

Making PDF Documents Accessible

Converting documents to PDF

Overview

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, 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.

Microsoft Word

Note

The accessibility and conversion settings of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint are essentially the same. You can follow the instructions below for Word to convert PowerPoint files to PDF as well.

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:

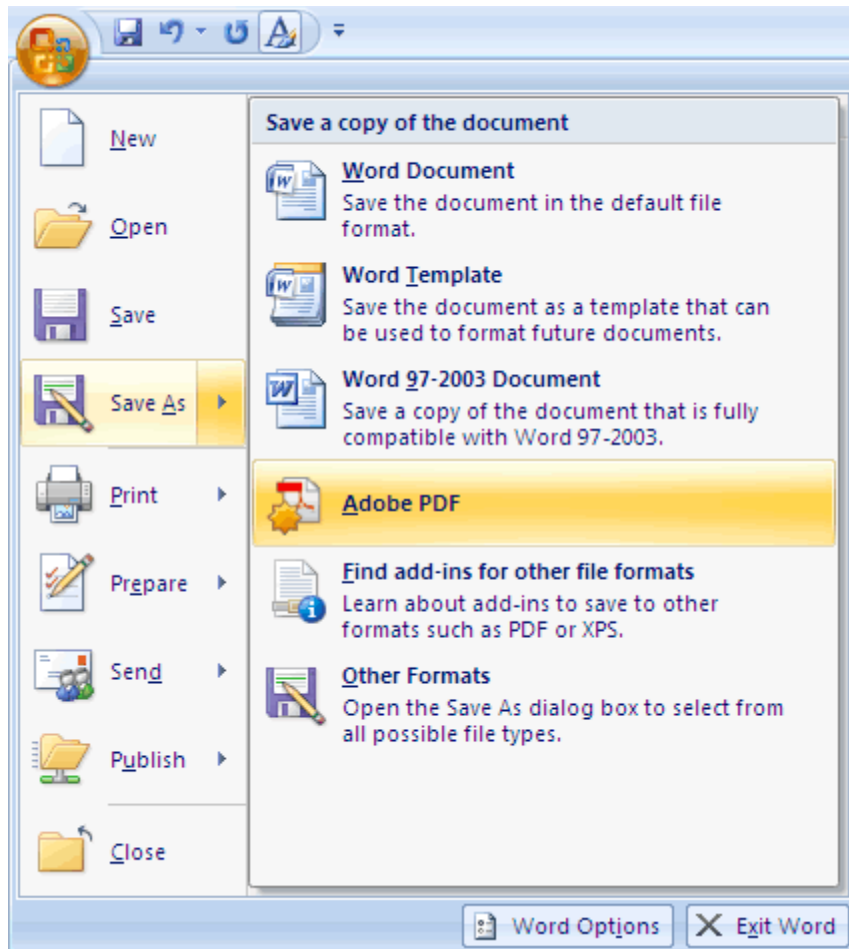
1. The file must be accessible. That includes providing alternative text for images, proper headings, appropriate link text, etc. For more information, view our video on Microsoft Word stylesheets.
2. Office 2000-2003 users must have Acrobat installed, as well as the add-in. Office 2007 users must have either Acrobat or the Microsoft PDF add-in installed.
3. The file must be exported correctly. If a file is created by printing to PDF, it will not be correctly tagged.

Word 2007

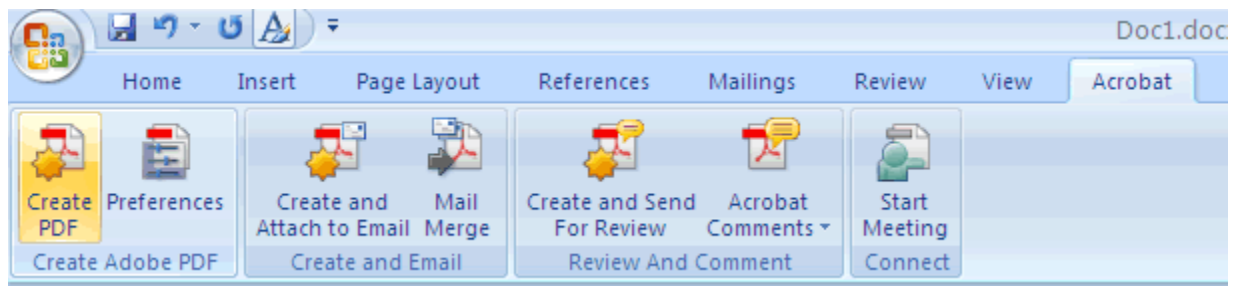
Adobe Add-in

With the Adobe add-in installed, you can export to PDF one of two ways.

