

## **Survey result: PDF/A is coming – now!**

***PDF/A format has become well known in the meantime – more than half the potential users plan to introduce it in the next year***

(Berlin) Companies which plan the introduction of a uniform format for long-term archiving are largely settling on PDF/A. This was revealed by a recent survey conducted by the PDF/A Competence Center. Furthermore, the survey of 377 IT decision-makers indicated that PDF/A is nearly as well known as the TIFF and PDF archiving formats used up to now, and is even more recognized than JPEG. The fact that PDF/A is not yet widely used can be attributed to its publication as an ISO standard only two years ago. Nonetheless, at least half of all those expressing interest have specific plans for introducing PDF/A within the next year. An alarming finding of the survey was the revelation that sixty-three percent of those company representatives questioned indicated that their documents are still being archived in the original format. This constitutes a considerable risk with regard to the availability of the information in the future and may also violate statutory requirements for document retention. Companies using the PDF/A format can be certain that their documents will remain readable in the long term. This satisfies legal requirements and ensures that the digitally archived information remains available for decades or longer.

The PDF/A Competence Center conducted a survey on the subject of archiving formats and PDF/A. The results have now been summarized in a market research report and provide representative information on the current situation of PDF/A. The ISO format for long-term archiving, published in October 2005, enjoys a high degree of recognition according to the survey: 93% of those questioned knew of it.

"This is very likely due to our intensive work in the PDF/A Competence Center," commented Thomas Zellmann, executive chairman of the PDF/A Competence Center, visibly pleased with the survey results. "It cannot be taken for granted that a new ISO standard will be so familiar to users after only two years. This brings us quite a lot closer to our goal of helping the PDF/A format to become established on the market. And the figures for the

planned use of the format for long-term archiving are very encouraging," added Mr. Zellmann.

Although in fact only 11% currently use PDF/A in their business, 80% of those surveyed indicated short-term to long-term plans for its use. More than half already have very specific plans involving projects within the next year; 20% plan to get started in the next six months or sooner.

### **Areas of application for PDF/A and key features**

Furthermore, the survey provided information on the current and future application of PDF/A in companies. It is foreseen primarily in the digitization of documents as well as for converting digital original documents and existing PDF files. Its use is also planned for processing incoming and outgoing mail as well as for archive migrations according to many survey participants. Among the statements on important features, long-term archiving played a key role. In about 50 percent of the cases a retention period of up to ten years appears sufficient. On the other hand, in specific sectors, significantly longer periods are required. This is particularly the case for public agencies as well as banks and insurance companies. Other features cited in the choice of a format for long-term archiving are the option of full-text searching and the assured compliance with statutory provisions. Future users of PDF/A in particular also place great value on the independence from operating systems, software and manufacturers.

### **Many store documents in their original format**

In response to the question "Which archiving formats are currently used in your company?", 63% indicated that their corporate documentation is filed directly in the format with which it was created. "In view of the statutory requirements for long-term availability of documents in compliance with auditing standards, companies cannot afford to archive this way," noted Mr. Zellmann. "But it can be assumed that a high proportion of these users are among those planning to introduce an archiving strategy with PDF/A in the foreseeable future." Archiving in the original document format is risky, because the readability of the information cannot be ensured after a few years given the rapid pace of IT development. In some cases, content can be made accessible only with considerable effort and expense. Therefore a corresponding strategy which complies with the law is unavoidable for every company.

### **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. This and other specifications are intended to ensure the long-term readability of 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. More than fifty companies in over a dozen countries have joined the PDF/A Competence Center within the first year. The executive chairman is Thomas Zellmann, a managing partner of LuraTech. Hans Baerfuss, CEO of PDF Tools AG, Switzerland, is the executive vice chairman.

### **Editorial contacts:**

**PDF/A Competence Center**  
**c/o LuraTech Europe GmbH**  
Thomas Zellmann  
Kantstr. 21  
10623 Berlin, Germany  
Phone: +49 30 394050-0  
Fax: +49 30 394050-99  
[info@pdfa.org](mailto:info@pdfa.org)  
[www.pdfa.org](http://www.pdfa.org)

**good news! GmbH**  
Nicole Koerber  
Kolberger Str. 36  
23617 Stockelsdorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 451 88199-12  
Fax: +49 451 88199-29  
[pdfa@goodnews.de](mailto:pdfa@goodnews.de)  
<http://www.goodnews.de>