Proxima Nova Supplemental Font Guide

WHY "SUPPLEMENTAL" FONTS?

Proxima Nova is a full-featured OpenType font family. It includes many typographic extras such as small caps, old style figures, and alternate characters. To take advantage of all the extra features, you need to use applications such as Adobe Creative Suite 1 or 2, or QuarkXPress 7, which have solid support for all (or nearly all) the advanced features in OpenType fonts.

Unfortunately, many popular applications have not yet been updated to take full advantage of OpenType fonts. Or, you may not be ready or able to upgrade to a version that has. If you use Flash, MS Word, Freehand, earlier versions of QuarkXPress or Adobe applications, for example, you can only use the basic characters in Proxima Nova.

For this reason, the Proxima Nova Supplemental fonts were created. These are also OpenType format, meaning they still have the advantage of a single font file that works on both Macs and PCs. However, standard characters have been replaced with ones which would otherwise be impossible to access in OpenType-challenged applications.

Proxima Nova ScOsf gives access to the small cap and old style figure set, including punctuation and number symbols designed to match. These are essentially the same as what you get if, when using Proxima Nova in an OpenType-savvy application, you apply the Small Caps or Old Style Figures features.

Proxima Nova Alt provides access to the alternate forms of the a, f, l, y, and G, including ligatured and accented forms of these characters. These are essentially the same as what you get if, when using Proxima Nova in an OpenType-savvy application, you apply the Stylistic Alternates feature. (Except: The "f" in this font is actually the one used in all the f-ligatures. It has a shorter hook at the top for cases when it preceeds a tall character.)

The supplemental fonts are available in all the same weights and styles as the standard ones and are included at no extra charge when you purchas a Proxima Nova license.

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

These fonts are "bare bones" and contain no special OpenType features, other than kerning. The supplemental fonts only cover the basic Western Latin character set. There are also dozens of characters in the main font which are not included in the supplemental fonts, such as other currency symbols, tabular figures, superscript, subscript, fractions, case-sensitive punctuation, ligatures, and many miscellaneous symbols. It would technically be possible to put all these into an even bigger set of supplemental fonts, but you're really better off in the long run using applications with better OpenType support if you need everything that Proxima Nova has to offer. These fonts cover the most-requested characters for people using non-OpenType-savvy application.

Bear in mind that these fonts are a work-around, a "hack," a step backward in font technology. Use them only when you have to. If you use an application with good OpenType support, such as the Adobe Creative Suite or QuarkXPress 7, there is no reason to use them at all.

WHAT EXACTLY IS IN THE FONTS?

The standard character set and the two supplemental sets are shown below. Special characters—the ones normally inaccessible in non-OpenType-savvy applications—are shown in blue.

PROXIMA NOVA
(CHARACTERS AVAILABLE IN NON-OPENTYPE-SAVVY APPLICATIONS SHOWN)

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Mark Simonson STUDIO   THIS FONT IS AVAILABLE FROM WWW.MS-STUDIO.COM

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HOW TO INSTALL THE SUPPLEMENTAL FONTS

The Proxima Nova supplemental fonts are installed the same way as any other fonts and are meant to be installed alongside the standard version of Proxima Nova.

FONT NAMES

In applications that group fonts according to family, the standard Proxima Nova fonts will be in one group, the Small Caps and Old Style fonts in a second group, and the Alternate Character fonts in a third group. (Condensed and Extra Condensed are also grouped separately.)

The font names follow a consistent pattern to make it easy to find the font you need. For example:

SOME OF THE STANDARD FONTS:

Proxima Nova Regular
Proxima Nova Bold
Proxima Nova Condensed Thin Italic
Proxima Nova Extra Condensed Black

THE MATCHING SMALL CAP & OLD STYLE FIGURES FONTS:

Proxima Nova ScOsf Regular
Proxima Nova ScOsf Bold
Proxima Nova ScOsf Condensed Thin Italic
Proxima Nova ScOsf Extra Condensed Black

THE MATCHING ALTERNATE CHARACTER FONTS:

Proxima Nova Alt Regular
Proxima Nova Alt Bold
Proxima Nova Alt Condensed Thin Italic
Proxima Nova Alt Extra Condensed Black

Note: In some applications (MS Word, QuarkXPress, most Windows applications), the font names may be abbreviated.

USING THE FONTS

In general, use these the same way you would use any other separate fonts together. That is, select the text you wish to change an choose the font from the font menu. Note that there can be no automatic kerning between Proxima Nova and the supplemental fonts, just as there is no automatic kerning between any two separate fonts. However, each of the fonts includes extensive kerning support among its own characters.