



**PDF Days
Europe
2025**

Easier to design!

Yet, harder to print?

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gradual



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FourPees

Calculating the width and height of a page box

pdfToolbox EXPLAINED



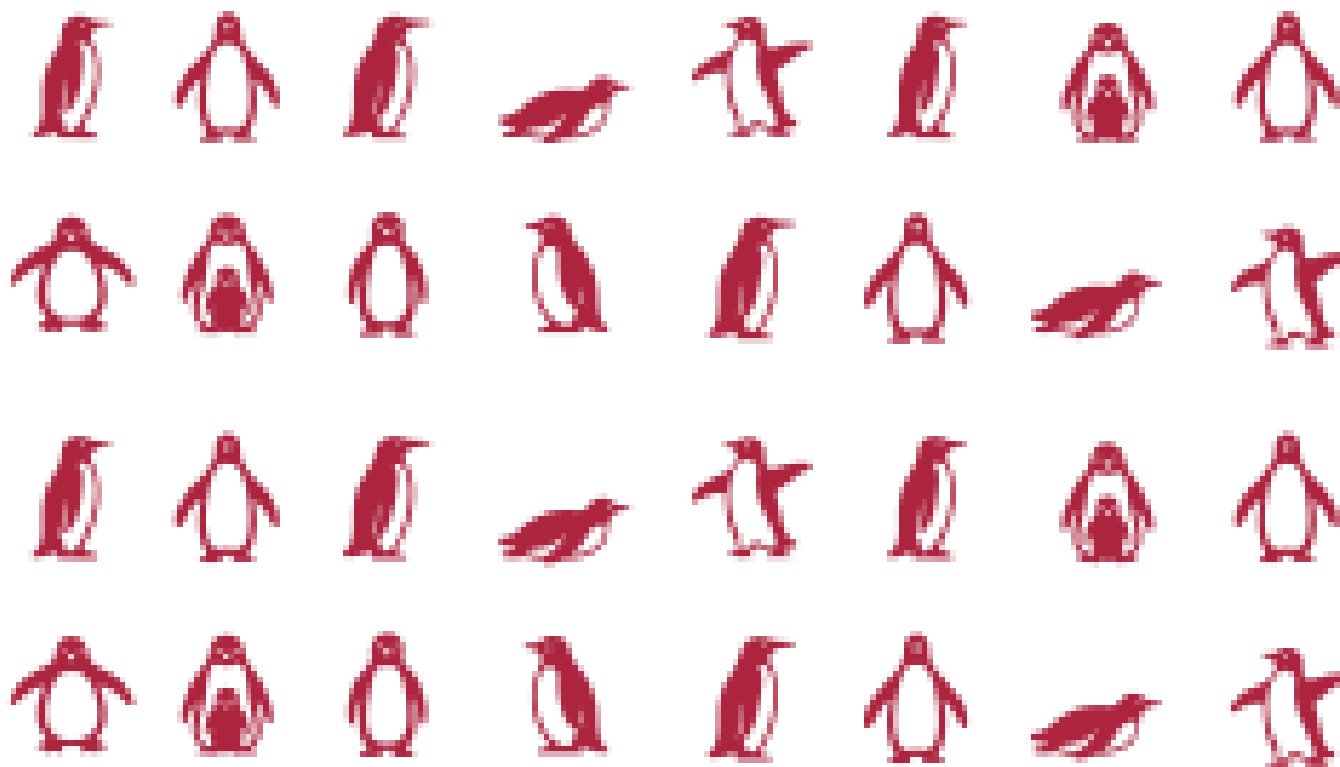
Abstract purple geometric shapes on a yellow background. On the left, there is a large semi-circle. To its right is a smaller, crescent-shaped arc. Above the semi-circle is a curved segment, and below it is another curved segment, all in the same purple color.

The good,
The bad, and,
The ugly

What is good?



Is this a good PDF file?





When is a PDF file good?

*“If it functions properly
in Adobe Acrobat*



When is a PDF file good?

*“If it prints without errors,
and quickly enough*





When is a PDF file good?

“If, after printing, it looks like what I wanted





When is a PDF file good?

*“If the result looks
good enough*





When is a PDF file good?

*“It prints without problems,
and
no complaints follow*



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The good,
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What is bad?

The changing nature of “bad”

- Contains the font “Courier”
- Was created using “PDFWriter”
- Contains “city fonts”
- Contains TrueType fonts
- Contains fonts that are completely embedded
- Contains very high-resolution images
- Was created by “Canva” or “Adobe Express”?



Casual design tools

They're not even wearing three-piece suits!



Professional design tools

- Pagemaker
- Framemaker
- Quark Xpress
- Adobe InDesign – Illustrator – Photoshop

- Affinity Publisher – Designer
 - Discussion?



Casual design tools

- Office applications
 - Microsoft / Google / Apple
- Adobe Express
- Canva
- Definition
 - Seriously lacking in professional print tools and features
 - Can be lack of color spaces
 - Can be lack of overprint / transparency
 - Can be lack of concepts such as bleed, page boxes...

A large, stylized purple smiley face graphic is positioned on the left side of the slide. It consists of a large semi-circle on the left, a smaller semi-circle on the right, and two curved lines at the top and bottom, all in a deep purple color.

Why the hate?

“We listen, and we don’t judge”

- Lacking color support
 - CMYK, spot color...
- Lacking bleed and page box support
- Not much choice in how to export to PDF
- Font problems?
 - Mostly caused by bad fonts these days, getting hard to export a PDF without embedded fonts

- RGB
 - Even imported elements are converted into RGB
 - No spot colors
 - No overprint
- Bleed is (now) supported!
- Crop marks and bleed output are (now) supported!
- No built-in PDF/X support
 - Let alone Ghent Workgroup

- Mostly RGB
 - (very strange “CMYK equivalents” concept)
 - No spot colors
 - No overprint
- Bleed is (now) supported!
- Crop marks and bleed output are (now) supported!
- No built-in PDF/X support
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Conclusion?

PDF is difficult, but so are we



Conclusions

- Have the correct expectations
 - Someone using Canva has different skills and expectations than someone using Adobe InDesign
- Look at the progress
 - Canva now is not the same as Canva 5 years ago
- There is sometimes a difference between:
 - A PDF file not being perfect
 - A PDF file not being good enough for print
- Take your own responsibility
 - Look at (automated) ways to fix the most annoying problems
 - Software (pdfToolbox obviously)
 - Communication with your customers! (printer websites are often sorely lacking)

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consisting of several overlapping purple circular and semi-circular shapes. One large semi-circle is prominent in the middle, with other smaller arcs above and below it.

Questions?

Remarks, incriminations, tribulations, gossip...