

PDF: Accessibility Best Practices

Method 1: Convert MS Word to PDF

1. Start with a well-structured Word document.
2. In Word, click the **File** tab and select **Save as**. In the Save as type field, select **PDF (*.pdf)**.
3. Enter a file name in the **File** name field.
4. Click on the **Options** button and make sure the **Document structure tags for accessibility** is checked.
5. Click **OK** and **Save**.

This will tag the document so that headings and lists are correctly interpreted by screen readers. Additional remediation using Adobe Acrobat Pro/DC may be needed to adjust reading order.

Method 2: Run Optical Character Recognition (OCR) on Scanned Document

Using Acrobat XI for OCR

1. Open the scanned PDF file in Adobe Acrobat XI.
2. Open the **Tools** panel (click Tools in top right) and click **Text Recognition**.
3. Click **In This File** and the **Recognize Text** window will open.
4. Click the **Edit** button to adjust OCR settings. Select **English (US)** for Primary OCR Language, **Searchable Image** for PDF Output Style and **600 dpi** for Downsample To.
5. Click **OK** when done.

Using Acrobat DC for OCR

1. Open the scanned PDF file in Adobe Acrobat DC.
2. In the **Tools** panel, click the **Action Wizard** and select **Optimize Scanned Document**.
3. Use the **Enhance** tools to **Add Document Description**.
4. Use the **Enhance** tools to **Optimize Scanned Pages**.
5. Use the **Enhance** tools to **Save As**.

Method 3: Run Adobe Acrobat Built-in Accessibility Checker

Using the Acrobat XI Accessibility Checker

1. Click the **Tools** tab to open the **Accessibility** panel on the right hand side. If you don't see it, click the **View** menu and select **Tools > Accessibility**.
2. Under **Accessibility**, select the **Full Check** button. The Accessibility Checker window will open.
3. Under the **Report Options**, check the **Create Accessibility Report** option.
4. Click the **Start Checking** button.
5. The Accessibility Checker Report will display on the left pane.

Using the Acrobat DC Accessibility Checker

1. In the **Tools** panel, click **Accessibility** to bring up the Accessibility tools.
2. From the Accessibility tools, select the **Full Check** button. The Accessibility Checker window will open.
3. Under the **Report Options**, check the **Create Accessibility Report** option.
4. Click the **Start Checking** button.
5. The Accessibility Checker Report will display on the left pane.

Resources

http://go.illinois.edu/pdf_resources

