

Creating Accessible PDF's

Adobe, Acrobat, and PDF

It is important to distinguish between Adobe, Acrobat and PDF. These terms are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same.

- Adobe is a company; they are the creators of Acrobat.
- Acrobat is a tool for creating, editing and viewing PDF files.
- PDF is a format or type of document. It stands for Portable Document Format. The PDF format was created by Adobe.

The terms Adobe, Acrobat, and PDF are related in the same way as Microsoft, Word, and doc.

PDF Tags

When people talk about "accessible" PDF files, they usually are referring to "tagged" PDF files, even though there is more to an accessible PDF than tags. PDF tags provide a hidden structured, textual representation of the PDF content that is presented to screen readers. They exist for accessibility purposes only and have no visible effect on the PDF file.

HTML tags and PDF tags often use similar tag names (e.g., both have tags named h1) and organization structures, but they really are quite different. If you are comfortable with HTML, you will probably have an easier time creating and editing tagged PDF files.

PDF files are not typically created in Acrobat. They are usually created in another program and *converted* to PDF. There are dozens or probably hundreds of programs that can create PDF files, but very few of them produce tagged PDF files. If you are using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, OpenOffice.org Writer, or Adobe tools such as InDesign, you can often create accessible, tagged PDF files without opening Acrobat. Of course, the accessibility of the PDF depends on the accessibility of the original document. Utilizing this means to create an accessible document is easier than actually opening Acrobat.

Microsoft Word

Note: The following instructions can also be used to convert PowerPoint files to PDF.

The majority of the PDF files on the web were probably created in Microsoft Word. The good news is that it is possible to create accessible PDF files in

Office, as long as the following requirements are met:

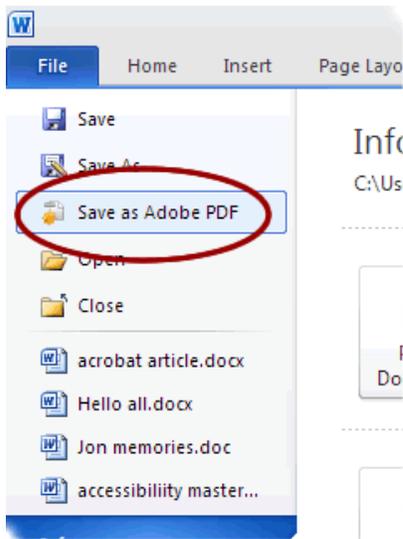
1. The file must be accessible. That includes providing alternative text for images, proper headings, appropriate link text, etc. For more information, read our tutorial on [Microsoft Word](#).
2. Office 2000-2003 users must have Acrobat installed, as well as the add-in. Office 2007 users must have either Acrobat or the Microsoft PDF add-in installed. Office 2010 users can create tagged PDF files natively or with the Adobe add-in.
3. The file must be exported correctly. If a file is created by 'printing to PDF', it will not be correctly tagged.

Word 2010

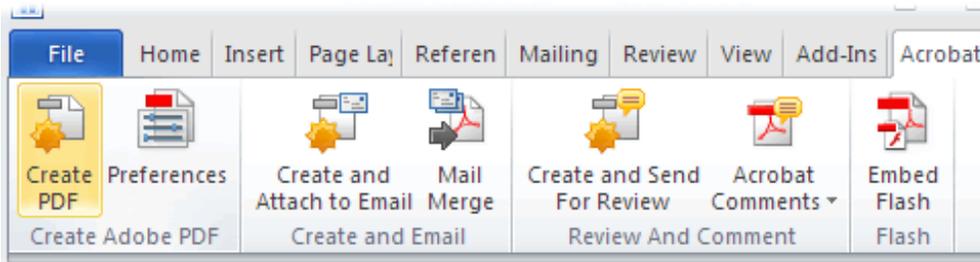
The Acrobat add-in is only available to users who have Acrobat X installed and are using the 32-bit version of Office 2010.

