

Making Accessible PDFs *From Microsoft Word Documents*

I. Introduction

ADA-Compliant PDFs allow screen-readers to properly communicate information to users with disabilities.

II. Procedure

Step 1: Adding Alt Text to Images

The first step in creating ADA-compliant PDFs is to make sure that all of your images have alternative text. To add an alternative text to an image, follow the instructions below:

1. Double-click the image.
2. When the Format Picture dialog box appears, select the Web tab (see Figure 1. Format Picture Dialog Box).

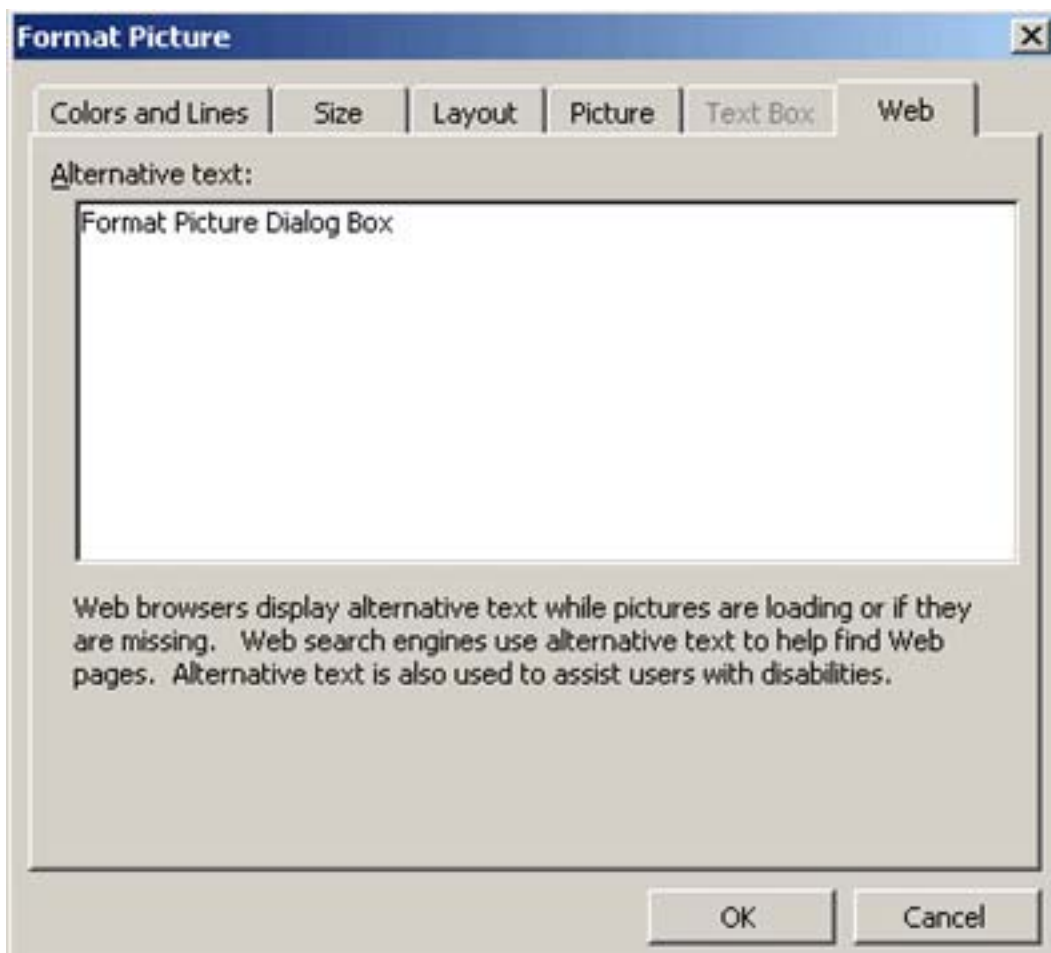


Figure 1. Format Picture Dialog Box

3. Type in the alternative text for the screen reader in the Alternative text: box
4. Click the OK button.

Note: If you wish to have images left- or right-aligned with text wrapping near the image, you must put the image into an invisible table. A screen reader will not recognize alternative text on images that have been aligned using the text-wrap formatting.

Step 2: PDF Conversion Settings

The next step in creating ADA-compliant PDFs is to make sure that your PDF conversion settings are properly set. From the Adobe PDF menu, at the top of Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint, select Change Conversion Settings and make sure that you have the following configuration for each tab in the dialog box (see Figure 2. PDF Conversion Settings).



Figure 2. PDF Conversion Settings

1. In this tab area, make certain that there is a checkmark next to Enable text access for screen reader devices for the visually impaired. If this option is not already enabled, click on the checkmark under Permissions that says Use a password to restrict printing and editing of the document and its security settings (see Figure 3. Permissions). This will allow you to turn on the Enable text access for screen reader option. If you don't want to set a password to restrict printing, just uncheck this box under Permissions after you have made your screen reader enabled option change.

