

# **Please Don't Fiddle with my document**

PDF documents are not a new thing. On that basis you may question why I am not writing about something new, we all like things that are shiny and new. Well, the answer is that while it is likely that most people have used and are using PDF files (even if you don't know it!), I suspect that most are unaware of the potential of the now common PDF. Here are the answers to some common questions that may shine light on what PDF documents have to offer.

## **What is a PDF document?**

A PDF document is an electronic file containing text and images which you can view or print just like any other document. PDF stands for Portable Document Format. The key word is "portable". Not only does a PDF document have a small file size it can be viewed on just about any computer, including handhelds. In fact, one of the principle reasons for the proliferation of PDF documents is that the programs to read or view the documents are free. The most common program is Adobe Acrobat Reader.

If it were just the portability of PDF documents that made them useful I doubt they would have become so popular. The other key characteristic of a PDF document is integrity. That is, the document you created and see on your computer is the same when viewed on another computer. For a variety of reasons documents, which are not PDF documents, created on one computer are not perfectly interpreted when viewed or used on another computer. This misinterpretation can be for as simple a reason as a change in the paper dimensions which affects the layout of the document.

So, a PDF document preserves the text, images and layout of your original document so that anyone can view the document exactly the way you created it.

## **Why should I use PDF documents?**

As I have just discussed, a PDF document is portable, which means it can be viewed on just about any other computer using a free reader. Another advantage is that once you

have created a PDF document, it is not easy to amend or alter the document. An often frustrating result of sharing documents in other formats, such as Microsoft Word, is that the document can be amended - not everyone is polite enough to use track changes (a useful feature, but can be tricky to use). Unless you need to have other people make amendments to a document, sharing the document in a PDF format will give you more confidence and control over its integrity.

PDF documents also offer extensive security options. Documents can be locked with a password and protected from being saved or printed. PDF documents can also have digital signatures attached.

Another important consideration in using PDF documents is the inherent risks with other formats. Word processing packages, such as Microsoft Word, have a range of information that is not obvious when using or saving the document which can be potentially damaging. For example, say you are using track changes in drafting an agreement. You insert a clause which your client determines is not acceptable. If track changes is not used carefully, this clause could still be seen if the Word document is shared. There is a variety of hidden information in some document formats which is largely, if not completely, removed when converted to a PDF document.

## **How do I create a PDF document?**

The creation of PDF documents is where the money is made. While the world can download and use PDF readers for free, the software to create a PDF document is generally only available at a price. The most

common program is Adobe Acrobat (Standard or Professional). This software allows you to create PDF documents from almost any source, electronic or paper.

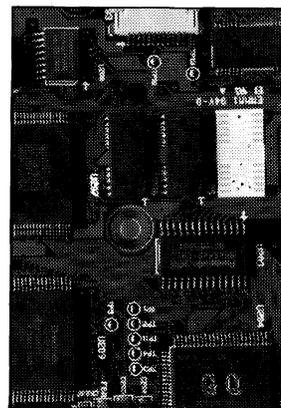
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## **What can I do with PDF documents?**

If you have the software to create a PDF document, there is a host of additional things that you can do to improve document. Firstly, you can assemble a PDF document using multiple source documents, whether they are word documents, spreadsheets, pictures or other documents.

You can add comments or notes to a PDF document. Comments do not change the underlying PDF document. One way to think about how this works by taking a paper document and placing a transparency sheet (used for overhead projectors) over your document. Now, write your comments on the transparency. These comments have not changed

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## **Nardine Collier cont...**

bloody silly and made me cry. But, I went on to finish my degree. Thanks Eric (I think).

**How long have you been in the Territory and what brought you up here?**

I was born in Darwin. So the answer to brought me here is pretty obvious - though I could be rude and say the back of Mum and Dad's panel van.

**What is the best, and worst, thing about living and working in the Territory?**

Having never lived anywhere else I can't really compare, but having visited and spent time in large cities I am always glad to come home. Territorians are a friendly lot! I especially enjoy working in Alice Springs. As a group, the practitioners here seem to get along well.

**If you had the power to change one thing in the world, what**

## **Please Don't Fiddle with my document cont...**

the original document. Comments on PDF documents operate in a similar manner.

PDF documents can also be interactive through the use of hyperlinks. For example, if you refer to a website, you can make that reference a "hot" spot which if clicked on, will take the reader to the website.

Tip: One thing you might not realise is that you can usually copy the text from a PDF document. Using the "Text Select" tool on the Adobe Acrobat Reader tool bar, you can highlight and copy all or part of the document and past it into your word processing package. You will lose the formatting, but you will have the text.

### **Links:**

CutePDF (<http://www.cutepdf.com>)

Adobe ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)) ①

**would it be?**

I should say "world peace", however what I really want is a Spotlight store in Alice Springs.

**What is your greatest achievement?**

My daughter Becky and my very soon to be born son.

**What are your hobbies?**

Nowadays - watching "Shrek" (Becky's favourite movie, so I've seen it about 200 times), reading, cooking, and the old favourites of wine and dining (though not so much lately). Recently I've taken up sewing and churn out weird clothes that Becky is too young to realise are awful.

**Describe your perfect weekend**

A little house on a beach, good food, good wine and a SLEEP IN.

**What are you most passionate about?**

My family and in recent times the

necklines of little girl's t-shirts.

**What was the last book you read?**

Seriously - The Cat in the Hat.

**What is your favourite movie?**

Shrek

**What is your favourite holiday destination and why?**

At the moment Adelaide. We have great friends there and I can indulge my taste buds and catch a glimpse of the ocean.

**Describe your perfect meal**

Thai or maybe Japanese or maybe Malaysian... fish and chips.

**After a long week at work it is finally Friday, you walk up to the bar and order a...**

Pink champagne, but I've forgotten what bars look like.

**Three words that describe you...**

Tired and more tired. ①

## **Hardie victims pursue justice denied to others**

The Jackson inquiry into James Hardie has been a potent reminder of the fundamental importance of protecting an individual's right to sue and recover compensation for personal injuries, according to the Law Council of Australia (LCA).

"James Hardie victims have kept their right to be fully compensated only because the New South Wales Government hasn't seen fit to take away their common law rights, as they have done for so many others," LCA President-elect Steve Southwood QC said.

Without such rights, particularly the right to sue for pain and suffering, the victims of asbestos supplier James Hardie would be in a far worse position. Although the victims of the negligent use of asbestos have tragically lost their health and years of life, compensation will provide them with medical care and will allow them to live the rest of their lives with dignity.

Mr Southwood said that the "thresholds" imposed on the right to claim damages in public liability cases by the NSW Government had deprived many people of their rights to sue for compensation.

"The NSW Government recognised that just compensation should be available for asbestos victims. However, there is no valid reason why other victims of negligence should not have the same right to be compensated," he said.

Mr Southwood was speaking as the Law Council this week made its second submission to the Special Commission of Inquiry, chaired by David Jackson QC, into the Medical Research and Compensation Foundation, established by the James Hardie Group.

"The James Hardie inquiry is a wakeup call, showing that it is time to review some of the tort law reforms that have been introduced throughout Australia", Mr Southwood said.