

Review: Agfa Type CD-ROM 2.1

Bruce Long

If you like to use a lot of fonts and have access to a CD-ROM drive, the Agfa Type CD-ROM is a nice product you might consider. As is the case with other font CDs, the fonts are all “locked”, except for the freebies which come with the CD; if you want additional fonts you must call a toll-free number (and pay more) to get the special code which will unlock them. So the freebies are the main attraction, and Agfa’s freebies are more attractive than the other font CDs I have seen advertised.

The unlocked fonts you get with the Agfa CD are 20 “headline” fonts, Type 1 (ATM-compatible) fonts which are designed to be used at large sizes. For samples of the 20 fonts, see the Agfa ad on page 43 of the September 1991 *MacUser*. A few of the fonts don’t look particularly good on a 300 dpi laser printer (Behemoth Condensed, Section Bold and Westervelt, for example) but most of them are quite nice and if you use headline fonts for flyers or newsletters these 20 give you a nice variety at a very reasonable cost.

Because they are headline fonts they do not have the complete character sets found in standard laser fonts—many of the option- and option-shift-characters are different from the standard ones. But these headline font variations are actually better and much more likely to be useful than some of the obscure characters in standard sets; most of these headline fonts include characters for large dots, check boxes (plain and with an “x” in the middle), stars, arrows and checkmarks.

In addition to the 20 headline fonts, purchase of the Agfa CD entitles you to one “Pi and Symbols” font of your choice, from Agfa’s exclusive collection of 126 such fonts. This wide variety includes symbol fonts for Astrology, Animals, Borders (several nice ones), Business, Communications, Games, Holidays, Company Logos, Math & Technical, Medical, Military, Musical, Religious, Seals, and Transportation. For my selection I picked the Holidays font, which contain symbols for Christmas, Halloween, and other holidays.

Of course the CD comes with a printed catalog which gives examples of the other 1500+ fonts available on the CD: the complete Adobe and Agfa type libraries. Most of these are rather expensive—the freebies that come with the CD are listed in the catalog as costing a total of \$830. But a few “special offers” come with the CD, and I assume that after sending in my registration I will be advised from time to time of other font specials.

All of the Adobe screen fonts are unlocked on the CD, so you can examine (and use) the Adobe screen fonts to your heart’s content.

Also on the CD are demo versions of various font utilities: Metamorphosis, TypeStyler, LetraStudio and The Art Importer.

The Agfa Type CD-ROM retails for \$99, but you shouldn’t pay that much since it is available from mail-order discount houses for much less; I bought mine at The Mac Zone for \$61. At that price, the cost is just \$3 for each of the 21 Agfa fonts. It’s a very good deal, if you like fonts and have access to a CD-ROM drive—but I wouldn’t recommend buying a drive just for this CD.