

NOTE: This document is part of BookStack’s open-source admin documentation and appears in edited form for portfolio purposes only. I have edited this document as if it were to be ported into an external environment for publishing. I have used the Microsoft Writing Style Guide.

The original document can be found here: [PDF Rendering](#)

The Microsoft Writing Style Guide can be found here: [Microsoft Writing Style Guide](#)

PDF rendering

By default, BookStack uses `dumpdf` to export pages as PDF documents. The benefit of using `dumpdf` is that it doesn’t require any additional installation or setup but the rendering capabilities are somewhat limited.

As an alternative, you can define a command to use external PDF rendering options that may provide more capabilities.

- [Export page size](#)
- [PDF export command](#)
- [Using wkhtmltopdf](#)

Export page size

By default, PDF exports are generated in A4 size. If you’d prefer exports to be generated in “US Letter” standard sizes, you can specify this within your `.env` like so:

```
1 # US Letter
2 EXPORT_PAGE_SIZE=letter
```

PDF export command

Instead of using the default PHP-based default PDF rendering system, you can define a command for BookStack to use when generating a PDF. This allows you the flexibility to choose which program is used to create PDF exports.

The command is set via an `EXPORT_PDF_COMMAND` option in your `.env` file, which can use the following placeholders:

- `{input_html_path}`

Commented [MOU1]: GLOBAL: Per MS style, use sentence-style capitalization.

Commented [MOU2]: GLOBAL: Suggest using headings rather than enlarged font for accessibility.

Commented [MOU3]: GLOBAL: Suggest using Calibri font family per branding and accessibility standards. QA has corrected headings only; please apply changes to entire document before publishing.

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Commented [MOU4]: Per MS style, suggest revising for clarity and to avoid awkwardness.

NOTE: I have capitalized `dumpdf` in the revision as it begins the sentence. Please verify capitalization style; it appears both capitalized and lowercased in GitHub.

Suggest: `Dumpdf` doesn’t require any additional installation or setup. However, the rendering capabilities are somewhat limited.

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Field Code Changed

Deleted: [PDF Export Command](#)

Field Code Changed

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Commented [MOU6]: Query: Please verify the term “US Letter” for capitalization style and the use of quotes. If you are using this term to match the string used in the example, retain as-is. You may, however, wish to remove quotes and use bold for emphasis instead.

Commented [MOU7]: Per global readiness, do not use ... [1]

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Commented [MOU8]: Revised for concision and flow.

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- Path to a file where BookStack will provide HTML to convert
- {output_pdf_path}
- Path to a file where the command should output its PDF result

Here's an example value for this option using these placeholders:

```
1 EXPORT_PDF_COMMAND="/scripts/convert.sh {input_html_path} {output_pdf_path}"
```

Below you can find some examples using this for specific PDF generation options.

Considerations

- Security is a significant concern for this option and process. Input HTML will include user-editable data, and is not assured to be trustworthy and safe. Ideally, any networking or file system access would be disabled or otherwise prevented during conversion.
- BookStack will attempt to embed required images into the HTML data as base64 data URIs to avoid external fetching.
- BookStack will embed CSS styling into the HTML data.
- Use of this option requires running a process from PHP, which can be considered risky and may potentially be blocked by configuration, environment, or systems like SELinux by default.
- BookStack sets a timeout of 15 seconds for this command to return.
- BookStack will use the return status code of the command as an indicator of failure or success, while also checking that the output PDF was written to.

Example: Weasyprint command option

Warning: This option is not considered secure due to potential filesystem or network access.

This example uses [weasyprint](#) to generate PDF exports.

```
1 EXPORT_PDF_COMMAND="weasyprint {input_html_path} {output_pdf_path}"
```

Using wkhtmltopdf

Note: As of BookStack v24.05, this option is considered deprecated due to diminishing support for wkhtmltopdf. You can instead use the more flexible [PDF export command](#) option detailed above.

Pre-compiled binaries for wkhtmltopdf can be found on the [wkhtmltopdf downloads page](#). BookStack will check for a file named `wkhtmltopdf` at the base folder of a BookStack install. If found, it will use that to render PDF exports. If the file does not exist, it will check for a `WKHTMLTOPDF` variable in the `.env` file. You can use the below variable in your `.env` file to set an alternate location to wkhtmltopdf:

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Commented [MOU9]: Per MS style, do not use hyphens as dashes. Suggest creating sub-bullets instead. Also, per MS style, bulleted items must be parallel (all fragments or all sentences). Items that are fragments must not use terminal periods unless the items create complete sentences when combined with the stem.

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Commented [MOU10]: Suggest changing "these" to "the same" so the reader knows that this next example uses previously introduced placeholders.

Suggest: Here's an example value for this option using the same placeholders.

Commented [MOU11]: Per MS style, do not use directional terms "below." Suggest "later in this document" instead.

Suggest: You can find some examples ... PDF generation options later in this document.

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Commented [MOU12]: Suggest explicitly naming the option for clarity. Suggest, for example: "Use of the PDF export command option ..."

Commented [MOU13]: Per MS style, do not use and/or. Use "or" only. Additional revisions (comma after "environment") applied per MS style.

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Field Code Changed

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1 `WKHTMLTOPDF=/home/user/bins/wkhtmltopdf`

If neither of those exist, or if the security option [mentioned later in this document](#) is not enabled, the default dompdf renderer will be used instead.

Note: As of BookStack v21.08, the `ALLOW_UNTRUSTED_SERVER_FETCHING` must also be set to `true` for wkhtmltopdf to be enabled, [as](#) without this dompdf will be used instead.

This change was made for security [reasons](#) since, in many cases, wkhtmltopdf will perform fetches to external URLs which may be defined by users. You should only enable [this](#) option in environments where users [and](#) visitors are trusted.

1 `ALLOW_UNTRUSTED_SERVER_FETCHING=true`

[See our security page for more detail regarding this option.](#)

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Commented [MOU15]: Per accessibility, do not use sensory terms (see). Suggest:

Refer to our security page for more detail regarding this option.

Per global readiness, do not use idioms or localized expressions (like so) as not all audiences will understand them. Suggest replacing “like so” with “using the following example:”

Suggest: ... you can specify this within your .env using the following example: