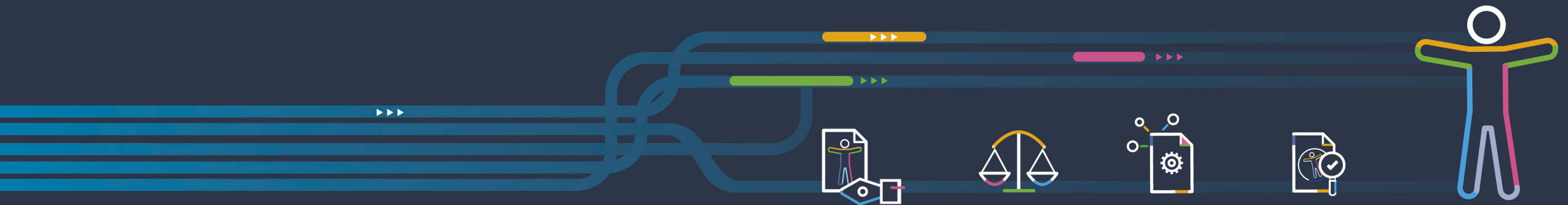


ACCESSIBLE PUBLISHING

CHECKING ACCESSIBILITY OF PDF FILES



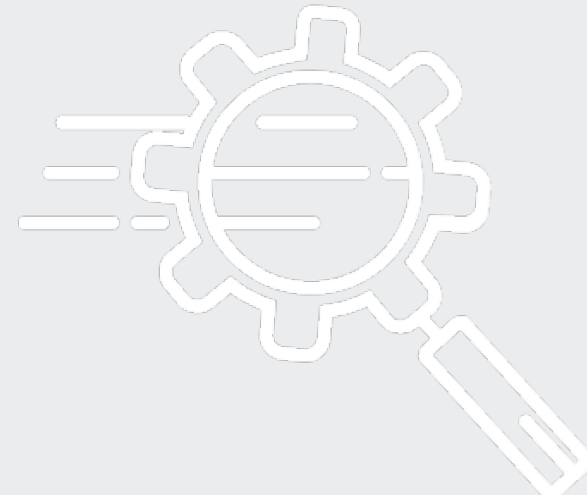
May 18, 2026

| Maria Jerez





- Introduction to accessibility
- **Checking accessibility of PDF files**
- Creating accessible publications with Word
- Creating accessible PDF from InDesign
- Creating accessible presentations with Power Point
- Writing effective alternative texts
- Accessibility do's and don'ts in social media



[Check all our webinars in EU Learn](#)



- Checking the accessibility of a PDF file
- Checking the colour contrast
- Screen readers
 - NVDA



1

Checking the accessibility of a PDF file



Tools to check a PDF



Adobe Acrobat Pro (Windows and macOS)

- Metadata
- Alternative texts
- Tags panel
- Order panel
- Accessibility checker



Plug-in Callas pdfGoHTML 2 (Windows and macOS)

- Screen reader preview with tags
- Can check tags reading order and alt text



PDF Accessibility Checker (PAC 2024) (Windows)

- PDF/UA and WCAG standards compliance
- Screen reader preview with tags (similar to Callas pdfGoHTML 2)

Characteristics of accessible PDFs



- Basic requirements
- Metadata
- Navigation
- Text
- Figures
- Structure
- Reading order
- Colour contrast



Basic requirements



- Document is tagged.
- No encryption / No password protection.
 - Except if specially configured for reader devices.
- Initial view: Bookmarks panel and page.
- Magnification: Fit page.
- Document title displayed in the PDF title bar.
- PDF compliant with PDF/UA standard.





- Title
- Author
 - Usually the name of institution, agency or DG.
- Primary language of the publication
 - A PDF document can only have one primary language.
- Subject and keywords



Properties: Description tab

Metadata

- Title
- Author
- Subject
- Keywords

Basic requirements

- Tagged PDF

The screenshot shows the 'Document Properties' dialog box with the 'Description' tab selected. The 'Description' section contains fields for Title, Author, Subject, and Keywords, all of which are highlighted with a blue rounded rectangle. Below these fields, the 'Created', 'Modified', and 'Application' information is displayed. An 'Additional Metadata...' button is located to the right of the 'Created' and 'Modified' fields. The 'Advanced' section is expanded, showing details about the PDF Producer, Version, Location, File Size, Page Size, Number of Pages, and Fast Web View. The 'Tagged PDF' checkbox is checked and highlighted with a blue rounded rectangle. The 'OK' button is highlighted with a blue rounded rectangle.

