



Rich Reveals

No 2. The PDFWriter - Is it a Boon or Boondoggle?

Well, it all depends on what you are trying to make with it. In general, you should only use the PDFWriter for simple text documents. The PDFWriter is a printer driver which converts files directly from your software application, whereas Acrobat's Distiller is a separate application which converts PostScript files to PDF.

Warning: Never, ever, use the PDFWriter if your file contains EPS graphics.

PDFWriter is often quicker to use and to process files than Distiller. However, in most cases, Distiller will provide higher quality files than the PDFWriter. When I speak of quality, there is no difference in how fonts appear in PDF files, no matter which utility you use to create them. I'm talking about graphics, and other issues dealing with final use of files, such as high-end printing.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to discuss the different options for creating a PDF from a simple Microsoft Word doc. You're on a PC.

- 1 There should be an Acrobat icon in your tool bar. If there isn't, you can configure Word to show the icon by Customize > Toolbars and click on the PDFMaker 4.0 checkbox. When you click the icon, a helper macro called PDFMaker (unique to Windows and either Word 97 and PowerPoint 97 or later) launches. (A PDFWriter macro works with Word 95, and Excel 97 and 95 -- Windows only.)



This window allows you to select either the PDFWriter or Distiller and/or the Distiller Printer to make your PDF. If you choose Distiller, you can also select the

About Rich

This is a column which Rich writes for Planet PDF bi-weekly. He has 38 years experience in printing and print management, advertising, marketing, graphic design, copywriting, photography, and computer-related consulting. His platform of choice and most expertise is the Macintosh. However, in the world of PDF, he is competent on the PC, as well.

Rich's firm, RSA Business Solutions LLC, provides print brokering, graphic design, and PDF consulting services. You are welcome to visit his website to learn more about what he can do for you at <http://www.inficad.com/~richsprague>. You may find it helpful and interesting to search through the library of documents he is creating regarding PDF and his links to other PDF resources.

Rich Responds

If you have questions regarding the preparation of your PDF files, or other issues, Rich has kindly offered to respond to direct e-mails: richsprague@inficad.com, and provide answers if his expertise and time allows.

Please keep your questions related to simple issues, as Rich makes his living providing print management and consulting services.

Upcoming Columns

A New Way PDF makes the process of going to print sooooo much easier.

correct Optimized Settings for your document, including the default settings or any of your own custom Settings.

With the Create Adobe PDF (also known as the PDFMaker), in Acrobat 4 you can choose the Distiller or the PDFWriter; whereas in version 3 your choice is simply one...the PDFWriter.

2 You can access the File menu and choose Create Adobe PDF which provides you exactly the same choices as if you selected the Acrobat icon. Again, this is a macro function only available to the Office Suite, so do not expect this capability if you are using Corel's WordPerfect, for example.

3 You can print either from the File menu or use Ctrl+P, and select the Distiller Printer. If you choose this option, make sure and have Distiller launched and select the appropriate Optimized Settings. Otherwise, your file will be made with the last Settings used.

4 You can also print a PostScript file, then Distill either manually, or automatically by saving the file to a Watched Folder for batch processing. Again, in this case Distiller should be launched with the proper Settings selected *before* you launch your Word document.

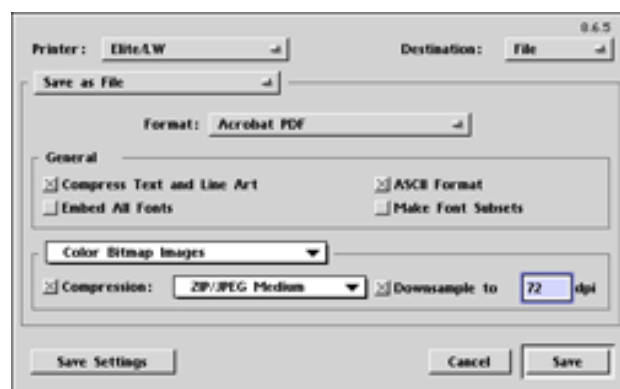
5 You can drag and drop on the PDFWriter icon.

On the Mac, there are several choices for making your PDF.

1 Print with the PDFWriter. You select the PDFWriter in the Chooser. Then it's File > Print or Command-P.

Note: There is a nifty shortcut. Hold down the Control key. That's right, there is a use for that key on the Mac. Then choose File > Print. This allows you to access the PDFWriter without going into the Chooser.

