

Troubleshooting PDF Creation Issues in Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is the most common source program for generating PDF content. Here are some tips and tricks for producing predictable PDF output.

In a recent AcrobatUsers.com Tech Talk, I described various issues and solutions you can use when creating PDF files. This article describes important issues and includes tricks you can try from that presentation. The list isn't exhaustive, but may help pinpoint issues you're experiencing with your files.

Microsoft Word serves as the source program for more PDF files than any other software. In general, problems with PDF creation from Word stem from these sources:

- PDFMaker choices
- Bookmarks
- Links and hyperlink settings
- Document structure

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PDFMaker issues

Although it seems simple to click the button, the PDFMaker macro is a complex structure, and interconnected in your system in various ways. In Microsoft Word (Windows) for example, you'll find the Adobe Acrobat menu, configuration settings and toolbar, depending on the version of Word you're using. Whether you're working from Word, generating a file via Distiller, or converting a file to PDF from within Acrobat 9, the same set of .joboptions files are used. The .joboptions files contain the conversion details and settings such as fonts, images, and so on.

In individual programs, like Word, the PDFMaker uses those same settings files along with offering program-specific choices. Let's look at some of the Word PDFMaker choices that can trip you up on the Settings and Bookmarks tabs. In Word 2007, click Preferences on the Acrobat ribbon; in Word 2003, choose Adobe PDF > Change Conversion Settings to open the Acrobat PDFMaker dialog box.

General Settings

The Settings tab shows by default when you open the dialog box (Figure 1).

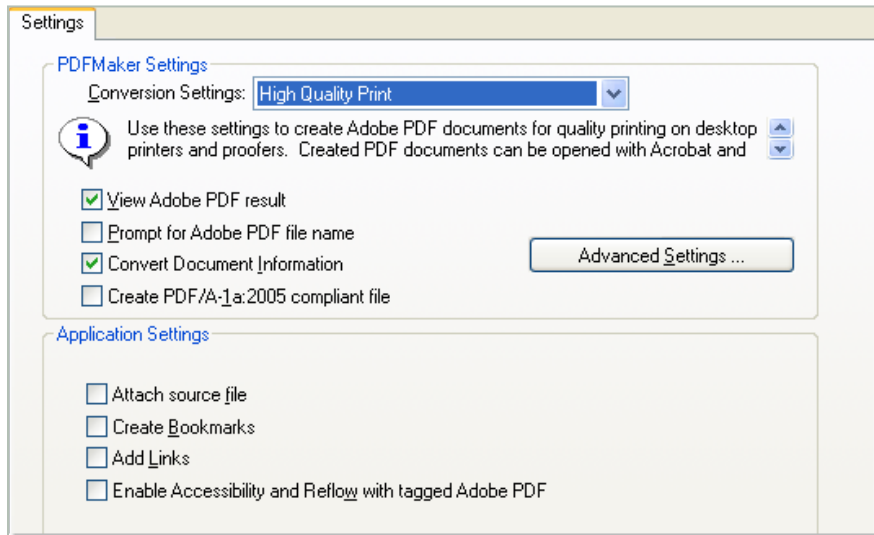


Figure 1: Pick general settings first.

The two items checked in the figure can cause PDF creation issues:

- If you don't have a powerful system, don't select the option to open the PDF file automatically.

As your system processes

the Word document, it also tries to launch Acrobat 9, which can cause a system slowdown or even freeze. If you want to see the file immediately, open Acrobat 9 before starting the conversion.

- Don't convert the document information. Sometimes the problem lies in the structure of the file itself. Separating the content from the structure may allow for a complete PDF file.

Bookmark Logic

Bookmarks are extremely useful navigational tools, and can be as frustrating as they are useful. First, make sure that you've selected the Create Bookmarks check box on the Settings tab of the Acrobat PDFMaker dialog box.

Watch the options you choose on the Bookmarks tab of the PDFMaker dialog box. You know what items on the document you want to use for bookmarks if you've planned. Often, you'll have default Word headings that you can use. You might also have custom styles with assigned heading levels, like the example shown in Figure 2. When a subset of one of the Bookmark options choices is active you'll see the check box show a green background, rather than a solid check mark.

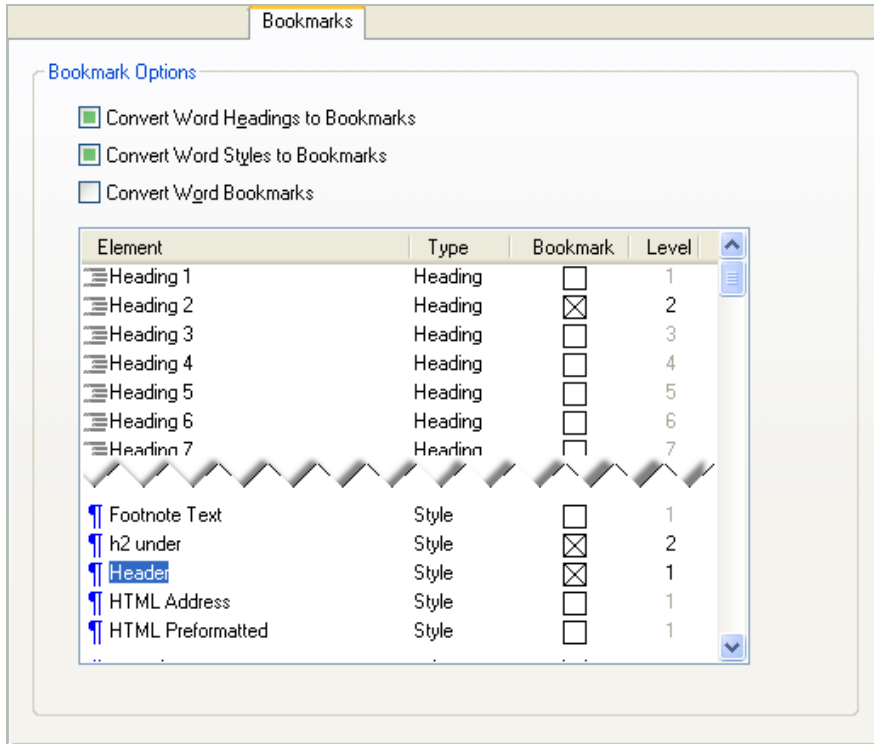


FIGURE 2: Select the elements to use for bookmarks.

Click the individual Bookmark boxes in the list to select and deselect elements. After conversion, you'll have a logical and useful list of bookmarks for navigating the document (Figure 3)

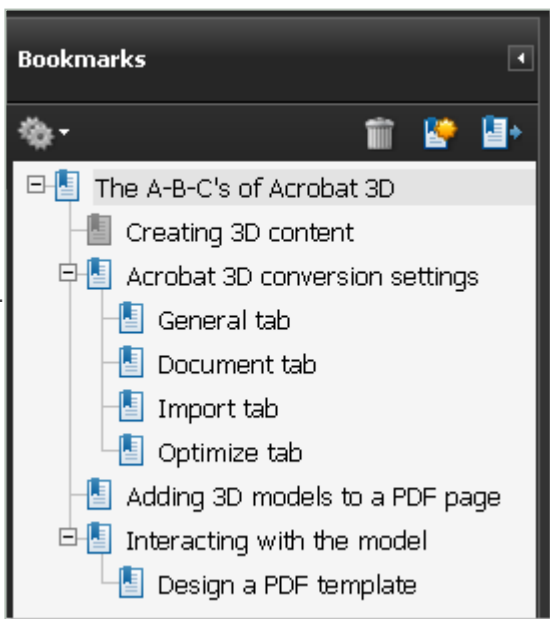


FIGURE 3: A useful set of bookmarks.

You can simulate the appearance of the Bookmark list using the Outline view in Word. As you see here, showing Level 3 elements in the Outlining ribbon yields the same list of headings as in the finished bookmarking example.

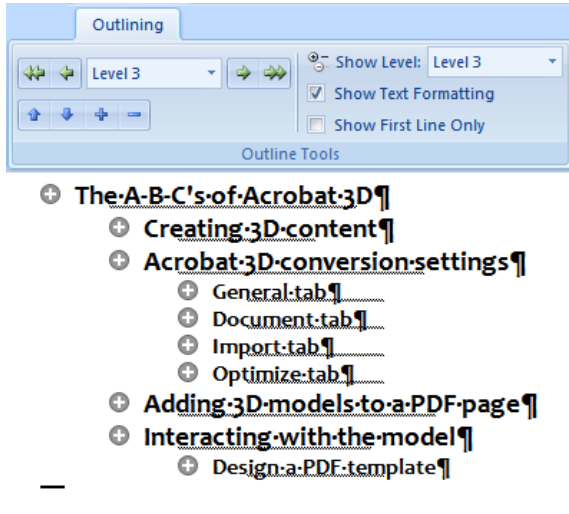


FIGURE 4: Preview bookmarks in the Outline view.

Linking success

Links and hyperlinks can be difficult to process, whether added to document content or as a table of contents. Here are a few tips to consider when troubleshooting your document links:

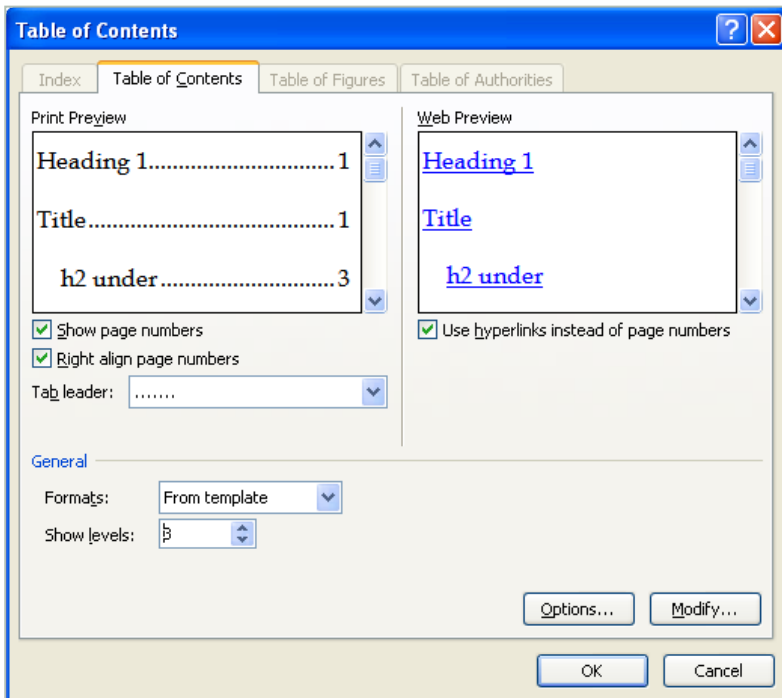
On the Acrobat PDFMaker Settings tab, select the options to add links and tag the file. Adding links is straightforward; tagging the file adds a structure that makes it simpler for Acrobat to

understand and interpret when producing your document.

On the Bookmarks tab of the PDFMaker, deselect the Convert Word Bookmarks option if selected. Word bookmarks are features in a long document structure, such as indexing, and the Hyperlink field information can interfere with your PDF output.

Build a Table of Contents

If you've had problems making your hyperlinked table of contents work properly in Acrobat,



go back to the source and either replace or check the Table of Contents manually. From the References ribbon, click Table of Contents > Insert Table of Contents to open the dialog box (Figure 5). Make your choices, and be sure the Use Hyperlinks Instead of Page Numbers check box has been selected.

FIGURE 5: Check the hyperlink settings.

In the resulting Table of Contents, you can see how different the same item is addressed in the field code (Fig-

ure 6). The sample at the top simply identifies the page where the corresponding title is located, while the bottom table of contents identifies a page reference.

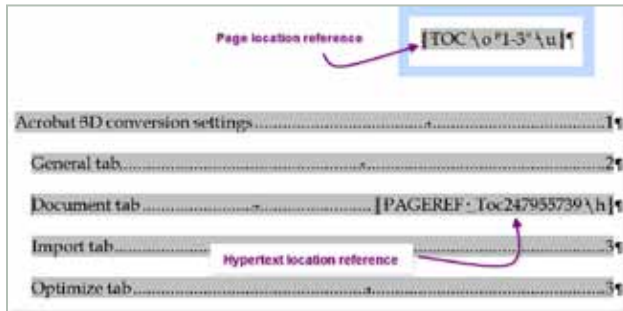


Figure 6: Use a hyperlink for identifying a location.

Tips for handling the document

Here are a few quick ways to fundamentally change the content of your Word document by manipulating its content or the code associated with it. Repairing the structure of the Word document or overwriting an erroneous file component may be all that's standing in the way of a proper PDF export.

RENAME THE FILE: Resaving the file with another name overwrites data stored with interim saves that may be the source of the conversion problem.

MOVE THE CONTENT: Select the entire document except for the final ¶ (para tag) and paste to a new document. Word stores much of the file's data at the end of the document. Moving all the content to a new file retains your content but places it within a new file structure.

RENAME YOUR TEMPLATE: Normal.dot template file. Just like renaming a document file, renaming the template can overwrite any structural issues.

Note: *In Office 2007, the file is named Normal.dotm if you use the macro-enabled document template format.*

SAVE THE FILE AS XML: Saving the Word file as XML restructures the file. Then, resave the XML file as a Word document again. The Export > Resave process reconstitutes the Word document with a new structure.

Some general fixes to try

You've tried all the tricks, and your file still doesn't look as you want. What's next? Well, there are a few general system issues you can check out that don't take much time or require a computer science degree to accomplish.

Repair your Acrobat installation

Any time your program is misbehaving, consider repairing the installation. It's quick,



and takes care of quirky issues. Choose **Help > Repair Acrobat Installation** and let your system review and repair any issues in the program installation.

Delete Acrobat temporary files

You may find your program slows down when there are too many .tmp files on your system. You can make the deletions in Windows via the Start > Run dialog box. Rather than using a DOS command using the del acr*.tmp /s script, use your system utilities to clean up temporary files.

Where's the PDFMaker?

Microsoft Office 2007 disables add-ins if a program isn't closed properly—including the PDFMaker. In most common applications, click the Microsoft Office button, then click the Application Options button to show the panel.

1. Look for the PDFMaker in the Add-ins.
2. Click Add-Ins to display the list.
3. Click the Manage drop-down arrow and choose Disabled Items then click Go.
4. Pick the Acrobat PDFMaker Office COM Addin to activate it.
5. Close the dialog box, then close and reopen your application.
6. By the way, you'll find the Add-Ins panel in most Office programs following the steps. In Outlook or Visio, choose **Tools > Trust Center** and follow the steps to locate and activate the add-in.

Check the log files

The Distiller log files capture problems and store them in a file on your system. Each file that throws an error records the information in the messages.log text file (Figure 7).

```
"%%[ Error: undefined; OffendingCommand: setdistillerparams;
ErrorInfo:CalCMYKProfile U.S. Web Coated (SWOP) v2 ]%%

There is an error in the process related to the CMYK color profile

%%[ Flushing: rest of job (to end-of-file) will be ignored]%%

Distiller states that since the error has been found, the rest of the job won't proceed

Error accessing color profile: U.S. Web Coated (SWOP) v2

Distiller can't find the required color profile

%%[ Warning: PostScript error. No PDF file produced. ] %%"

Final results. Not what you want to see!
```

Figure 7: An annotated error message example.

