GUST Font License: An application of the LaTeX Project Public License

Jerzy Ludwichowski
Nicholas Copernicus University
Toruń, Poland
`Jerzy dot Ludwichowski (at) uni dot torun dot pl`

Karl Berry
TeX Users Group
`karl (at) tug dot org`

Abstract

We describe interpretation and usage of the GUST Font License. It is legally identical to the LaTeX Project Public License, with additional requests (not requirements) related to usage with fonts. It is currently used for the Latin Modern font project, among others.

1 Introduction

A previous article [8] described the process of formulating a license for fonts in the TeX world, culminating in two different licenses, based on (but slightly modified from) the LaTeX Project Public License (LPPL) [7]. These were the GUST SOURCE and GUST NOSOURCE font licenses. After further discussions, we realized that the licenses could be simplified and combined into one; viz., the GUST Font License (GFL). Furthermore, it could be made legally identical to the LPPL.

The present article describes interpretation and usage of the new license and points out some benefits of the new formulation.

2 LPPL interpretations

The main reason for the two separate licenses in our first attempt was the fact that fonts do not always have source files separate from the fonts themselves; they can be designed purely visually.

We owe a large debt to Frank Mittelbach of the LaTeX team, and the principal architect of the LPPL, for pointing out that the LPPL does *not* require that source files exist. In LPPL terms, the 'Work' and 'Compiled Work' can be one and the same thing, which is indeed the case for visually defined fonts.

A second concern in the original formulation was clause 6a in LPPL, which requires, in certain cases, that a derived work which can directly replace an original work identify itself as a modified version. It was not clear to us how this could apply to fonts. Fortunately, Mittelbach again disentangled us, noting that simply changing the font's official name (e.g., the `FontName` in a Type 1 PostScript font) would suffice to fulfill this clause.

With these clarifications, we realized that the two GUST font licenses could be combined into one, and furthermore, the result could be made legally equivalent to the LPPL — we would only need to add requests, without any new requirements or other changes. This is highly beneficial, as the FSF, Debian, and other organizations have already officially accepted the LPPL as a free software license [2]; this way, there would be no need for additional analysis, and no question that the new GUST Font License would also be a free software license. We were also pleased not to contribute to the ongoing problem of "license proliferation" in the free software world [1]. Finally, of course the LPPL was designed for use with (LA)TeX, so we were very happy that it could be used for fonts in the TeX world, too.

3 GFL usage

As a result of the above, to use the GFL, strictly speaking, it is only necessary to abide by the LPPL. Most importantly, the LPPL maintenance status and any maintainer(s) should be stated. Indeed, this feature of the LPPL was a primary reason for choosing the LPPL in the first place, as explained in the prior article [8].

The additional request in the GFL is for names of fonts to be changed in derived works, at the authors' option. The recommendation thus is for authors to provide a separate manifest file, with three sections:

1. Font names which should be changed.

2. File names which should be changed.

3. File names which need not be changed.

The Latin Modern manifest [5] is a good illustration.

The GFL web site [3] provides a generic template for a manifest file in GFL-licensed distributions, as well as a template for a readme file, and of course the current text of the GFL, among other information.

GUST e-foundry fonts [4] will be released under the GFL as new versions are published; Latin Modern has been already, as mentioned above. We are also pleased to report that Palle Jørgensen has agreed to use the GFL for his Fonetika Dania [6].

4 Conclusion

We hope the GFL will remain a stable legal basis for font releases in the TEX world for many years. Questions and comments are welcome, as always; please see the GFL web page [3] for contact information.

Finally, thanks again to Frank Mittelbach for his time and good cheer in discussing these perennial licensing issues.

References

[1] GNU Project. Licensing web page.
`http://gnu.org/licenses/`.

[2] GNU Project. Various licenses and comments about them. `http://gnu.org/licenses/license-list.html`.

[3] GUST Font License web page.
`http://www.gust.org.pl/fonts/licenses`.

[4] GUST e-foundry web page.
`http://www.gust.org.pl/projects/e-foundry`.

[5] Jackowski, B. and Nowacki, J. M. Latin Modern manifest. `http://ctan.org/tex-archive/fonts/lm/doc/fonts/lm/MANIFEST.txt`.

[6] Jørgensen, Palle. Fonetika Dania. `http://ctan.org/tex-archive/fonts/fonetika/`.

[7] LATEX Project Public License.
`http://www.latex-project.org/lppl/`.

[8] Ludwichowski, J. GUST font licenses. *GUST Bulletin 23*. `http://www.gust.org.pl/projects/fonts/licenses/gfl.pdf`.

[9] SIL Open Font License.
`http://scripts.sil.org/OFL`.