

Accessible PDF Files

Create a Web Page or PDF?

Generally we recommend creating a web page instead of a document (i.e., PDF). Some reasons for this include: PDF files are usually larger than a simple HTML page; web pages provide easier navigation from one page to another; PDFs don't work on all platforms, i.e., iPads; and PDFs are less accessible for those with physical disabilities.

However, there are a few instances when linking to a PDF could be the better choice.

- When you require users to sign a form.
- Documents that always need to be printed.
- Documents that cannot be altered. PDF files can be 'locked' down so no changes can be made to them.
- Long documents.

Think of PDF files as an alternative to Web pages. Use them mainly for pages that people need to print.

PDF files are preferable to Word documents. Two reasons **not** to link to Word files on the web:

- Even though it is the most popular word processing program, not everyone has it.
- Word files can transmit viruses.

Reasons to use PDFs on the Web

- Not everyone has Word
- The doc must be printed
- The doc is very long

What are PDF Files?

- PDF is a format or type of document. It stands for Portable Document Format. The PDF format was created by Adobe.
- Adobe is a company. They are the creators of Acrobat.
- Acrobat Professional (cost about \$80 from UBMicro) is a tool for creating, editing and viewing PDF files.
- Acrobat Reader is free

Most PDF files are created using a variety of software. Then the files are saved as PDFs. But some software doesn't produce 'tagged' PDF files. Tagged files are an essential component for accessible PDF files.

If you are using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, or Adobe tools such as InDesign, you can often create accessible, tagged PDF files without opening Acrobat. Just use styles and alternative text for images.

The accessibility of the PDF depends on the accessibility of the original document.

Create an Accessible PDF from Word

To make an accessible PDF from Word, the document must: 1. be structured, 2. have alternative text for images and 3. include tags in the PDF.

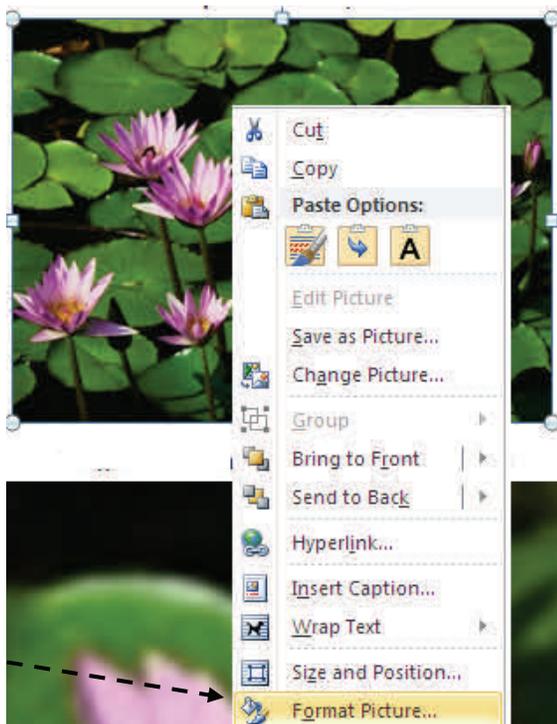
1. Structured Word Files

To make the Word file structured, use styles. For example, when creating a heading, instead of using bold and enlarging the font, use a style called Heading 1 or Heading 2.

- In Word 2011 (Win), styles are available from the drop-down styles list.
- Styles in Word 2011 on a Mac are in the Home tab.

2. Alternative Text for Images

1. In **Word 2010 (Windows)**, right-click on the image, then select *Format Picture*. Choose *alt text* and type in a description of the image. Click *close*.
2. In **Word 2011 (Mac)**, select the image, choose format picture from the top menu; click format button, choose alt Text (on the right). Then type in a description of the image. Click OK.



Adding alternative Text for an image in Word 2011 on a Windows PC

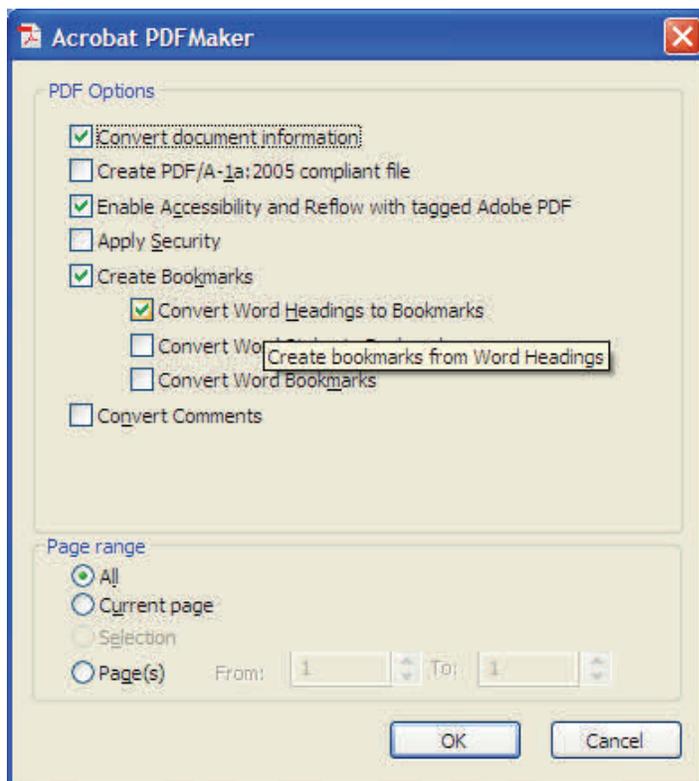
3. Creating the PDF File With Tags

In order for the resulting PDF to be accessible, tags must be included. Here's how to do that on a Windows PC.

1. Save the Word 2010 file
2. Choose File > Save as PDF
3. In the popup window choose the *options* button on the bottom right
4. Choose the following:
5. Convert doc info
Enable Accessibility...tagged Adobe PDF
6. Create bookmarks > convert Word Headings
7. Click OK > Name the file and choose the location, then save.

On a Mac:

1. Save the Word 2011 file
2. Choose File > Save as
3. In the next window choose the format: PDF
4. Name the file, choose the location, then save.



PDF options for Windows

Other Resources

WebAIM's article on [PDFs from Microsoft Word](#) (contains screen snapshots).
Microsoft's [Accessibility Training Overview \(Audio File\)](#)
Adobe's [Accessibility Training Resources](#)