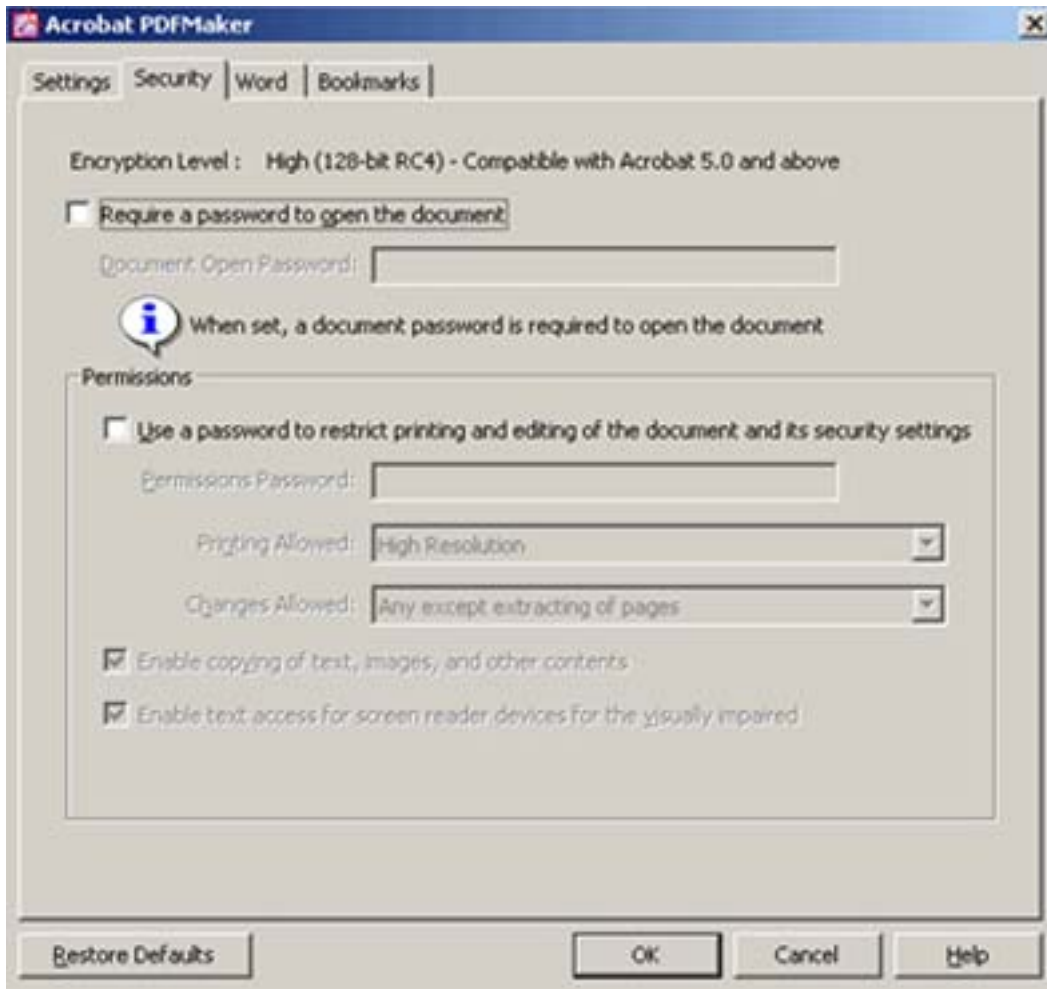


Figure 3. Permissions

2. After you have checked all the conversion settings in the Acrobat PDFMaker dialog box (see Figure 4. Word Settings and Figure 5. Bookmarks Settings) click the OK button to close the dialog box and save your settings.

