

Looking at the GDocs fonts, Jan 2011. This text was typed using default settings except for the added space between paragraphs. Therefore the font is Arial at 11pt except where otherwise noted.

GDocs offers 17 fonts on my Windows/Office 2010 system (using Chrome or IE8 browser). In the following list each line was typed in on the Windows system using the named font at 11pt. They all look different on the Windows system.

1. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Arial
2. **Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Arial Black**
3. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Arial Narrow
4. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Calibri
5. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Cambria
6. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Comic Sans MS
7. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Consolas
8. *Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Corsiva*
9. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Courier New
10. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Droid Sans
11. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Droid Serif
12. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Garamond
13. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Georgia
14. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Tahoma
15. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Times New Roman
16. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Trebuchet
17. Text TEXT ilmo ILMO 01 Verdana

On the Windows system nrs. 1-4, 6, 10, 14, 16 and 17 are variable width sans serif fonts, nrs. 5, 11-13 and 15 are variable width serif fonts, nrs. 7 and 9 are the fixed width sans serif and serif fonts and nr. 8 is cursive.

Evaluation on an Ubuntu 10.10 system (Chrome or Firefox):

In the drop-down fonts menu Arial Black (Windows) is called Wide and Arial Narrow (Windows) is called Narrow. Fonts Garamond, Georgia, Tahoma, Trebuchet and Verdana are not in the drop-down menu; the drop-down contains 12 fonts on the Ubuntu system.

When the above list is viewed on the Ubuntu system then fonts Arial Black, Arial Narrow, Comic Sans MS and the five missing ones are all collapsed into one and the same font. On one Ubuntu 10.10 system they are all rendered as Times New Roman and on another 10.10 system they are again all the same, but it isn't Times New Roman.

Another observation on the Ubuntu system: Fonts Calibri and Consolas induce a noticeably wider line spacing than the other ones. The linespacing for Cambria is slightly larger than for the other ones, not including Calibri and Consolas.

Therefore, the distinct fonts that I find on both the Windows and the Ubuntu system with similar appearance on both are the variable spacing sans serif fonts Arial, Droid Sans and Calibri, the variable spacing serif fonts Cambria, Droid Serif and Times New Roman, the fixed width sans serif font Consolas, the fixed width serif font Courier New, and the cursive font Corsiva. Of these 9 fonts Calibri and Consolas have the line spacing issue. I am guessing that for general compatibility it is mandatory to offer Arial and Times New Roman. Courier New has niche value as the fixed width font, and maybe Corsiva has niche value too. Those four should serve my needs, and if the two Droids are thrown in then that is approaching an embarrassment of riches.