

Portable Document Format

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"PDF" redirects here. For other uses, see [PDF \(disambiguation\)](#).

Portable Document Format (PDF) is a [file format](#) developed by [Adobe Systems](#) for representing documents in a manner that is independent of the original application [software](#), [hardware](#), and [operating system](#) used to create those documents. A PDF file can describe documents containing any combination of text, graphics, and images in a [device independent](#) and [resolution](#) independent format. These documents can be one page or thousands of pages, very simple or extremely complex with a rich use of fonts, graphics, colour, and images. PDF is an [open standard](#), and anyone may write applications that can read or write PDFs royalty-free.

In addition to encapsulating text and graphics, PDF files are most appropriate for encoding the exact look of a document in a device-independent way. In contrast, markup languages such as HTML defer many display decisions to a rendering device such as a browser, and will not look the same on different computers.

Free readers for many platforms are available for download from the Adobe website [\[1\]](#), and there are several free [open source](#) readers, including [Xpdf](#) [\[2\]](#) for [POSIX](#)-like systems with the [X Window System](#); [KPDF](#) [\[3\]](#), a viewer based on *Xpdf* for KDE; [GPdf](#) [\[4\]](#), a derivative of *Xpdf* for GNOME, [Evince](#) [\[5\]](#), a document viewer for GNOME (fork of [GPdf](#)) that can view PDF-files; [GSPdf](#) [\[6\]](#) and [ViewPDF](#) [\[7\]](#), for [GNUstep](#); and front-ends for many platforms to [Ghostscript](#).

Proper subsets of PDF, collectively called PDF/X, have been standardized by ISO.

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Technology

PDF is primarily the combination of three technologies:

- a cut-down form of [PostScript](#) for generating the layout and graphics,
- a font-embedding/replacement system to allow fonts to travel with the documents, and
- a structured [storage system](#) to bundle these elements into a single file, with [data compression](#) where appropriate.

[\[edit\]](#)

PostScript