

Program: Introduction to Information and Communication Technology Accessibility and Inclusive Design

Course: Accessible Digital Content

Fourth Section: Accessible PDF documents



Course Overview and Licensing Information

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Targeted competencies:

- [[Mada ICT-AID Competency Framework](#)]
 - **D4.1, D4.2, D4.3, D4.4**
 - **D4.5.1, D4.5.2, D4.5.3, D4.5.4, D4.5.5**

General objectives

- Understanding key considerations for accessibility in common digital formats.
- Familiarity with fundamental principles of accessibility when creating digital content, such as word processing documents, presentations, PDF files, and various multimedia formats.
- Testing, evaluating, and reviewing accessibility requirements for inaccessible digital content.

Unit learning outcomes

- **By the end of this unit, you will be able to:**
 - Identify digital accessibility requirements in common digital formats.
 - Create accessible digital content.
 - Evaluate and review inaccessible digital content.

Unit Topics

- Accessibility considerations for common digital formats.
- Accessible word-processing documents.
- Accessible Presentation documents.
- Accessible PDF documents.
- Accessibility considerations for different multimedia formats.

4. Accessible PDF documents

Section learning outcomes

- **By the end of this section, you will be able to:**
 - Define accessible digital PDF files.
 - Identify accessibility requirements for PDF files.
 - Convert documents into accessible digital PDF files.
 - Verify accessibility of PDF files.

1. Accessibility of PDF Files

a) Definition

- When discussing PDF files, the following terms are commonly used: PDF, Acrobat, Adobe, though not interchangeable, generally refer to:
 - **Adobe:** The company that created the PDF format and Acrobat products.
 - **Acrobat:** A series of tools created by Adobe for viewing, creating, and editing PDF files.
 - **Portable Document Format (PDF):** A format designed to preserve the layout of documents including text, images, and various forms, in a uniform manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems. Initially created by Adobe, it has become an open format that can be created and viewed by other programs.

[WebAIM: PDF Accessibility - Defining PDF Accessibility](#)

1. Accessibility of PDF Files

b) Acrobat Tools

- In Adobe's series of tools for viewing, creating, and editing PDF files, there are three main tools:
 - **Acrobat Reader:** Allows users to view and interact with PDF files (including accessibility features) but cannot be used to create new files or edit existing ones.
 - **Acrobat Standard:** Adds the ability to create PDF files, along with features like converting scanned PDFs into searchable files.
 - **Acrobat Pro:** The only version of Acrobat that can be used to view accessibility information and edit it within a PDF file.

[WebAIM: PDF Accessibility - Defining PDF Accessibility](#)

1. Accessibility of PDF Files

c) Digital Accessible PDF Files - An Overview

- Initially, PDF files are not accessible by default, necessitating specific actions during their creation using the original software or application. Common pitfalls during PDF creation include:
 - Automatic scanning of documents as images to create PDF files.
 - Converting original documents that are not accessible.
 - Lack of alternative text for images.
 - Errors in reading order.
 - Absence of structural tags.

[WebAIM: PDF Accessibility - Defining PDF Accessibility](#)

1. Accessibility of PDF Files

c) Digital Accessible PDF Files - Creation

- PDF files are typically created using one of these methods:
 - Automated export from the source (e.g., information stored in a database). Accessibility of these PDF files often depends on the software or encoding used to create the file.
 - Exporting from desktop applications and saving in PDF format from various programs and applications (e.g., Microsoft Word for word processing or presentation software).

Accessibility of these PDF files also depends on the software used; the original document must be accessible, and the software should preserve accessibility features during conversion.

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1. Accessibility of PDF Files

d) Considerations for Accessibility in the Original Document (1/2):

- Many desktop applications can create accessible documents (refer to Unit 6, Section 1 for details), and accessibility features can be preserved when exporting to PDF format.
- Microsoft Office programs enable the creation of accessible documents, with accessibility services improving with each version. These programs also allow conversion of documents into accessible PDF files.
- It is essential to verify accessibility considerations in the original documents. For example, a document created in Microsoft Word should include all necessary information to ensure the PDF file is accessible, including:

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1. Accessibility of PDF Files

d) Considerations for Accessibility in the Original Document (2/2):

- Headings and layout
- Alternative text for images
- Tables
- Descriptive links
- Lists
- Font sizes
- Color contrast
- Language used

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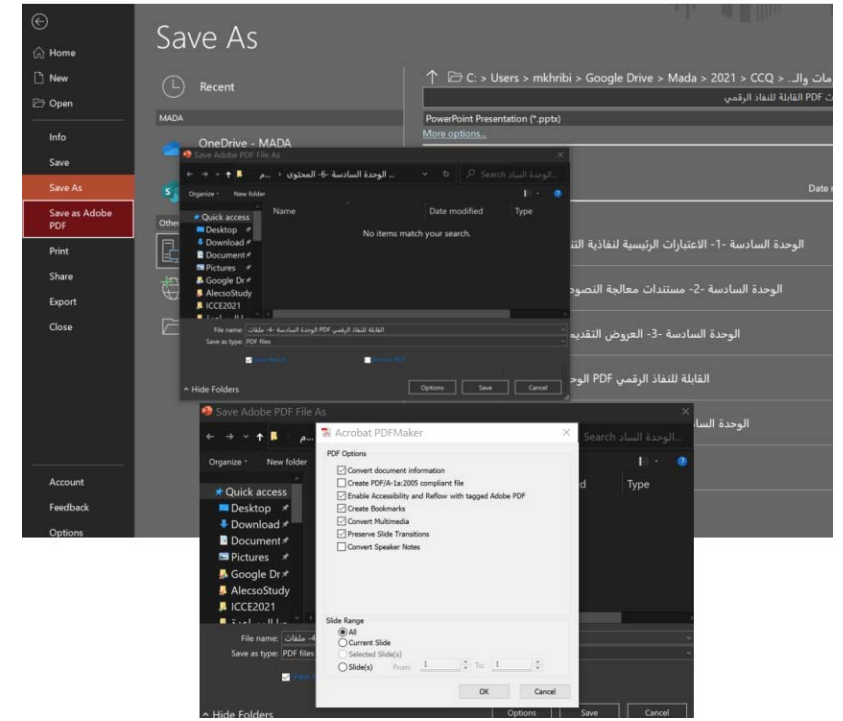
1. Accessibility of PDF Files

e) Creating Accessible PDF Files (1/2)

- To create accessible PDF files in Microsoft PowerPoint:
 - Select "Save As..." from the File menu.
 - Choose PDF from the available options. This allows creation of a PDF file while preserving accessibility features.
 - When saving, select accessibility options to ensure accessibility features are maintained.

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[Accessibility](#)



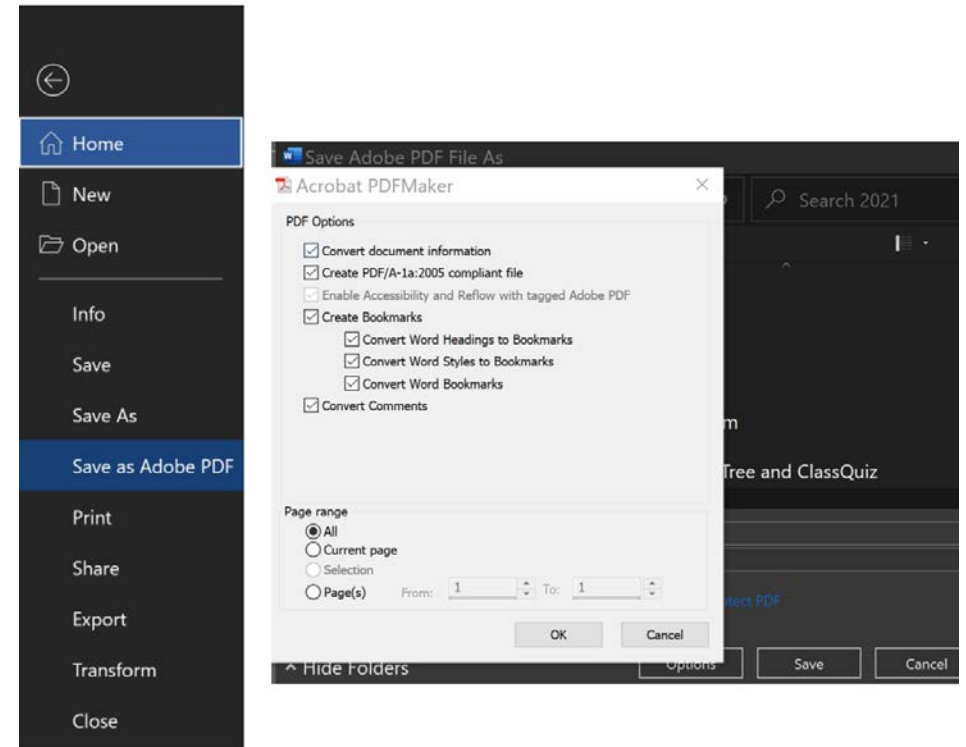
1. Accessibility of PDF Files

e) Creating Accessible PDF Files (2/2)

- Creating accessible PDF files in Microsoft Word:
- "Save As..." Go to File > and select PDF from the available options. This allows creating a PDF file that maintains accessibility features.
- When saving, choose accessibility options.

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[Accessibility](#)



1. Accessibility of PDF Files

e) More Information

- More details about digital accessibility of PDF files at the following links:
 - [Create and verify PDF accessibility, Acrobat Pro](#)
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