

PDF/A-2 a prominent theme at the PDF/A conference in Rome

(Berlin) The PDF/A Competence Center is organizing its fourth international PDF/A conference this year. One point of emphasis at the event will be the new part of the standard, PDF/A-2, which is expected to be completed soon. Experts will provide information on the standard's latest development and explain whether and when a change makes sense and how to go about it. Moreover, some providers will present their first "PDF/A-2 ready" solutions at the accompanying exhibition. The PDF/A conference will be held from September 29 to October 1, 2010 in Rome, Italy. The fee to attend the conference is €890 plus VAT. Additional information and registration is found at www.pdfa.org.

At the end of 2005, the ISO committee ISO TC 171 published the format specifications for PDF/A-1 as the international standard ISO 19005-1 for long-term archiving. Administrative departments, archives, libraries, publishing houses, banks and insurance companies and industry benefit from PDF/A, because the standard enables digital documents to be archived reliably.

In the summer of this year, work on the second part of the standard, PDF/A-2, was completed from a technical perspective. It is expected to be published in early 2011. PDF/A-1 was based on PDF version 1.4. PDF/A-2, which is based on the independent ISO standard 32000-1, can use functions which were only available as of PDF version 1.7.

These include among other things the following significant innovations:

JPEG2000 image compression

The inclusion of the high performance compression process JPEG2000 is interesting for scanned documents, for example, because higher rates of compression with better quality are achieved than with the older JPEG format. JPEG2000 also offers a lossless compression level.

Embedded PDF/A files via collections

Collections are called “portfolios” in Adobe Acrobat. This function enables users to compile multiple files in a “container PDF”.

PDF/A-2 now allows PDF/A collections to be created from a number of PDF/A files. File formats other than PDF/A are explicitly not permitted in these collections. A good application example is e-mail archiving including attachments in a PDF/A collection, for example.

Digital signatures

PDF/A-1 already enables the use of electronic signatures. In PDF/A-2, signatures are now integrated and used according to the PAdES standard published by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute. PAdES (PDF Advanced Electronic Signatures) is a set of limitations and extensions to the PDF standard in accordance with ISO 32000-1.

“PDF/A also offers further innovations, such as the expanded display of transparencies, PDF layer support, direct integration of OpenType fonts and additional options for using metadata,” said Olaf Druemmer, a board member of the PDF/A Competence Center, summarizing advances in the standard. “But individual users should judge for themselves whether adoption of the new part of the standard is called for.”

The PDF/A conference provides an outstanding information platform to assist in making that decision. All new features and improvements are presented from the perspectives of users and developers in workshops, lectures and a keynote speech. “We intend to use our knowledge to advise and support attendees in making decisions about whether to upgrade to PDF/A-2,” Druemmer stated. “They will also acquire the understanding necessary for implementing a successful migration strategy.”

Companies and public organization who favor PDF/A must, of course, use appropriate tools which accommodate the new standard. Adobe has already confirmed that the upcoming versions of its products will support PDF/A-2. Also at the exhibition accompanying the PDF/A conference, companies such as callas, LuraTech, PDF Tools and SEAL Systems will show their first “PDF/A-2 ready” products.

About PDF/A

The ISO 19005 standard (PDF/A) defines requirements for creating documents suitable for archiving based on the widely available PDF format. The standard specifies in detail what content is allowed and what is not. These and other specifications are intended to ensure long-term readability

of the documents regardless of the application software and operating system in which they were originally produced. The advantages of PDF/A such as full-text search capabilities have led it to already replace TIFF as the preferred archiving format in numerous international governmental organizations as well as in private industries.

About the PDF/A Competence Center

The PDF/A Competence Center was established as an international association in 2006. The objective of the association is to promote the exchange of information and experience in the field of long-term archiving in accordance with ISO 19005 (PDF/A). The management board is composed of executives from callas software GmbH, Compart AG, intarsys consulting GmbH, LuraTech Europe GmbH, PDF Tools AG (CH), PDFlib GmbH and SEAL Systems AG. Within less than three years, more than 100 companies and various experts from about 20 countries have joined the PDF/A Competence Center. The executive chairman is Harald Grumser, CEO of Compart AG, Dr. Hans Baerfuss, CEO of PDF Tools AG, Switzerland, is the executive vice-chairman.

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