Making PDFs accessible in Adobe Acrobat

Getting started

This write up is not meant to be the official way to make PDFs accessible. We encourage you to visit the Disabilities Computing Program (DCP) and check out their workshops held throughout the year. This article will cover two types of PDFs:

1. If you created the PDF from a word processor
2. If you scanned a page into a PDF

If you created the PDF from a word processor

Regardless what word processor the PDF was generated from, you should have a PDF that has its text recognized, so it can be read through most screen readers. But just in case:

1. Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat
2. Click on the **Tools** tab or use the **Find your tool here** search box and search for **Accessibility**
3. Click on the **Accessibility** button
4. A menu for Accessibility should open up to the right of the document, click on **Full Check**, then click on the **Start Checking** button in the window that opens
5. Review the Accessibility Checker report that opens to the left of the document
    1. Click and expand each heading to review the full report
    2. Right clicking on the items will tell you if you need to resolve the issue
6. Save the PDF

If you scanned a page into a PDF

This use case is if you received a scanned document as a PDF and the text has not been recognized (or OCR).

1. Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat
2. Click on the **Tools** tab or search for **Action Wizard**
3. Click on the **Action Wizard** button
4. A menu for Action Wizard should open up to the right of the document, click on **Make Accessible**, then click on the **Start** button
    1. You may need to correct some issues before the document can be scanned, for example, if the title or author of the document is missing
    2. Select the primary language of the document, but set **Output** as “Searchable Image” and **Downsample To** “600dpi”.
    3. Leave the **Accessibility Checker Options** as is, then click the **Start checking** button
5. Review the Accessibility Checker report that opens to the left of the document
    1. Click and expand each heading to review the full report
    2. Right clicking on the items will tell you if you need to resolve the issue
6. Save the PDF

This will help you make your PDF accessible to screen readers, but you will still need to manually review the reports and resolve the issue. We highly encourage you to reach out to the DCP office if you have any questions or concerns: https://dcp.ucla.edu/staff/

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