



Tagged PDF

Accessibility is the right thing to do!

TaggedPDF.com is intended as an aid to businesses, public sector agencies, educational institutions and others in meeting the PDF accessibility requirements of the impending update to the U.S. Federal Government's "[Section 508](#)"¹. The long awaited and badly needed [508 Refresh](#) substantially raises the bar for high quality PDF accessibility. The new Section 508 will align with [ISO 14289](#), the authoritative worldwide standard for [PDF Universal Accessibility \(PDF/UA\)](#).

508 PDF Help Center

The [508 PDF Help Center](#) lists many of the common errors and warnings encountered when using the popular free [PDF Accessibility Checker \(PAC 2\)](#) from [Access for All](#), along with suggestions for resolving the errors and warnings using [Adobe Acrobat Professional](#). PAC 2 was the first automated checker for PDF/UA compliance, and remains the only free one. The suggestions are specific to Acrobat Professional XI for Windows. The concepts should apply when using other versions, but the specific location of tools and features within Acrobat Pro may vary.

There are advanced tools – notably [axesPDF® QuickFix](#) and [NetCentric Commonlook® PDF Global Access](#) – that facilitate quicker and easier remediation of many PDF accessibility issues. However, many of us faced with 508 compliance have not yet invested in one or both of these tool sets. The [508 PDF Help Center](#) is intended as an aid in meeting the new 508 requirements for PDFs using only Acrobat Pro and PAC 2.

Credit for many of the remediation suggestions included in the [508 PDF Help Center](#) rightly belongs to the kind and knowledgeable accessibility enthusiasts on the [Adobe Acrobat Standards & Accessibility \(tagged PDF\) forum](#), and on several [LinkedIn](#) groups, especially About PDF/UA (accessibility).

¹ "Section 508" is commonly-used shorthand for "Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) as amended".

Resources for PDF Accessibility

The Essentials

One commercial tool, one free tool, one free document – these are the bare essentials for 508 PDF remediation.

1. [Adobe Acrobat Professional](#)
2. [PDF Accessibility Checker \(PAC 2\)](#) from the Swiss Foundation [Access for All](#), provides PDF/UA testing – to the extent that testing can be automated – and a screen-reader-emulator to display a PDF in the way that an assistive technology user would hear it.
3. [The Matterhorn Protocol](#), from the [PDF Association's PDF/UA Competence Center](#), provides PDF/UA compliance criteria. It includes checkpoints that can be automated as well as those that require human inspection.

Advanced Commercial Tools

If you invest in one or both of these tool sets, you will likely find much less need to visit the [508 PDF Help Center](#). These tools automate many PDF accessibility remediation tasks.

1. [axesPDF® QuickFix](#)
2. [NetCentric Commonlook® PDF Global Access](#)

Helpful Free Tools

1. [PAC 1.3](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page): The predecessor of PAC 2, PAC 1.3 has a different style of screen-reader-emulator that I prefer, especially when working with tables.
2. [pdfGoHTML](#) from [Callas Software](#) provides a screen-reader-emulator view somewhat similar to the viewer in PAC 2, with some additional features. pdfGoHTML installs as an Acrobat Pro plug in, making it very convenient to use while working in Acrobat Pro.
3. [VIP PDF Reader](#) from the [Swiss National Association of and for the Blind](#) is another great tool for visually checking the reading order and certain other human-inspection-needed PDF accessibility factors.
4. [Colour Contrast Analyser](#) from [The Paciello Group](#) is a simple tool for checking luminosity contrast, for example to help determine the legibility of colored text on a shaded background.

Helpful Free Documents and Websites

1. [Adobe's version of ISO 32000-1](#): The official version of ISO 32000 – the standard that defines the Portable Document Format – can be purchased from the [International Organization for Standardization](#), but there is no need. The free version from Adobe has the same content and even the same page and section numbers.
2. [The PDF/UA Reference Suite](#): The [PDF Association's PDF/UA Competence Center](#) publishes this set of ten PDF/UA compliant documents as a reference for best-practices for creating accessible tagged PDF files.
3. The [resources for accessible PDF](#) available from the [Association for Information and Image Management \(AIIM\)](#).

Document Available for Purchase

[ISO 14289-1:2014 \(PDF/UA\)](#) is the authoritative worldwide standard for PDF universal accessibility.