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## PDF Accessibility Overview

Combine PDF file format features with the functionality found in Adobe® Acrobat® and Adobe Reader® to provide access to documents all can use

A document or application is accessible if it can be used by people with disabilities—such as mobility impairments, blindness, and low vision—and not just by people who can see well and use a mouse. Accessibility features in Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Reader, and Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) make it easier for people with disabilities to use PDF documents and forms, with or without the aid of assistive software and devices such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, and braille printers.

Making PDFs accessible tends to benefit all users. For example, the underlying document structure that makes it possible for a screen reader to properly read a PDF out loud also makes it possible for a mobile device to correctly reflow and display the document on a small screen. Similarly, the preset tab order of an accessible PDF form helps all users—not just users with mobility impairments—fill the form more easily.

## Each PDF File is Different

Not all PDFs are the same. PDF files are created in a variety of ways, from a variety of applications, and for a variety of purposes. In addition to applying the proper accessibility enhancements to PDF documents, achieving your accessibility goals for an individual PDF file requires understanding the nature of the PDF and the uses for which it is intended.

Using the guide Adobe® Acrobat® X Pro Accessibility Guide: PDF Accessibility Repair Workflow, you will learn how to assess existing PDF files for certain characteristics which influence their accessibility. The order in which this assessment is conducted is important. By following these procedures in the recommended order, users can efficiently proceed through the analysis of a PDF file in a systematic fashion. Systematically ruling out or confirming certain characteristics which a PDF file may possess will guide you to the most appropriate next step for making an individual PDF accessible.

This series also discusses techniques for converting source files to accessible PDF. Using the Adobe PDFMaker with Microsoft Word as an example, this guide provides best practices for designing your source document with accessibility in mind so that the original document can be efficiently transformed into an accessible PDF version. Refer to the guide entitled Adobe® Acrobat® X Pro Accessibility Guide: Creating Accessible PDF from Microsoft® Word for complete information.

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**Note:** These Best Practices techniques assume the user has access to Adobe Acrobat Pro X or Adobe Acrobat X Pro Extended for Windows. Adobe Reader X and Adobe Acrobat X Standard do not have the complete set of tools needed to create and validate PDF documents for accessibility.

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## Two Workflows for Creating Accessible PDF Files

The PDF format is a destination file format. PDF files are typically created in some other application. What this means is that the author who is concerned with PDF accessibility will be confronted with one of two situations: