

# Ink Link

## HOWARD PRINTING

### PDF = Portable Document Format

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Everyone receives, prints and forwards them to others. Some of us even create them. Many think they're the cat's meow, the bee's knees or the best thing since automatic bread machines. They're PDF files, something print buyers and Web developers should understand in more detail.

PDFs are documents that have been converted to files that can be interchangeably displayed or printed on a Macintosh or Windows-based PC machine without the original application program. Adobe's Acrobat software made this possible by building on a PostScript base, then using special coding applications.

This coding allows users to view and manage documents in an application- and platform-independent manner.

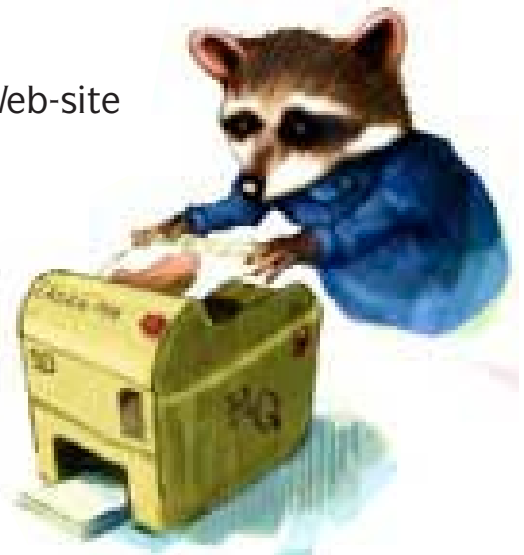
Originally PDFs were intended for viewing purposes only. It was an excellent way for graphic designers and printers to send soft proofs to clients. Viewers could review and critique their printed pieces as the design was being developed. Designers could get feedback without creating expensive hard-copy proofs. Printers would be 99% certain the design was final before beginning print production work. Everyone saved time and money along the way.



Turning a document into a PDF is referred to as "distilling." When you distill your document, you are essentially doing the interpretation and display list functions. This means you are embedding fonts, photos and graphics and compressing vector objects—making it no longer necessary to link design elements to a document. Distilling also identifies and secures CMYK vs. PMS ink colors. If your document can be distilled to a PDF, the odds are that it will output reliably on a Macintosh, DOS, Windows, UNIX or Web browser using Acrobat Reader.



There are several kinds of PDFs—two of which are the most common in advertising. Low-resolution PDFs work fine for Web-site use and monitor viewing. Their small file size makes it easy for a reader to zip around Web pages—avoiding lengthy image downloads. While low-res pages are printable, high-resolution PDFs are necessary for commercially printed pieces. Everyone has seen the fuzzy type and poor photo quality of a Web-based image that has been accidentally printed in a brochure or newsletter. One of the basic requirements for printing high-quality images is to start with high-quality "printing" PDFs.



Users quickly deduced that if PDFs could be viewed and printed on common laser and ink-jet printers, they were also candidates for use in printers' film output, platemaking, direct-to-press and digital printing. PDF file processing for print production has led to an influx of PDF-based network systems within the printing industry. PDFs are truly an important and powerful tool for print and Web graphics handling.

One of the securest ways to transfer art files is by converting them to PDFs. Doing so also reduces the file size which make email or FTP site postings quicker. Call us for details on how we can make your printing files process quicker and more efficiently.

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