

# A bit about PDFs

PDF stands for Portable Document Format. As the name implies, it is a data format that can be used to describe documents. Adobe, the developers of PDF, market software to create, edit and visualize PDF files. Because the specifications of the file format are publicly available, a lot of other companies develop software for PDFs as well. In prepress, PDFs are used more and more as a format to exchange data between applications.

## Creating high-end PDF files

PDF (Portable Document Format) documents are quickly becoming the file format of choice for the graphic arts industry. The advantages of using this format are growing on a daily basis.

1. Fonts can be embedded
2. Graphics are embedded
3. Graphics can be downsampled for excellent compression
4. PDFs are relatively small for what they contain
5. They are not related to computer system
7. They can be annotated by multiple proofers
8. They can be edited and colour managed
9. Printers can print from them directly for high quality printing

## General Steps for Creating PDF Files

In general, there are two different ways in which you can create PDF files for prepress:

- a) From application select 'Publish or Export to PDF' from the 'File' menu.
- b) Print to a PostScript file and then use Acrobat Distiller to convert the PostScript data to a PDF file.

In general, the second workflow is much more reliable. We strongly recommend to use the print to PS file first, then use Acrobat Distiller to convert the PostScript data to a PDF file.

Every application uses different options to create a PostScript file that is suitable for conversion to PDF. In general, you should set the following options:

- a) Create a composite file, do not ask separations from the application itself
- b) Include all fonts in the printfile. On a PC, you should set up the system to include TrueType fonts as Type 42 fonts (in some drivers called 'outline'). Don't ask the driver to replace TrueType fonts with PostScript fonts.

The First Step is to purchase Acrobat Distiller from Adobe. This software can be purchased for a very reasonable price. Once Acrobat Distiller is installed, the proper set-up is required. \*Note-You will only need to do this step the first time you make a PDF. For Acrobat Distiller Settings please download appropriate PDF from website.

The Next Step is to convert your existing document (Quark, PageMaker, ect) into a PDF via your Acrobat Distiller.

## Editing PDF Files

PDFs can be manipulated more easily than PostScript files. There are already some programs on the market that allow you to change the content of a Pdf file and more are sure to pop up in the future. Below is a basic overview of the different options you have to edit PDF files.

Acrobat plug-ins

Illustrator

PhotoShop

FreeHand

Corel Draw

Enfocus pitstop