



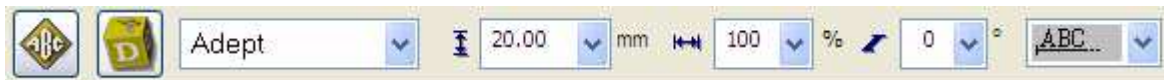
DigiTips



The Secret Free Design Factory

Yes, it's true! You have the makings of a free design factory inside your computer. With a few downloads (FREE!) you can outfit your factory to create some of the easiest designs you've ever imagined.

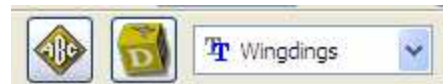
You already know the machine that will be used in our design factory. It's our old friend the Lettering Tool -



Oh, I know what you're thinking. "It's some kind of stupid joke. The free designs are just lettering. Whoopee do!" Well, yes, we're using the lettering tool, but no, there are no letters involved, at least not in the sense you're thinking. The secret lies in True Type fonts.

In the world of fonts there is a particular class called dingbats. No, I'm not referring to Edith Bunker, but if you know who Edith is you're old enough for you and I to have gone to different schools together. Dingbats are those strange little characters that we sometimes need to put in our text, like ✂ and ☺. Your Windows computer comes equipped with a set of dingbats in the **Wingdings** font. By selecting that font in the lettering tool, you can create little designs from the dingbat characters. Let's see how that works. Start by opening the **EasyDesign** program, close the opening menu, and then follow these steps:

1. In the font portion of the lettering tool, choose the Wingdings font. If the straight line option is not selected, choose it now.



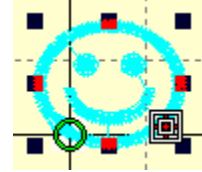
2. Click the block to open the Lettering dialog. In the empty text box type a single uppercase J. Don't





worry about the size, Width or Slant settings. Then click the OK button to close the dialog.

- Left click the mouse near the center of the hoop. You will see a familiar figure appear. OK, it's a long way from a world class design, but it was incredibly easy, wasn't it?



Now that you've seen the machine that you can use to make these free designs, you can probably guess what comes next. We need to find some better selections of dingbat fonts to choose from. A quick Google search for *free dingbat fonts* turns up over a million sites to choose from, but as is often the case with Google, our first choice is more than good enough. That turns us to the **Dingbat Depot** (<http://www.dingbatdepot.com>). As you can see from the list at right, there are a lot of categories of free dingbat fonts. Each category has a number of different fonts to choose from.

So how do we get the fonts into our computer so that Digitizer Pro can use them? Let's work through the process step by step.

- Open up your web browser and enter the address of the Dingbat Depot into the address bar.
<http://www.dingbatdepot.com>
- Look in the top left part of the browser window for the alphabetic directory, and click on the letter **J**.



- Now you can see all the font collections that begin with "J." Scroll down the list until you see the *Jewel Set*. Click on this set.



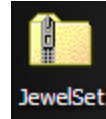
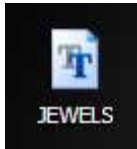
- You will now be asked whether to open or save the downloaded file. Choose the **Save** option. Save the file to your desktop. When it finishes,





close your browser. (You may want to bookmark this site first, as I expect you'll be coming back to it.)

5. Now locate the downloaded file on your desktop and double click on it to open the zip file. Inside the zip you will see a text file (Easy Jewels) which confirms that the font is indeed free. There is a graphic file (JewelSet), which is pretty, but irrelevant. The file that we really need is the font file (JEWELS). Drag this file from the open zip file to your desktop.



6. Next you need to add this font to your windows font collection. Start by opening Control Panel from the Start menu. If your computer is set to display the Control Panel in *Classic View*, simply double click the **Fonts** option.



