

Using CorelDraw for sign design

Third in a series to help you get the most out of any design software

By Bob Darnell

With the vast number of fonts out here, the Font Navigator application by Bit stream that comes with CorelDraw is a welcome improvement to using Windows' basic font handling (see *Get your fonts under control*, by Doug Downey, *SignCraft* January/February 2001). Font Navigator will also work with Adobe Postscript Type 1 fonts as well as TrueType fonts.

Besides working seamlessly with CorelDraw to find the correct fonts in a drawing that you might not have installed in your Windows fonts folder at the moment, it also allows you

to organize the fonts into groups. These groups can help you identify unknown letter styles much faster, or simply provide a means to choose an appropriate letter style by eliminating the need to look at the groups that you don't think are a good choice.

Once I grouped all of my available letter styles, I printed each group to a PDF (Adobe Acrobat) file, and created links between all of the PDF files to navigate through them easily. This displays six or seven entire letter styles per page instead of one font at a time.

continued...

NEW D/S ILLUMINATED LAWN SIGN - LEXAN FACES
NEW 3/16" CLEAR LEXAN FACES WITH VINYL GRAPHICS APPLIED TO THE SECOND SURFACE

INSTALLATION LOCATION

GRAPHIC DETAIL

6x7 FRAMES AND 18" ALUMINUM FABRICATED FILLER PAINTED TO MATCH 3630-49 BURGUNDY

3630-005 Ivory COPY / 3630-49 BURGUNDY BACKGROUND WITH A 3630-78 WIND ROSE OUTLINE

3630-20 WHITE COPY WITH A 3630-22 BLACK OUTLINE

3" REVEAL PAINTED TO MATCH 3630-49 BURGUNDY

3/16" WHITE LEXAN FACE WITH 4 LINES OF 6" CHANGABLE READOGRAPH LETTERS AND TRACK / BOTTOM ROW HAS A CLEAR LEXAN PANEL WITH VINYL GRAPHICS APPLIED TO THE FIRST SURFACE / 3630-005 Ivory COPY ON A 3630-49 BURGUNDY BACKGROUND

1/4" OUT-OUT ALUMINUM LETTERS PAINTED WHITE AND STUD MOUNTED TO BRICK BASE ON 1/2" STANDOFFS

**6'-0" HIGH BRICK BASE BY OTHERS TO MATCH EXISTING BRICK BUILDING
BRICK BASE TO HAVE ANCHOR BOLTS FOR MOUNTING SIGN**

	CUSTOMER: KNOLLWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH	DESIGN NO.: C721 SK02	SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"	DATE: SEPTEMBER 7 / 2000
	ADDRESS: 800 CHEAPSIDE STREET, LONDON, ONTARIO	ACC. EXEC.: ANTHONY VANDELOO	REVISION #1:	CHECKED BY:
2736 BRIGMAN DR., LONDON, ONT. N6H 1G4 PHONE: 1-519-681-6492 / FAX: 1-519-681-3856	SIGN TYPE: NEW D/S ILLUMINATED LAWN SIGN	DESIGNER: BOB DARNELL	APPROVED BY CUSTOMER : DATE : _____	

Here's another drawing created in CorelDraw.

Scripts From the look of things in CorelDraw 9 and 10, it appears that CorelScript is giving way to Visual Basic for Applications, but the use is pretty much the same. (In fact, using Visual Basic is more powerful.) You can use these features to record your actions and save them to be performed again later.

For instance, once you hit the record but-

Layers Layers can also make your life a lot easier in certain circumstances. If you don't know what layers are, it might help to think of each layer as a piece of acetate on an overhead projector. You can draw on each layer separately, make each one visible or invisible or change their order. You can also set a layer to not print or lock it so it can't be changed.

The real power of layers is that you can work on something very complex and remain organized and efficient. For instance, if I have a drawing with a complex support structure for a sign with many different sign elements over top, dimensioning lines all over the place, and a fancy background, etc., it can get very hard to work with all of the elements getting in the way. If I were using layers, I could make everything invisible, except the support structure layer, and make changes to it easily.

I don't use layers as much as I probably should. AutoCad users are very familiar with layers and usually use a different layer for virtually every type of element they draw. This does make a lot of sense and provides a better management of complex drawings, but for most of my needs, that many layers are more work than is worthwhile. Layers in CorelDraw are a lot like Signlab's ability to turn color layers on and off, but in CorelDraw the layers are independent of color. *SC



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Organizing your fonts by category saves design time

I have grouped my fonts into the following categories and sometimes add a font to more than one group if it's appropriate. Whatever groups you decide to use, the object is to narrow down the characteristics of a letter style as quickly as possible.

- San Serif
- San Serif—Thick & Thin
- Serif—All
- Serif—Angled/Chopped Serifs
- Serif—Classical Roman
- Serif—Fat Serifs
- Serif—Flat Serifs
- Serif—Slab Serifs
- Script—Calligraphic Script—Fancy
- Script—Formal Calligraphic
- Script—Half Italic
- Script—Workhorse
- Slash
- Wingdings
- Decorative
- Modern
- Poster

Use scripts to record your actions and save them to be performed again later

ton, you could move your mouse to the file menu then go to "import" and navigate to the file you want. Type in the name of your template drawing and import it, then stop recording and save the script. You could then create a keyboard shortcut that would allow you to import that file at any time with one key press. You may not want to bother with it for

that particular example, but if you find a set of operations that you perform repeatedly, creating a script that does it for you is efficient. It can get a little complicated depending on what you're trying to do, but with some effort you should be able to get some good results.

If you know a little bit of computer programming, you can also create your own dialog boxes and operations, adding functions that you think Corel missed. I can't say that I have delved that far into it yet. Even if you never use it yourself, it is comforting to know that Corel developed this software so that others can add functionality to it.

There's more on www.signcraft.com

Click on *Features* to read:

- **Using CorelDraw for sign design** by Bob Darnell, May/June 2001
- **Get your fonts under control** by Doug Downey, January/February 2001