2 With Apple's Laserwriter Print Driver 8.6x, you can now make a PDF directly from the Print Dialog window. (You need to have Distiller installed for this to work.) You Print, then choose Destination File, and in the Save as File popup window, you change PostScript Job to Acrobat PDF.



Expert Interviews

• [PostScript Thinker](#)

Glenn Reid, author of Adobe's Green Book and *Thinking in PostScript*, discusses the development of PostScript and its relationship to PDF.

• [PDF: better than paper](#)

Author of *From Paper to Web*, Tony McKinley, talks to us about PDF and its capabilities for document management, workflow and collaboration.

• [Internet Publishing & PDF](#)

Author of *Internet Publishing With Acrobat*, Gordon Kent, talks about PDF, XML and the Web.

• [The new PDFMaker for Acrobat 4.0](#)

Anna Kjos, Senior Product Manager for the Adobe Acrobat team, talks about the development of the new version of PDFMaker included with Acrobat 4.0.

• [PDF and Prepress](#)

CEO of InfoMania, Tom Mornini, speaks to us about PDF and Prepress and Acrobat 4.0.

• [The inside of Acrobat 4.0](#)

The Engineering Manager for Acrobat Forms, Annotations, Digital Signatures, and Security, Carl Orthlieb, talks to Planet PDF about the development of Acrobat 4.0

Note: If you don't have a PostScript printer on your system, you can use Adobe's Virtual Printer driver available at:
<http://www.adobe.com/supportservice/custsupport/LIBRARY/pdrv.mac.htm>

3 You can also print a PostScript file, then Distill either manually, or automatically by saving the file to a Watched Folder for batch processing. Again, in this case Distiller should be launched with the proper Settings selected *before* you launch your Word document.

4 You can drag and drop on the PDFWriter Desktop Printer icon.

So far, you know that the PDFWriter is for simple business documents, your file cannot contain an EPS graphic, and it works a little faster than Distiller. With a large document, this could be a big advantage, unless you have some spring cleaning to do in the supply room.



(See example above -- the logo on the left was made using the PDFWriter; the one on the right was made using the Distiller.)

Okay, you're adamant and want to use the PDFWriter with a Quark doc containing an EPS graphic. You will be sorry when the image/s shows up badly bitmapped. That's simply because the PDFWriter can't read an EPS file, and substitutes the EPS preview image in your doc, if there is any.

Another time you might want to use the PDFWriter is when your system has a limited amount of RAM, but boy you're playing with danger if you're trying to create a doc which should by all rights be distilled and you're taking another road because you need a few bucks worth of RAM. Buy the RAM and make your PDF it correctly.

You should always use Distiller, and not the PDFWriter, when creating a PDF from any of the graphics programs like PageMaker, QuarkXPress, FrameMaker, Illustrator, FreeHand or CorelDraw. The reason for this is because Distiller has many Job Options settings which you can use to precisely control the resulting PDF, including compression, color management, or use device-independent color.

Also, you may also need to preserve PostScript features, such as document structuring convention (DSC) comments in your PDF file.

In Photoshop, one can Save a PDF directly from the application.

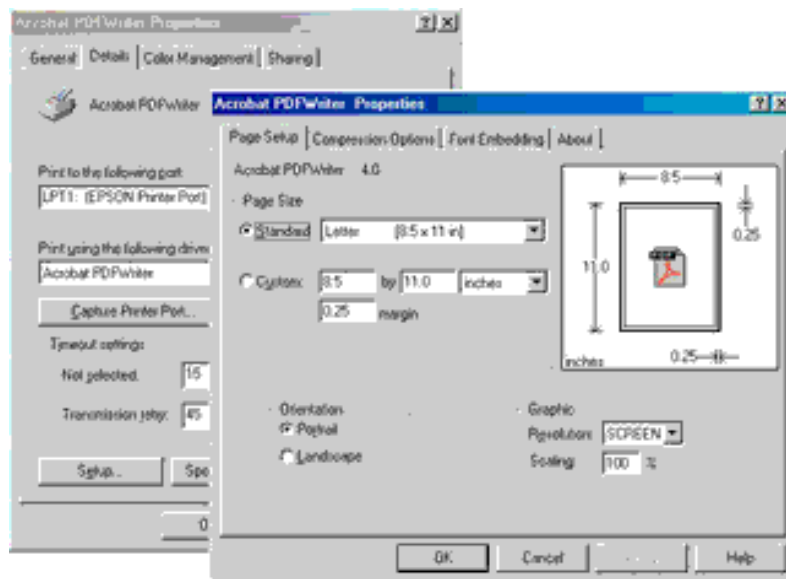
Other times when you will want to use Distiller are:

- 1 Any time you send files to a pre-press shop or service provider for high-end publishing. This advice sort of goes hand-in-hand with the admonition to use Distiller to make your PDFs when using graphics programs, but it's worth stating twice.
- 2 You want to convert PostScript files to PDF in a batch process.
- 3 You're using the Create PDF File command in Word 97 and want to include bookmarks and links.
- 4 You want to embed Asian fonts in PDF files.

