

## The Advantages of PDF/A

The PDF/A Standard defines requirements for creating documents suitable for archiving, based on the widely available PDF format. PDF/A combines the universal capabilities of PDF with the reliability and consistency essential for long-term archiving.

### PDF/A – the unambiguous and retainable PDF

A PDF/A file contains everything needed to visually reproduce it and contains nothing that could damage or alter the visual reproduction.

### More capable and more compact than TIFF G4 and JPEG

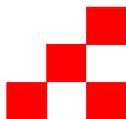
Raster formats store all page content as pixels. In PDF/A, text is font based and therefore searchable. PDF/As with scanned pages can have OCR text integrated and positioned directly behind the visible text, reconstructing the text in an invisible layer. This enables the document to be searchable, while completely retaining the facsimile look.

### More universal than files from application programs

Files from application programs generally require the different respective applications in order to be opened and viewed. One single platform-independent program suffices for PDF/A.

### Digitally sign PDF/A

The PDF file format supports internal (embedded) signatures. The PDF/A standard allows for digital signatures and applies only a minimum of requirements on them. PDF/A documents can therefore be explicitly and reliably digitally signed, while still retaining their PDF/A-compliance and the advantages it offers. This support is also extendable to new signature technologies that become introduced in the future.



## PDF/A Competence Center Services for Members

The PDF/A Competence Center is geared towards developers of PDF solutions, software suppliers and consulting companies working with PDF/A, and also towards end users who are considering implementing PDF/A in their businesses or in the public sector.

Members of the PDF/A Competence Center enjoy the following advantages:

- Portray their own businesses, solutions and products on the PDF/A Competence Center website
- Enjoy a stronger market perception through use of the PDF/A Competence Center logo
- Benefit from the joint press effort through regular PDF/A Competence Center press releases
- Direct contact to journalists and magazines
- Direct contact to experienced PDF/A experts through the internal technical forum
- Access to all internal documents and working tools of the association
- The possibility to influence future development of the ISO standard
- Participation in the technical working group
- Support for evaluating the quality of their own PDF/A solutions
- Mutual tests for PDF/A compliance
- Involvement in PDF/A conferences and PDF/A seminars
- Joint booths at trade fairs

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The new ISO standard PDF/A for long-term archiving is generating enormous interest in the market. The PDF/A Competence Center was founded as an international association to address the high demand for information about PDF/A and to promote the exchange of ideas and experience. The combined knowledge of numerous PDF/A experts is available to interested parties in one package. The association conducts events and seminars, contributes to further standardization, and is a single point of contact for all questions concerning PDF/A.

## The PDF/A Standard and its' Goals

PDF/A is an ISO standard for using PDF format for the long-term archiving of electronic documents. It was published on October 1, 2005 as "ISO 19005-1: Document management – Electronic document file format for long-term preservation – Part 1: Use of PDF 1.4 (PDF/A-1)".

The PDF/A standard is the result of more than three years of committee work by business representatives and members of different associations from around the world. ISO 19005-1 defines "a file format based on PDF, known as PDF/A, which provides a mechanism for representing electronic documents in a manner that preserves their visual appearance over time, independent of the tools and systems used for creating, storing or rendering the files." The standard defines neither an archiving strategy nor the goals of an archiving system. It identifies a "profile" for electronic documents that ensures the documents can be reproduced in years to come.

It is widely foreseeable that PDF/A will establish itself in the coming years as the preferred standard for archiving electronic documents. The PDF format, as well as the software required for creating, viewing and processing PDF documents, can be found in use all over the globe in both public and private sectors. PDF is being applied with increasing tendency as a robust and flexible document format in the most diverse areas of implementation. The PDF/A standard now guarantees that PDF documents can be accessed with certainty even over long periods of time, and is therefore a superior format for long-term archiving.

## Areas of Application for PDF/A

PDF/A can be used to archive all electronic documents that can be printed, as well as all non-electronic documents that can be scanned. For this reason, applying PDF/A becomes quite practical in many branches. The following examples are taken from different areas of application where PDF/A has already been implemented or where pilot projects are being undertaken.

### Incoming Mail

Regardless of how the incoming mail arrives in a company, be it by letter post, faxes or e-mail, the mail must be properly stored. For an electronic archive, paper documents have to be scanned and e-mails, including attachments, must be converted to a suitable storage format. A uniform infrastructure can be best realized based on PDF/A.

### Outgoing Mail

The outgoing mail has to be archived in a similar manner to the incoming mail. An important requirement to consider is that post sent out in the classical format (paper copy) can also be archived in a reliable electronic format. A large selection of print stream converters available on the market now support PDF/A format.

### Engineering Drawings (CAD)

Engineering drawings usually require a special software just to view them. A conversion to PDF/A enables the drawings to be displayed with one standard software and provides the security that the drawings can be viewed and printed even after many years.

### Scientific Work

Several universities are already requiring that dissertations and theses are submitted in PDF/A format when possible.

### Archive Migration

Countless archiving specialists are unhappy with their current archive infrastructures for numerous reasons. In addition, legal regulations are applying new demands on archived documents. Several businesses have already begun migrating their diverse and in some cases extremely voluminous archives to PDF/A.

## Sectors

The long-term archiving of electronic documents is a task that is high on the priority list in many sectors, even when the main focuses vary. A few examples from selected sectors and their requirements are listed below. This list is by no means complete, but certainly offers an insight into how PDF/A can be beneficial and meaningful for the long-term archiving in your own sector.

### Banks and Insurances

Credit and insurance files often have a lifetime of fifty years or more. Electronic archiving based on PDF/A is drawing more and more attention - not only for newly archived files but also for existing documents. The standardized PDF/A format offers valuable benefits for both reproducibility and searching.

### Industry

The engineering sector is especially suited as a candidate for long-term archiving. Engineering drawings for bridges, airplanes or machines for example must be archived by law for up to 99 years. It may also be necessary to archive numerous versions of the documents.

### Publishers

PDF/X has established itself in the past years as the standard document exchange format for prepress and print production processes. A PDF/X file can at the same time be saved as a PDF/A file. This becomes a practical combination when publications are stored in a long-term archive after their production.

### Public Sector and Government

The use of PDF/A here is highly dependent on the type of public or government agency. PDF/A can be meaningfully applied in agencies when digital or digitized records have to be retained. Typical examples are proposals, construction records and notifications.