

## Universal Access Tip Sheet – Creating an Accessible PDF from a Word File

When creating PDFs from a Microsoft Word file, there are steps that can be taken to ensure that the PDF is accessible to all, including those that use screen or text readers. This can be done without compromising the security of the file and it helps everyone else who may want to use this.

*In order to create a PDF from a Microsoft Word file, you must have a version of Acrobat Pro or higher.*

### Getting Started:

When creating a PDF through a Word file, make sure that you are typing in at least 12 point type, avoid using text boxes wherever possible, and use Styles to add headings and titles that will be used for navigation purposes.

### Using Styles:

Designing your document with styles adds the structure that the PDF needs to be accessible to all. To add a title or heading style:

1. Highlight the text you will turn into a heading or title
2. In Word 2007, *Select* the proper **Style** from the **Home** ribbon
3. In Word 2003, *Click* **Format: Select Styles and Formatting** and choose the proper style from the list along the right hand side of the palette.

### Add Alternative Text (Alt Text) to Images:

People who use screen readers to read documents have difficulty with images because the reader cannot read an image directly. To make images accessible, a thorough description of the image must be provided as alternative text. Alternative text can be added to an image in the creation stage as follows:

1. In Word 2007, *Right click* on the image and choose **Size**.
2. *Select* the **Alt Text** tab and enter your description.

Or

1. In Word 2003, *Right click* and select the **Format Picture** dialog box.
2. *Select* the **Web** tab and enter your description.

### Setting Up for Converting to PDF:

The settings in PDFMaker Conversion determine the features that will be included and how they will be included in the PDF. Selecting Preferences and then the Settings Tab gives you access to different settings. For accessibility purposes, the most important setting to check is “Enable Accessibility and Reflow With Tagged Adobe PDF”. This is set by default and is part of the process used to make your PDF readable. It is also important to check the following:

1. Create Bookmarks – this will use the headings you have specified to create bookmarks for navigation tools.

Note: Under the Bookmarks Tab, you can choose what level you would like to be converted to bookmarks. Recommendations include all headings or all styles if styles were used. This can help with navigation.

2. Add Links – this will make any links that you add able to be accessed

Under the Security tab is the second piece that is important to make sure is checked. Here, the creator must check “Enable Text Access for Screen Reader Devices for the Visually Impaired”. This is set as the default, but it is imperative that you ensure this box is checked. You can still set other security options to prevent copying and protect your document even with allowing screen readers to read the text.

### **Final Conversion:**

Once all of the proper setting have been selected, it is time to fully convert the Word document into an accessible PDF. This is as simple as pushing one button:

1. In Word 2007, *Click* the **Create PDF** button from the Acrobat Ribbon.
2. In Word 2003, either *Click* the **Convert to Acrobat PDF** button on the Acrobat toolbar, or *Click* **Convert to PDF** from the **Adobe PDF** menu.

Following these steps, you should have an accessible PDF that can be accessed by any student using a screen reader.