

Isartor test suite for PDF/A-1 released

(Berlin) After more than a year of work, the PDF/A Competence Center's technical working group has released the Isartor test suite, with which the quality of PDF/A validation can be checked. It contains over 200 files which systematically violate all the requirements for PDF/A-1b. This enables users and software providers to determine whether a PDF/A validator actually tests all the rules for PDF/A-1b.

The PDF/A Competence Center has made the test suite available free of charge for downloading from its web site at www.pdfa.org.

The Isartor test suite was developed by PDF Tools AG, PDFlib GmbH and callas software GmbH. Quality assurance was also provided by intarsys consulting GmbH and SEAL Systems AG. The name Isartor was chosen for the test suite, because this was the place where the PDF/A Competence Center's technical working group first met. This version of the suite forms the basis for further steps to facilitate product testing or even certifications. Thus a version of the test suite for PDF/A-1a is also planned.

PDF/A validators are used wherever the quality of PDF/A documents produced must be checked. Critical points in the workflow are for incoming mail, before archiving and prior to sending. More stringent quality requirements can also mean the use of multiple validators. The Isartor test suite helps users to evaluate the validation tools from various providers and determine their suitability for specific areas of application.

As Thomas Merz, CEO of PDFlib GmbH and head of the PDF/A Competence Center's technical working group noted, "Unfortunately, not everything that is labeled 'PDF/A' does in fact conform to that standard. This test suite enables users and providers to check the validation tools as a first step. In the second step, the tested tools can then be used to validate the PDF/A documents produced and ensure standards-compliant archiving. During the creation of the test suite, the members of the working group discussed many technical details. The results of these discussions have been published as technical notes and are available to interested developers."

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. Experts predict that the designation of PDF/A as an ISO standard will promote the popularity of that format, and advantages such as full-text search capabilities will lead to it replacing TIFF in the near future.

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 Systemhaus GmbH, intarsys consulting GmbH, LuraTech Europe GmbH, PDF Tools AG (CH) and PDFlib GmbH. Within less than two years, more than 85 companies and various experts from over 20 countries joined the PDF/A Competence Center. The executive chairman is Thomas Zellmann, a managing partner of LuraTech. Hans Baerfuss, CEO of PDF Tools AG, Switzerland, is the executive vice-chairman.

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