The Adobe Add-in, also called PDFMaker, is the best choice to create high-quality tagged PDF files. With the Adobe add-in installed, you can export to PDF one of two ways:

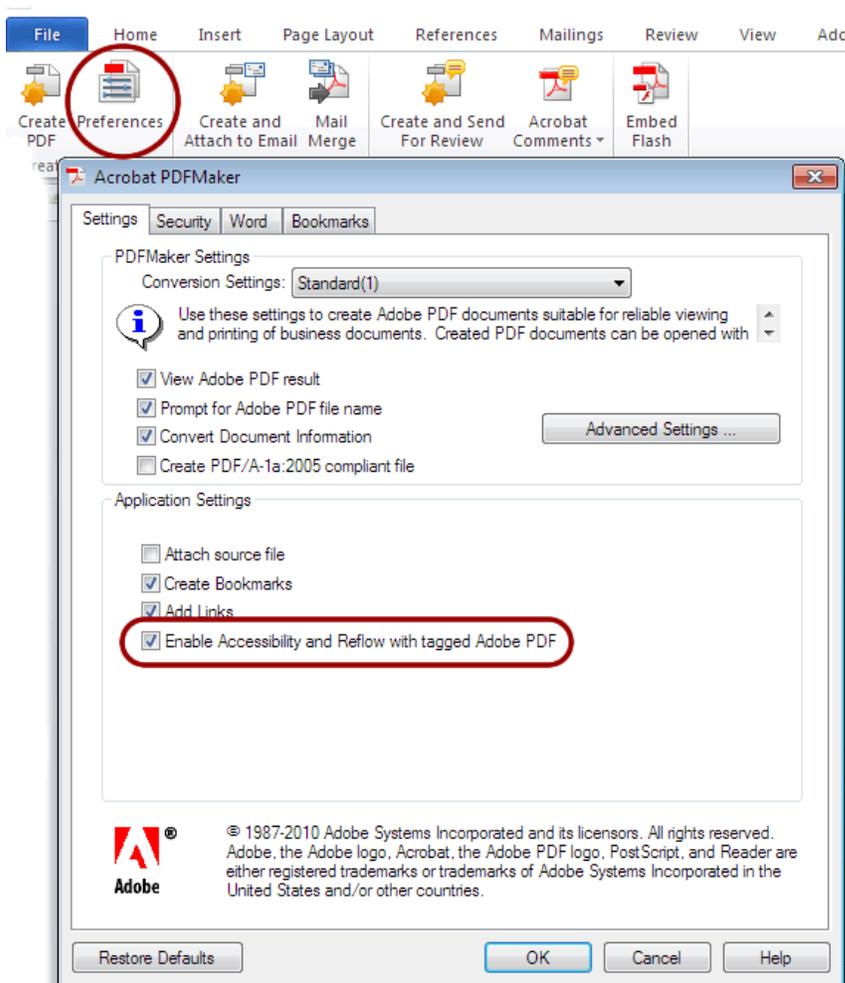
Select File > Save as Adobe PDF.



Or you can select Create PDF from the Acrobat ribbon.



Either one of these options will open the same dialog box. The program should create a tagged PDF file by default. If this is not the case, select Preferences from the Acrobat ribbon and ensure that Enable Accessibility and Reflow with tagged Adobe PDF is selected.

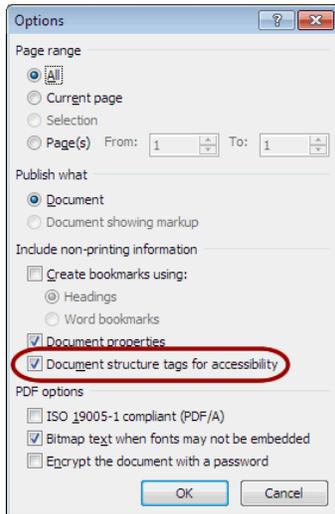


Save as tagged PDF natively

Word 2010 allows you to create tagged PDF files *without* installing Acrobat. The

tagging process may not be quite as good as with the Adobe add-in, but most content, such as heading levels, lists, and alternative text for images is exported.

