

## How to Create Accessible PDFs

PDF, which stands for Portable Document Format, was created to have a standard image that would be an exact representation of its printed form. PDFs can be created many different ways and read by many different programs (not just Adobe). The first step in creating an accessible PDF is recognizing what kind of PDF you have.

Image PDF – text cannot be copied or searched. Even though there may be text, it is just a picture of the text.

Searchable PDF – text can be copied and searched.

Tagged PDF – text can be copied and searched and there is an underlying structure that provides improved accessibility for assistive technology such as screen readers but does not affect the look of the document.

## Converting MS Documents to PDF

### Overview

PDF files are not typically created in Acrobat. They are usually created in another program and *converted* to PDF. If you are using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, you can often create accessible, tagged PDF files without opening another program. Of course, the accessibility of the PDF depends on the accessibility of the original document.

### Microsoft Word

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:

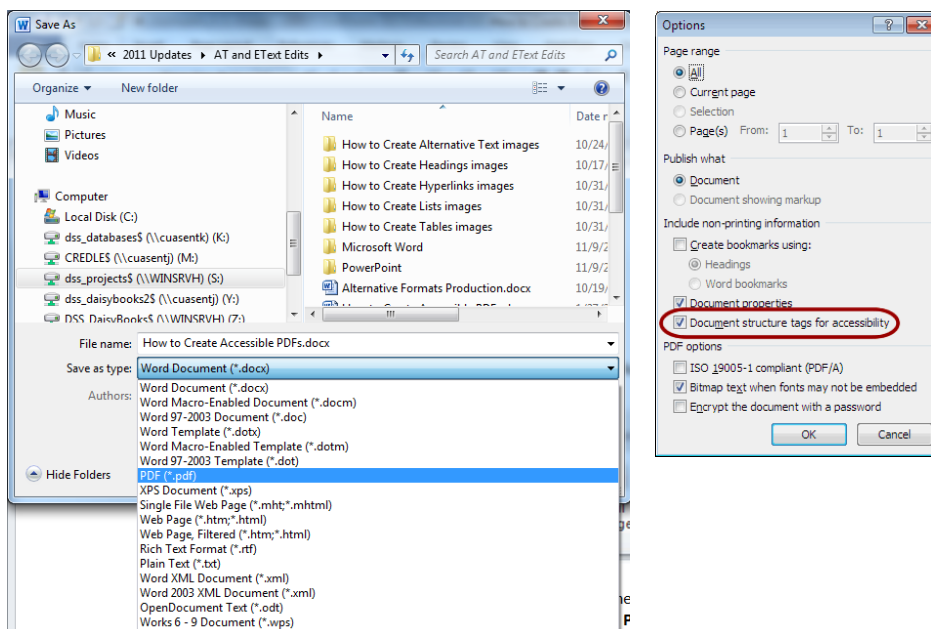
1. The file must be accessible. That includes providing alternative text for images, proper headings, appropriate link text, etc. For more information, read our other articles on Microsoft Word.
2. Office 2010 users can create tagged PDF files natively or with the Adobe add-in. Previous versions of Office need to install an add-in to create PDF files from the documents. The file must be exported correctly. If a file is created by printing to PDF, it will not be correctly tagged.

**Note:** If you are familiar with the CutePDF printer, this will not create an accessible PDF.

## Word 2010

1. Make sure you have saved your document as a Word document first so that you can edit the document at a later date. Go to the File tab on your ribbon and select Save As. A dialog box will appear. Open the Save as type drop-down menu and select PDF (\*.pdf).
2. Click on the options button in the same dialog box. Make sure that the **Document structure tags for accessibility** option is selected. Click OK. Save your file in the proper location.

**Note:** You can use other programs and add-ins, such as Adobe Acrobat, but this tagging process works well with most basic MS Word documents. If you want to verify the accessibility of the PDF or edit the tags that are created, you will still need Acrobat Professional.

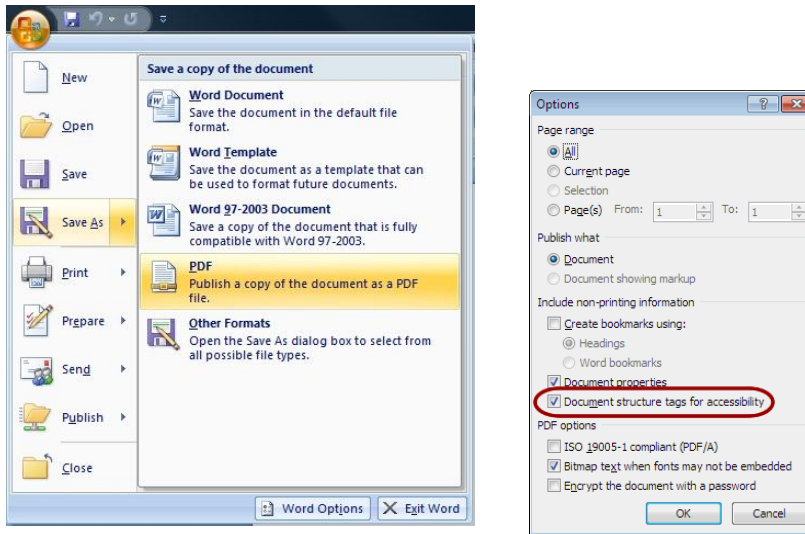


## Word 2007

### 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.

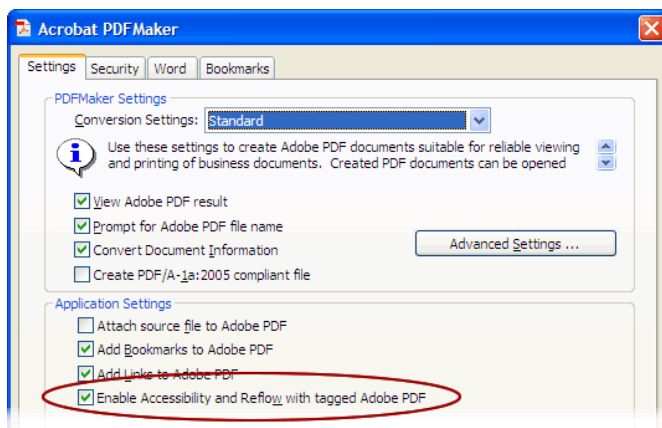
1. To convert to PDF using the Microsoft add-in, click on the **Office Button**, hover over **Save As**, and select **PDF**, or press **Alt + F, F, P**.
2. Before you save the file, select **Options** and ensure that the **Document structure tags for accessibility** option is selected.



## Word 2000-2003

**Note:** You will need to install Adobe Acrobat. When you install Adobe Acrobat, an add-in for Microsoft Office is installed by default. The add-in allows you to convert Office files to PDF without opening Acrobat. This add-in also installs an **Adobe PDF** menu, which should appear in the Menu bar.

1. To convert a Word Document to PDF, Select **Adobe PDF > Convert to Adobe PDF**. If your document is correctly structured, this should automatically create a tagged PDF.
2. To make sure that files are converted correctly, go to **Adobe PDF > Change Conversion Settings** and check **Enable Accessibility and Reflow with tagged Adobe PDF**.



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