

Creating PDF Documents

The creation of Portable Document Format (PDF) documents is essential for the electronic filing component of CM/ECF; it is the only format that the application accepts.

Background

There are two primary methods for creating PDF documents: formatting text documents into PDF at the time of creation or scanning imaged documents from paper into PDF. The former method offers at least four significant advantages over the latter.

Reduced Labor: Imaging is a labor-intensive task and if documents must be imaged, either the attorney or the court will have to provide that labor.

Improved System Performance: Text documents are much smaller than imaged documents. For a typical document, its PDF text version would be only 20% of the size of its imaged version. Therefore, whenever an imaged document is stored or viewed, it puts five times more load on the network than it would as a text document. It also takes five times as long to transfer. That extra transfer time is particularly noticeable when the user is working over the Internet.

Reduced System Storage Cost: An imaged document consumes about five times more storage space than it would as a text file.

Text Search Capability: Text documents can be searched for words and phrases (as is done in Westlaw or Lexis). Imaged documents cannot be searched without first performing an extra step called optical character recognition (OCR). OCR is labor-intensive and does not yield 100% accuracy.

Creating PDF documents from a word processing package

The optimal method for creating a PDF document for filing in CM/ECF is a simple method: create it directly from a word processing application using a PDF writer. PDF files created in this way have two advantages: they are much smaller in size than documents that have been scanned and they are text-searchable by court users.

Acrobat PDF Writer

PDFWriter is the best Acrobat tool for use in creating a PDF document from a word processing application because it:

- creates a file that is smaller in size than a scanned document
- creates a file that is text searchable
- converts the document more quickly than Distiller (see below)

To ensure that the formatting and appearance of the document remain the same when viewed through the word processor and when viewed or printed through the PDF reader, the printer (File/Print menu) must be set to "Acrobat PDFWriter" *before* beginning to compose or edit the document. If a document is initially prepared with some other printer specified, the ultimate conversion to PDF is very likely to introduce changes in pagination, fonts, spacing, or other formatting elements, requiring further proofreading and further editing. Once the document is saved as a PDF file, always print from the PDF reader (rather than from the word processor) to be

sure that the printed copy matches the court's official copy.

If PDFWriter is set as the default printer, no other steps should be needed. "If some other printer is set as the default, PDFWriter must be selected as the current printer immediately after opening the word processing application (or immediately after choosing to create a new document). In WordPerfect, each time the document is opened for editing before the final version is ready for filing, the printer should be set again to PDF Writer. In Word, PDF Writer is retained as the printer until the Word application is closed; if just the document has been closed and then reopened, the printer will still be set to PDF Writer.

Adobe Acrobat Distiller

This tool can also be used to create a PDF document but it is not recommended unless there is a need for embedded images in the document because there are a couple of drawbacks to using this tool:

- it creates a file significantly larger than that created by PDF Writer
- it takes significantly longer for the file to be created

Note that the default installation of Adobe Acrobat includes the installation of Distiller but not PDF Writer. To load PDF Writer, you must choose the "custom " installation.

WordPerfect

Although WordPerfect versions 9 and 10 offer a feature ("Publish-to-PDF") that allows a document to be converted directly into **PDF format**, it is not recommended; the file created in this way is unnecessarily large.

Testing by the CM/ECF project team shows that an eight page document converted to PDF with WordPerfect 9.0's Publish-to-PDF feature is three times larger in size than the same document converted with Acrobat PDFWriter. When a one page document with an image embedded in it (a small agency seal) is converted, the difference in size is much greater; the PDF file created by WordPerfect is nearly 100 times larger than the file created with PDFWriter. This difference in size can be lessened by changing the bitmap compression setting from the default of ZIP to JPEG (through the Details tab) and the quality factor from 2 (the highest quality) to 255 (the lowest quality). However, even with the quality set to 255, the file is still three times greater and with the quality set to 2, the file is 11 times greater. These tests were done with the Advanced Output setting set to the default of RGB; changing this setting to gray does not significantly change the size of the file. The quality of the seal is better at the highest quality setting (and better than the quality of the seal created through PDF Writer).

Preliminary testing of this feature in WordPerfect 10 shows that improvements have been made in the size of the file created. However, compared to the file created by PDFWriter; the WordPerfect-created PDF file is still nearly three times greater for a plain text file and eight times greater for a file with an image embedded in it. The size of the imaged file can be diminished to about four times greater by changing settings.

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word 97, Word 2000, and Word 2002 do not currently provide a PDF converter and the Product Guide for Microsoft Office XP makes no reference to it. There is, however, a macro installed with Adobe Acrobat called PDFMaker that provides enhanced

features for creating PDF files from Word. It is installed by Acrobat in the Microsoft Office/Office/Startup folder and is accessed through the File/Create Adobe PDF menu item or through an Adobe icon on the toolbar. It uses Acrobat PDFWriter or Distiller and converts Word features such as headings to PDF bookmarks, URLs to PDF Weblinks, cross-references within a document to PDF links, etc. A full list of these features can be found at the www.adobe.com web site (search for PDFMaker) or for users that have already installed Adobe Acrobat, a help file can be found in the Program Files/Adobe/Acrobatx.0/Help/ENU folder. PDFMaker is not available for the Macintosh operating system.

The PDF files created in Word using the File/Print to Acrobat PDFWriter method and the File/Create Adobe PDF (the PDFMaker macro) method are nearly identical in size. There do not appear to be any differences in the quality of the PDF files produced. The advantage of the PDFMaker macro is the additional conversion features that it provides for Word documents. If these particular Word features are not used, the File/Print to Acrobat PDFWriter method is adequate.

Creating PDF documents from a scanning system

For those documents that must be imaged because a word-processed version does not exist, the preferred method is to scan the document directly into PDF format using Adobe Acrobat (both 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0 provide this feature). (From the File menu, choose Import/Scan.) Scanning to a format other than PDF (e.g., TIFF) would add both delay and labor, requiring not only the scan but then a conversion to PDF.

Factors to consider when scanning

There are several factors to consider when determining how the scanning will be done.

The quality of the document when scanned is determined by the level of detail recorded by the scanner. This detail is referred to as the resolution, which is measured by the dots per inch (dpi). A higher resolution:

- is slower to scan (this is dependent also on the scanner and the number of pages that are scanned).
- creates a document with a larger file size. This, in turn, causes the loading of the document into the case management application and the retrieval of the document from the application, to be slower.

There is a trade-off between the resolution, the speed at which the document is scanned, and the file size of the scanned document. For example, using a scanner rated at 30-45 pages per minute, a 100 page document scanned at 300 dpi produces a file of 6.97 MB and takes 3 minutes and 51 seconds to scan. The same document, scanned at 150 dpi produces a file of 3.67 MB and takes 2 minutes, 15 seconds to scan.

It is important to find a resolution that will provide a high quality document, with a file size that does not hamper the length of time it takes to scan, load, and retrieve the document. Our court recommends 200 dpi resolution.

Another factor to consider is the mode of scanning. Almost always, it should be done in black and white, so that the file size will be as small as possible. However, there are some documents (those with shaded boxes, for example) that may need grayscale instead; this, however, will produce a file that is much larger in size than the document scanned in black and

white. Never scan in color, unless absolutely necessary. This, too, will produce a document with an extremely large file size, which will take longer to load into the application and longer to retrieve for viewing purposes.

Limits on size

Because of the staff time, disk space, and long retrieval time consumed by large documents, our court recommends a limit on the file size. Our CM/ECF application will display a warning if your document size exceeds 2.0 MB. If your document exceeds the recommended limit, the policy is to break the document into separate, smaller documents.