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# ACCESSIBILITY

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Creating accessible documents with Adobe Acrobat Pro 9

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## INTRODUCTION

A screen reader is a software application that works to interpret what is being displayed on a computer screen (whether a monitor is present or not). This interpretation is then most commonly re-presented to the user with text-to-speech audio. Screen readers are a form of assistive technology (AT) useful to people who are blind, visually impaired, illiterate or learning disabled, often used in combination with other AT, such as screen magnifiers. In order for a screen reader to correctly decipher a PDF document, it must be created according to Accessibility guidelines.

This guide will provide you with a basic set of best practices for creating accessible PDF documents in Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro.

### Accessibility:

Making information technology resources and services available in a usable format (with reasonable accommodation) to all students, employees, guests and the general public regardless of disability.

## ADOBE ACROBAT ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER TOOLS

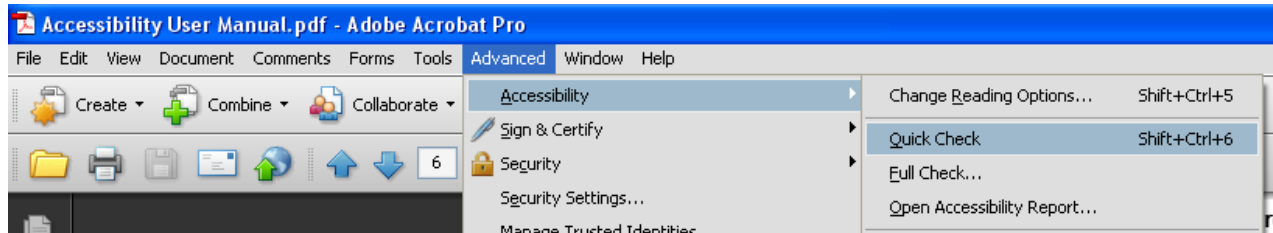
The first step in building accessibility into a PDF is to assess it using the checker tools available in Adobe Acrobat Pro (version 6 and later). You can use the results of the checker as a guide to making your documents accessible. Note that although the accessibility checker tools can help to identify areas of documents that may be in conflict with accessibility guidelines, they do not check against *all* accessibility criteria.

There are two Accessibility Checker tools: Quick Check and Full Check. We will explore each individually.

## QUICK CHECK

The Quick Check is often the best way to check for accessibility before attempting to use a PDF. The Quick Check will reveal whether a document has real text, structure tags and appropriate security for a screen reader to discern it properly.

To run a Quick Check in Adobe Acrobat Pro 9, from your file menu go to Advanced > Accessibility > Quick Check.



## QUICK CHECK RESULTS [1]

Results will vary. Below is a list of possible results and actions you can take.

***“This document has logical structure but it is not a Tagged PDF. Some accessibility information may be missing.”***

Quick Check has found an underlying document structure in the document, so Acrobat will use the available document structure to control the reading order, rather than analyzing the document itself. However, this untagged document structure might be incomplete or unreliable, so assistive software and the accessibility features in Acrobat (such as the Read Out Loud) may not read the page properly. If the reading order of the page seems to be wrong, select Override the Reading Order in Tagged Documents in the Reading panel of the Preferences dialog box.

***“This document is not structured, so the reading order may not be correct. Try different reading orders using the Reading Preferences panel. ”***

Quick Check has found no underlying document structure that Acrobat can use for reading order. Acrobat will analyze the reading order of the document using the current analysis method set in the Reading Order preference, but this PDF might not be read correctly by screen readers. If the reading

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<sup>1</sup> Adobe Inc, 2009

order seems wrong, select a different option for Reading Order in the Reading panel of the Preferences dialog box.

***“No accessibility problems were detected in this quick check. Choose the Full Check command to check more thoroughly. “***

Quick Check has found that the PDF contains searchable text, is tagged, has an underlying document structure, and has no security settings that prohibit access for screen readers. To check for other types of accessibility problems that may be present in the PDF, use Full Check.

