OSAC RESEARCH NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM

OSAC
Organization of Scientific Area
Committees for Forensic Science

Title of research need:	Reliable resource for introduction and identification of fonts
Keywords:	Font, typeface, document examination, document authentication, document dating

R&D Need Rank: Low, Medium, High	High	**SAC Approved Date:**	June 9, 2025

Submitting subcommittee(s):	Forensic Document Examination

Research Need Summary:

The purpose of these research needs is to build a stronger scientific foundation for forensic science standards. The information provided herein will help to evaluate and strengthen existing standards, and/or fill any standards related gaps. In the space below, please provide a brief narrative of the need to be addressed. This should include:

- The identity of any specific standards that would be affected/improved/evaluated
- A discussion on gaps that exist within the standards or standards related gaps that need to be filled
- How this work would fill those gaps
- An overview of any current or past research efforts that may be relevant to this effort
- A discussion regarding how this research might improve current laboratory capabilities and/or forensic services within the criminal justice system
- Any relevant references

Online resources such as "What the Font", "Font Squirrel", and "What Font Is" are helpful tools in identifying fonts (typefaces) but are not definitive and may not withstand scrutiny in a court of law. Forensic Document Examiners (FDEs) and other non-FDE experts have presented on the topic of font identification and the importance of date of introduction of fonts. [1,2,3] As technologies have changed from typewriters to modern computers and printing techniques, FDEs have relied on input from verifiable sources such as manufacturers in determining document creation, development, and authenticity. Yet, a relationship gap exists between FDEs and font developers. A reliable and continued database resource establishing access to font identification and date of introduction is needed by FDEs in order to further standards on alterations[4] and authentication[5] of documents.

Key bibliographic references related to this research need include:

- [1] Naso, J. and LaPorte, G., Authenticating Documents Through Typeface Analysis. American Society of Questioned Document Examiners and Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners Joint Conference, 2022, San Antonio, TX.
- [2] Phinney, Thomas, Fonts: What Document Examiners Need to Know. American Society of Questioned Document Examiners and Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners Joint Conference, 2022, San Antonio, TX.
- [3] Hunter, G. and Mohammed, L. Font Flexin' With Aptos: Is This Next-Gen Typeface Slain' or Playin'? (K13). American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Conference, 2025, Baltimore, MD.
- [4] ANSI/ASB Standard 035 Standard for the Examination of Documents for Alterations, First Edition, 2020.
- [5] ANSI/ASB Standard 201 Standard for the Examination of Financial, Identification, and Other Authorized Documents, to be developed.

This research need has been identified by one or more subcommittees of OSAC and is being provided as an informational resource to the community.