



[News and media](#) [News](#) [2008](#) [PDF format becomes ISO standard](#)

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PDF format becomes ISO standard

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The **Portable Document Format (PDF)**, undeniably one of the most commonly used formats for electronic documents, is now accessible as an ISO International Standard - ISO 32000-1. This move follows a decision by Adobe Systems Incorporated, original developer and copyright owner of the format, to relinquish control to ISO, who is now in charge of publishing the specifications for the current version (1.7) and for updating and developing future versions.

"By releasing the full PDF specification for ISO standardization, we are reinforcing our commitment to openness", says Kevin Lynch, Chief Technology Officer at Adobe. "As governments and organizations increasingly request open formats, maintenance of the PDF specification by an external and participatory organization will help continue to drive innovation and expand the rich PDF ecosystem that has evolved over the past 15 years."

PDF, a digital form used to represent electronic documents, allows users to exchange and view the documents easily and reliably, independent of the environments in which they are created, viewed and printed, while preserving their content and visual appearance.

With the explosive growth of the Internet, PDF has become one of the most common formats for document exchange, widely used in all professional and personal contexts. The format enables:

- preservation of document fidelity independent of device or platform
- merging of content from diverse sources
- collaborative editing of documents using multiple platforms
- digital signatures for authenticity
- security and permissions to preserve control over content
- accessibility of content to those with disabilities
- extraction and reuse of content for use with other file formats, and
- gathering data and integrating it with business systems using PDF forms.

Major corporations, government agencies and educational institutions use PDF to streamline their operations by replacing paper documentation with electronic exchange. Already, over 2 000 PDF product developers use this standard for their products and billions of PDF files are in existence today.

ISO Secretary-General Alan Bryden comments: "As an ISO standard, we can ensure that this useful and widely popular format is easily available to all interested stakeholders. The standard will benefit both software developers and users by encouraging the propagation and dissemination of a common technology that cuts across systems and is designed for long term survival."

The new standard, **ISO 32000-1, Document management – Portable document format – Part 1: PDF 1.7**, is based on the PDF version 1.7 developed by Adobe. This International Standard supplies the essential information needed by developers of software that create PDF files (conforming writers), software that reads existing PDF files and interprets their contents for display and interaction (conforming readers), and PDF products that read and/or write PDF files for a variety of other purposes (conforming products).

Future versions of the format will be published as subsequent parts of the standard by the ISO subcommittee in charge of its maintenance and development (SC 2, *Application issues*, of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 171, *Document management applications*).

ISO 32000-1, *Document management – Portable document format – Part 1: PDF 1.7* costs 370 Swiss francs and is available from ISO national member institutes (see the [complete list](#) with contact details) and from ISO Central Secretariat through the [ISO Store](#) or by contacting the Marketing & Communication department (see right-hand column).