FontKeys Spreadsheet

Have you ever wanted to see what all of the characters in a font look like? Have you ever wanted to see what keystrokes you would have to press to get a strange-looking character into your spreadsheet or word processing program? Have you wondered how a given font looks when it is printed very small or large?

If so, this Quattro Pro for Windows spreadsheet is for you. In a simple fashion, it allows you to view and/or print any of your Windows fonts in four major ways: 1) a keyboard and extended character format so you can visually see each of the characters and be shown what keys to press to get it into your document, 2)a portrait table showing all of the characters in the font, 3) a landscape table of all of the characters in the font, and 4) a table of text strings in various sizes with bold, italic etc.

Selecting a font

There are two defined styles in the spreadsheet. One is "Normal" which you shouldn't change. The other is "Keyboard" and when you change the font assigned to this style, the characters in the tables change to the font you specify. To change the font, use the command Edit | DefineStyle (Alt-E, D) which will bring up a dialog box to let you change various things for any defined style. In the top left corner is a box labelled "Define Style For" which should either have "Normal" or "Keyboard" in it. If it has "Normal" displayed change it to "Keyboard" (use the mouse to select or press the down arrow and select "Keyboard"). Now that you have the Keyboard style chosen you can edit the Font (click on it with the Mouse or press Tab 14 times and then Enter).   Use the mouse or the cursor to select the font you want and then press Enter or click OK. The font size remains 24 point unless you change it (the tables were designed for this character size) and if desired you can set or clear the other enhancements such as bold, italics, underline or strikeout although the spreadsheet was designed without any of these in use.

Note that the default color for this style is red. With most fonts, this will print fine on black and white printers but some Postscript fonts look a bit strange unless you set the color black (or use a color printer). Nothing bad happens if you change the text color (it is right below the "Font" choice in the DefineStyle dialog box). The only drawback is that the keyboard and portrait and landscape tables will not be as neatly color highlighted onscreen if you use black rather than the default red.

Printing Tables

The first spreadsheet page is labelled Keyboard and in the top of it you should see three floating buttons. The leftmost one is labelled "Print Table(s)" and if you click on it you will get a dialog box that lets you select which of the 4 layouts you wish to print. Select any, all or none of them to print and then click on OK (or Cancel if you decide not to print). The tables will be printed on your currently selected printer on 8.5"x11" paper, one table per page.

Previewing Tables

The second floating button on the Keyboard page is labelled "Preview Table(s). It is identical to the print option described above except that instead of printing to the printer, it gives a print preview. For each one, when you are done looking at it, click on the close preview button or press ESC.

Help

The third floating button in the Keyboard page is labelled "Help" and will cause a short help dialog box to

be displayed when you click on it.
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The Keyboard Table

This table shows all of the characters in the font in two parts.   The top part is an approximation of a PC keyboard. In the middle of each key is a small copy of the "normal" character assigned to it (at least in the U.S.) for your reference. Also in the box are the two characters you can get by pressing this key in your other Windows application for the chosen font. The bottom character is the unshifted character and the top one is the shifted character. For example, when you first bring the spreadsheet up the Keyboard Style is set to use the WingDings font so in the box for the "8" character on the keyboard it shows a mouse on bottom and an envelope on top. If you wanted to use the envelope in your Word Perfect document, you would change to the WingDings font and then press Shift-8 (the asterisk key normally) and instead of the asterisk character you normally get, you get an envelope. [One of the neat things about using True Type and ATM Postscript fonts in Windows is that they are scalable to any size you want without any "jaggies".]

Most fonts have more characters in the font than you can directly type in from the keyboard. These are called "extended characters" and Windows allows you to enter them by holding down Alt and then pressing a four digit code on your numeric keypad. The bottom half of the keyboard table page shows you what number to use for a given character. For example, the WingDings font will show that if you press Alt-0165 you will get a character that looks like a bullseye. [Note - For this to work in any application, NumLock must be turned on.] Just add the row number with the column number (e.g., character 165 in the table is really on the row labelled 152 and in the column labelled 13).

Portrait and Landscape Tables

These two tables are the numerical versions of the "extended characters" described above but it covers all of the characters in the font, even those which can be entered from the keyboard. For example, if you wanted to enter a capital "a" you could either press Shift-a or hold down Alt and then press 0065 on the NumPad. The portrait and landscape tables have exactly the same information, just the orientations are different.

Text Table

The tables above are primarily intended to be reference sheets for those fonts such as WingDings that have unusual character sets. However, you probably have some "normal" fonts loaded that when you choose in Quattro or Word Perfect or whatever, you can't remember exactly what they look like and whether it is one of those fonts that looks good in large point sizes or small point sizes (or neither). This table is intended to help with this problem.   It prints (or displays) the selected font in various sizes from 6 to 36 point and for each there is normal, bold, italic and bold/italic. I have put three lines of text in cells D1, D2 and D3 which you can change to give yourself a representative look at the font. Look in column A to the left of the text strings and you will see numbers from 1 to 3 which correspond to the text strings. If you wish to display string 3 in a given point size go to column A and enter 3 in the row you want to change.

Technical note - A Quattro Pro style is restricted to only one point size (among other things) which created a problem for a page that should display strings in that style in various sizes. I have a macro called "Fix_Text" on the macros page that changes the fonts for each of the text strings to the same font as the

"Keyboard" style just before the print preview or printouts are done as described earlier in this document. The item of note here is that if you change the font associated with the "Keyboard" style, it is not reflected in the Text Table until you either use the floating buttons or run the Fix_Text macro.

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How I Use the Spreadsheet

For each of my "strange" fonts, I have printed a keyboard layout and a landscape character map which I keep in a notebook as a reference. For the "normal" fonts I made a printout of a landscape character map and the text strings so I can see which fonts look better at various point sizes. I have found that this greatly eases font selection in all of my WIndows programs.

I downloaded a shareware program a while back called "Printer's Apprentice" which did basically what I have recreated in the spreadsheet. I decided that it wouldn't be too difficult to do in Quattro since it had linedraw and styles etc. and I wanted to practice with some simple floating objects and dialog boxes. This is the result. I hope you find it useful.

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