Mostly-free OCR B

This font is used in UPC bar code symbols, including the ISBN symbols on

most published books.

A freely distributable version seems to be sorely needed. Until now, it's

been very difficult to find the font in computer-usable format except by

paying a high fee to a commercial font vendor. Even many serious commercial

publishers have so much trouble getting it right that they just go ahead and

use Helvetica instead, or even (shudder) Arial. Since the OCR B font is

required by an international standard, it seems like it ought to be free.

So here it is. The font in this package is not a "ripped", pirated, or

shadily reverse engineered version; every effort has been made to ensure

that it genuinely derives from free sources and all the creators involved

have actually intended it for free public use.

Converted by Matthew Skala from Metafont format to Postscript and TrueType

formats, July 28, 2006, using mftrace 1.2.4 by Paul Vojta, which is

available from

http://www.xs4all.nl/~hanwen/mftrace/

and Autotrace 0.31.1 available from

http://autotrace.sourceforge.net/

The Metafont files (not included - see notes below) were coded by Norbert

Schwarz in the 1980s, based on German standards documents. He has attached

a notice, notably not actually claiming any copyright - see the file

"ocrbinfo" - saying that the fonts are "given to free non commercial use",

but commenting that he is only free to grant rights to his own work on the

digitization, because he did not design the original letter forms. He

suggests that there may be other copyright claims attached to the letter

forms themselves, which Schwarz credits as being originally designed by

"Adam Frutiger" [sic], almost certainly a mistake for Adrian Frutiger. My

(Matthew Skala's) understanding of copyright law, at least in the USA and

Canada, is that in fact typefaces per se cannot be subject to copyright

claims, so the software embodiment is the only thing subject to copyright

and Schwarz's release makes it available for whatever "non commercial use"

means.

To avoid muddying the waters further, any copyright claims by Matthew Skala

on these files are hereby released to the public domain. I'd like for these

fonts to be freely usable even in marginally commercial applications, such

as to generate UPC labels for books that will be sold for profit, but it may

not be within my power to grant that myself because I didn't write the

Metafont files although I did do considerable, and probably copyrightable,

work on the translation to Postscript and TrueType. It was \*not\* a purely

automated process; try using the tools I used and see how far you get

without human editing! I'd also like for these fonts (the fonts themselves

as opposed to documents made with them) not to be sold, not even indirectly

by those Web sites that advertise "free downloads" but make it difficult to

actually download fonts without paying a fee.

NOTE: This ZIP archive is a stripped-down version containing just the

essential files for using the main OCR B font on most systems. If you want

the much larger complete package, which contains Metafont sources and several

variant fonts (reverse-video, outline, and slanted), look for a ZIP archive

called ocrb-complete.zip wherever you found this one.

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