Document Properties

Description

File: Example 1 - OLAF Report 2019.pdf

Title: The OLAF report 2019

Author: OLAF

Subject: Twentieth report of the European Anti-Fraud Office, 1 January to 31 December 2019.

Keywords:

Created: 08/09/2020 21:27:48

Modified: 08/09/2020 21:34:37

Application: Adobe InDesign 15.1 (Macintosh)

Additional Metadata...

Advanced

PDF Producer: Adobe PDF Library 15.0

PDF Version: 1.7 (Acrobat 8.x)

Location: D:\ACCESSIBILITY\! NEW\!Accessibility trainings and demos\!do\check PDF\demo files\Structure\

File Size: 4.85 MB (5 084 665 Bytes)

Page Size: 210 x 297 mm

Number of Pages: 60

Tagged PDF: Yes

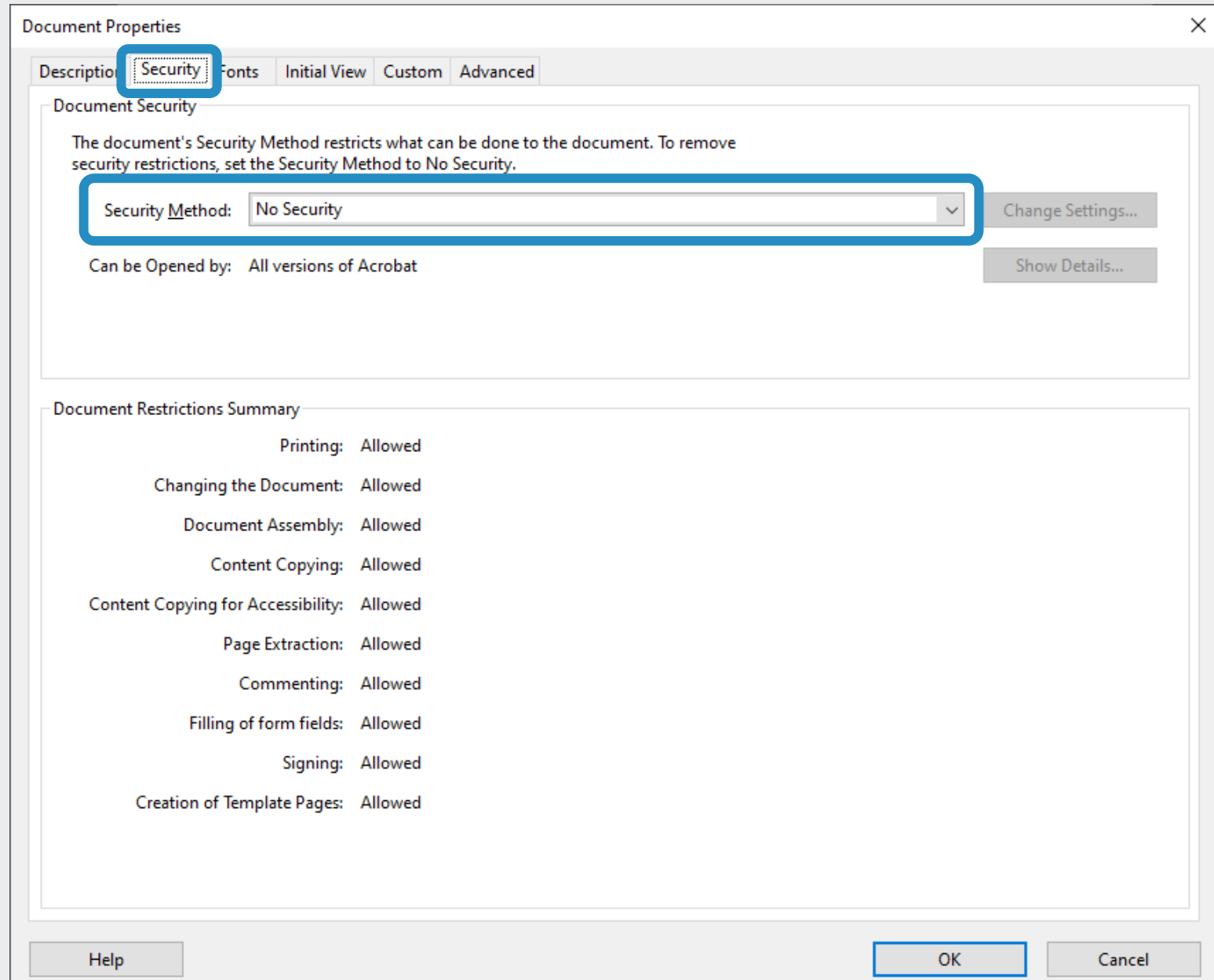
Fast Web View: No

Help OK Cancel

Properties: Security tab

Basic requirements

- No encryption
- No password protection



Properties: Initial View tab

Basic requirements

- Navigation tab:
Bookmarks panel and page
- Magnification: Fit page
- Show: Document title