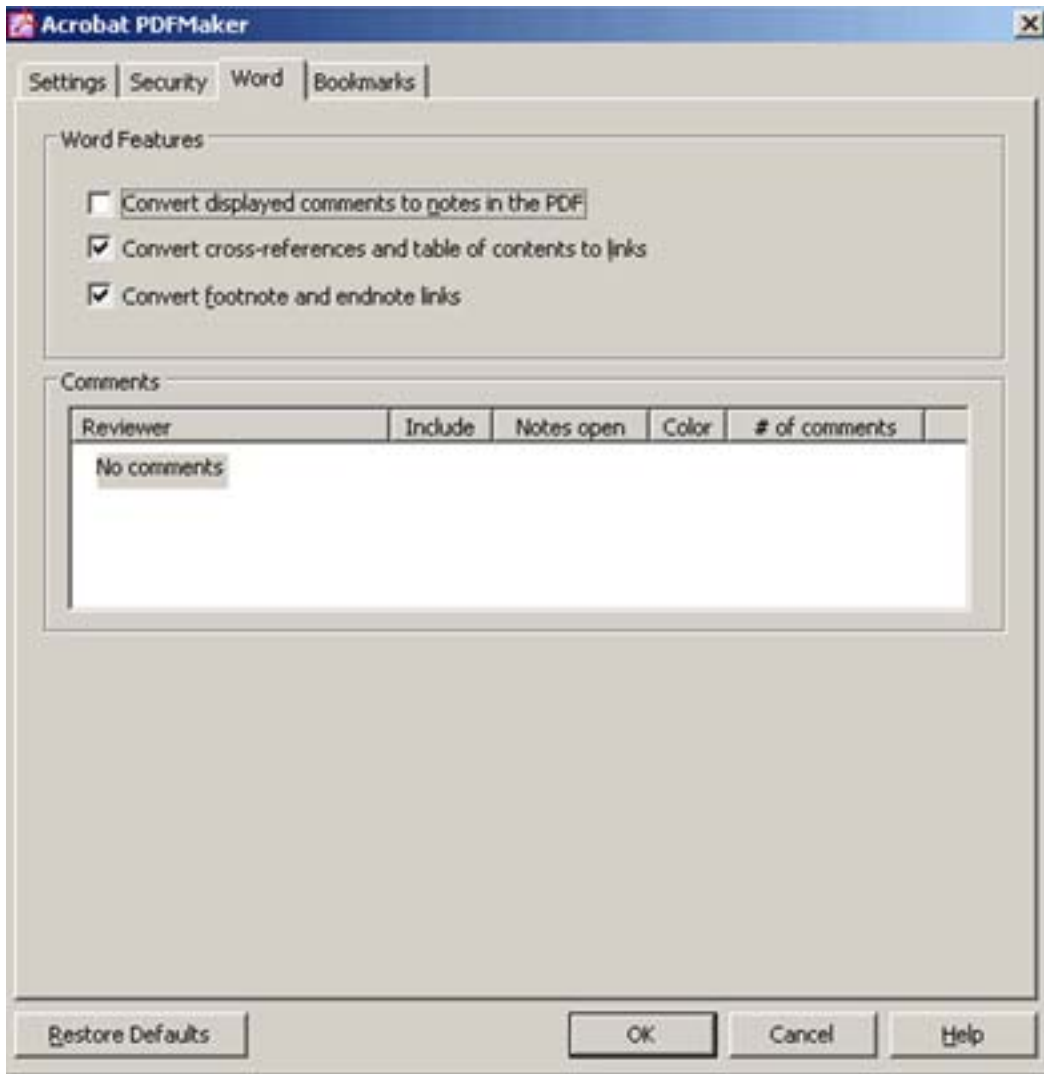


Figure 4. Word Settings

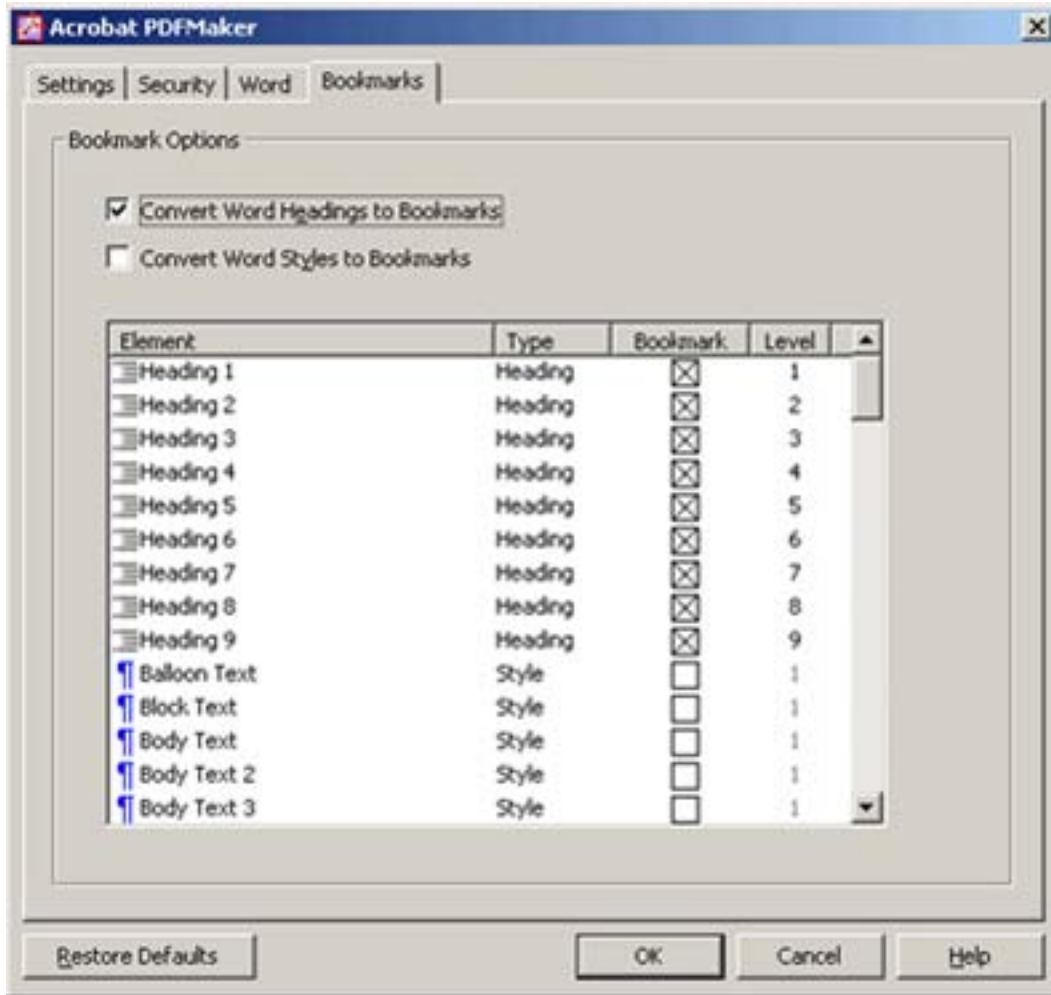


Figure 5. Bookmarks Settings

Step 3: Convert to PDF

1. After you have reviewed the conversion settings, select Adobe PDF > Convert to Adobe PDF. The Acrobat PDF Maker will prompt you to save the document. Click Yes.
2. When the Save Adobe PDF File As dialog box appears, type a filename with all lowercase letters and the .pdf extension. If you wish to have a space in your filename, use an underscore instead. The use