



Wrangling PDF for Accessibility

With Robert Browder
PDF Explorer





Let's get a few things straight...

- When used as a noun, what is the plural form of PDF? It is PDF I *think*?
- I think of myself as an explorer NOT an expert.
- When YOU have expertise to share, please do!



A Little History

- PDF stands for portable document format
- Created by Adobe in the late 20th century
- Became an ISO standard in 2007 due to heavy use in the public sector

PDF in its natural environment



Positives About the Format



- Self Contained
- Easy to Archive
- Open Standards Make PDF Widely Available for Open Source Development
- Great for fixed layouts and printing
- Able to embed interactive content (video, audio, and javascript)

Limitations for Accessibility



- PDF can be formatted in a variety of ways, not all are accessible
- Flat images w/o text information
- May include text, but may not have read order explicitly defined
- Images need alt text manually defined



Complex Content

- Tables
- Math
- Pretty much anything **besides** basic text and flat images



PDF Tools

- Adobe Acrobat Pro
- Abby Fine Reader
- Read & Write



Acrobat Accessibility Tools

Let's try it!



Accessibility Workflow for PDF

Check out this awesome presentation from **Carli Spina**:

- <https://vtpubs.lib.vt.edu/2017/12/13/pdf-accessibility/>



Workflow Efficiency & When to Consider Alternative Formats

- Basic text and images are easy enough but require significant time input
 - Optical Character Recognition
 - Reader Order
 - Alt text for images

- LOTS of complex content becomes time consuming quickly