***“This document’s security settings prevent access by screen readers. “***

Quick Check has found that the PDF has security settings that interfere with screen readers’ ability to extract text for conversion to speech. You may be able to use a screen reader with this document if your assistive technology product is registered with Adobe as a Trusted Agent. Contact your assistive technology product vendor.

***“This document appears to contain no text. It may be a scanned image. “***

Quick Check has found that the PDF contains no searchable text, probably because the document consists entirely of one or more scanned images. This means that screen readers, Read Out Loud, Reflow view, and most other accessibility features—which rely on text as input—will not work with this document

# FULL CHECK

Use the Full Check to perform a more thorough check for many characteristics of accessible PDFs. To run a Full Check, from the file menu select Advanced > Accessibility > Full Check.

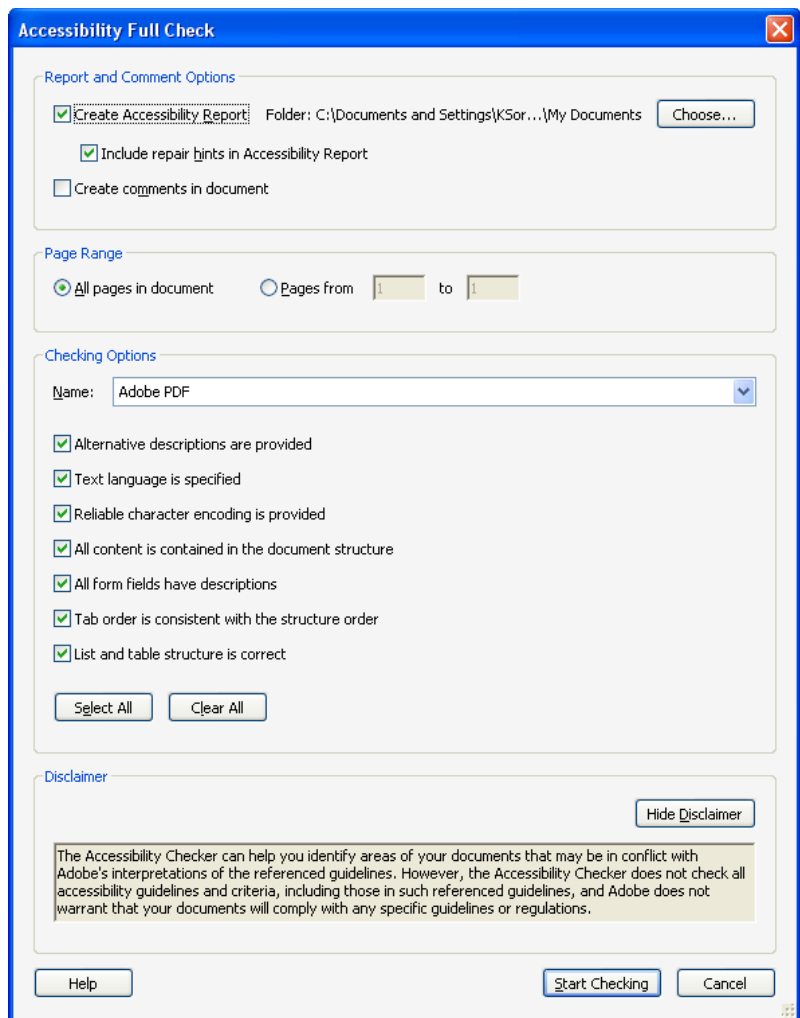
You can choose which kinds of accessibility problems to look for and how you want to view the results.

1. Choose Advanced > Accessibility > Full Check.
2. Select options for how you would like to view the results.

You can save the results as an HTML file or as comments that are located where the accessibility problems are detected. Since the comments become part of the actual document structure that need to be tagged, it is recommended you select the Report option only.

3. Select a page range if you prefer to do a full check on individual sections of a document. For larger documents, it is suggested to check portions at a time for the efficiency.
4. Select an accessibility standard (Adobe PDF, Section 508 (U.S.), or W3C ) from the Name menu, and then select the accessibility options to check for.

