Acrobat Forms Tips and Techniques

Copying Fields

It often takes some intense manipulation of fields to get things just right on a form. Proper coloring, sizing, actions and JavaScripts all make up a field. It is often the case that you need to make a copy of a field within a form but did you know that you can save your form fields to a separate file and copy and paste them for later use? This tip shows you the three different forms of copying that are available in Acrobat Forms Author version 3.5.

Control-Drag Copy

The *Control-Drag Copy* allows you to copy fields within the same page within a document.
1) Open this sample file (FrmTnT01.pdf).
2) Select the form tool so that you can edit the form fields on the page.
3) Select a field by clicking inside the field rectangle.
4) Click within the field and drag the field to a new location while holding down the *Control* key. Notice how the cursor changes with the addition of a plus sign ("+") to indicate that you are copying. You can hold down the Shift key to constrain the dragging of your field in the horizontal or vertical direction.
5) Switch back to the hand tool, notice how your new field is exactly the same as the old one.

Clipboard Copy

The *Clipboard Copy* allows you to copy fields across pages and across documents.
1) Continue using the sample file from the previous step.
2) Select the form tool so that you can edit the form fields on the page.
3) Select the two fields on the page by holding down the *Control* key and doing a **marquee select** on both fields. Notice how the cursor changes to the selection cursor when you hold down the *Control* key.
4) Type Control-C or select **Edit⇒Copy** from the menu bar. Your fields have now been copied to the clipboard.
5) Turn to page 2 in your sample document and type Control-V or select **Edit⇒Paste** from the menu bar. Your fields are now pasted into the center of your current view on the second page.

Duplicate Fields

The *Duplicate Fields* feature allows you to duplicate a selection of fields on many pages in a document automatically. This special feature tries to share properties and field data between fields in order to reduce file size.
1) Continue using the sample file from the previous step but return to the first page.
2) Select the form tool so that you can edit the form fields on the page.
3) Select the two fields on the page by clicking on the first field and then Shift-clicking on the second field. You can extend a multiple selection at any time by Shift-clicking on additional fields. This is more precise than marquee selection but can be more time consuming. Using a combination of the two techniques is usually your best bet.
4) Select **Edit⇒Fields⇒Duplicate…** from the menu bar. The page selection dialog will appear. Select the *all pages*

You might want to keep a special document with all of your favorite fields inside as palette to copy from to make it easier when you want to author a form. Feel free to copy fields from some of the sample files that came with your Acrobat Forms Maker version 3.5 CD and use them in your own forms.