of the underscore in lieu of a space is essential if you wish to place the files on the web or in Blackboard. Click Save to continue (see Figure 6. Save Adobe).

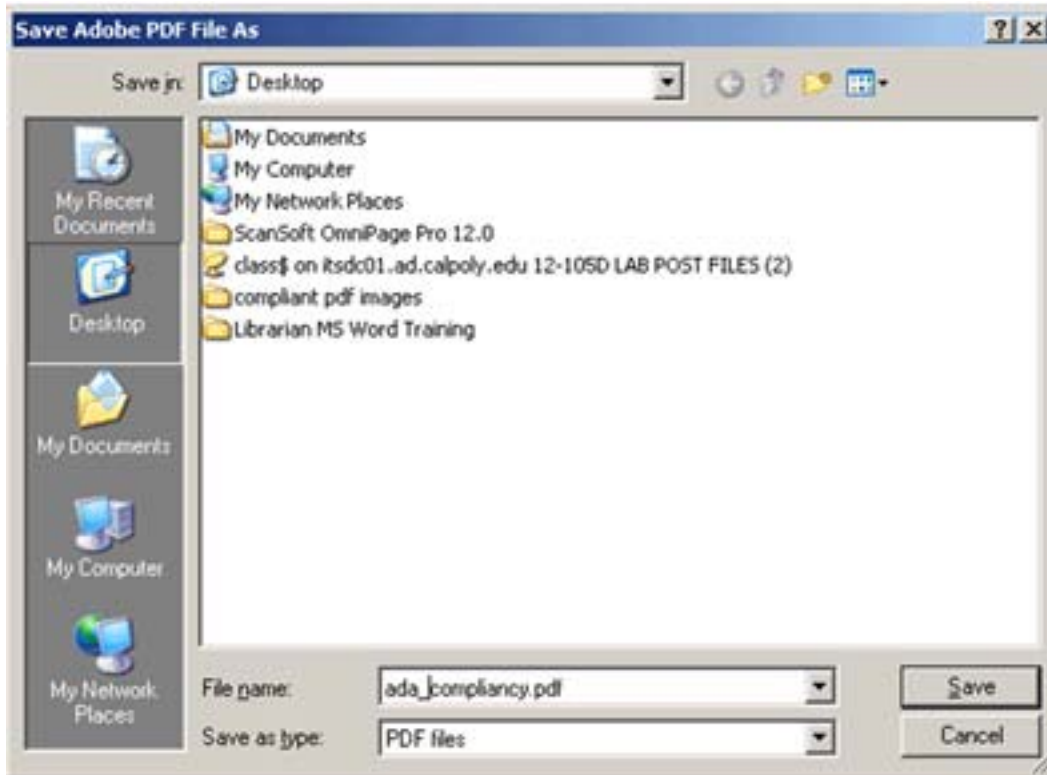


Figure 6. Save Adobe

Step 4: Document Properties

Now when you open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat Professional, there a few more tasks you need to complete.

1. With the generated PDF file open in Adobe Acrobat Professional 7.0, select File > Document Properties (see Figure 7. Document Properties).