5. Click Start Checking.



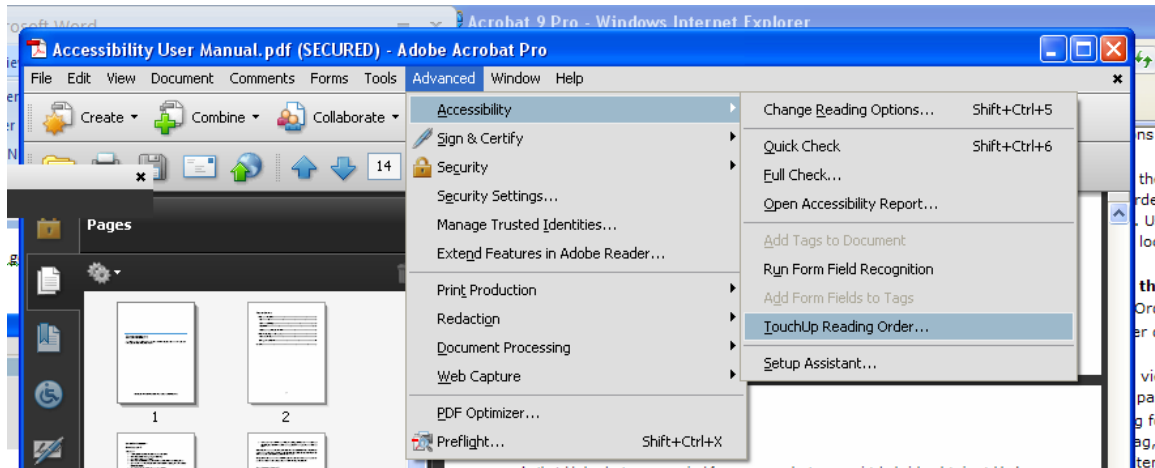
The results are displayed in the left panel, which also has helpful links and hints for repairing issues.

If you created a report in step 2, the results are available in the selected folder. Clicking on the links highlights the problem areas in the document. The Accessibility Checker panel also provides hints for repair.

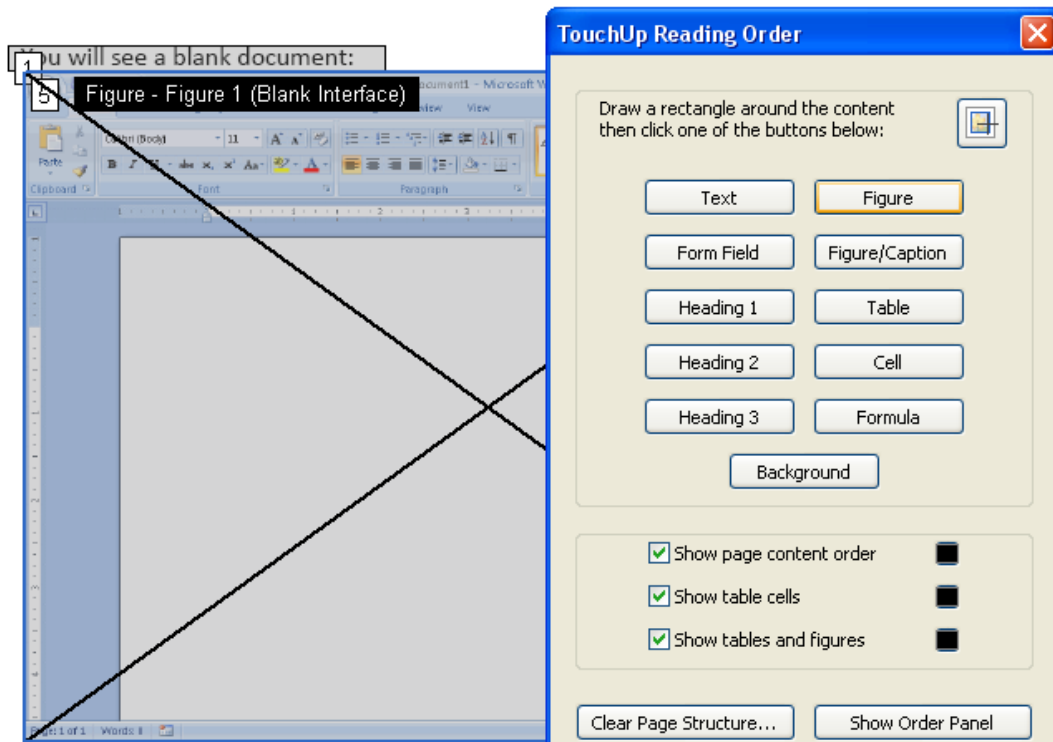
Because the Full Check feature is unable to distinguish between essential and nonessential content types, some issues it reports don't affect readability. It's a good idea to review all issues to determine which ones require correction.

