

## **Adobe and Accessibility**

### **Accessing and Creating PDF files**

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#### **What are Adobe PDF files?**

The Portable Document Format (PDF) was created to allow designers to share content with formatting intact. Unfortunately, at the beginning, the features that allowed a PDF to look a certain way, also tended to prevent users from accessing the content with Assistive Technology. To combat this problem, Adobe worked to improve the accessibility of the PDF by adding features for those who are accessing documents and also adding features for those who are creating documents. Both pieces are vital - content designers must create Adobe files with access in mind. Users need to be aware of tools and techniques for accessing files in ways that are most efficient for them as individuals.

#### **How are Adobe PDF files accessed?**

Users must have the free Adobe Reader program to access a PDF file. Within Adobe Reader a user can then make use of several convenient features to improve access to the content assuming the PDF was created with accessibility in mind in the first place.

#### **Adobe Reader can read text out loud**

1. Make sure the document contains text to be read
2. Go to the View pull-down menu
3. Choose Read Out Loud

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Activate Read Out Loud | Shift + Ctrl + Y |
| Read Page              | Shift + Ctrl + V |
| Read Document          | Shift + Ctrl + B |
| Pause                  | Shift + Ctrl + C |
| Stop                   | Shift + Ctrl + E |

#### **Adobe will read in a choice of voices**

- Go to the Edit menu and select Preferences or use the keyboard shortcut (Ctrl +K)
- Select Reading
- Uncheck "Use Default Voice"
- Select voice of choice (additional voices can be loaded onto machines to give more choices)

#### **Adobe can read at faster and slower rates**

- Go to the Edit menu and select Preferences or use the keyboard shortcut (Ctrl +K)
- Select Reading
- Uncheck "Use Default Speech Attributes"
- Adjust the Rate of speech

#### **Adobe has reading order options**

- Tagged documents afford the best reading
- "Infer reading order from document" works well but can be slower

## Adobe lets users replace document colors

- Go to the Edit menu and select Preferences or use the keyboard shortcut (Ctrl +K)
- Select Accessibility
- Check “Replace Document Colors”

## Adobe has a reflow option

- Control and 4
- Eliminate Horizontal Scrolling – useful for magnification or small handheld devices

## Adobe has automatic scrolling

- Control, Shift and H to start and stop
  - Arrow up and down to slow down and speed up
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## How are Adobe PDF files created?

- 1) Scanning a printed page or creating a PDF from an image file
- 2) Converting/Distilling/Combining existing electronic files

## Ideally PDF will be created from accessible source file

- Use headings (don’t just change font size)
- Use tables appropriately (for data– use columns for layout)
- Avoid text boxes
- Add alt tags to images
- Conversion
  - Method – use the Acrobat tool installed within the source application
  - Settings – convert document info, add links, enable accessibility and allow reflow, etc

## If scanned image, then additional steps are mandatory for file to be usable

- 1) Run OCR
  - Advanced>Recognize Text Using OCR
- 2) Add tags to images, tables, etc
- 3) Touch up reading order
  - Go to Advanced>Accessibility>Touch Up
  - Show Order Panel

## What steps must be taken to improve accessibility of a PDF file?

- 1) Evaluate the original document
  - a. If it is created from another document – does that document have structural tags?
  - b. If it is created from an image – has OCR (Optical Character Recognition) been run
- 2) Run the accessibility check
  - a. Open the document in Acrobat
  - b. Go to Advanced>Accessibility>Quick Check (Ctrl+Shift+6)
- 3) Make repairs as needed
  - a. Some repairs are best made in the source document if possible (tags, headings, etc)
  - b. Sometimes settings need to be changed prior to conversion to PDF
  - c. Some changes must be made in Adobe (touch up reading order, document language, etc)
- 4) Run the accessibility check after making repairs to ensure that no problems are found

*\*Note - Disability Support Services provides training and support for students, staff, and faculty. There are also interns who may be available to assist faculty with the conversion of materials to a more accessible format – contact [kaela@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:kaela@uaa.alaska.edu) to learn more*