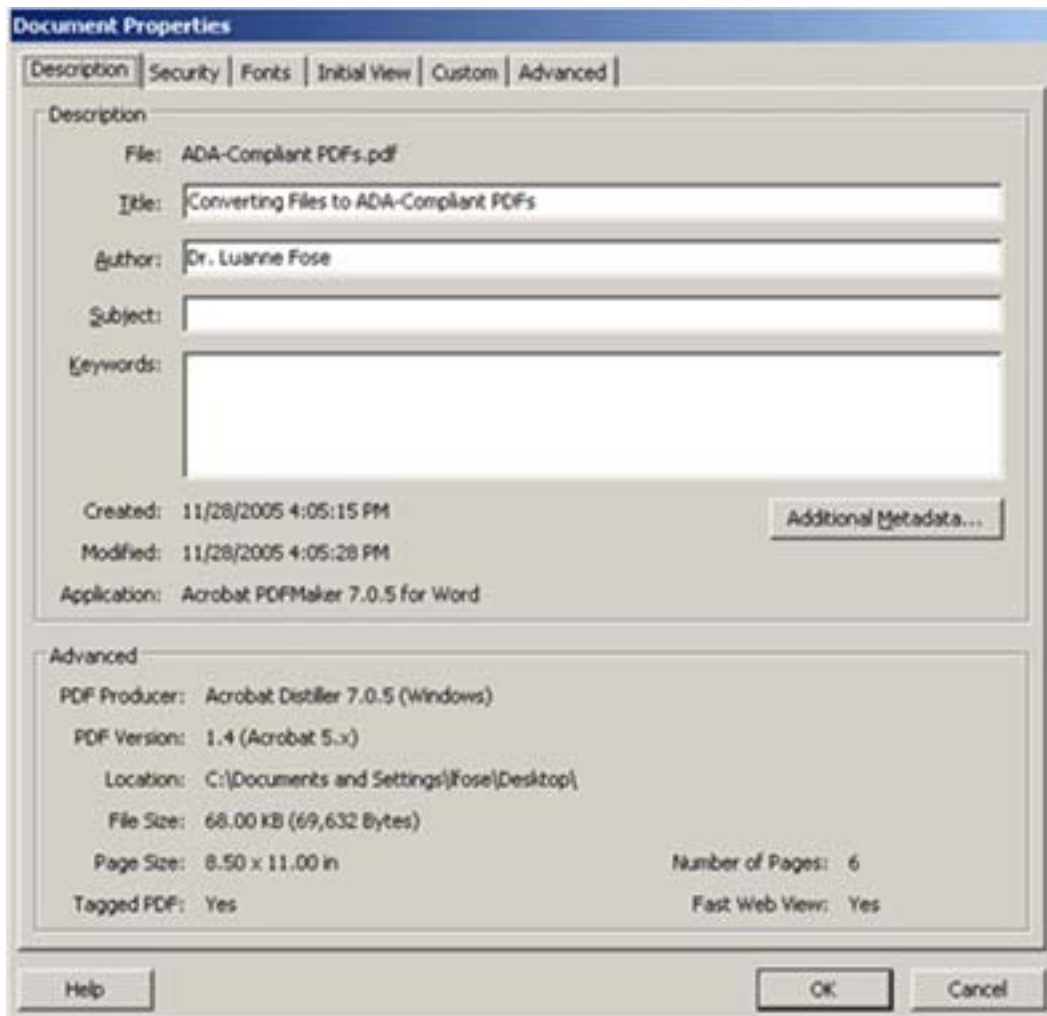


Figure 7. Document Properties

2. Click on the Description tab and make certain that the Title: and Author: areas are filled out with the proper information. Generally, you can avoid having to fill this information out in Adobe Acrobat if you make sure that in Microsoft Word within Tools > Options > User Information, you have the appropriate data already listed there. The title has been taken from the first heading of your Microsoft Word document. If you wish to have a different title, erase the title that is here and provide a different one.
3. Click on the Advanced tab in the Document Properties dialog box and in the section labeled Language:, select English US (see Figure 8. Language). If you don't select the appropriate language for the document, the screen reader will have difficulty reading the document correctly.