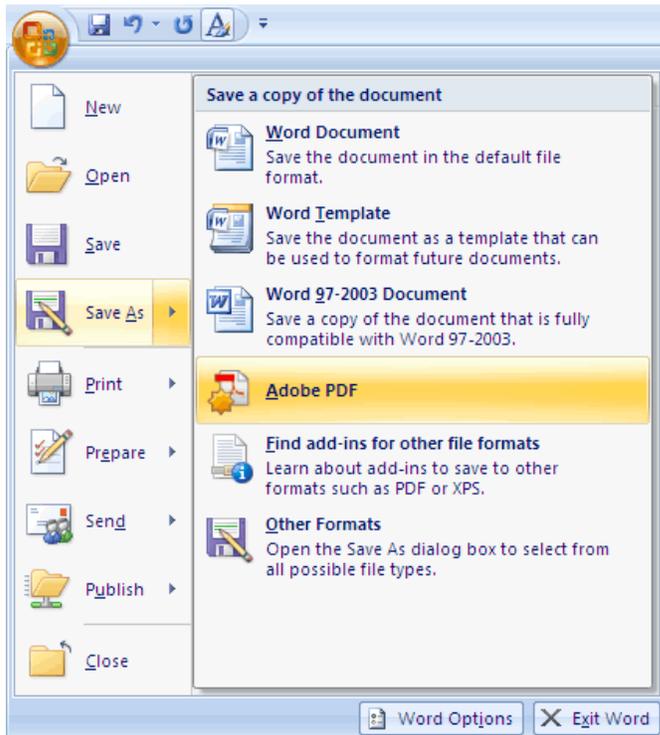
To convert to PDF using the Microsoft add-in, Select File > Save As, and under Save as type: select PDF. Before you save the file, select Options and ensure that the Document structure tags for accessibility option is selected.



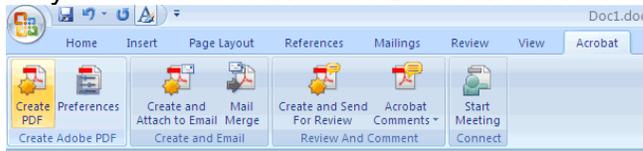
Word 2007

Adobe Add-in

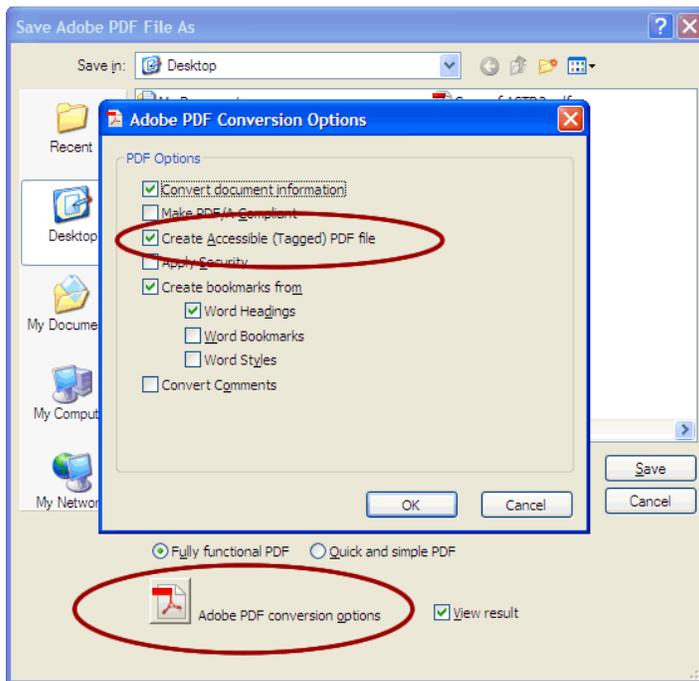
With the Adobe add-in installed, you can export to PDF one of two ways:
Click on the Office Button, hover over Save As, and select Adobe PDF, or press Alt + F, F, A.



Or you can select Create PDF from the Acrobat ribbon.



