
Reviews

Adobe Acrobat CD Sampler. Adobe Systems Incorporated. 1994.

Although it has been available since late 1994, the Adobe Acrobat CD Sampler remains a valuable tool for getting acquainted with the variety of documents that you might consider publishing electronically. In addition, this compact disk provides hands-on experience that can help you make decisions about the types of publications that are most appropriate for Adobe's Acrobat software.

Acrobat already is making its mark with agricultural communicators. Colorado State has produced five compact disks containing Acrobat-based publications. Many states have put Acrobat versions of their publications on the World Wide Web (WWW). And Oregon State University is using Acrobat in a pilot test of print-on-demand publication distribution in county Extension offices and public libraries.

The Adobe Acrobat CD Sampler contains a wide range of publications, from literary works and technical information to reference materials. Included are the King James Bible, the complete works of Shakespeare, articles from WIRED magazine, a couple of issues of the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, an issue of the German weekly news magazine *FOCUS*, and an informal dictionary of computer terms that's both entertaining and informative.

A couple of unusual publications deserve special mention because they showcase interactive features of the software. The Locator Guide to San Francisco Airport features airport diagrams that you can explore to find shops, services, and airlines. The Maps in Minutes World Map lets you locate countries, lakes, major cities, and more, and zoom in up to 800 percent on them. It's fun to play with until the novelty wears off.

The 748-page Imagery Standards Database, an exhaustive collection of imagery standards for the Association for Information and Image Management, demonstrates how an electronic publication could replace a paper version of such

a ponderous tome and save considerable printing, warehousing, and distribution costs.

It is just such considerations that make the Acrobat CD useful. For instance, the Acrobat versions of newspapers and magazines faithfully capture their print layouts. Unfortunately, this often makes reading the computer screen difficult despite software features that help you navigate through the document. (The *New York Times* must feel the same way. Its first WWW product, Timesfax, uses the Acrobat software. The Times now has a non-Acrobat Web edition that contains more articles and presents more interactive options for the reader.)

On the other hand, I gained an appreciation for Acrobat's potential for archiving and reference purposes in addition to print-on-demand. The Adobe Acrobat CD Sampler also made me realize that although the Acrobat software can make a faithful electronic copy of a paper publication, its real potential may be in the computer-related embellishments it can add.

Until software such as Acrobat came along, the main obstacles to electronic publishing were hardware incompatibility (for example, DOS versus Macintosh) and software incompatibility—you couldn't read my PageMaker 5 document with your Pagemaker 4 software. Acrobat solves these problems, allowing DOS, Mac, Unix and Windows users to open any Acrobat document.

From a publisher's perspective, the beauty of Acrobat is that it converts documents into an electronic version that retains text, graphics, and page layout in a format that faithfully preserves your original design. It's the ultimate what-you-see-is-what-you-get. Moreover, Acrobat has a security option that prevents anyone else from altering a publication, a major concern of many authors and publishers.

The Adobe Acrobat CD Sampler is available free with all Acrobat products or directly from Adobe for a shipping and handling charge (call 1-800-87-ADOBE).

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