Appearance and Themes

Otherwise click on the **Appearance and Themes** option. Then click the

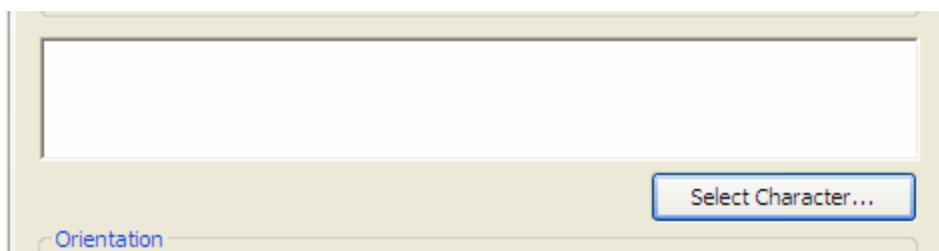
Fonts choice in the **See Also** box at the left side of the window.



7. You now have the system font window open on your screen. Installing the new Jewel font set is done by simply dragging the JEWELS font file into this window. A dialog will briefly appear showing the install process, and then the font is installed. At this point you can safely delete the file that you downloaded, as well as the file you dragged into the font folder.

If you have had Digitizer Pro open through this exercise, close it now. Digitizer will only recognize new fonts when it is first opened, so if you add new ones you'll have to open it again to have them show up in the font list.

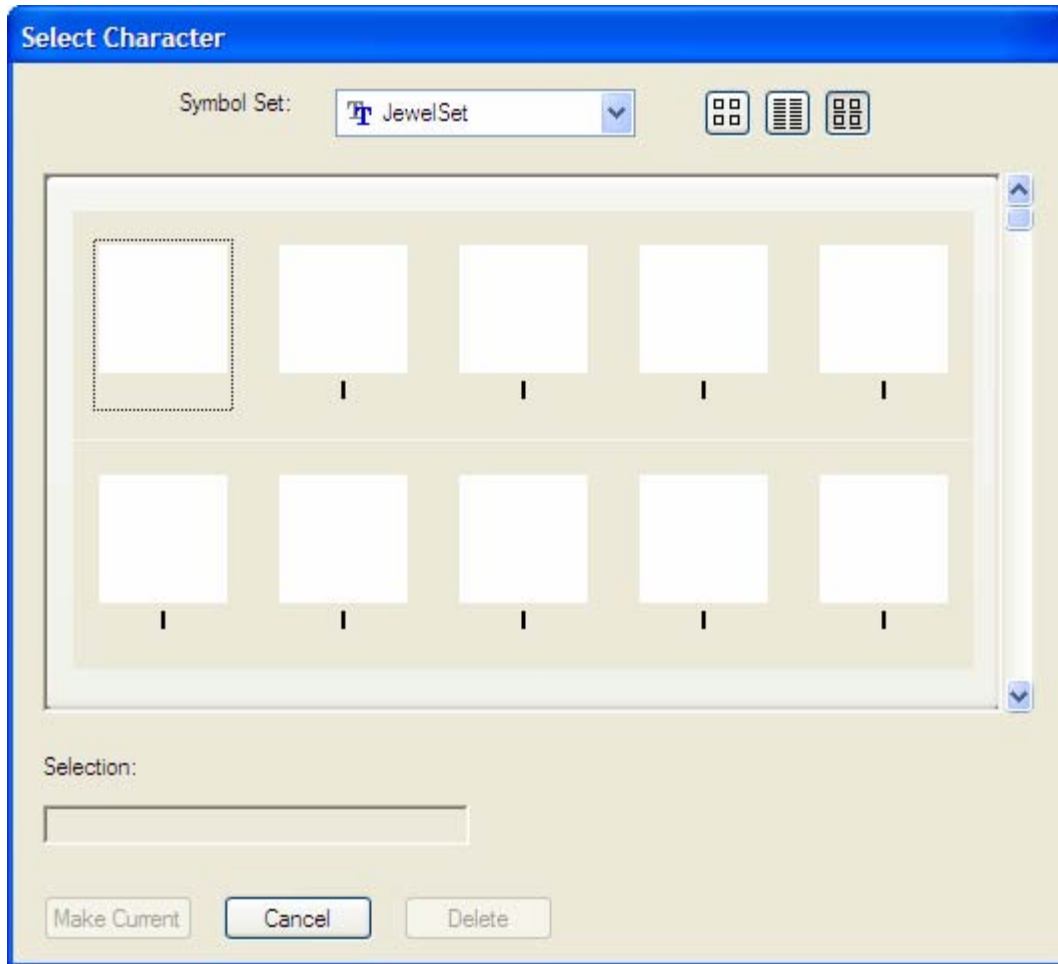
We're ready to use the font we just added. Open EasyDesign, and either choose **Freehand digitizing** or just close the opening menu choice. In the font choice menu on the Lettering toolbar, choose **JewelSet**. Then click the block to activate the tool. Almost immediately you're going to run into a problem. How do you know what letter(s) to type to get the character that you want? Notice the **Select Character** button? Maybe that will help. Let's click it!



