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Rails: Convert HTML to PDF?

What is the best and easiest way of taking HTML and converting it into a PDF, similar to use CFDOCUMENT on ColdFusion?

UPDATE: I really appreciate all the comments and suggestions that people have given so far, however I feel that people leaving their answers are missing the point.

1) the solution has to be free or open sourced. one person suggested using pricexml and the other pd4ml. both of these solutions costs money (pricexml costing an arm and a leg) which i'm not about the fork over.

2) they must be able to take in html (either from a file, url or a string variable) and then produce the pdf. libraries like prawn, rprf, rtex are produced using their own methods and not taking in html.

please don't think i'm ungrateful for the suggestions, it's just that pdf generation seems like a really problem for people like me who use ColdFusion but want to convert to Rails.

ruby-on-rails pdf

edited Dec 17 '08 at 20:04

asked Dec 10 '08 at 19:12



rip747

5,780 ● 6 ● 25 ● 41

github.com/itkin/proselytism.git – nicolas Mar 6 '13 at 8:14

So why did you downvote HTMLDOC then? – Kurt Pfeifle Dec 17 '14 at 22:42

14 Answers

The gem, [WickedPDF](#), does *exactly* that.

edited Mar 11 '15 at 22:26



Josh Pinter

14.9k ● 6 ● 84 ● 105

answered Dec 5 '09 at 20:55



Sebastian

1,845 ● 3 ● 26 ● 33

1 you sir are the man. EXACTLY what i was looking for! – rip747 Dec 6 '09 at 13:39

1 i tried clicking on the link a couple of times, but then I lost track of what was going on (strange). Then I tried copy paste the link, and it worked. If you get a %5f in the pasted url, just replace it with an underscore. – Kinjal Dixit Jul 2 '11 at 22:43

Is this preferred over PDFKit? – Matt Feb 14 '13 at 16:34

@Matt According to the Ruby Toolbox, they're about on par: ruby-toolbox.com/categories/pdf_generation I can only speak to WickedPDF, but it certainly gets the job done and is maintained quite actively by the looks of it. – Josh Pinter Mar 11 '15 at 23:54

The greatest thing nowadays is PDFKit for this job:

- <https://github.com/pdfkit/PDFKit>
- <http://railscasts.com/episodes/220-pdfkit>

edited Aug 5 '12 at 10:08



whirlwin

5,315 ● 15 ● 44 ● 71

answered Apr 9 '11 at 17:29



f100r

61.2k ● 17 ● 172 ● 205

Try [WickedPDF](#), PDF generator (from HTML) plugin.

Here is example

```
gem 'wicked_pdf'
gem 'wkhtmltopdf-binary'
#wicked_pdf is a wrapper for wkhtmltopdf, you'll need to install that, too
```

In Your Controller(I supposed you are in show method):

```
respond_to do |format|
  format.html
  format.pdf do
    pdf = render_to_string :pdf => 'test',
      layout: 'pdf.html.erb',
      template: 'show.pdf.slim',
      header: { :right => "[page] of [topage]"},
      margin: {top: 0,
        bottom: 0,
        left: 0,
        right: 0},
      outline: {outline: true,
        outline_depth: 2}
  end
end
```

In your view for PDF link

```
= link_to 'Download Pdf', you_show_path(@uour_object, format: :pdf)
```

If you want to send pdf in email attachment, first save your pdf file in public or temp folder then in mailer class (e.g. in mailers/e_mailer.rb)

```
attachments["test.pdf"] = File.read(Rails.root.join('public','test.pdf'))
mail(:to => to, :cc => cc, :subject => "subject")
```

After sending email you can delete file

```
File.delete(Rails.root.join("public", "test.pdf"))
```

edited Aug 4 '16 at 6:26

answered Oct 7 '15 at 12:26



[Sajjad Murtaza](#)
715 ● 6 ● 14

This is the true answer – [Abs](#) Jan 31 '16 at 0:58

I know this question is almost 5 years old at this point. However, new options are available.

Try Shrimp! <https://github.com/adeven/shrimp>

answered Jun 5 '13 at 17:30



[Michael Irely](#)
1,573 ● 2 ● 22 ● 45

After After a lot of blood sweat and tears I managed to write a pretty simple rails app that allows the user to write letter templates via [TinyMce](#), these are then saved and can be viewed as pdf documents.

I decided to restrict the options in the wysiwyg editor as much as possible as some of the options don't work exactly as expected, but that's nothing a little gsub-ing couldn't solve if needed.