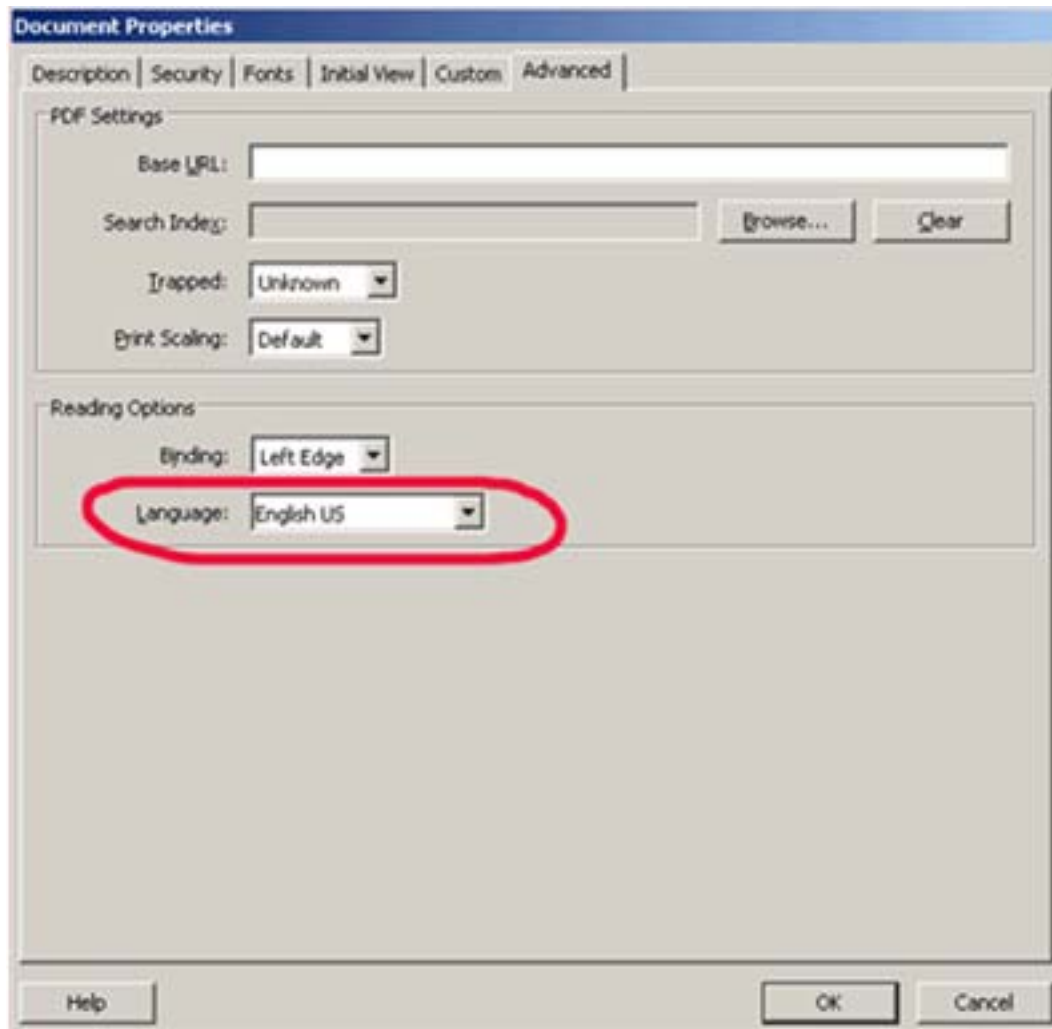


Figure 8. Language

4. Click OK to save your settings and close the Document Properties dialog box.

Step 5: Adding Tags to an Existing PDF Document

To ensure that screen-readers handle the PDF correctly, you must add tags to the various elements of the page. Tags are displayed in a hierarchical order and indicate the reading sequence of the document. If the scanned document isn't given tags, you can add them.

1. Choose Advanced > Accessibility > Add Tags to Document.
2. Choose View > Navigation Tabs > Tags.
3. From the Options menu > Highlight Content (see Figure 9. Add Navigation Tabs). Now, when you select a tag from the list, the respective element will be highlighted in the document.

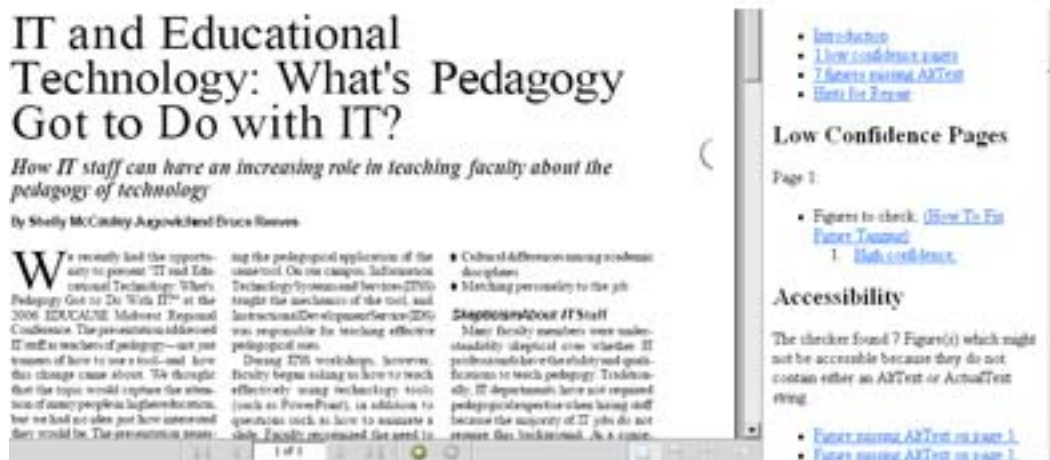
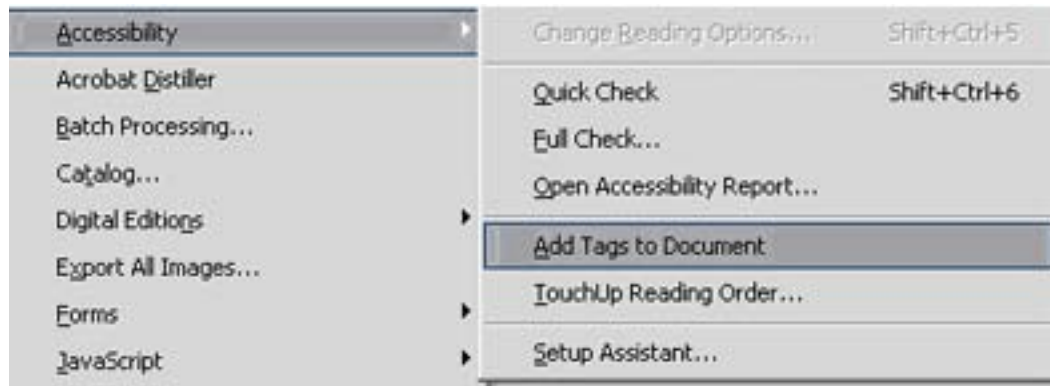


Figure 9. Add Navigation Tabs

4. To make sure an element has an appropriate tag, select the tag, then click Options > Properties.
5. The TouchUp Properties window will open. Verify that the Type is appropriate, and make sure any images have Alternate Text, then click Close.

