QuikREF

Acrobat
PDF Accessibility

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 19.3% of the nation's population, or approximately 50 million people, have disabilities. A Harris Poll from June 2000 found that 43% of those, over 21,000,000 Americans with disabilities, are online.[1]

WHAT MAKES A PDF ACCESSIBLE?

Contains readable text
A PDF must contain underlying text. To test for text, save your PDF as plain text (File > Save As, Plain Text). Beware of PDFs created by scanning as this type of PDF is normally displayed as an image rather than actual text. Use OCR software[2] to convert this type of image to text.

Text is in a logical reading order
Does the text in your PDF read in a logical order? To test your reading order, save your PDF as plain text (File > Save As, Plain Text). The order depicted in the plain text file translates to the reading order of your PDF.

Images have alternative text defined
Have you added descriptive text to your images? This text is normally added to an alternative text field (or Web field) in the originating application (such as Microsoft Word).

Table data headers are defined
For tables containing data, define row and column headers. This can be done in some originating applications (like Microsoft Word).

Forms contain field descriptions and display a logical tab order for elements
Field descriptions and field tab order can be added and checked for using Adobe Acrobat Professional.

NOTE: To be considered accessible, a PDF must fulfill Section 508 requirements. The list above represents 508 requirements common to PDF files. For a comprehensive list of requirements, see the Section 508 Web site at http://www.section508.gov.

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, http://factfinder.census.gov and IBM Accessibility Center, http://www-03.ibm.com/able/

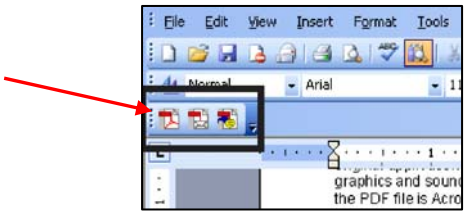
[2] Recommended OCR software: OmniPage Pro or ABBYY FineReader. OmniPage Pro is available in the FSRC (ARC 3012) for use by Sac State faculty and staff.

CREATING ACCESSIBLE PDFS

1. Create an accessible document (Word, PowerPoint, etc.)
Accessible PDFs begin BEFORE a file is converted to PDF!

- Make sure important images contain alternative text
  - MS Word 2003: Select the image, right-click, select the **Web** tab
  - MS Word 2007: Select the image, locate the **Size Group** from the Format Ribbon, click on the **Size box launcher**, click the **Alt text** tab
- For help with other elements, such as tables or PowerPoint slides, review the accessibility handouts on the Sac State training handouts Web page: http://www.csus.edu/training/handouts/.

2. Convert to PDF
Click the PDFMaker icon in the menu bar:



Do NOT use the File > Print option to convert to PDF. The resulting PDF may only be partially accessible.

For detailed information on creating accessible PDFs, see the workshop handout titled *PDF Accessibility: How to Create Accessible PDFs Using Adobe Acrobat* also located on the Sac State training Web site: http://www.csus.edu/training/handouts/.

***Mac Users*:** PDF accessibility from applications such as MS Word is not fully supported using PDFMaker on the Mac. It is best to add accessible elements (e.g. alternative text; see step 1 above) using MS Word on Windows, then use PDFMaker [on Windows] to convert your document to PDF.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- PDFMaker is only available with the full version of Adobe Acrobat (Acrobat Standard/Professional).
- Office 2007 users: In order to access PDFMaker, you must be running Adobe Acrobat 8.1 (check for updates in Acrobat 8).
- If PDFMaker is unavailable, you will need to check and potentially fix accessibility problems using Adobe Acrobat (it is highly recommended that you use Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional, which is currently available from your college ITC).
- For additional information regarding accessibility at Sac State, see the Sac State Accessibility Web site at http://www.csus.edu/accessibility/.