

## Visual Chartform (VCF) Notes

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As far as I know, most of these points are not covered in the TMG Users Guide, nor in Getting the Most Out of The Master Genealogist (GTMOOTMG).

### Controlling Which Spouses or Parents Appear on Descendant Charts

The information in this section applies to Descendant charts with *Chart Options > Chart Style > Orientation* set to “Top to bottom”, and *Chart Options > Lines > Descendant Connections* set to “UK style”. In this style, couples appear side by side joined by a double line.

This information also applies to spouses of descendants in the Hourglass Chart with *Chart Style > Orientation of Ancestors* set to “Top”.

Primary events are normally marked with a “ \* “ on the event tag. For marriage tags, you can mark any number of marriages (0, 1, 2, etc) as primary.

The number of spouses of a given descendant which show on a chart depends on two factors, as illustrated in the Table:

Factors Controlling Spouses on Charts			
Case #	Marriage marked as primary?	Couple have known children?	Spouse shows on chart?
1	yes	yes	yes
2	yes	no	yes
3	no	yes	yes
4	no	no	no

The table shows that the only time a spouse of a descendant is not shown on a chart is when the marriage is not marked as primary and the couple have no known children (case 4).

[Terry Reigel also discussed “several ways to omit people who would otherwise appear in any ancestry report or chart in TMG” (Wholly Genes Community Forum post, 3 Jan 2005). His discussion of non-primary marriages didn’t make the distinction between cases 3 and 4 above. He also suggests using surety levels as a filter, but some of us don’t have enough of these set to any value, and filtering by surety level might prevent some birth and death events from appearing in the boxes. Terry’s list comes from pp. 117 - 118 of GTMOOTMG. ]

### Controlling Where the Second Spouse Appears on the Chart

When you show two spouses of one descendant on a chart, the default is for the first spouse to appear on the left, and the second on the right. However, when you are producing a chart to be joined to another chart, you may wish to locate the second spouse on the left. This is done by changing one of the two marriage sort dates so that the

second marriage has the earlier sort date. Descendant charts will now show the second spouse on the left, since it is earliest by sort date, and events in the Person List are always ordered by sort date, regardless of true date. (see “Chronological Sort” in the TMG help file). To better display what is happening, you can choose to list tags in order of Sort date instead of Date, by unchecking “Show date instead of sort date” in *File> Preferences> Program Options> Tag Box*.

### **Effect of the Number of Known Parents**

The number of “known” parents (parents recorded as parents in the project) affects what is printed on the chart. These could include biological, step, foster, or adopting parents of either sex. A child with only one known parent will be shown as the child of the known parent and an “Unknown person” in a second box, with the two parents joined by the double line.

If a child has two known parents in the project, both parents show on the descendant chart, whether they are married or not. In other words, the double line really means one of two things: they were a married couple (with or without children); or, they had children together (whether they were married or not).

Three or more known parents might be recorded in the project. The most common case in my family is where a person has three parents: one “Mother-Bio”, one “Father-Bio”, and one “Father-Ado” (Adopting). In this case, the only father showing on the charts is the father marked as primary (with the \*). Thus, when there is an adopting father, you can choose to show the adopting father instead of the biological father, if you wish.

### **Miscellaneous Comments about VCF**

- (1) When moving boxes or extending lines, holding down the shift key forces the box or line to move precisely horizontally or vertically (see “Moving Components” in the VCF help file).
- (2) To avoid messed up lines when several boxes are moved, select and then group everything you want to move before moving.
- (3) In VCF there are 37 standard and 69 fancy frames, with the latter requiring 24 MB of storage. To make all the frames available, you need to specifically select “fancy frames” in the Select Components window of the TMG setup process. The setup process can be re-run just to add the fancy frames.
- (4) One new feature of VCF that I would find useful would be the ability to independently set each of the four chart margins to any specified size.

## Recommendations on File Formats and Printing for Visual ChartForm

Visual ChartForm (VCF) is a very powerful illustration program. The ability to join several charts together is an extremely useful feature. In this way, you can make virtually any chart you want, subject only to practical limits on the amount of work involved and the size of the charts.

### File Formats

VCF charts can be created in five different file formats. The five formats, and their important characteristics, are compared in the Table. VC2 is the native format of VCF charts, and files in the other four formats are generated from within VCF as shown in the second column.

Characteristics of Different File Formats					
File Format	How created or printed	Big chart file size (MB)	Image quality		Notes
			Big chart	Small chart	
VC2	<i>save as ... or print from VCF</i>	135	excellent	excellent	Wholly Genes can print this
PDF	<i>print to virtual printer</i>	3.0	excellent	excellent	preferred by commercial printers
JPG	<i>export to</i>	2.7	poor	photos & text grainy	
BMP	<i>export to</i>	28	poor	photos & text grainy	
EMF	<i>export to</i>	135	onscreen terrible, printed poor	excellent	aspect ratio of photos altered

The “virtual printer” used in “printing” the PDF format to a file refers to a pdf creator program discussed in detail later. The export to JPG provided two adjustable parameters:  $1 < \text{Quality} < 100$ , and  $0 < \text{Smoothing} < 65,000$ . The “best quality” JPG was selected by setting Quality = 100 and Smoothing = 0. Other JPG settings produce smaller file sizes at the expense of quality. The export to both the BMP and EMF formats provided no adjustable parameters.

