

About substitute fonts for latin alphabets

The fontconfig files include 30-font-metrics.conf. The PDFs in this directory show *some* of the fonts listed there. To quote from that file (after the lists of matching fonts):

“We want for each of them to fallback to any of these available, but in an order preferring similar designs first. We do this in three steps:

- 1) Alias each specific to its generic family. e.g. Liberation Sans to Arial
- 2) Weak alias each generic to the other generic of its family. e.g. Arial to Helvetica
- 3) Alias each generic to its specifics. e.g. Arial to Liberation Sans, Arimo, Albany, and Albany AMT”

What that means is that **only** the fonts known there will be used as substitutes, and that if you install more than one, only the first match will be used. So, I happen to like NimbusRomanNo9L as a Times-style font (a question of what languages it covers, and the shape of one uncommon glyph). But I normally install the Liberation fonts. So for me, NimbusRomanNo9L will be used when a page specifies Times, but *not* if it specifies the more-common Times Roman.

Mostly, I have used freely-available fonts or MS fonts from one of my machines, the exception is Helvetica which I bought to see how it compared. Bookman, Palladio and Century Schoolbook do not seem to be in common web usage. The Zapf Chancery font is script - nice, but no more generally useful than any blackletter or uncial fonts. So although it was a standard PostScript font it does not seem worth documenting for TTF/OTF fonts.

I have ignored Helvetica Condensed, Arial Narrow, and their substitutes.

In general, if a latin font and its substitutes cannot be found then fontconfig will fall back to DejaVu. It will (correctly) use DejaVu Serif for Georgia and Palatino (because they are listed in 45-latin.conf), but it will use DejaVu Sans for both Bookman and New Century Schoolbook which are not listed there.

However, although I have listed DejaVu as the fallback, the choices are ordered in 60-latin.conf and if you had installed Bitstream Vera it would use that, or perhaps the old Luxi fonts if DejaVu was not installed.

The files here are:

- bookman-substitutes - substitutes for ITC Bookman
- calibri-substitutes - MS Calibri and its substitute
- cambria-substitutes - MS Cambria and its substitute
- courier-substitutes - Courier, Courier New and their substitutes
- georgia-substitutes - MS Georgia and its substitute
- gothic-substitutes - substitutes for ITC Avant Garde Gothic
- helvetica-arial-substitutes - helvetica, arial, substitutes
- palatino-substitutes - some substitutes for Palatino
- schoolbook-substitutes - some substitutes for New Century Schoolbook
- times-roman-substitutes - substitutes for Times, Times New Roman and its subs