Status of Font Development

SIL fonts are updated when relevant new characters are accepted into the Unicode Standard, or when new technology is developed to make the fonts work better. The goal for these fonts is to support a uniform set of characters.

Andika

Andika Basic was released in May 2008 in a single weight. It contains over 630 glyphs from the Basic Latin and Latin-1 Supplement Unicode ranges, including a selection of commonly used extended Latin characters, diacritic marks, symbols and punctuation. It also supports complex diacritic behavior. Italic, bold and bold italic styles are planned for development.

Charis SIL

Charis SIL currently has the most extensive glyph inventory of SIL’s Roman fonts, supporting over 1,900 characters. The latest release aligns with Unicode 5.1 and offers small capitals functionality, among other features.

Gentium

Work is underway to fill out the Gentium inventory. Gentium Basic and Gentium Book Basic were released in March 2008, both with bold and bold italic styles in addition to regular and italic. They also support complex diacritic behavior.

SIL Roman Fonts for Literacy

Extensive character coverage combined with cutting-edge technology

SIL has produced fonts for a variety of complex Roman and non-Roman scripts around the world. All SIL fonts are available for free download at http://scripts.sil.org

SIL International is a faith-based nonprofit organization that facilitates language-based development within non-dominant language communities through research, translation, training and materials development.

SIL recognizes that multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding. SIL’s participation in multilingual education involves serving as an advocate with and for ethnolinguistic communities, linking them to supportive resources, and assisting them in increasing capacity to build sustainable language-based development programs. As an NGO, SIL has special consultative status with ECOSOC and formal consultative relations with UNESCO.
Andika

The Andika* font addresses the needs of new readers learning a Roman script (ABCs and variations of those letters). When literacy and education workers look for fonts specifically for teaching people to read, they prefer two characteristics:

- a sans serif style
- simple, distinct letter forms

These specialists have often had to use fonts lacking one or both of these attributes.

The letters in many sans serif fonts are too similar in appearance. This can confuse the novice reader trying to distinguish between look-alike letters such as b and d or p and q. Andika also includes special letters and diacritics for the many languages of Africa, Asia and the Americas that use Roman script.

Andika, a Unicode font, was introduced in 2006. Its design is based on decades of legibility research. Initial response to the design from literacy and education personnel has been positive.

Charis SIL

Charis SIL* is a serif font offering high legibility, even in long printed documents such as books. It prints well in settings as varied as silkscreen or high-speed presses, and has four styles—regular, italic, bold, and bold italic. Literacy and education workers can choose the simple a and g forms you see here, or use the standard typography shapes a and g. Besides the a and g, Charis includes many other user-selectable letter styles, such as four varieties of LATIN CAPITAL LETTER ENG (U+014A):

Charis has a large inventory of glyphs (letters, symbols, punctuation, diacritics, etc.) needed for almost any Roman- or Cyrillic-based writing system, whether used for phonetic or orthographic needs. In addition, there are dozens of other characters and symbols useful to linguists. This Unicode font uses state-of-the-art font technologies to support complex typographic issues, such as the need to optimally position arbitrary combinations of base characters and diacritics.

Gentium

Gentium* is a Unicode serif font family designed to enable diverse language groups around the world to produce high-quality publications. It has won multiple awards. The overall design is highly readable, reasonably compact and visually attractive.

*Each column uses the font being described.