Font Management

Sooner or later this is an issue that every graphics software enthusiast is going to have to face. Many of the graphics software programs install hundreds of fonts onto your system. Most of them don't give you the option of which ones you want... they just dump all their fonts into your Windows FONTS folder. Often the fonts are visual duplicates of fonts you may already have under a different name. Add to that all those fun, cool, free fonts we find on the web and before long your system becomes sluggish and you can't seem to figure out why.... Chances are, it's font overload.

Most of the information you read about fonts in Windows will say that Windows can handle as many as 1,000 fonts. This may be true, but you are going to experience a decline in system performance much earlier than when you hit this number. The truth of the matter is, Windows does not "reach its limit" according to the number of installed fonts at all... it has to do with the length of the font names and their filenames. Furthermore, if a font resides in a location other than the FONTS folder or the SYSTEM folder, the entire path to the font has to be stored in the registry, reducing the number of fonts you may install.

To further compound the problem, Windows does not tell you when you have reached the limit of installed fonts and it will continue to let you think you are adding fonts to your system when in fact, you are not. Let me explain....

Once you reach that mysterious limit of fonts in Windows, you (or a program installation) can keep adding fonts to the Windows FONTS folder. The fonts will appear to be installed because they are in the folder, but they may not appear in the font menu of your programs. The fonts are unusable because you have reached your system's limit. When this occurs, you will find that as you delete fonts, the number of installed fonts that is indicated in the Status bar when viewing the Windows FONTS folder, does not change. This is because as you delete fonts, those extra, unusable fonts are moving up and becoming usable again. When you finally see this number in the status bar actually begin to decrease, you know you are making progress.

It's a good idea to keep the number of installed fonts below 400. If you do this you will find your system and programs will start faster and run much smoother. Does this mean you have to give up all your favorite fonts? Not necessarily... There are a few things you can do to have the best of both worlds. I'll discuss those later; first, I'll explain the safest way to trim down your font collection.

To read the full 3 part article about Font Management and to get a list of those fonts you must not remove, go to :
http://graphicssoft.about.com/library/weekly/aa072099.htm?terms=font+management

If you follow the links in this article, you will find out how to **safely** remove fonts, where to store the fonts you remove and which fonts not to remove.