# DOCUMENT READING ORDER

Use the TouchUp Reading Order tool to examine the structure, reading order, and contents of a PDF in detail. To access the TouchUp Reading Order tool, go to Advanced > Accessibility > TouchUp Reading Order...



Once you are in touchup mode, draw a box document sections according to its structure (normal text, heading 1, etc.) and click the appropriate box on the TouchUp Reading Order.

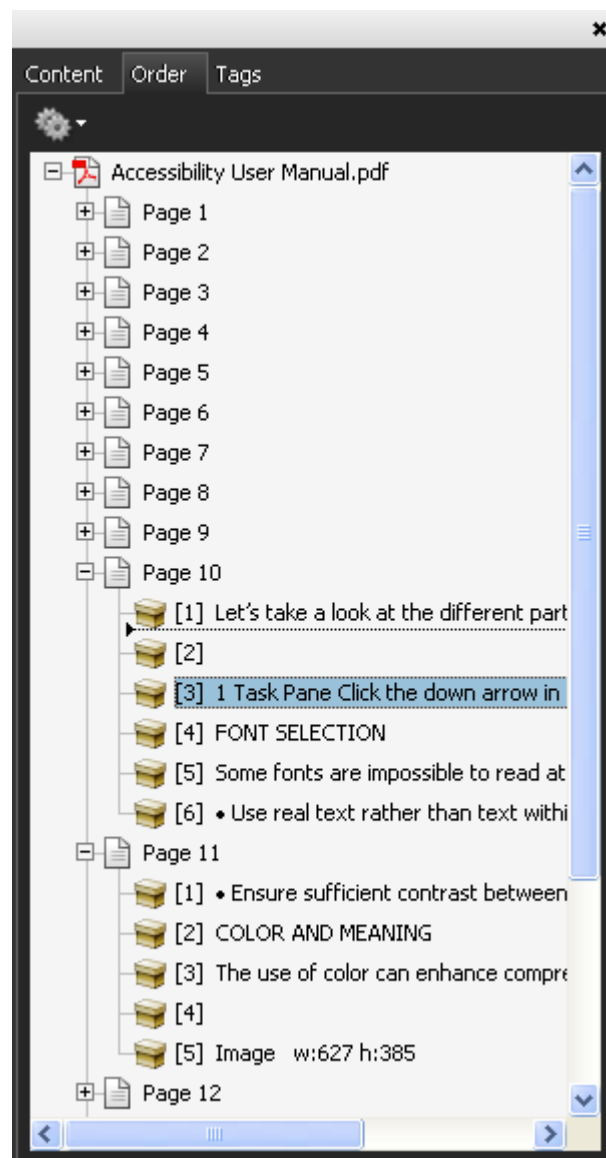


## REORDERING DOCUMENT TAGS

Sometimes the reading order of your document components will need to be adjusted.

To change the reading order:

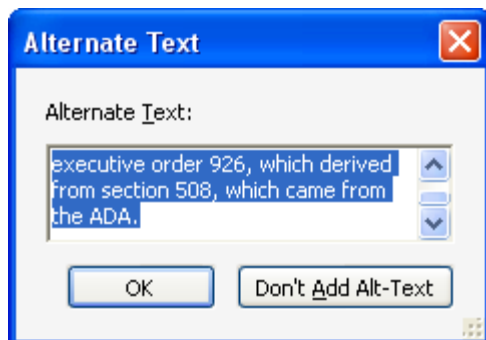
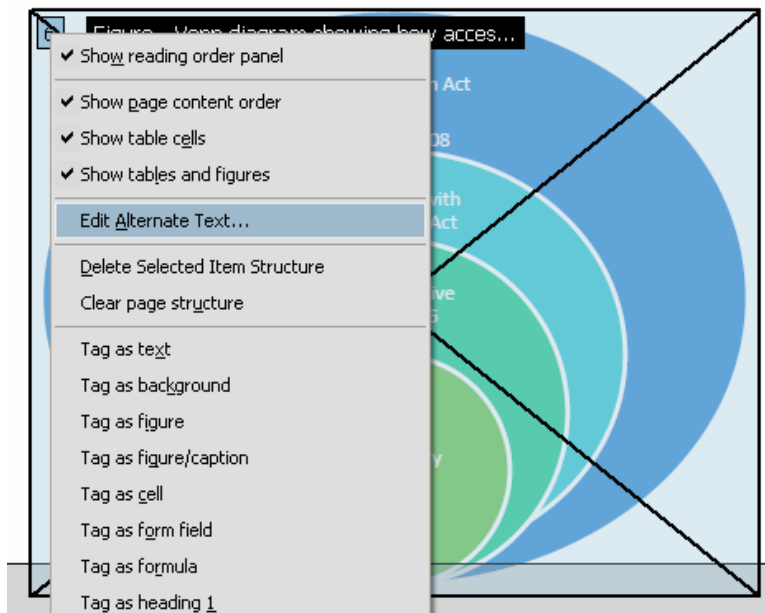
1. Select the TouchUp Reading Order tool.
2. In the TouchUp Reading Order dialog box, click the Show Order Panel button.
3. In the Order tab, navigate to view a list of highlighted regions that appear in the document pane.
4. In the Order tab, drag the tag for a highlighted region to the location you want. As you drag, a line appears to show potential locations. When you drop the item, the highlighted regions on your page are renumbered to show the new reading order.



## ADDING ALTERNATE TEXT FOR IMAGES, TABLES AND CHARTS

It is necessary to add alternate text for all images in a document. The alternative text is read by screen readers and also is seen on mouse-overs for web images.

While in TouchUp mode, you can add alternate text to images that have been tagged using the TouchUp Reading Order tool. To add alternate text, right-click on the tag number box and select Edit Alternate Text...



An alternate text dialog box will appear. Provide your text description and click OK.

## CONTINUE CHECKING UNTIL ALL ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED

Repeat the process of running the Accessibility Checker and using Hints for Repair until the Accessibility Checker indicates "The checker found no problems in this document" for the tests you have selected.

## FINAL CHECK

Once you have structured the document's reading order, the best way to test accessibility is to use the tools that assistive technology users will be utilizing. However, even if you don't have a screen reader, Acrobat offers some useful tools for checking the accessibility of a PDF file. Adobe Acrobat 9 has a built in read out loud tool. You can test how your document reads by going to View > Read Out Loud > Read to End of Document.

## WINDOWS COMMANDS FOR READ OUT LOUD FEATURE

### FROM THE VIEW MENU:

- Choose Alt + V for View, then A for Read Out Loud, and then O for Read this page only.
- Choose Alt + V for View, then A for Read Out Loud, and then E for Read to end of document.
- Choose Alt + V for View, then A for Read Out Loud, and then P to Pause reading. Note that if reading is paused, this command changes to Resume reading. Press the letter R to Resume reading.
- Choose Alt + V for View, then A for Read Out Loud, and then S to Stop reading.

### KEYBOARD COMMANDS ARE:

- Ctrl + Shift + V to Read this page only.
- Ctrl + Shift + B to Read to end of document.
- Ctrl + Shift + C to Pause or Resume reading.
- Ctrl + Shift + E to Stop reading.

## ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

- Chancellor's Office  
<http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/>
- CSULB Training  
<http://training.csulb.edu>
- ITSS  
<http://www.csulb.edu/lats/ts/software/lecshare>
- WCAG 2.0 at the W3C  
<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>
- 508 Compliance  
<http://www.section508.gov>