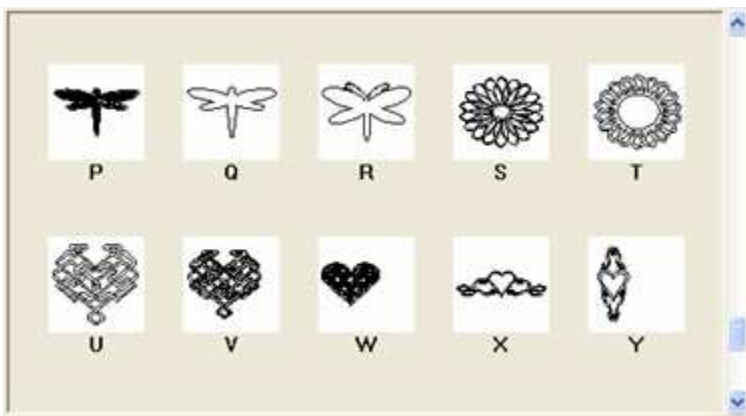
No **Select Character** button? See the **Addendum** at the end of this issue.



That seems like a reasonable idea, and it leads us to another dialog box. How-



ever all those empty boxes don't really help much. Don't give up! One of the things you'll find with a dingbat font is that not all characters are present in

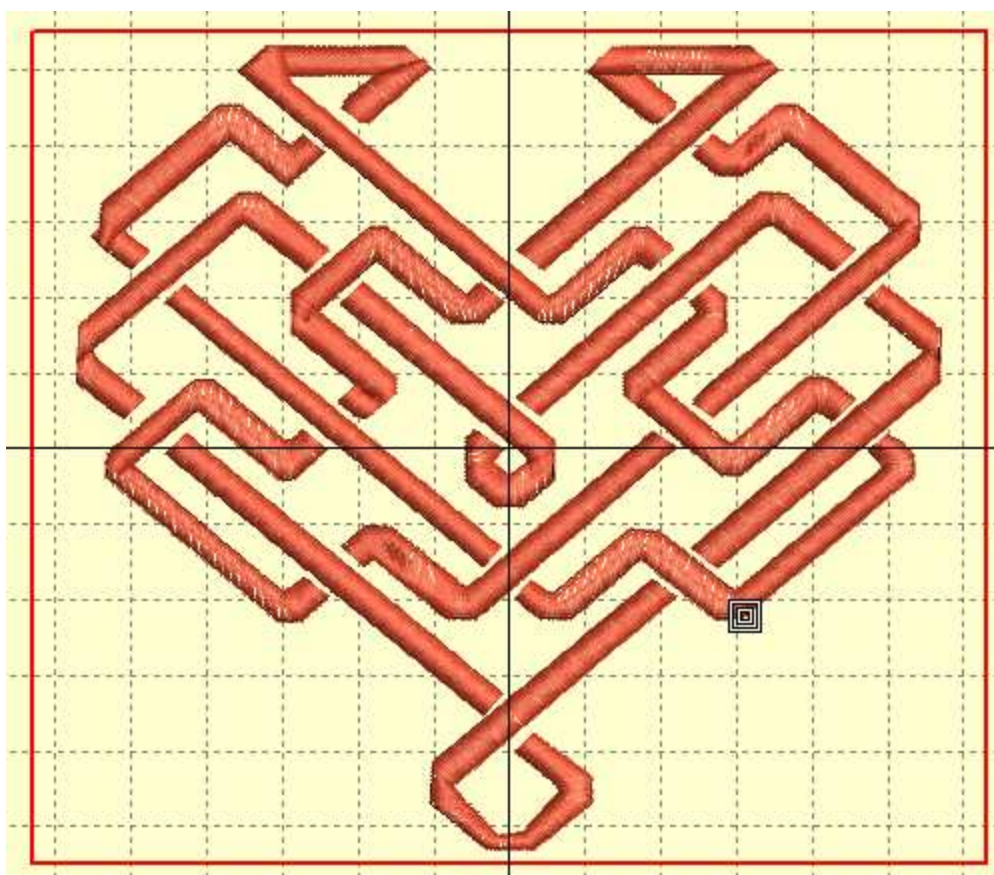


the font. Use the scroll control on the side and you will eventually find the characters that are defined for the font. In this case, we'll scroll down to the letter **U** and click it. Then click the **Make Current** button. This will copy the letter into the box in the Lettering dialog. Click OK to close the dialog



and then click the OK button to finish. Click in the bottom left corner of the hoop to create the lettering. You may find that it takes a little longer to generate than actual letters. This is OK, and does not indicate a problem.

When the dust settles, you'll find the design shown at right. No, it's not that impressive, just a little blob. But we're not finished yet. Use the mouse to grab a corner and drag that corner away from the center. Move the design as needed, and repeat this until your design pretty well fills the hoop. Now look what you have!

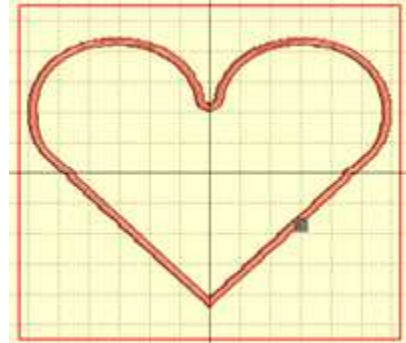
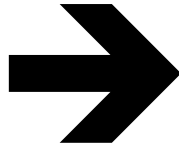


Can you believe this beautiful, intricate design came from a simple font? That's the magic of True Type fonts. They are actually little programs that tell the computer how to "draw" the letter, but in our case the program tells Digitizer Pro how to make a design from the letter.

There are a few minor limitations to this system. Not all characters will work, and some of these free fonts are incomplete. You may be wondering why