Setting PDFWriter properties:

The PDFWriter properties control the page setup, the compression settings, and the font embedding of all PDF files created with the PDFWriter.

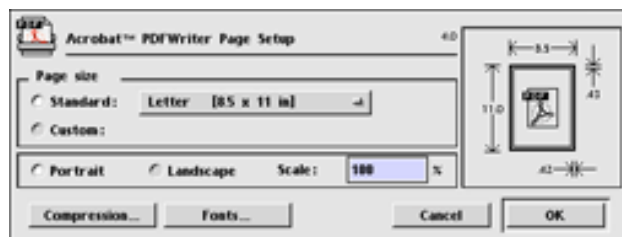
How to access the PDF Writer settings:



In the Windows 95 or 98 desktop, choose Settings > Control Panel > Printers from the Start menu, right-click Acrobat PDFWriter, choose Properties, click the Details tab, and click Setup. In the Windows NT desktop, choose Settings > Printers from the Start

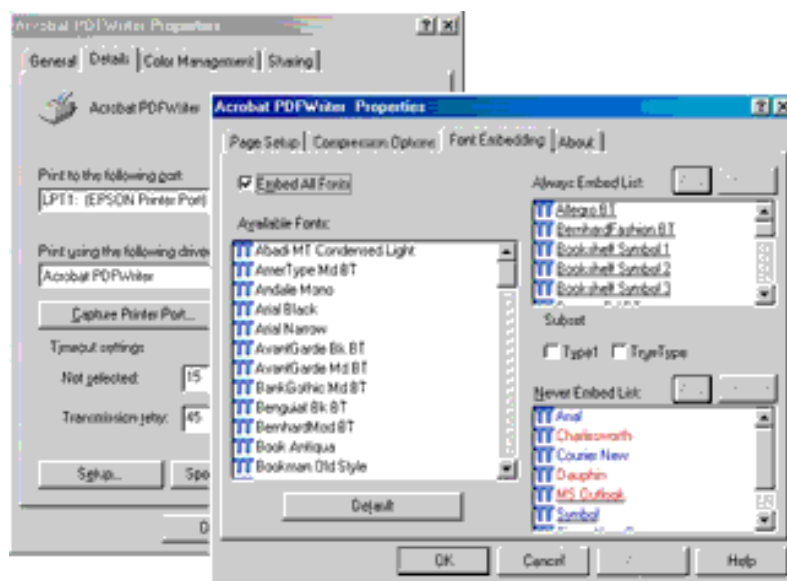
menu, right-click Acrobat PDFWriter, and choose Document Defaults. This will change the settings for all PDF files created with the PDF Writer.

On your Mac, hold down the Control key, and choose File > Page Setup. You can also take the long way by opening the Chooser, selecting the PDFWriter, and choose File > Page Setup.



I don't want to get into a dialog in this article about choosing the appropriate Settings. That's another issue to be addressed at a later date. However, one important item to address is embedding and subsetting of fonts. In the PDFWriter, the default for the subsetting of fonts is 35% and cannot be changed. If you need to subset your fonts at 100%, do not use the PDFWriter. I have written an entire article on embedding and subsetting fonts. It can be viewed at: www.planetpdf.com/mainpage.asp?WebPageID=362

Finally, there are a couple of other things unique to the PDFWriter



1 You can tell what kind of fonts you have in your system. In the font window, all fonts are labeled with T1 for Type 1 PostScript fonts and are in blue; TT for TrueType fonts and they are in red. Caution: Do not use Type 3 fonts in PDF files...they will look fuzzy, and they can't be embedded.

2 In regards to font licensing, many people have asked how one can tell which fonts are licensed. When it comes to font licenses, the PDFWriter is one smart cookie. It automatically places a font that cannot be embedded (due to license) in the Never Embed list and colorizes the name of the font in red.

Note: WordPerfect fonts are in my *never embed* list, not by my choice.

Well, that's it, the long and the short of the PDFWriter. For some of you it may be a boon, but for the vast majority it can be a boondoggle, and a mistake to use.

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