Step 6: Check Object Ordering

1. To ensure screen-readers handle the elements in the right order, click the Order tab (see Figure 10. Order Tab).

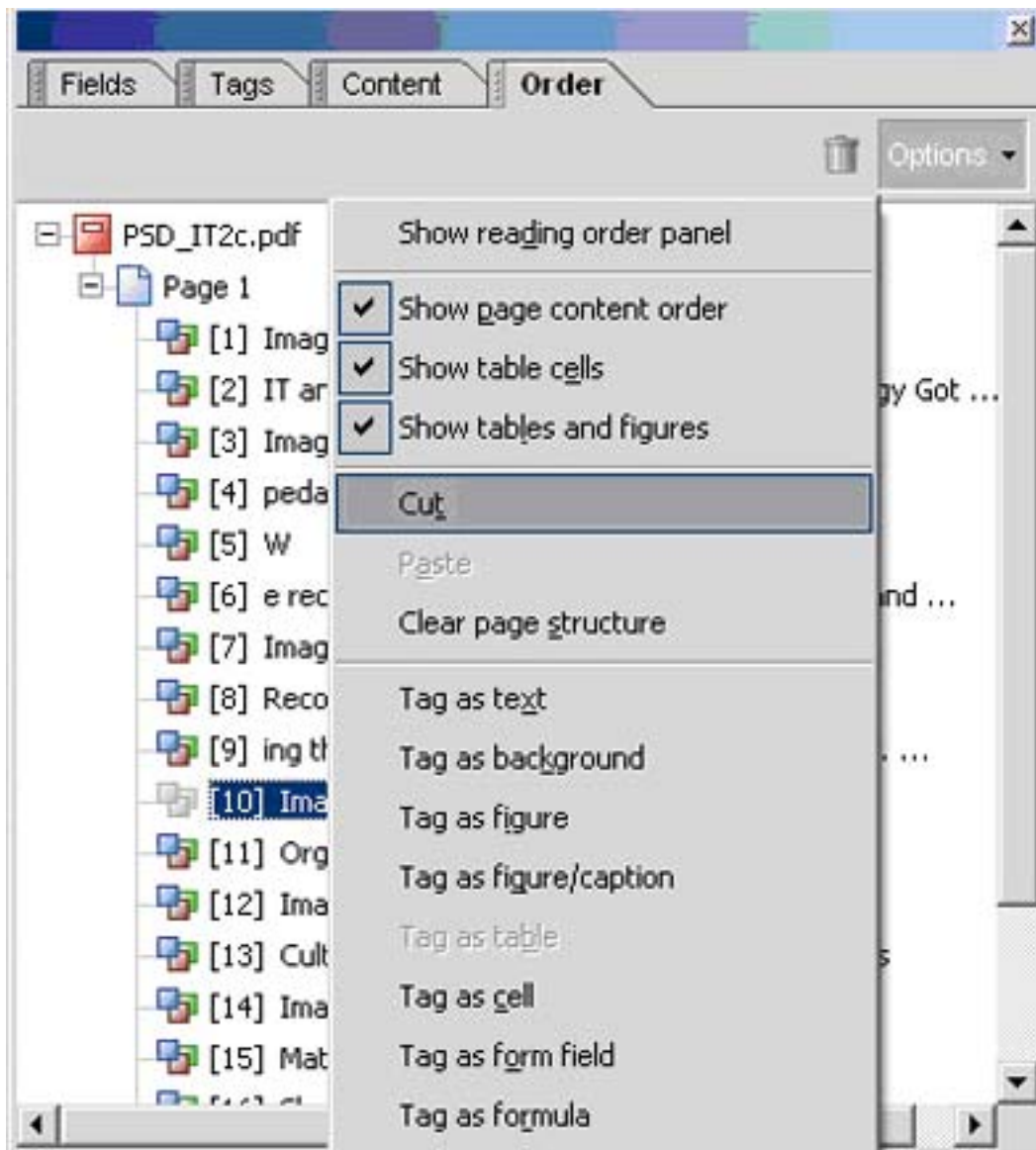


Figure 10. Order Tab

2. Move the tags/objects by clicking on the colored boxes and dragging them into place.
3. Tags/Objects can be removed from the Options menu > Cut.

