

Testing Web Fonts

Typographic Web Design, Laura Franz, October 2016

According to gs.statcounter.com (which tracks the activity of third party visitors to their member websites — more than 15 billion hits per month, by people from all over the world onto 3 million+ member sites), the following browsers and operating systems accounted for approx 85% of visitors between September 2015 and September 2016.

Not every browser is used on every OS. In addition, not every Browser/OS combination is available on all cross-browser testing services. When testing web fonts, I recommend testing early—and as many options as possible—to avoid problems down the road.

White spaces in the chart below show combinations available in the free trial on crossbrowsertesting.com as of October 2016. Test as many as you have access to. Notice if the font doesn't look good/work (pixelated, spacing problems, structure or strokes of the letters change, blurriness).

Keep your screen shots (showing the OS/Browser combo in the screenshot) in a folder. Save the folder to confirm you tested the font. If the font falls apart for any OS/Browser not marked with a * or ** below, don't use it! Choose and test another font.

Amount of use (%) for each OS or Browser	<i>Win8 available for free testing</i>						
	Android (29%)	Win7 (24.6%)	iOS (11.2%)	Win 10 (8.6%)	Win 8.1 (6%)	OSX (5.1%)	Win XP (4.1%)
Chrome (48%)					*		
Firefox (8.6%)					**		
iPhone 0 (7.2%)							
IE 11 (5.5%)					<i>IE 10</i>		
Android 0 (4.7%)							
Opera 0 (4.4%)							**
Safari iPad (3.1%)			<i>Mobile Safari</i>				
UC Browser (1.7%)							
Opera 15+ (1%)			<i>Opera Mobile</i>				**
Safari 9 (1%)					<i>Safari 5.1</i>	<i>Safari 8</i>	
IE 8 (1%)		***		***			***

* Chrome on Win 8 and 8.1 results in jaggedy text. This problem is resolved in Chrome 45 and higher.

** Firefox on Win 8 and 8.1 and Opera on Win XP result in "jaggedy text." May be resolved in later versions of Opera.

*** Keep an eye out for fake italic and fake bold (using Google Fonts) in IE 8. Learn why this happens and how to fix them at <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2012/07/avoiding-faux-weights-styles-google-web-fonts/>