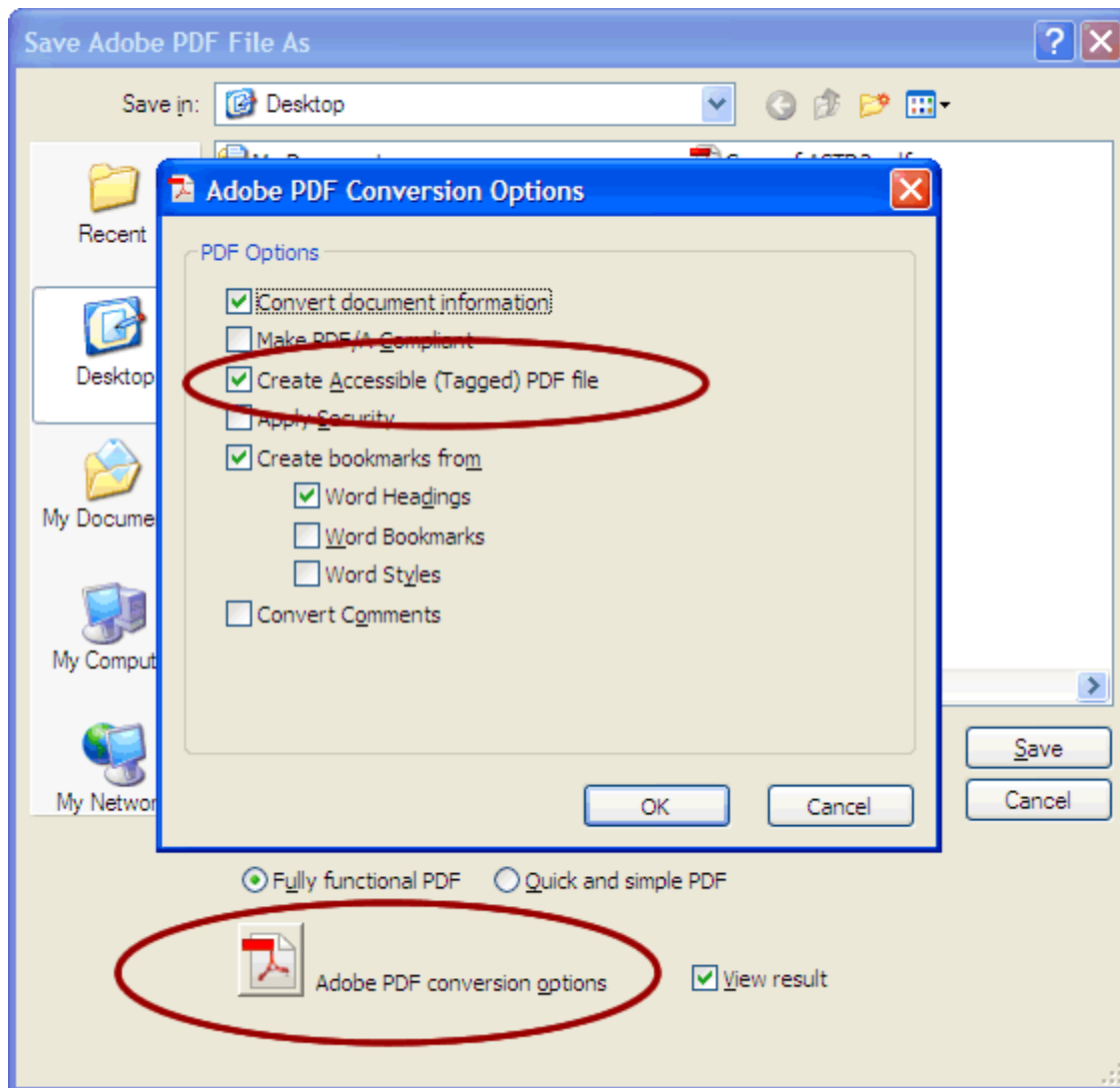
Click on the **Office Button**, hover over **Save As**, and select **Adobe PDF**, or press **Alt + F, F, A**.



