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Common PDF Interoperability Concerns

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Senior Product Manager | Datalogics

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Datalogics: Who We Are

Established in 1967

Providing Adobe PDF toolkits to developers since 1997

PDF Association Member

Located in Chicago

Active in PDF community

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The PDF Format

The PDF file format is:

Vast

Feature rich

Open format

Hundreds of different PDF processors

Implemented from scratch

In different languages

Results may vary

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"Technically Valid" PDFs May Appear Differently

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Most Common Discrepancies

Unsupported image types

Transparency processing inconsistencies
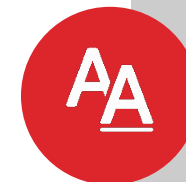
Font challenges

Color variations

Overprint issues

Annotation appearance differences

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Common Unsupported Image Types

16 bit images

Often used for their wide color gamut

JBIG2

Lossless compression for bi-level images

JPEG2000

A successor to JPEG

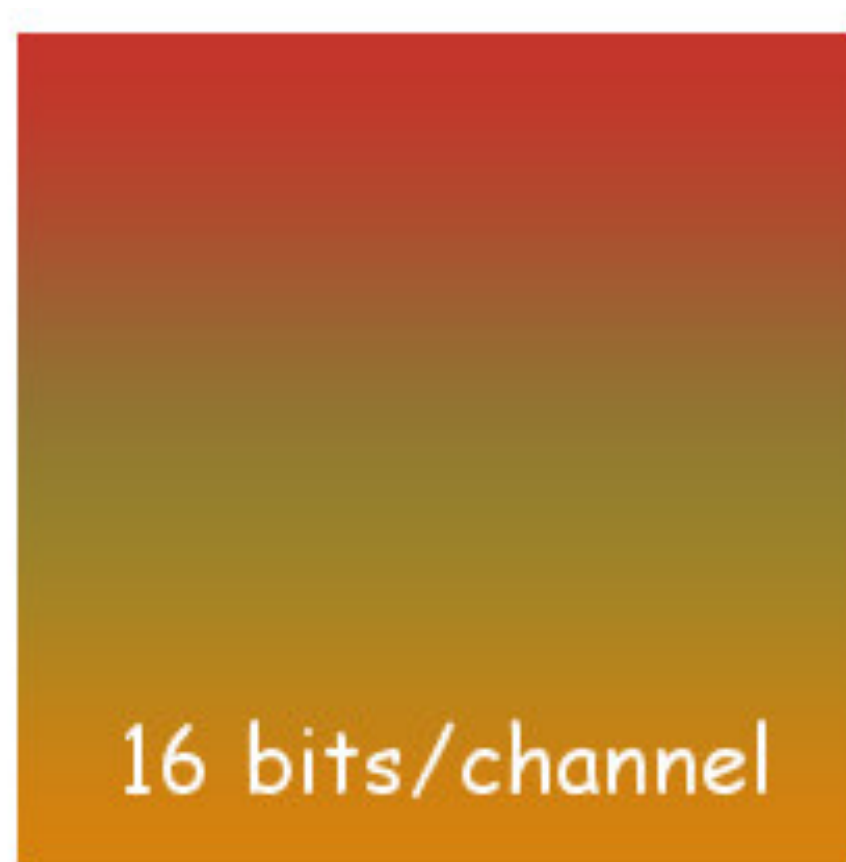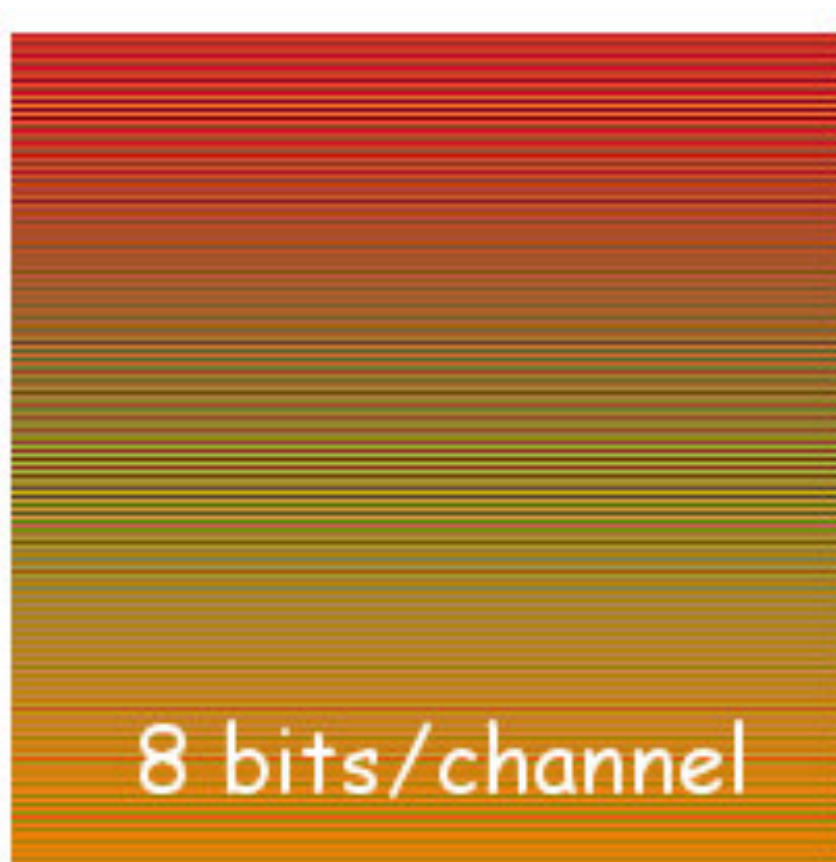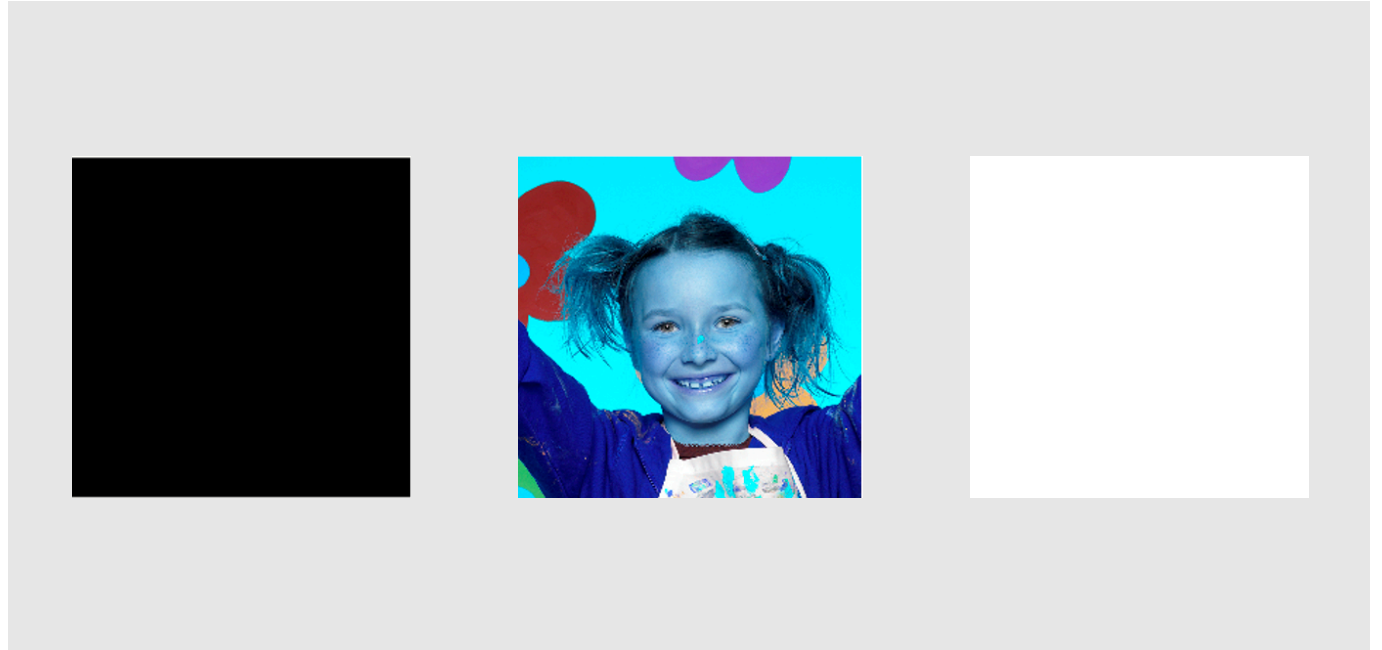Vel Genov,
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16 bit Images