Step 7: Accessibility Check

Now you will need to test your document to make sure it really is accessible:

1. With speakers connected to your computer and turned on for audio, open the PDF file in Adobe Acrobat Professional. Select View > Read Out Loud > Read to End of Document and listen to the document being read as a screen reader would. If alternative text tags have been added properly on the images, the computer voice should also read the content of those tags.
2. Now create an accessibility report by selecting Advanced > Accessibility > Full Check (see Figure 11. Accessibility Check).

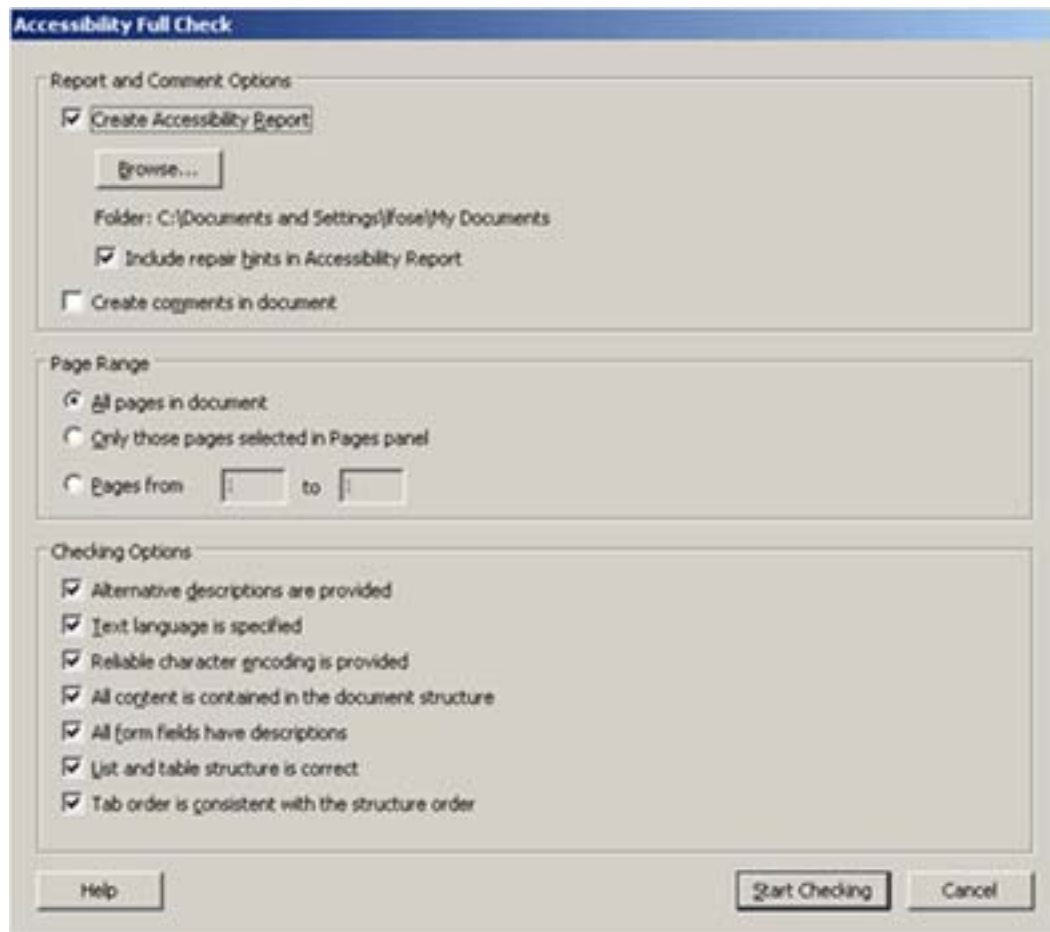


Figure 11. Accessibility Check

3. When the Accessibility Full Check dialog box appears, click on the checkbox where it says Create Accessibility Report. Retain the other default settings in this dialog.
4. Click on the Start Checking button and the Accessibility Full Check will look for possible accessibility problems within the document.
5. After the Accessibility Full Check has completed its analysis, Adobe Acrobat will provide you with a full accessibility summary and tips on how to fix any problems that might have been found. This summary report will appear in the window to the right of the PDF document where Adobe Help generally resides. If accessibility problems have been detected and flagged, fix them according to the instructions provided in Adobe Acrobat and then run the Accessibility Full Check once again.
6. Continue running the Accessibility Full Check until there are no longer any accessibility problems detected. In certain circumstances, you may wish to make the fixes in the original Microsoft Word document and then convert it to PDF once more; then, run the Accessibility Full Check again after the edits have been made within Microsoft Word. This will insure that your Microsoft Word document is compliant in case you ever return to it in the future to make edits or changes.
7. Save the PDF once more by selecting File > Save.

III. Additional Resources

- [Acrobat Accessibility Resources](#)
- [Creating Accessible PDF Documents with Adobe Acrobat 7.0](#)

References Cited

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“Making Accessible PDFs from Microsoft Word Documents.” Center for Teaching & Learning. California Polytechnic State University, SLO.
<http://ctl.calpoly.edu/tech/tutorials/PDFWordpc/PDFWordpc.html>