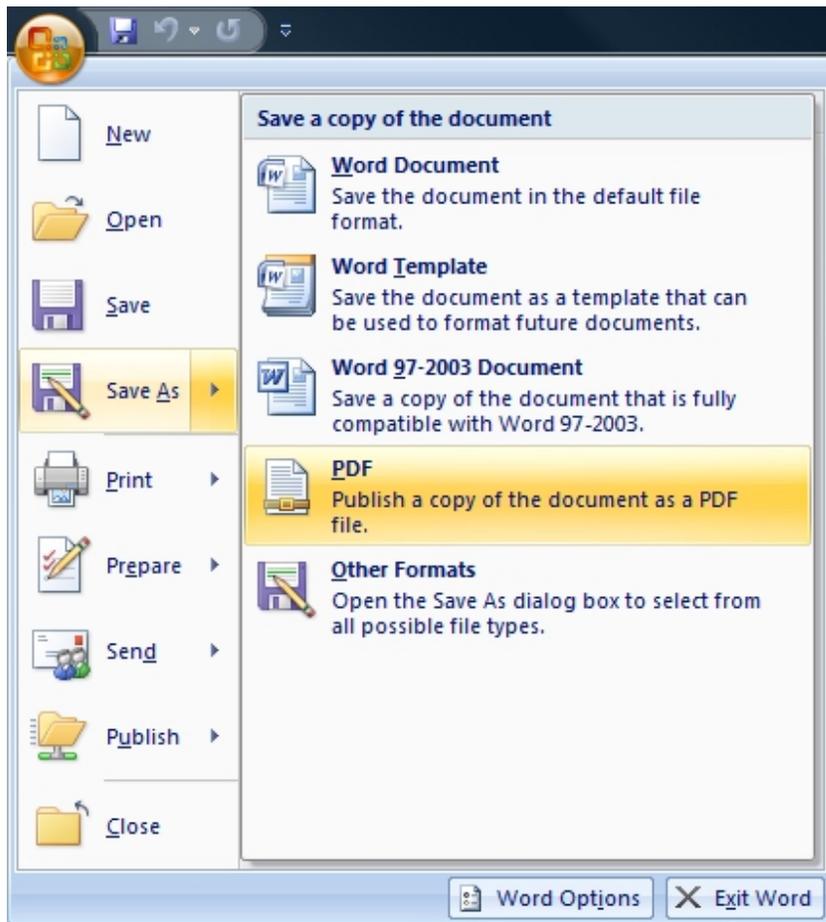
Either one of these options will open the same dialog box. The program should create a tagged PDF file by default. If this is not the case select Adobe PDF conversion options and ensure that Create Accessible (Tagged) PDF file is selected.



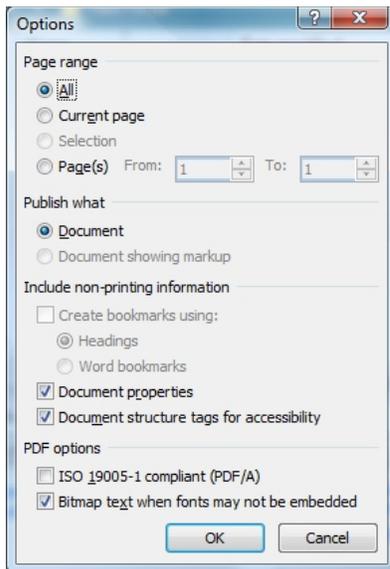
Microsoft Add-in

There is a free [Save as PDF Add-in](#) for Word 2007 that allows you to create tagged PDF files *without* installing Acrobat. If you want to verify the accessibility of the PDF or edit the tags that are created, you will still need Acrobat Professional.

To convert to PDF using the Microsoft add-in, click on the Office Button, hover over Save As, and select PDF, or press Alt + F, F, P.



Before you save the file, select Options and ensure that the Document structure tags for accessibility option is selected.