There is a ruby gem that wraps HTMLDOC which you'll need: [PDF::HTMLDoc](#)

Once you've got that, register the mime type, then you can do something like:

```
@letter_template = LetterTemplate.find(params[:id])

respond_to do |format|
  format.html
  format.pdf { send_data render_to_pdf({:action => 'show.rpdf', :layout => 'pdf_report'}), :filename =>
    @letter_template.name + ".pdf", :disposition => 'inline' }
end
```

In the application controller i've added the render_to_pdf method like:

```
def render_to_pdf(options = nil)
  data = render_to_string(options)
  pdf = PDF::HTMLDoc.new
  pdf.set_option :bodycolor, :white
  pdf.set_option :toc, false
  pdf.set_option :portrait, true
  pdf.set_option :links, false
  pdf.set_option :webpage, true
  pdf.set_option :left, '2cm'
  pdf.set_option :right, '2cm'
```

```
pdf.set_option :footer, "..."  
pdf.set_option :header, "..."  
pdf.set_option :bottom, '2cm'  
pdf.set_option :top, '2cm'  
pdf << data  
pdf.generate  
end
```

You'll find more documentation on HTMLDOC site that Travis Beale Linked to. Hope this helps get you on your way and unless your documents are really complicated it should suffice. Let us know how you get on.

answered May 8 '09 at 14:43



[tsdbrown](#)

3,460 ● 2 ● 25 ● 36

- There is [RPDF](#) in which you describe your pdf's in as a view.
- There also is [RTEX](#) which uses (La)TeX to generates pdf's.

answered Dec 11 '08 at 17:16



[mat](#)

8,082 ● 2 ● 31 ● 42

The closest thing I found as a "solution" to this is by using JRuby and then using [The Flying Saucer Project](#). I just wish that it would get ported over to Ruby so it could be a native solution. God I wish I was better at Java.

edited Dec 12 '08 at 18:30

answered Dec 11 '08 at 13:11



[rip747](#)

5,780 ● 6 ● 25 ● 41

[acts_as_flying_saucer](#) is a ruby port of flying saucer library – [Amar](#) Jun 13 '11 at 9:46

The project may have stagnated, but Pisa (aka [XHTML2PDF](#)) is a Python lib which does CSS+HTML to PDF. used it in a (low-traffic) Rails app a while back by driving it as a commandline tool -- worked pretty well.

answered Jun 5 '10 at 23:54



[Thomas](#)

41 ● 1

If you want to have really good quality (think, proper layout/CSS etc) you need to create a process embedding a real webbrowser rendering it offscreen and printing it via PDF printer driver.

answered Dec 10 '08 at 19:21



[Johan Dahlin](#)

10.6k ● 4 ● 24 ● 51

actually I don't think would be the best solution as most websites have a "print" style to them that remove elements of the site. – [rip747](#) Dec 10 '08 at 19:30

There is for sure no direct way to do this in Ruby (at least there wasn't when I was trying to do it couple of months ago). If you really can't avoid generating your pdfs from html, you should probably look around for some external tools or services for this purpose.

Good luck!

answered Dec 10 '08 at 19:44



[Milan Novota](#)

12.7k ● 6 ● 44 ● 60

I am trying the library from [www.pd4ml.com](#)

here is a code snip....

I pull in the html into the String content. Then I do a couple things like replace the radio buttons with checkboxes and then run it through the pd4ml library to render the pdf. The result looks pretty much like the original page....

```
String content = nextPage.generateResponse().contentString();

content = content.replace("Print", "");
content = content.replace("Back", "");

content = content.replace("border=\"1\"", "border=\"0\"");
content = content.replace("radio", "checkbox");

java.net.InetAddress i = java.net.InetAddress.getLocalHost();
String address = i.getHostAddress()+":53000";

content = content.replace("img src=\"/cgi-bin", "img src=\"http://"+address+"/cgi-bin");

System.out.println(content);

PD4ML html = new PD4ML();
html.setPageSize( new java.awt.Dimension(650, 700) );
html.setPageInsets( new java.awt.Insets(30, 30, 30, 30) );
html.setHtmlWidth( 750 );
html.enableImgSplit( false );
html.enableTableBreaks(true);

StringReader isr = new StringReader(content);
baos = new ByteArrayOutputStream();
html.render( isr, baos);
PDFRegForm pdfForm = (PDFRegForm)pageWithName("PDFRegForm");
pdfForm.baos = baos;
pdfForm.generateResponse();
```

answered Dec 17 '08 at 19:15



Adam Yocum

Have you tried looking at html2pdf? the home page is <http://html2pdf.seven49.net/Web/>

There is also a sourceforge project of it.

Alan

answered Dec 17 '08 at 20:09



apolinsky

238 ● 1 ● 3

HTMLDOC?

- converts HTML to PDF;
- Free and Open Source (commercial support available);
- can be used as...
 - ...standalone application,
 - ...for batch document processing,
 - ...or run as a web-based service;
- interface is CLI or GUI.

edited Oct 7 '15 at 12:06

answered Jun 10 '10 at 19:56



Aleksandr Kovalev

1,145 ● 2 ● 12 ● 25



Kurt Pfeifle

51.1k ● 13 ● 132 ● 223

Not specific to Ruby, but the best solution I've found to this is the open source [HTMLDOC](#).

edited Oct 7 '15 at 12:09

answered May 8 '09 at 13:26



Aleksandr Kovalev

1,145 ● 2 ● 12 ● 25



Travis Beale

3,004 ● 5 ● 24 ● 33