



# A PDF'S QUEST FOR ACCESSIBILITY



What are the steps to making a PDF accessible?

## PDFS LOOK PROFESSIONAL, BUT BEWARE!

...just because they're pretty does not automatically make PDFs accessible! A scanned document that hasn't undergone **OCR (Optical Character Recognition)** won't have searchable text, and so can't be read by screenreading software. Scans may also have warped, blurry text or poor contrast. The best way to ensure a PDF is accessible is to create it as a born-digital document (like a Word doc) or use a scanner that performs the OCR process!

## AN ACCESSIBLE PDF HAS...

**TAGS WITH HIERARCHICAL HEADERS**

**A LOGICAL READING ORDER**

**BOOKMARKS**

**PAGE LABELS**

**METADATA**

**ALT-TEXT**

## TYPES OF PDFS AND THEIR ACCESSIBILITY LEVELS

BORN-DIGITAL	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
SCANNED W/ OCR	● ● ● ● ● ●
SCANNED W/O OCR	● ● ●
SCANNED HANDWRITTEN DOC	●

## THE JOURNEY

- STAGE 1 ● CREATE THE DOCUMENT**
  - Scan using OCR if possible; find good lighting and hold pages flat.
  - Or, create doc in a word processor.
- STAGE 2 ● PERFORM & CORRECT OCR**
  - If not already done, perform OCR using a tool like ABBYY FineReader.
  - Correct the recognized text.
- STAGE 3 ● ADD OR CORRECT TAGS**
  - Add tags using Adobe Acrobat DC/Pro.
  - A tag tree may have already been generated by the OCR process. If so, it will need correction.
- STAGE 4 ● ADD METADATA & REVIEW**
  - Use the Properties menu in Acrobat DC/Pro to add title, author, copyright, initial view, and primary language.



# MORE TIPS FOR ACCESSIBILITY WARRIORS

## CAN YOU FIND A MORE ACCESSIBLE VERSION?

Sometimes it makes more sense to find an **alternate format** of a PDF document, rather than remediating it. For example, an online news article does not need to be converted to PDF; doing so would actually make it *less accessible*.

## WHAT ABOUT OTHER DIGITAL DOCUMENTS?



**HTML pages**, or texts contained on web pages, tend to be the most accessible kind of digital document. Helpful indicators like headers and alt-text can be built into HTML.



**Microsoft Word doc/docx** files and other digitally-created documents (files from Pages, Open Office, Google Docs, etc.) are searchable and allow for easy designation of header tags.

## WHAT IS A NESTED HEADER HIERARCHY?

