PDFBooklet

User Manual

Version 0.1.0-preview

Create professional booklet impositions from PDF files
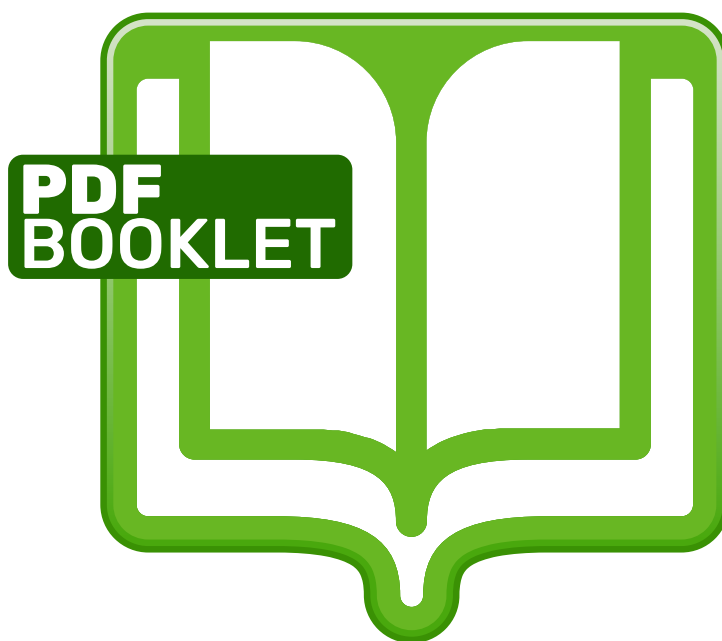
Table of Contents

Welcome

Thank you for using PDFBooklet! This application helps you create professional booklet impositions from PDF files for printing, binding, and distribution.

Whether you're creating a booklet to fold and staple, a calendar with two pages per sheet, or simply rearranging pages, PDFBooklet gives you complete control with an intuitive interface.

Getting Started

Installation

Linux Users:
- Download the PDFBooklet-x86_64.AppImage file
- Open a terminal and navigate to the download location
- Make it executable: chmod +x PDFBooklet-x86_64.AppImage
- Run it: ./PDFBooklet-x86_64.AppImage

Alternatively, double-click the AppImage file in your file manager (if configured to allow executable files).

First Launch

When you first launch PDFBooklet, you'll see:

- Menu bar with File and Help options
- Left sidebar with configuration tabs
- Center preview area (empty until you open a PDF)
- Status bar at the bottom

Opening and Configuring Your PDF

Opening a PDF

Click File → Open PDF or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+O. Navigate to your PDF file and click Open. The first page will appear in the preview area.

Basic Configuration

Before arranging pages, configure these basic settings in the Basic Options tab:

Mode

- **Booklet:** Arranges pages side-by-side for folding and binding (most common)
- **Calendar:** Arranges pages top-and-bottom (useful for calendars)
- **Single:** Processes pages individually without combining

Unit

Choose millimeters (mm) or inches (in) based on your preference.

Output Size

Select your paper size from common presets: A4, A5, Letter, Legal, or Custom (enter your own dimensions).

Orientation

- **Portrait:** Tall pages (default for most booklets)
- **Landscape:** Wide pages

Example: To create a standard booklet on A4 paper, select Mode: Booklet, Output Size: A4, Orientation: Portrait

Understanding Layout Modes

Booklet Mode

Creates a layout where pages sit side-by-side, ready for folding and binding.

How it works:
- Pages are arranged so that when folded, they appear in correct reading order
- The back page sits next to the front page
- Middle pages sit in the center spread

Common use: Printed booklets, brochures, magazines, zines

Calendar Mode

Places two pages on each sheet with one above the other.

How it works:
- First page appears on top half
- Second page appears on bottom half
- Continue through the document

Common use: Calendars, comparison documents, note-taking layouts

Single Page Mode

Processes each page individually onto its own output sheet.

How it works:
- Each input page becomes one output page
- Useful for resizing, rotating, or applying transformations without combining pages

Common use: Resizing PDFs, applying consistent transformations, format conversion

Global Transformations

Global transformations apply to every page in your document. Configure these in the Global Options tab.

Horizontal Shift

Moves all pages left or right. Positive values shift right, negative values shift left. Use this to adjust margins or center content.

Vertical Shift

Moves all pages up or down. Positive values shift up, negative values shift down.

Scale (Uniform)

Enlarges or reduces all pages proportionally. 100% = original size, 110% = 10% larger, 90% = 10% smaller.

Rotation

Rotates all pages by a specific angle. Positive values rotate counterclockwise, negative values rotate clockwise. Common values: 90°, 180°, 270° for orientation changes.

Horizontal Scale (Directional)

Stretches or compresses pages horizontally only. 100% = original width, 110% = 10% wider. Useful for fitting content to different aspect ratios.

Vertical Scale (Directional)

Stretches or compresses pages vertically only. 100% = original height, 109% = common adjustment for A4 to fit Letter paper height.

Flip Horizontal / Flip Vertical

Mirrors pages along the horizontal or vertical axis. Useful for creating mirror images or fixing reversed scans.

Example Use Case: You have a Letter-sized PDF but want to print on A4 paper. The height difference requires a 9% vertical stretch: Set Output Size to A4, Set Vertical Scale to 109%.