we didn't choose the heart character representing the letter **W**. It looks really nice, but when Digitizer Pro processes it, the results are surprising:



What happened here? I don't know. Perhaps the character was too intricate, or maybe the font file itself was flawed. In any case, this is one of those that just didn't work out.

Another thing you'll notice about these free designs is that they are always in just one color. That, of course, is something you can fix in version 2, by adding a color split. (See *Color Changes on Demand* in volume 5, issue 11.)

Now that you know the basic, and where to get your free dingbat fonts, you're ready to try some on your own. Here's one that I did using the letter **D** in the *Baby's Breath Easter* font. As a character, it looks like this:



As a design, it looks like this:





Wrapping Up

This marks the 44th issue of DigiTips since it started in 2002. Each year it gets a little harder to balance what beginners need with what experienced digitizers want. I also find my self considering topics, only to go back and see that I've already covered them before. Since some of you may be just getting started with Digitizer Pro, a return trip to some of the earlier topics might be in order. What do you think? Please let me know what you'd like to see covered in future issues. Send your emails to jim@sewingroom.com.

Trouble in River City

Although the 2.0C upgrade fixed some bugs in Digitizer Pro, a very annoying one continues to lurk. Coincidentally it's in the Lettering Tool. When you put in a string of lettering, there are no locking stitches between the letters. That means if you cut the stitches between letters, there is a good chance that they will unravel. You do get locking stitches at the end of each word, just not between the letters in the word.

