Fontstand poised to revolutionize the font market.

For release 22-MAY-2015 (under press embargo until 3PM CET)
The Hague, Netherlands

Developed by independent designers, this new Mac OS X app for testing and renting desktop fonts could become the iTunes of the digital font market.

Out of the billions of digital device users in the world, probably only a tiny fraction ever stop to think about the fonts they use every day, much less wonder if they need anything beyond Times, Arial and Comic Sans. But as all designers know, whether you are a first-grader trying to get your mom's birthday card 'just right' or a professional crafting a comprehensive corporate identity, every font has its own character, and you can never have enough of them.

Producing a well designed font family is an extremely time-intensive task that demands artistic skill, technical knowledge and fanatical attention to detail. This makes high-quality fonts with advanced typographic features and broad language support expensive. And although free fonts are widely available on the web, they generally lack the refined details, diversity of styles and range of characters that (not only) professional graphic artists need to produce top-quality work. (Also, contrary to popular perception, pre-installed font families like Times Roman (normally US$140) and Helvetica (normally US$210) are 'free' only because companies like Microsoft and Apple pay to license them.)

Up until now, this has created a double-edged predicament for independent font designers and their customers: high-quality fonts have been costly, and font users have found it expensive to assemble a broad palette of typefaces to work with.

Furthermore, the reality of software piracy has discouraged designers from allowing any but the most restricted 'try-before-you-buy' options, which in turn has discouraged users from paying for a font that may or may not prove to be useful enough to justify the cost.

Fontstand, a simple standalone application for Mac OS X, (downloadable for free at Fontstand.com) marks a revolution in the way fonts are distributed and licensed. Conceived by independent type designers specifically to address the concerns of their industry, it provides customers with a simple way to try fonts for free and rent them by the month for a fraction of their regular price, an ideal solution if you need a font for just one project and don't plan on using it again. At present, Fontstand features thousands of fonts and font families from more than 20 of the world's top independent font foundries, including the work of internationally recognized designers (detailed listing below).

What Does Fontstand Do?
Fontstand's simple, intuitive interface lets you view fonts and try them (up to ten a day) for free, using them just as if they were installed on your computer. Renting a font for 30 days costs just 10% of its regular price, and any rented font can be shared with another Fontstand user for just an additional 2% of its regular price, a pricing model that benefits small graphics studios and other workgroups, even those whose collaborators are spread out all over the world. Any font rented for a total of twelve months becomes permanently available in Fontstand and can also be downloaded and installed like any normal font.

Behind Fontstand's elegant interface, however is a complex cloud-based service that automatically manages all the font files, software licensing and billing details. All you have to do is choose the fonts and use them. Once the free trial or rental starts, the fonts are available, and you don't have to be connected to the Internet or have Fontstand open; you can use them in any program that works normally with digital fonts.

Since Fontstand is exclusively a desktop font system, one thing that it does not do is handle webfont licensing. While users can create website graphics using Fontstand fonts, permission to use the fonts themselves on a website remains the domain of the fonts' publishers. Fontstand lets you do anything else you would normally do with a desktop font, like write letters, print résumés, design invitations, make posters, etc.

Fontstand BV
Lange Beestenmarkt 90k
2512 EH, The Hague
The Netherlands
info@fontstand.com
fontstand.com

Who Needs Fontstand?

Fontstand targets a broad audience of users from design students to professional designers to type enthusiasts, anyone for whom the high price of font licenses has been a barrier to creative exploration and use of type. As Christian Schwartz, principal designer at Commercial Type, explains: *'Small foundries have put a lot of effort into experimenting with design, but not enough effort into experimenting with licensing models. We joined Fontstand because we want to learn who the traditional font licensing model has been leaving out.'*

Fontstand also aims to address the concerns of type designers who seek fair compensation for their efforts, and who may not be able to support their work amid the current trend towards a flat-rate library subscription model. Jason Smith from Fontsmith gives a wider perspective: *'Independent foundries are finding it harder and harder to compete with the monopolies of Monotype and Adobe Typekit. Fontstand aims to support foundries, like ours, who employ highly skilled people to craft beautiful fonts with distinct stories. It gives us a way to let new user groups — particularly students, freelancers and small businesses — trial our fonts on projects while allowing us to protect our IP and our businesses more widely.'*

What's Wrong With Traditional Licensing?