- **A wider color gamut**

- **65,536 tonal values vs. 256 in 8 bit**

- **Commonly used in photography when shooting "RAW"**

- **Image showing bits**

8 bits/channel

16 bits/channel

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ORIGINAL

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- **Use common image formats**

- **Make sure color spaces are appropriate for your audience**

- **Use tools with a fully color-managed workflow**

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Transparency

- **Transparency is often used in PDF files**

- **Transparency reduces file size**

- **Different types of transparency**

- **Often incomplete support in different PDF toolkits/viewers**

- **Having transparency makes your document slow to process**

- **Accidental transparency**

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What is Transparency?

Transparent Image

Disassembled Images

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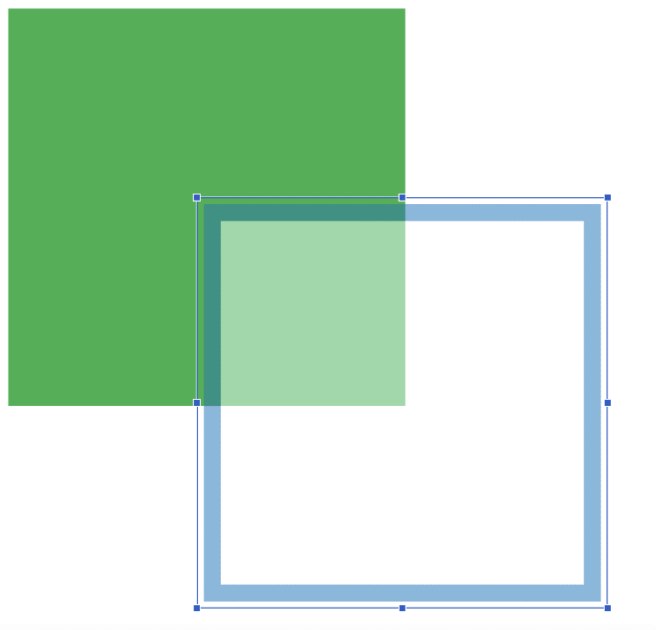Datalogics

Why flatten transparency

- **Eliminate ambiguity (of the author's intent)**
- **If your document or artwork contains transparency to be output, it usually needs to undergo a process called *flattening***
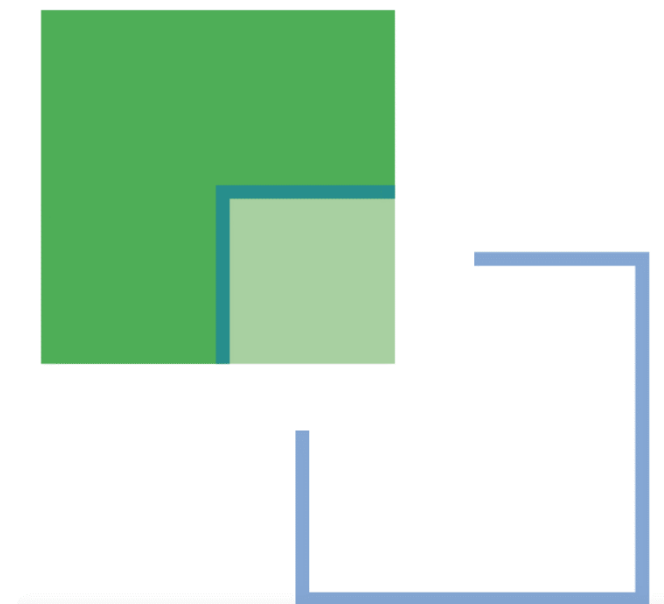
Bad files slow down the process

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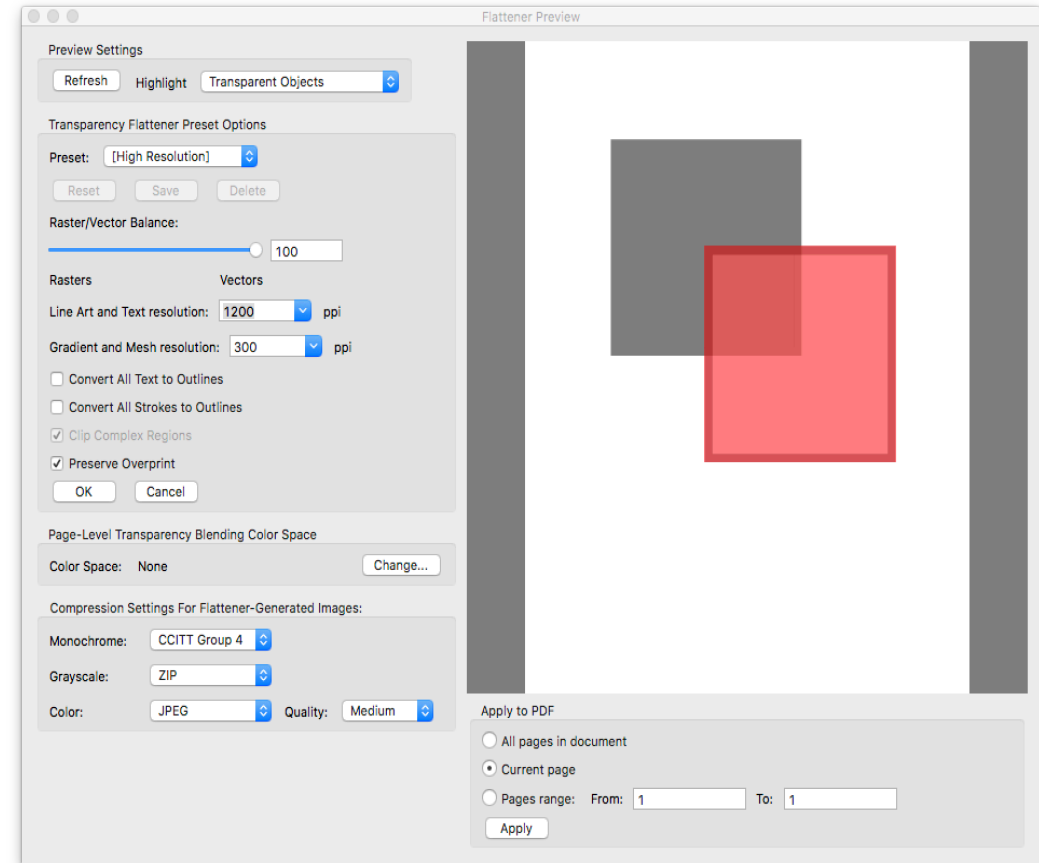
How Does Flattening Work?

Pre-flatten: 73k

Post-flatten: 396k

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Flattening Advantages and Tradeoffs

Reduced time to process files

- Files can be flattened prior to print
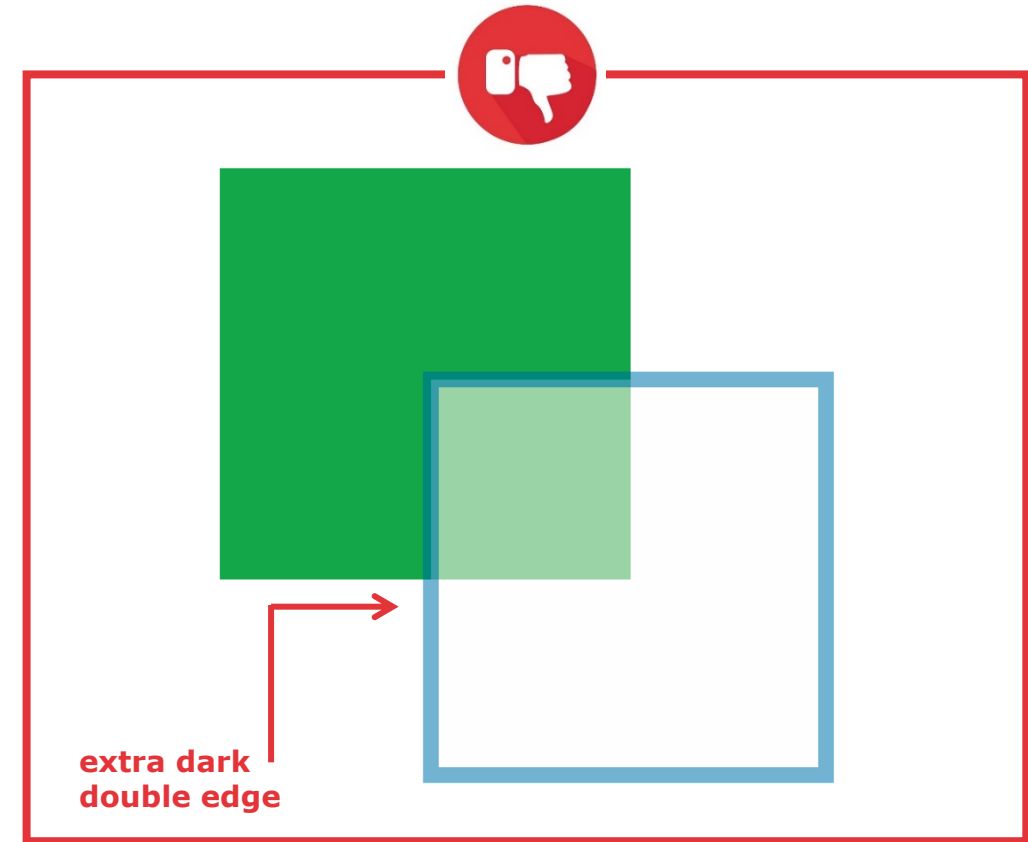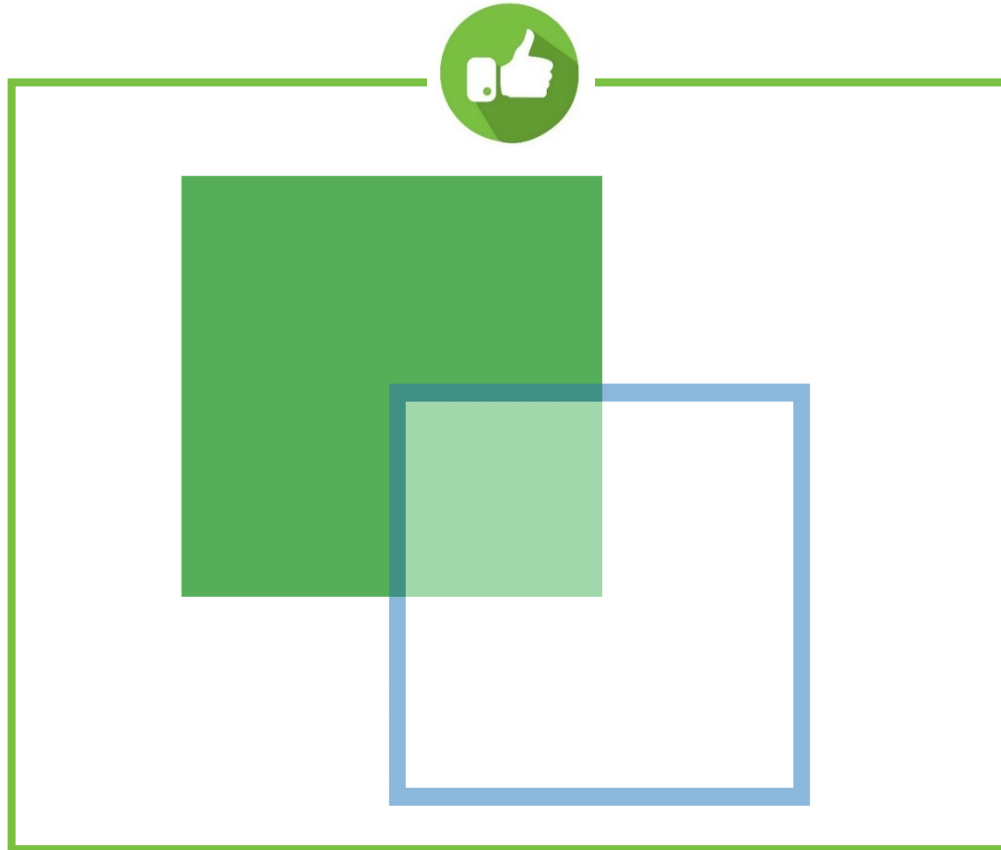
- Reduced time at the press

Increased file size

Eliminate ambiguity

Less options for editing

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extra dark
double edge

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When Not to Flatten

File size needs to be minimal

You have control over the complete workflow
If your tools can handle transparency

100% accurate file reproduction is not critical

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Embedded fonts	Fonts not embedded properly	Missing fonts	Wrong characters in fonts
Different versions of a font	Same fonts with different names	Font licensing	File size due to excess fonts

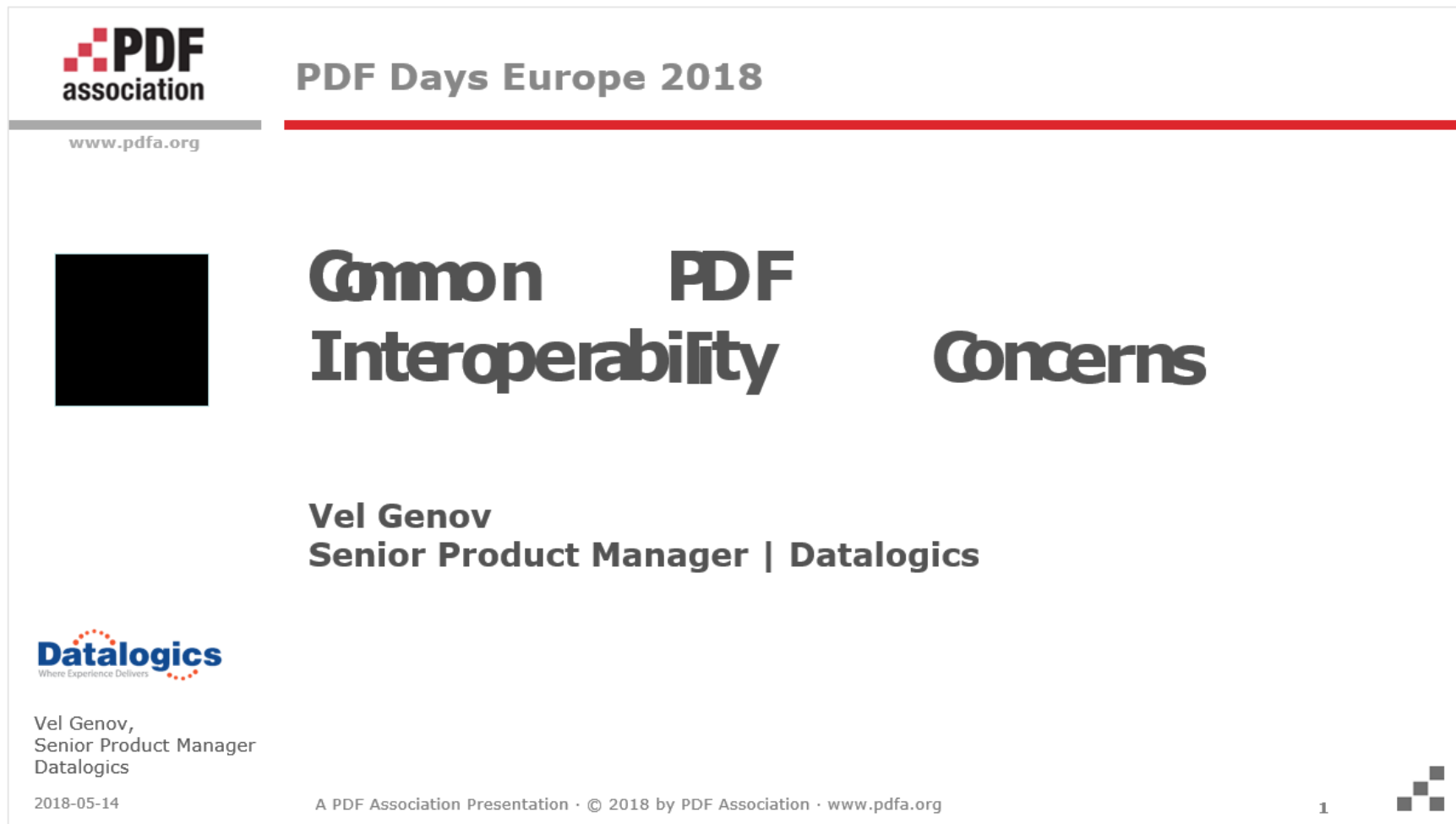Vel Genov,
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When a font is not embedded, it's up to the PDF processor to find a substitute font

The results can sometimes look like this:

Does this text look ok to you?

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What Went Wrong Here?

How to Avoid Costly Mistakes

Know the shortcomings of your tools

Screen files
- *When they first enter your workflow*
- *When they exit your workflow*

Convert files for maximum compatibility

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Thank you! Any questions?

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