There is a work-around for this problem. Press the **HOME** key to go to the beginning of your design. Click the **STOP** button to turn off all tools. Then use the arrow keys to step through the lettering, stopping at the first point where you need a locking stitch. The **DOWN** arrow will travel 10 stitches at a time, while the **RIGHT** arrow travels just 1 stitch. Once you have found the point where you need a lock stitch, click the Run Line tool. Click on the stitch cursor, popularly called the "maze box" and then press **ENTER**. This will insert a locking stitch at that point. Don't forget to set the color to match when you choose the tool, so you don't also insert a color stop.

Windows Vista

If you are contemplating upgrading your computer to Vista, I would suggest that you wait for Service Pack 1, due in the fall of 2007. But if you buy a new computer, you likely will have no choice. To make Digitizer work with Vista, you will need a new dongle driver. To get it, go to this page:

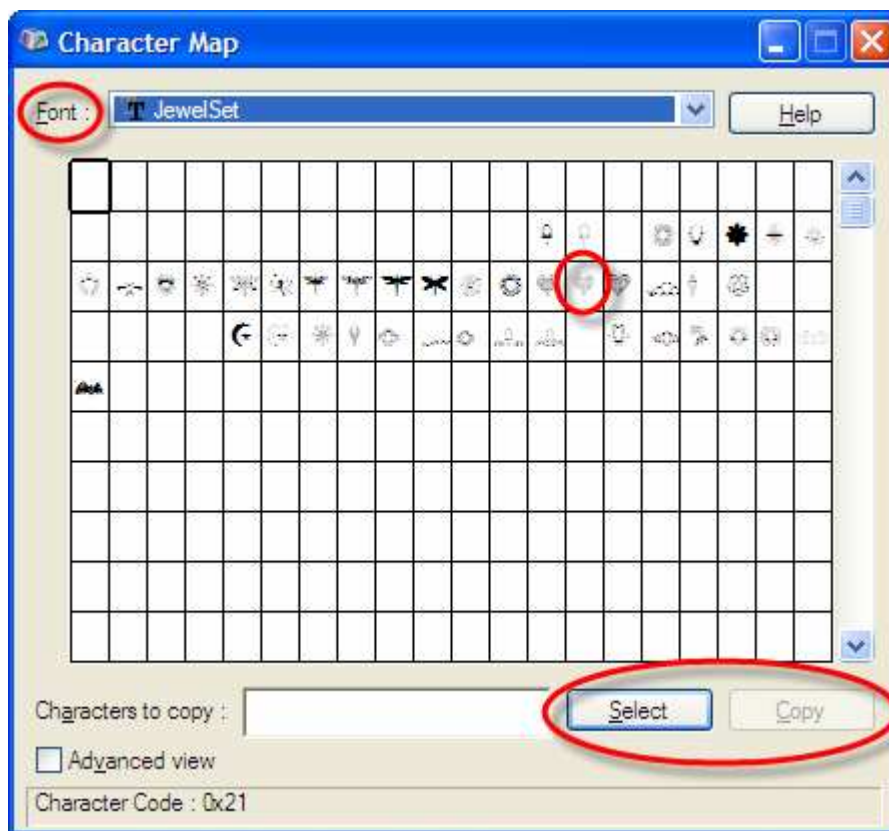
<http://www.mc11000.net/faq.asp?show=23>



Addendum

After publishing this issue, we received word from some subscribers that they did not have the *Select Character* button referenced at the bottom of page 3. This feature was added in Digitizer Pro version 2.0, which is a free upgrade, available through Janome dealers. If you have been unable to get the upgrade, here is a work-around for the lack of the button.

1. Click **Start -> All Programs -> System Tools -> Character Map**. This will open the following dialog:



2. Click on the character you want, then click the *Select* and *Copy* buttons to copy it to the clipboard.
3. Go back to the lettering box in Digitizer Pro, and type **CTRL-V** to paste in the character that you have selected.