There are several options that you may want to modify but the only one that concerns accessibility is the check box labeled Tagged PDF. *Although this option is not checked by default, it remains selected once you have selected it the first time.*

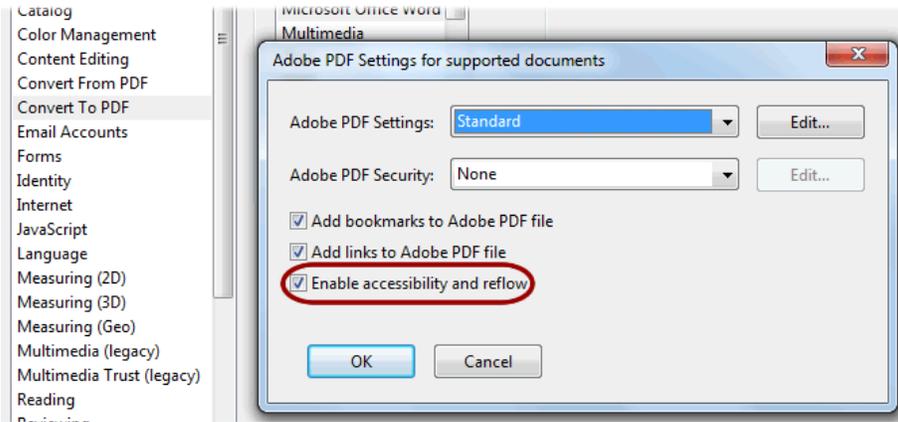
Tip: There is an icon labeled PDF on the menu bar () that will allow you to save a file as a PDF without opening the Options window. You must ensure that Tagged PDF is selected in the PDF Options dialog box *before* you use this icon, or your files *will not* be saved as tagged PDF files.

Adobe Acrobat Professional is still required if you want to modify a tagged PDF, and it is not always possible to create a correctly-tagged PDF using only Writer. For example, a document with complex tables or forms, or with a multi-column layout, may need to have the tagging process completed in Acrobat Pro.

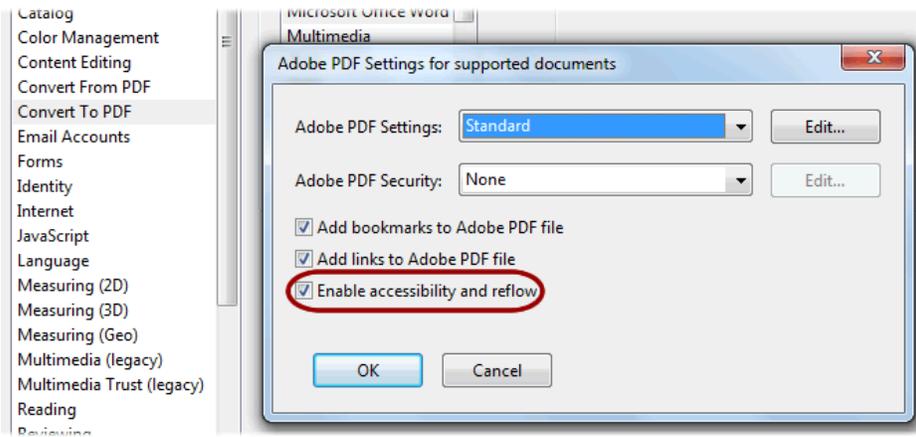
Convert to PDF in Acrobat

If you are having trouble converting a document to tagged PDF in Office, or if you want to merge multiple documents into one tagged PDF file, you can convert a file to PDF in Acrobat. There are several ways to do this; one of the easiest is to select File > Create PDF > From File (in Acrobat X, File > Create > PDF From File). If the file format is supported (i.e. the file is created in a Microsoft or Adobe product), the file should be tagged as it is converted. If no tags are present, select Edit > Preferences > Convert to PDF, choose the correct format, select Conversions Settings, and ensure that Enable accessibility and reflow is

selected.



If you want to combine multiple files into one PDF, select File > Create PDF > From Multiple Files (in Acrobat X, File > Create > Combine Files into a Single PDF). A dialog box will appear. Select Options and then select Always enable accessibility and reflow.



Source: <http://webaim.org/techniques/acrobat/converting>