Fonts, like any other software, are typically licensed, not sold, which means that the user pays for the right to use them, but does not own them. Traditional licensing agreements can be extremely complicated, and prices are affected by a wide variety of factors, including the font format (not all formats work with all software), number of users, number of computers the font is installed on, or even the number of geographical locations where the font is installed, as well as the use of the font (whether for print or electronic media, typically with special licensing requirements for use of the fonts in websites, applications and games). The biggest problem with traditional licensing, however, is that the user pays the same price whether the font is used once for a single party invitation or ten years for an entire global marketing campaign. Fontstand not only simplifies the licensing issue, it enables users to pay only for what they use.

Another advantage of Fontstand is the ability to test fonts thoroughly before buying or renting them. Typically, font publishers have offered only limited ways to try out their products, for example viewing them online or printing a watermarked PDF sample, but Fontstand's free trial feature lets you use fonts in all your applications for 1 hour so that you can get a much better idea of how they will work in your project (for example, how they will look in different colors, in different sizes, or with other fonts).

Why Rent a Font?

The traditional licensing model requires users to pay for a full license even if they plan to use a font for just one project. Fontstand makes it possible for designers to rent fonts for just as long as they need them, potentially saving them a lot of money. And if they need to revisit a project later, the fonts they need are just a click away. Furthermore, if any font accumulates twelve months of rentals (whether or not they are consecutive), Fontstand automatically makes the font permanently available, no more rentals required. This costs slightly more than buying the font outright from the start, but it also makes the 'up-front' investment in fonts much, much smaller, putting a much wider selection of fonts at your disposal.

Why Not Just Use Free Fonts?

Not every font is suitable for every project, and even a font that 'looks right' at first may not work well in the end. Free fonts in particular generally lack the features that make professionally developed type more versatile, more useful (and more expensive). Most free fonts provide only a basic character set sufficient for the most basic projects, but lacking the foreign language and currency symbols, superscript and subscript numerals, small caps, ligatures and other characters required for more complex design work.

On a more technical note, aside from the time that professional font designers spend creating these extra features, they also spend hundreds of hours 'kerning' fonts, (adjusting the spacing of individual letter combinations), so that the font reads smoothly, without gaps in the text that distract the eye. Free fonts seldom feature this painstaking attention to detail, and generally produce uneven, less readable results, especially in large blocks of text or at smaller point sizes.

Who Is Behind Fontstand?

Fontstand is a company registered in the Netherlands, strictly independent from any existing large corporate entity on the font market. The application was conceived by type designers Andrej Krátky, Peter Biľak, and Ondrej Jób.

More than twenty independent type foundries from 12 countries joined forces to make thousands of individual fonts and font families available via Fontstand. The list includes such type-design heavyweights as Commercial Type (US/UK), Fontsmith (UK), House Industries (US), Process (US), Typofonderie (FR), TypeTogether (CZ), Typotheque (NL) and Bold Monday (NL), as well as renowned independent type design studios like Mark Simonson Studio (US), Type Supply (US), LettError Type (NL), Suitcase Type Foundry (CZ), Storm Type Foundry (CZ), Production Type (FR), DSType (PT), LudwigType (DE), Urtd (SK), Typonine (HR), Retype (NL), Letters from Sweden (SE) and Feliciano Type Foundry (PT).

The list of type designers whose work is included in Fontstand would be even longer, including such

names as Gerard Unger, Jean-François Porchez, Veronika Burian, Paul Barnes, Christian Schwartz, Peter Biľak, Pieter van Rosmalen, Paul van der Laan, Erik van Blokland, František Štorm, Jason Smith, David Quay and Xavier Dupré, plus many others.

Fontstand makes choosing and using fonts simpler, while creating a sustainable business model for type designers. As Peter Biľak, co-founder of Fontstand, says: *"Type designers are great at the production phase of fonts, but now we have created a platform to connect directly with end users. This is important because if we don't channel money from font licensing back to font designers, there won't be any new fonts made."*

Download the App: fontstand.com
(Requires Mac OSX 10.9 or later)

Fontstand introduction video link here: https://vimeo.com/126369959
Fontstand screenshots gallery: http://fontstand.com/press

We are available for interviews, please get in touch directly:
Peter Bilak <peter@fontstand.com>