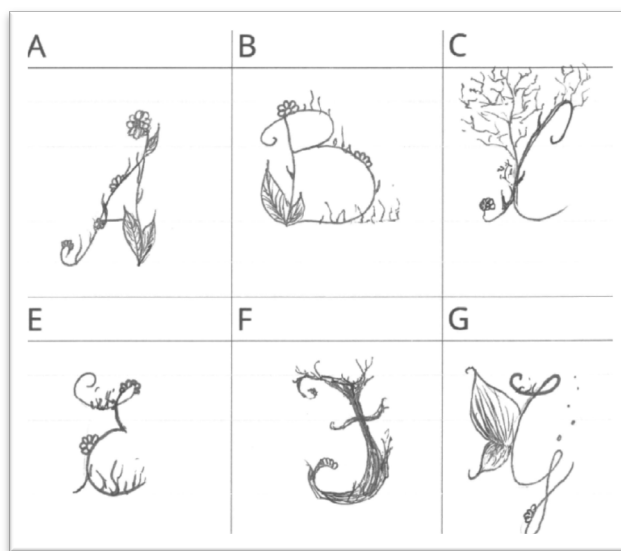


## MAKE YOUR OWN COMPUTER FONT (IT class for IX grade)

As Information Technology teacher, I had the opportunity to bring font creation activity in two different schools this year. In first school I only narrated the history of typography and fonts for one day before asking them to choose a personal style and draw by hand letters in a special grid I set up for that purpose. Indeed for that course I decided to use a very simple online software which converts handwritten letters to computer fonts, integrated with an easy tool to adjust some details and letter position.

This tool is the website [www.calligraphr.com](http://www.calligraphr.com) (previously myscriptfont.com), where you choose a set of characters and it gives you a pdf grid ready to be filled with drawn letters, numbers and symbols. Then you have to take a picture or a scanning and upload the pdf or image to your account in the website. In a minute it shows the raster fonts, which can be adjusted one by one before converting them to vector images.

Students didn't take much seriously the assignment at first, a boy completed all alphabet in only two hours. But girls diligence helps and they were really a good model for their male classmates, which noticed with a certain interest the good quality drawings. I didn't have to ask in a big way to start again, and the third and fourth day everybody was drawing conscientiously. The drawing part went on from three to five days (1 hour and half each day), and then someone were ready to scan the grids and to upload them to the website. Then the second part started, where everybody adjusted the contours and the few mistakes for each character, and placed them at the right height. No vectors here, no bezier curves and tangents, it's quite easy and learning the software is not frustrating at all. Results are quite nice and elegant for some students, less precise for others, but everybody is happy to write a motto with his own fonts.



hand drawing by Venere



fonts by Mathilde



fonts by Khalill 1

The second time I had to teach information technology in IX grade I decided to enhance the program with an in-depth analysis of the development of the typography and the fonts categories, and to train students in the use of that professional software I used in Kassel International Training Week for IX grade.

This open-source software is FontForge (<https://fontforge.github.io>), it's free and it doesn't need registration, but it has to be installed on every computer. It's really powerful, and it let you generate a complex curve with only a bunch of points, from which you control the roundness and angularity. This is a very useful occasion to introduce students to vector curves, tangents, control points, and to show them a CAD alike graphic software.



fonts by Francesco

fonts by Sarah

I found out that it's quite difficult to learn for some IX grade vivacious students. They simply cannot put their mind into that so deep to reach the acquaintance with the software needed to carry on the project. So I needed a plan B, and I asked to some of them to try a different solution to reach a similar target, that was Calligraphr website, and then to tell me differences between two softwares. That worked fine, and with calligraphr they went on working with quite perseverance, proud to be tester and make something "more" than their classmates.

With FontForge the work is much longer, and even if I made them drawing first characters by hand, there is a lot to do on computer. Anyway it's a good experience for them and sometimes they ask to exit and walk around for a while, since mental effort needed is bigger than with Calligraphr.

This activity is made in parallel with touch keyboarding, usually first 10 minutes every day. And it's concluded having them writing a motto using their own font for caps letter or full alphabet.

Students loves this activity, after a few days on it, and ask sometimes to get on with the job at home, since they wish to complete all the alphabet, which is quite time-consuming activity. Anyway I only ask to make some characters with patience and precision, since they are enough to give a special look to their motto.

Undoubtedly this is an activity which need a strong belief from the teacher, students look at it suspiciously at the beginning, and it will be easy feeling discouragement, but it will give a lot of satisfaction at the end, also after only one week of work.

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