



ZapfDingbats.dfont does not preview in Suitcase X1

Description: ZapfDingbats.dfont, which is included with Mac OS X, does not preview correctly in Suitcase X1.

Solution/workaround:

ZapfDingbats.dfont is a Unicode font, and depending on the application you are working in, Unicode fonts will behave differently. Unicode is a character encoding standard that allows universal language access, and it's the default character encoding of Mac OS X. Unicode is also sometimes referred to as UTF-8 encoding.

“Fundamentally, computers just deal with numbers. They store letters and other characters by assigning a number for each one. Before Unicode was invented, there were hundreds of different encoding systems for assigning these numbers. No single encoding could contain enough characters: for example, the European Union alone requires several different encodings to cover all its languages. Even for a single language like English no single encoding was adequate for all the letters, punctuation, and technical symbols in common use.

These encoding systems also conflict with one another. That is, two encodings can use the same number for two different characters, or use different numbers for the same character. Any given computer (especially servers) needs to support many different encodings; yet whenever data is passed between different encodings or platforms, that data always runs the risk of corruption.

Unicode provides a unique number for every character, no matter what the platform, no matter what the program, no matter what the language.”

Excerpt from <http://www.unicode.org/standard/WhatIsUnicode.html>

Since Unicode is the default character encoding of Mac OS X, most Mac OS X applications, specifically Cocoa applications, use Unicode text input. However, Mac OS 9 and most Carbon applications do not use Unicode, instead they use a different character encoding scheme called Western or Mac Roman (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mac-Roman>).

The fundamental difference is that dingbat characters have different Mac Roman and Unicode mappings. Unicode does not map dingbat characters to keyboard alphabet keys. Therefore, text entry from the keyboard using ZapfDingbats.dfont, in a Cocoa application, will result in 'invisible' text, blank boxes, or font substitution.

Suitcase X1 is a Cocoa application, which inherently uses Unicode, therefore ZapfDingbats.dfont will not display in the Preview pane since the Preview pane is attempting to display alphabet characters.

To display and use dingbat characters in an application that uses Unicode, you need to instead use the Character Palette, a built-in feature of Mac OS X.

To access the Character Palette, follow these steps:

1. From the Apple Menu, select System Preferences...
2. In System Preferences, select International
3. In the International preferences, select the Input Menu tab
4. In the list of keyboard layouts, turn on the Character Palette

You will now notice a small country flag in your menu bar. This is referred to as the Text Input menu. Click the Text Input menu, select "Show Character Palette" and the Character Palette will be displayed.

From the "View:" drop-down menu in the palette select "Glyph", and then on the Glyph Catalog tab, select "Zapf Dingbats" from the "Font:" drop-down menu. The dingbats will then be displayed. You can then either drag & drop glyphs from the Character Palette into your document, or if you have activated the Text tool in your application, double-click on the glyph you wish to use and it will appear after the cursor.

On the flip side, if you are using an application that uses Western or Mac Roman text input, such as Microsoft Word v.X, you can use keyboard alphabet entry with ZapfDingbats.dfont and it will display the dingbats. This is because the character encoding is translated on the fly from Unicode to its Mac Roman equivalent.

Also, you can use a different version of Zapf Dingbats that uses the Western or Mac Roman encoding. ITC Zapf Dingbats, which is included in Adobe's Font Folio 9, uses Mac Roman encoding, thus it will preview in Suitcase X1's preview pane, and also allow keyboard alphabet input in any application.

If you are unsure what the character encoding of your font is, you can use Unicode Font Info by Andrew Thompson. You can find more information on Unicode Font Info at <http://pixel.recoil.org/cocoa/>

Online resources ---

Unicode, <http://www.unicode.org/>

Unicode Font Info, <http://pixel.recoil.org/cocoa/>

Apple Type Services for Unicode Imaging, <http://developer.apple.com/intl/atsui.html>

Adobe Type, <http://www.adobe.com/type/>

Products affected: Suitcase X1 on Mac OS X

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