The “Big” chart used in the evaluation measures 16” x 66”, contains 74 individuals in boxes (60 of them with colour head-and-shoulder images) and eight large colour images added to the chart as decorations. The “Small” chart is a single 8.5” x 11” page containing 14 individuals in boxes, 13 of them with head-and-shoulder images. The file size for the big chart ranges from 2.7 MB for the JPG format to 135 MB for both the VC2 and EMF formats.

The image quality of the charts was examined for all twenty possible combinations of parameters: two chart sizes, five file formats, and both presentation media (onscreen or printed). Chart quality was normally found to be the same for the onscreen image and the printed image; the only exception was the EMF files for the Big chart. Note that the image quality of the three exported file formats (JPG, BMP, and EMF) was found to depend on the chart size. The reason for this is not known.

Other relevant information is included in the Notes column of the table. Wholly Genes' ChartForm Delivery service can print from both VC2 and PDF, but they prefer the VC2 format. Large-format commercial printers prefer to work with the PDF format when they have a choice. Finally, I found that the EMF format changed the aspect ratio (height-to-width ratio) of the individual photos inside the boxes, as well as the aspect ratio of the boxes themselves. For one representative photo, the measured aspect ratio was 1.21 for the printed EMF image, compared to 1.30 for the original photo and the printed versions of the other four formats. The faces in the printed EMF chart looked slightly compressed vertically, and not quite natural.

### **Printing Charts**

It is obvious from the table that the only two chart formats worth using are the VC2 and the PDF formats – the other three fail in image quality and/or aspect ratio. The VC2 format is the best format to print from as long as you are printing onto small pages accepted by your home color printer. You can also print economical large charts at home from VCF as long as you don't mind taping a number of small pages together – you can show cut marks on these small charts. For printing large charts on a single large sheet of paper, you can either use the Wholly Genes' Chartform Delivery Service, accessed through TMG/Report/Chart printing service, or you can “print” to a PDF file using a virtual PDF printer, and take that file to a local commercial printer. If your local printer works with the newer Cyan Magenta Yellow black (CMYK) colour mode, instead of the older Red Green Blue (RGB) colour mode, you will need a PDF conversion program that handles the CMYK colour mode.

I know of three options for performing the PDF conversion: buy the Adobe Acrobat software (too expensive); use the free online conversion process at the Adobe web site (nearly impossible to find); and convert using the PDFCreator program (the recommended option because it works well, has no advertising, and supports the CMYK colour mode).

The process of producing a chart from PDFCreator has four steps: download and install PDFCreator; set the page size and virtual printer in VCF; print a pdf file using the color mode; and take the file to your local printer for printing. The first three steps will now be described in more detail.

First, find and load the latest version of PDFCreator from <http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/>. As of May 2008, this is version 0.9.5. Download and install it.

Secondly, view the current paper size by choosing View / Page Bounds. The goal is to set the paper size large enough that the whole chart is on one huge page, in which case no page bound lines will be visible. In VCF, select File / Page Setup / Printer, and set Printer Name to PDFCreator, and select printer Properties / Layout, and select Portrait or Landscape orientation. Click Advanced to get the PDFCreator Advanced Options window. Set Paper Size to Postscript Custom Page Size and enter the width and height (any number up to 200 x 200 inches). Two hundred inches is 16.7 feet. Paper Feed Direction seems to work equally well with either Short or Long edge first. Click OK to

get back to Advanced Options, and set whatever you want for the other options. I use Print Quality 600 dpi and leave all other features at the default values. This is also the best place to re-size the drawing for printing: set Scaling to 100% or any other size you want. Click OK four times in succession and you are back to the main VCF program. Note that now no page bound lines are visible – the new size has taken effect.

Next, print the pdf file. Under File / Print you will see the Printer Name is PDFCreator and the only print range showing is “All”. This confirms that your chart will be “all” on one large page.

Press “OK” and wait for the processing to halt at the PDFCreator screen. (This takes about 3 minutes for my 136 MB VCF chart on my computer). Under Options / Program / General Settings, set “Associate PDFCreator with postscript files”. Under Program / Save, give the PDF file a name. Under Options / Formats / PDF / General Tab, set Compatibility to the latest Acrobat version you have. Under the Colors Tab, select Color Options = “Use Color Model Device CMYK” (or RGB, as desired), Press Save to finish all the PDFCreator settings.

Back at PDFCreator 0.9.5, Save, enter a file name, and Save. This process takes about 1 minute on my computer with the same file.

## **Conclusions**

The **recommendation** is to print small charts directly from VCF on your home colour printer (if you have one), and to send large charts for printing to either Wholly Genes (in the VCF format ) or to a local commercial printer (in the PDF format).

You can get good ideas for designing your charts by looking at the examples on the Wholly Genes web site under “sample reports”.

It is easier to resize a chart for printing using PDFCreator, not the TMG resize command.