Or you can select **Create PDF** from the **Acrobat** ribbon. Either one of these options will open the same dialog box.

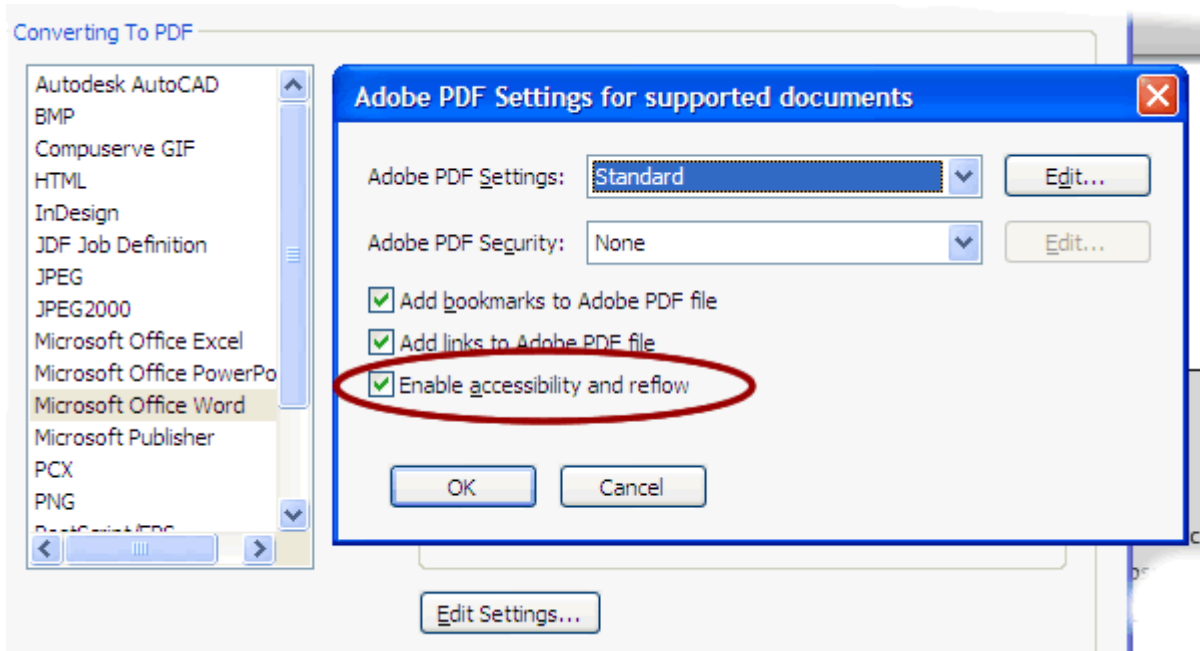


Before saving, select **Adobe PDF conversion options** and ensure that **Create Accessible (Tagged) PDF file** is selected.

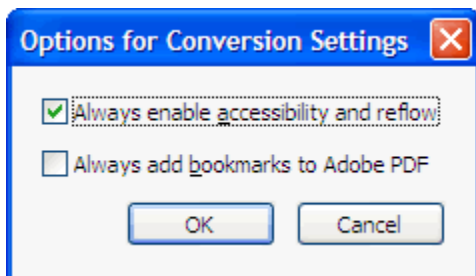


Convert to PDF in Acrobat

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**. 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**. A dialog box will appear. Select **Options** and then select **Always enable accessibility and reflow**.



Source: <http://www.webaim.org/techniques/acrobat/acrobat.php>