Page-Specific Transformations

Apply unique transformations to individual pages or groups of pages using the Page Options tab.

Selecting Pages

Click on any page in the preview to select it. You'll see the page highlight, the "Manually selected page" radio button activate, and current transform values appear.

Domain Selection

Choose which pages to affect:

- **This page:** Affects only the currently clicked page, overrides global and even/odd settings
- **All even pages:** Affects pages 2, 4, 6, 8, etc. (right-hand pages)
- **All odd pages:** Affects pages 1, 3, 5, 7, etc. (left-hand pages)

How Transforms Compound

Transforms add together (compound):

Example 1: Global: 5° rotation, 109% vertical scale. Even pages: +3° rotation. Result for page 4: 8° rotation (5° + 3°), 109% vertical scale.

Example 2: Global: 109% vertical scale. Page 7 (manually selected): +2° rotation. Result for page 7: 2° rotation, 109% vertical scale.

Key Point: Manual page selections have the highest priority, followed by even/odd rules, then global settings.

Practical Workflow

- Set global transformations first (affects all pages)
- Select "All even pages" or "All odd pages" to adjust page sides
- Click individual pages for specific corrections
- Preview updates in real-time

Advanced Options

Fine-tune quality and performance in the Advanced Options tab.

Preview DPI

Controls the quality of the preview display:
- **72 DPI:** Fast, lower quality (good for quick checks)
- **150 DPI:** Balanced quality and speed (recommended)
- **300 DPI:** High quality, slower rendering (for final review)

Note: This only affects the preview display, not your saved PDF.

Tip: Use 72 DPI while making adjustments, then switch to 300 DPI for final review before saving.

Downscale Images on Save

Reduces file size by compressing raster images in your PDF.

Enable this when:
- Your PDF contains large photos or scanned images
- File size is a concern
- You're distributing digitally

Disable this when:
- You need maximum image quality
- Your PDF is mostly vector graphics/text
- File size doesn't matter

Target DPI

Sets the resolution for downsampled images (only applies if "Downscale Images" is enabled):
- **72 DPI:** Web/screen viewing, smallest files
- **150 DPI:** Balanced quality, medium files
- **300 DPI:** Print quality, larger files
- **600-1200 DPI:** High-quality printing, large files

Important: FlateDecode images (certain PNG-compressed content) are never downsampled to avoid quality issues. Only JPEG images are affected.

Saving Your Booklet

Save Process

- Click File → Save As or press Ctrl+S
- Choose a location and filename
- Click Save
- A progress bar shows the save process
- When complete, your PDF is ready!

What Gets Saved

- All page transformations applied
- Final layout (booklet/calendar/single)
- Downsampled images (if enabled)
- Vector content preserved at full quality

File Size

Your output file size depends on number of pages, amount of raster images, downscale settings, and original PDF compression.

Tip: If file size is large, enable "Downscale Images" and set Target DPI to 150 or lower.

Tips and Best Practices

Workflow Tips

Start Simple:
- Open your PDF
- Set basic options (mode, size, orientation)
- Preview the result
- Adjust if needed
- Save

Use Global First:
Set global transformations before page-specific ones. It's easier to make fine adjustments on top of a good baseline.

Preview Different Pages:
Use the navigation arrows (← →) to check different spreads. Issues might only appear on certain pages.

Test Print:
Always print one copy first to verify alignment, especially for booklets.

Quality Settings

For Screen Viewing:
- Preview DPI: 72-150
- Downscale Images: Yes
- Target DPI: 72-150

For Home Printing:
- Preview DPI: 150-300
- Downscale Images: Optional
- Target DPI: 150-300

For Professional Printing:
- Preview DPI: 300
- Downscale Images: No (or 300+ DPI)
- Preserve maximum quality

Troubleshooting

Application Won't Launch

Linux AppImage issues:
- Ensure the file is executable: chmod +x PDFBooklet-x86_64.AppImage
- Try running from terminal to see error messages
- Check that you have a modern desktop environment

PDF Won't Open

Common causes:
- File is corrupted: Try opening in another PDF viewer first
- File is password-protected: Remove protection before importing
- File format is incompatible: Ensure it's a valid PDF

Preview Looks Wrong

Try these steps:
- Check your global transformations are they set correctly?
- Verify output size matches your intended paper
- Check orientation (portrait vs landscape)
- Increase Preview DPI to 300 for clearer view

Images Look Bad After Downscaling

Solutions:
- Increase Target DPI (try 300 instead of 72)
- Disable "Downscale Images on Save"
- Note: Some image types (FlateDecode) are automatically skipped to preserve quality

File Size Is Too Large

Reduce file size:
- Enable "Downscale Images on Save"
- Set Target DPI to 72 or 150
- Check if your source PDF is already optimized

Getting Help

GitHub Issues

Report bugs or request features at: https://github.com/selwynorren/PDFBooklet/issues

Documentation

Latest updates and information: https://github.com/selwynorren/PDFBooklet

About

PDFBooklet is open-source software created to make booklet creation accessible and intuitive.

Version: 0.1.0-preview

Thank you for using PDFBooklet!

We hope this tool makes your booklet creation process smooth and enjoyable.

Happy printing!