



PDF Accessibility Guide

Ensuring that PDF documents are accessible is crucial for providing universal usability, especially for individuals with disabilities. This guide provides a comprehensive overview of checking and fixing PDF accessibility issues using Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Why PDF Accessibility Matters

An accessible PDF is universally easy to use and meets established accessibility standards. It supports assistive technologies such as:

- Screen readers
- Text-to-speech programs
- Braille displays

Adobe Resources

- [Adobe's guide on accessible PDFs](#)
- [Create and verify PDF accessibility \(Acrobat Pro\)](#)
- [Acrobat Accessibility series](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat Converter from Word to PDF](#)

Creating an ADA-compliant PDF

1. **Begin with an Accessible Source Document:** Start with a document that is already accessible and export it to a PDF, ensuring that tagging and structure are preserved from the outset.
2. **Utilize Appropriate Headings and Structure:** Organize your document with clear headings and a logical flow, making it easier for readers to navigate and understand the content.
3. **Provide Alternative Text for Non-Text Elements:** Include descriptive text for images, charts, and other non-text components to aid individuals using screen readers.
4. **Properly Tag Tables and Forms:** Ensure tables and forms are accurately tagged. Use header rows and columns for tables to facilitate navigation and apply correct tags like <Table> for tables and <TR> for table rows.
5. **Maintain Adequate Color Contrast:** Ensure text contrasts sufficiently with the background to be readable by those with vision impairments. Follow WCAG guidelines for contrast ratios and use tools like [WebAIM](#) to verify compliance.
6. **Select Accessible Fonts and Formatting:** Choose readable fonts and maintain consistent formatting throughout your document to improve readability.
7. **Clarify Link Destinations:** Provide clear, descriptive text for links to help users with assistive technologies understand where each link will take them.
8. **Specify the PDF's Language:** Tag the PDF with the correct language to ensure screen readers interpret the text accurately, avoiding confusion.

Checking PDF Accessibility

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Open Adobe Acrobat Pro**
 - o Note: The accessibility check tool is not available in the free version of Acrobat Reader.
2. **Open the PDF Document**
 - o Select the PDF you want to check for accessibility.
3. **Access All Tools**
 - o You may need to select "View More" to see all options.
4. **Prepare for Accessibility**
 - o Select "Prepare for accessibility" from the list of tools.
5. **Run Accessibility Check**
 - o On Mac, select "Accessibility Check"; on Windows, "Check for Accessibility".
 - o In the pop-up window, click "Start Checking".
6. **Review Accessibility Checker Menu**
 - o The menu appears on the right (Mac) or left (Windows) and includes:
 - Document
 - Page Content
 - Forms
 - Alternate Text
 - Tables
 - Lists
 - Headings

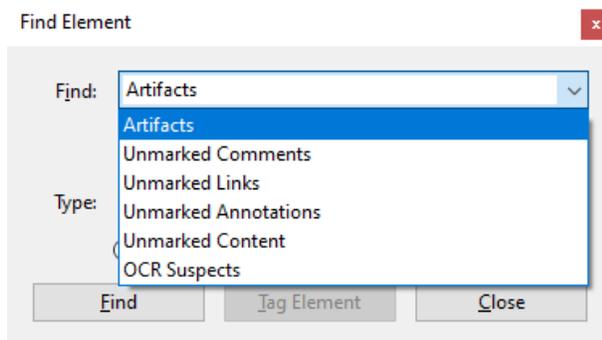
Fixing Accessibility Issues

Document

- **Logical Reading Order and Color Contrast**
 - o Always require a manual check. Use the provided tools to adjust the reading order and color contrast.
- **Title**
 - o Right-click and select "Fix". Enter the Title, Subject, Author, and Keywords.

Page Content

- **Tagged Content**
 - o Right-click to show in Content Panel, create artifacts as needed, and check again.
- **Tagged Annotations**
 - o Use the Content Panel to locate and tag elements correctly, then check again.
 - Right click and select **Show in Content Panel**. Right click on the problem item, **Find** to find the item listed below. Select **Tag Element** type description in the **Title** box. **Close**. Go to **Accessibility Checker** and right click on the problem item and select **Check Again**.



- **Tab Order**
 - o Right-click to fix and check again.

- **Character Encoding**

- Correct any lettering issues by retyping the text and check again.
 - The checker will highlight the specific words or characters causing the problem.
 - Another method for fixing this issue is to change the font used in the source document and then re-convert it to PDF.
 - Avoid using fonts with ligatures. The screen readers will not read these correctly and the fonts with this will fail.

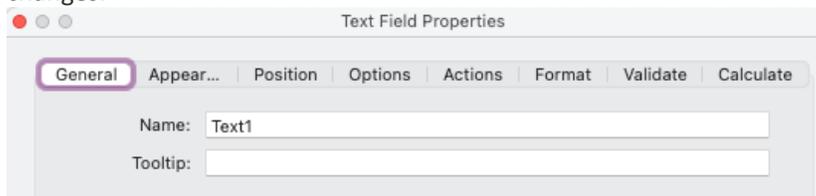
Forms

- **Forms, Tagged Form Fields**

- When this fails, work on fixing this first: Go to All Tools, Prepare for Accessibility, automatically tag PDF. Go to Accessibility Checker and right click on the problem item and select Check Again.

- **Forms, Field descriptions**

- When this fails, you will need to edit the tooltip associated with each form field. Go to Tools > Prepare Form. Locate the form field with the error and right click on it and select properties. The text you enter here will be displayed as a tooltip when the user hovers over the field. Click in the name field before closing to save the changes.



Alternate Text

- **Associated with Content and Other Elements**

- Ensure all figures have appropriate alternate text or are marked as decorative.

Tables

- **Headers and Regularity**

- Use the Tags Panel to delete incorrect tags and fix the reading order.

Lists and Headings

- Ensure proper nesting and tagging using the Tags Panel.

Final Steps

- **Open Accessibility Report**

- Review the summary for any remaining issues and correct them.

- **Save the Document**

- Close the Accessibility Checker and save your document.

By following this guide, you can ensure your PDF documents are accessible and meet the needs of all users.