

Keep your PDF file size smaller.

If you are preparing documents which will be converted to PDF format you might find the following tips helpful in keeping the size of your files small.

Scanning Documents

Whether you are scanning documents from original or photocopied sources it is recommended that you use the services of the Digital Resources Management Centre (DRMC). The DRMC, based in the Barr Smith Library, has the facilities and expertise to prepare optimised digital copies of the documents you require (while also maintaining the integrity of the University's copyright records). Consult the DRMC web site at <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/library/drmc/>

Scanning Images

Many images from books, journals, newspapers etc. are restricted in use by copyright laws—if you are unsure of the copyright status of an image, again, consult the DRMC.

For images which you are sure are free of copyright restrictions, the following points should be considered when scanning:

- Scan the image to the size it will be used at, avoid simply resizing a large image file.
- Save 'photographic' and 'greyscale' type images in JPEG format.
- Save 'flat colour area' (e.g. screen captures) or 'clipart' type images in GIF or PNG format.

Microsoft Word to PDF

When preparing Word documents for PDF conversion keep the following points in mind:

- Keep the number of fonts to a minimum and preferably use the 'standard' fonts found on most computers these days (e.g. Arial, Arial Narrow, Helvetica, Times New Roman, Times, Symbol).
- Use only those images that relate to the document, avoid 'colourful' backgrounds.
- Insert images at the size they will be used. Large files that are 'shrunk' to fit are still the same size in Kb/Mb as the original, despite looking smaller.
- Do not have images repeat on each page in the header or footer.
- Prepare the document according to its final use: with higher resolution (200dpi/300dpi) images for a PDF for printing, or with lower resolution (72dpi/96dpi) images for a PDF for screen viewing only, or a compromise in the middle.
- Always 'Save As...' before converting to PDF, to force the file to be rewritten and compacted after making any edits/changes.
- Try creating the PDF file directly from Word using the PDF icon (using PDF Maker) which is optimised to work with MS Office documents, and also by printing the document to file (.prn or .ps) and then converting it using Acrobat Distiller. Compare the sizes, they can sometimes vary depending on the originating document.
- Split large documents into smaller parts and convert each part as a separate PDF file.
- Do not have both portrait and landscape layouts in the same document for conversion.
- Check that your 'conversion settings' are the ones you want to use—they stay as they were set when last used.

PowerPoint to PDF

When converting PowerPoint presentations to PDF keep the following points in mind:

- Avoid using pictorial or shaded backgrounds for all slides. In PowerPoint this image is stored once and 'used' for all slides—when converted to PDF this image is 'printed' to every page and costs Kb of space each time. (This is true of the University logo which displays on each page of a PowerPoint presentation—use it only once and you will see dramatic file size reduction.) To avoid any problems, keep the logo and any background visuals to the 'title' slide and revert to simpler, plainer backgrounds for the remaining slides. (See CLPD ppt template file as a guide.)
- Reduce the size of image files, before inserting them into the PowerPoint document, to the size they will be used at.
- Reduce image resolution: 150dpi or 72dpi for colour and greyscale images;
300dpi minimum for 'line art' or bitmapped images.
- Avoid using lots of bitmapped images.
- Reduce the colour depth of your images e.g. from millions of colours to a 256 palette.
- Avoid lots of transitions in your slide show.
- If printing slides for 'notes' or 'handouts' try the settings for both greyscale and B&W to see which option reduces the file size the most. (Print to a file and then convert to PDF.)
- Avoid the use of animated GIFs and other clever devices unless they are relevant to the document.
- Avoid embedded multimedia (audio/video)—instead add a link and provide it separately.

Optimizing your PDF files

Adobe provide details in the Acrobat Help files (see Acrobat Distiller Options) and on its website on how to optimise your PDF files to reduce their file size. The document can be downloaded from...

Reduce PDF file size (Acrobat 6)*

<http://www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/acr6optimize/main.html>

<http://www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/acr6optimize/pdfs/acr6optimize.pdf> 

<http://www.planetpdf.com/creative/article.asp?ContentID=6112> (html version)

(This document is for Acrobat 6, see 'Additional resources/documentation online' below for the Acrobat 5 version.)

Image Editors

IrfanView installed on all PCs configured with the 'University Standard Desktop'

Photoshop The professional image editor of choice. (If you have access to it.)

Many other options are available for PC and Mac users: search the Internet under 'Image Editors'.

The following documents provide hints on preparing graphics (images) for PDF and the Web:


Adobe Acrobat: PDF and graphics strategies

<http://www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/pdfgraphics/main.html>

<http://www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/pdfgraphics/page2.html>

Factors to Consider When Preparing Graphics for Web Pages (by Rick Brower and Dr Jerry Waite)

<http://www.uh.edu/~jwaite/Papers.html>

<http://www.uh.edu/~jwaite/Webgraph.pdf> 

Additional resources/documentation online

(PDF) Best Practices. Shlomo Perets, MicroType (www.microtype.com).

#1: Reducing the size of your PDFs (August 07, 2001)

<http://www.planetpdf.com/creative/article.asp?ContentID=6568>

Creating a PDF file: How do I reduce file size?

<http://www.espere.org/pdf/htm#reduce>

Keep PDF file size small (Adobe Acrobat 5 tutorial)

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/PDFLessons/KeepItSmall.pdf> 

Adobe Studio Tutorial files (online)

PDF files and the Web

<http://studio.adobe.com/us/tips/tip.jsp?p=1&id=526&xml=acr6ppwebpdfs>

Accessibility and MyUni

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/myuni/instruct/planning/accessibility.html>

PDF related information can also be found at these web sites:

Planet PDF

<http://www.planetpdf.com/>

PDF zone.com

<http://www.pdfzone.com/>

Acrobat Talk (email discussion list)

<http://www.blueworld.com/blueworld/lists/acrobat.html>

Adobe Studio: tips and tutorials

<http://studio.adobe.com/us/tips/main.jsp>

3DAP (Digital Data Delivery for Australian Publications)

The 3DAP guideline for the creation of digital files for advertising is based on the Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF.) For clarity, the PDF file that is generated in accordance with these guidelines is called a *3DAPv2 PDF* file.

<http://www.3dap.com.au/>