

## Creating PDF/UA

PDF/UA conformance places stringent demands on both the document authoring software and the author.

- The software must generate high quality PDF documents, including embedded fonts and Unicode mapping for all characters
- Authors must provide semantic structure, define the logical reading order, include alternative text for images and avoid accessibility errors such as conveying information with color alone



## Using PDF/UA

PDF/UA conformance enables a top-quality reading and navigating experience with Assistive Technology (AT) and content reuse applications. PDF/UA is best utilized as part of an overall accessibility strategy.

Together with a compatible viewer, PDF/UA-conforming documents provide:

- Full access directly, or via compatible AT, to content in logical reading order, with applicable semantics
- A variety of presentation modes on mobile devices
- High-quality repurposing of content
- Rich, high quality navigation and search results

PDF/UA conforming tools can include PDF creators, editors, viewers, screen readers, magnification and text reflow tools, Braille printers, text-to-speech (TTS) systems, content repurposing implementations and search engines.

## The Matterhorn Protocol and PDF/UA Reference Suite

PDF developers and accessibility experts work together in the PDF/UA Competence Center to develop best practice guides and educational material.

- The Matterhorn Protocol: the free definitive algorithm identifying failure conditions for PDF/UA-1
- The PDF/UA Reference Suite: a free set of reference-quality PDF/UA-conforming documents

## Join the PDF/UA Competence Center!

If your organization is already a PDF Association member or Partner Organization, consider joining the conversation and activities in the PDF/UA Competence Center.

If your organization cannot join the PDF Association you may still become an individual member, and help advance the PDF/UA Competence Center's publication and educational efforts.

Email [info@pdfa.org](mailto:info@pdfa.org) to learn more.

## About the PDF Association

Founded in 2006, the PDF Association promotes the adoption and implementation of International Standards for PDF technology, including ISO 32000 and PDF subset standards PDF/A, PDF/E, PDF/UA, PDF/VT and PDF/X.

We work closely with the respective ISO working groups on the development of future PDF standards.

To follow the PDF industry, become a member today!

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# PDF/UA

**ISO 14289: The standard for universally accessible PDF documents and forms**

- What is PDF/UA?
- Why does the world need PDF/UA?
- Adoption of PDF/UA
- What should PDF developers know?

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## What is “tagged PDF”

PDF was originally designed to provide accurate, reliable on-screen and printed results for page-based content. Accessibility was not a consideration. Tagged PDF, the mechanism which enables accessibility via logical structure and semantic mechanisms was added to PDF in 2001.

Tagged PDF made it possible to represent content independent of its static visual presentation, allowing any end user to access PDF content through mechanisms such as text reflow or text to speech, or via a preferred Assistive Technology (AT).

## What is PDF/UA?

PDF/UA is the commonly accepted name for ISO 14289, an international standard defining the correct use of PDF tagging for accessibility purposes. A highly technical specification, PDF/UA identifies the components and properties of PDF technology which are relevant to accessibility, and provides requirements and restrictions on their use.

## History of PDF/UA

Since 2004, AIIM's PDF/UA Committee has collected stakeholders from throughout the industry to explore and develop technical requirements for accessible PDF technology.

Following the publication of PDF 1.7 as ISO 32000-1 in 2008, PDF/UA was re-developed to become an ISO standard. ISO 14289-1 (PDF/UA) was first published in 2012.

## How PDF/UA makes the world a better place?

- Establishes technical requirements necessary to document creation, viewing and AT software that can provide high quality access to PDF content
- Provides an International Standard to guide software procurement and development
- Provides a technically-specific road map to conformance with WCAG 2.0 in PDF content
- Works with PDF/A, the ISO standard for archival PDF documents
- Improves customer service and employee relations
- Reduces liability exposure and minimizes legal uncertainty

## Why does the world need PDF/UA?

PDF is all about reliability. For accessibility needs, however, the core PDF language provides the mechanism but not the technical requirements necessary to ensure accessibility.

Tagged PDF first entered the market in 2001, but even today a substantial number of PDF documents produced on desktop computers are untagged, and many tagged PDF documents are substandard. Consequently, most users who rely on assistive technology to read have learned to dislike PDF files for the unreliable, disjointed and grossly unsatisfactory experience they've so often received.

PDF/UA adoption fixes this problem.



## Recognition of PDF/UA

Since the standard's publication in 2012 PDF/UA has attracted a great deal of attention from around the world:

- As of April 2015, at least 12 vendors claim support for PDF/UA, and others, including Adobe Systems, have announced their intention to develop PDF/UA conforming products.
- DVBS, the German association for blind and partially sighted users, is translating the Matterhorn Protocol for reference in BITV legislation.
- The Library of Congress calls PDF/UA and PDF/A together a “preferred format”.
- In February 2015 the US Access Board included PDF/UA in proposed Section 508 regulations government Federal procurement and practice (more at [www.pdfa.org/pdfua](http://www.pdfa.org/pdfua))

## Accessibility requirements are coming: How does PDF/UA fit in?

- Authoring software used to create PDF files, including office programs, publishing tools and OCR applications
- Editing software used to modify or enhance (make accessible) existing PDF files
- Reader and Assistive Technology software used to navigate and read PDF documents
- Training, to help authors learn how to use PDF/UA-enabled software correctly

## How we can help: The PDF/UA Competence Center

From the **Matterhorn Protocol** to the **PDF/UA Reference Suite** and our publications, videos, webinars and LinkedIn groups, the PDF Association's PDF/UA Competence Center is actively working to promote understanding and adoption of PDF/UA.

PDF Association members can access a network of well-known experts, internal resources and activities promoting and developing the accessibility standard for PDF technology.

Members and non-members alike will find the PDF Association website, [www.pdfa.org](http://www.pdfa.org), a good place to start.

