

Universal Access Tip Sheet: Creating Accessible PDF Files with Form Fields

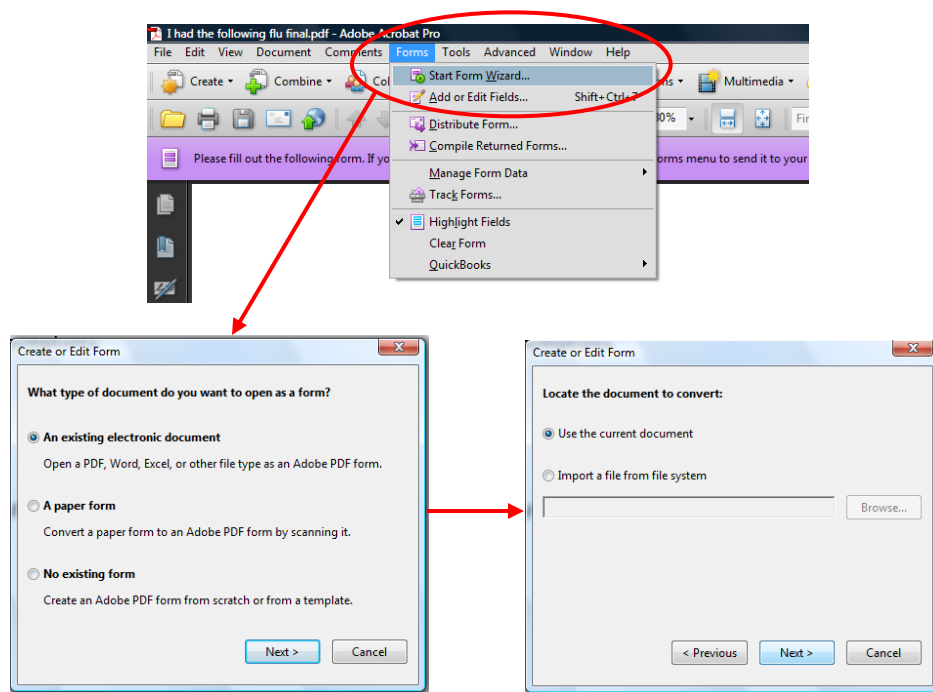
Forms that can be filled out electronically are very popular for many groups associated with the university. Often these come in the form of PDF files. There are some easy steps that can be taken to create PDFs with form fields that are accessible to all people.

NOTE: To create an accessible PDF with form fields, you must use Acrobat Pro or higher.

Step 1: Add Form Fields to Your Existing Document

Open your PDF document and do the following:

1. *Select Forms* from the toolbar
2. *Select An existing document* and *click Next*
3. *Select Use current document* and *click Next*



At this point, Acrobat will place form fields into places that it feels would be appropriate. The most likely result will be a text field placed on any blank line.

Step 2: Remove Unnecessary Fields

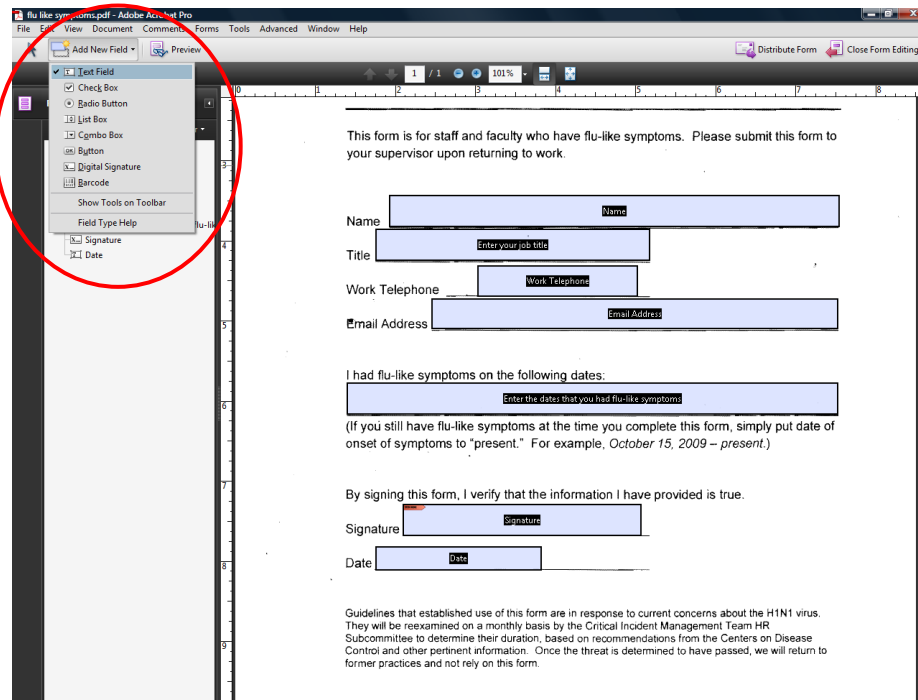
At this point, Acrobat will place form fields into places that it feels would be appropriate. The most likely result will be a text field placed on any blank line. Some of these fields may be unnecessary and these need to be removed. To remove these fields:

1. *Right click* on the desired field
2. *Click Delete*

Step 3: Add Needed Fields

Acrobat will not necessarily add all of the fields that you need. To add more fields:

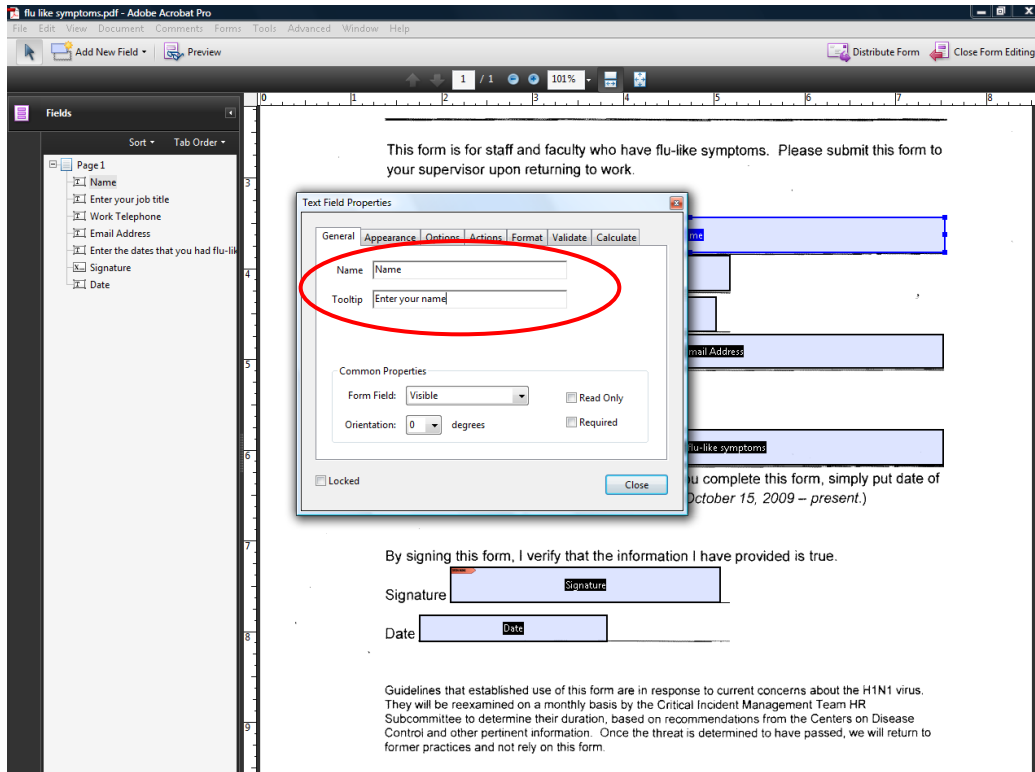
1. *Click Add New Field*
2. *Select* the type of field you wish to add (text field, check box, radio button, etc.)The cursor will turn into a crosshair with the desired field attached.
3. *Point* to the spot where you would like to add your field and *click*.
4. Continue until all fields are entered.



Step 4: Make Fields Accessible

Just adding fields does not make them accessible. Each field must be given a name and a tooltip. The tooltip will tell a screen reader user what to do when he or she reaches that field. To make them accessible:

1. *Right click* on the form field
2. *Choose Properties*
3. *Enter* a name in the Name field
4. *Enter* a description in the Tooltip Field



If your field is a **Checkbox**, consider tooltips that indicate why the user should check the box.

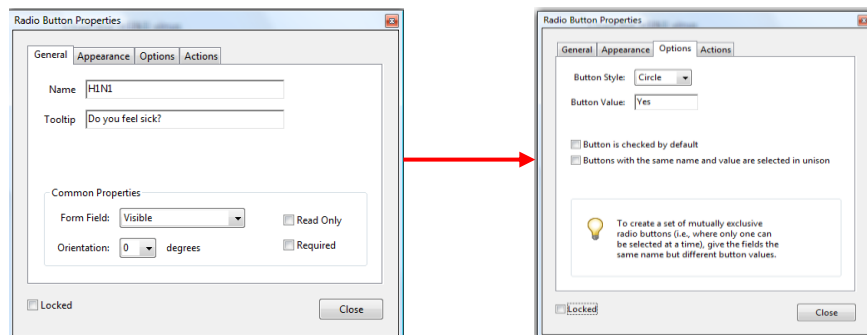
- Ex. Check this box if you experienced a fever in the last week

If your field is a **Radio Button** (a yes or no choice), enter a tooltip that asks a question.

- Ex. Do you feel sick?

If using a **Radio Button**, to ensure that only one option can be chosen:

1. *Right click* on the radio button
2. **Choose Properties**
3. **Name** each button the same and provide the same tooltip
4. **Click Options**
5. Make sure the **Button Value** for one button is “Yes” and the other is “No”



Step 5: Set the Tab Order

Many people with disabilities access these forms by tabbing through them. With this in mind, it is important to ensure that the tab order follows logical order. To do this, look at the list on the left side of your PDF. This will show the tab order. If the order is not correct, Click and hold on the icon to the left of the word that you'd like to move. Then drag that form to the spot you'd like it to appear in that order list. You will not see a change on your PDF, but the order will change for the individual tabbing.

Step 6: Finalizing the Form

- 1. *Click Close Form Editing***