The screenshot shows the 'Document Properties' dialog box with the 'Initial View' tab selected. The 'Layout and Magnification' section contains three dropdown menus: 'Navigation tab' set to 'Bookmarks Panel and Page', 'Page layout' set to 'Single Page', and 'Magnification' set to 'Fit Page'. The 'Open to page' field shows 'I' of IV (60). The 'Window Options' section has three unchecked checkboxes: 'Resize window to initial page', 'Center window on screen', and 'Open in Full Screen mode'. The 'Show' dropdown is set to 'Document Title'. The 'User Interface Options' section has three unchecked checkboxes: 'Hide menu bar', 'Hide tool bars', and 'Hide window controls'. The 'OK' button is highlighted with a blue border.

Document Properties

Description Security Fonts **Initial View** Custom Advanced

Layout and Magnification

Navigation tab: Bookmarks Panel and Page

Page layout: Single Page

Magnification: Fit Page

Open to page: I of IV (60)

Window Options

☐ Resize window to initial page

☐ Center window on screen

☐ Open in Full Screen mode

Show: Document Title

User Interface Options

☐ Hide menu bar

☐ Hide tool bars

☐ Hide window controls

Help OK Cancel

Properties: Advanced tab

Basic requirement

- PDF/UA compliance.

Metadata

- Primary language of the publication

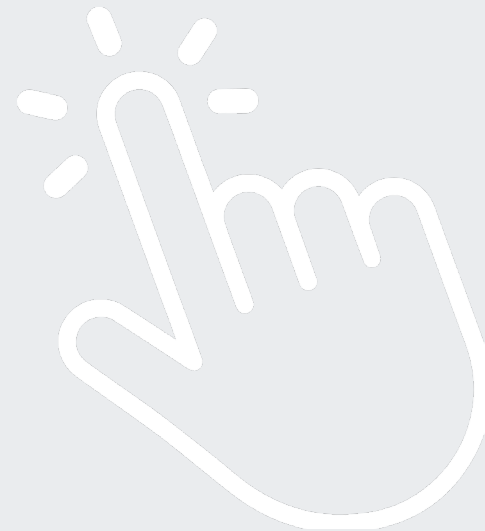
The image shows a screenshot of the 'Document Properties' dialog box, specifically the 'Advanced' tab. The dialog has a title bar with a close button (X) and a tabbed interface with the following tabs: Description, Security, Fonts, Initial View, Custom, and Advanced. The 'Advanced' tab is selected and highlighted with a blue border. The dialog is divided into several sections, each with a collapsed header icon (a small square with a downward arrow):

- PDF Settings:** Contains a 'Base URL' text field, a 'Search Index' text field with 'Browse...' and 'Clear' buttons, and a 'Trapped' dropdown menu set to 'No'.
- Accessibility:** Contains a 'PDF/UA Compliance' dropdown menu set to 'PDF/UA v1 - ISO 14289-1 2014'. This section is highlighted with a blue border.
- Print Dialog Presets:** Contains a 'Page Scaling' dropdown set to 'Default', a 'DuplexMode' dropdown set to 'Simplex', a 'Paper Source by Page Size' checkbox (unchecked), a 'Print Page Range' text field, and a 'Number of Copies' dropdown set to 'Default'.
- Reading Options:** Contains a 'Binding' dropdown set to 'Left Edge' and a 'Language' dropdown set to 'en-GB'. This section is highlighted with a blue border.

At the bottom of the dialog, there is a 'Protected Mode' status indicator set to 'On'. The footer contains three buttons: 'Help', 'OK' (highlighted with a blue border), and 'Cancel'.



- Table of contents
 - Represents the structure of the publication and have links to the content.
- Bookmarks
 - Represent the structure of the publication and have links to the content.
- Internal crosslinks
 - Index, list of tables, list of figures...
- External hyperlinks
 - Applied to a meaningful text describing the link.
 - Not just to the web address.
 - Not “link to”, “click here” or “more information”.





- Text ≠ image
 - Selectable and can be copied as text in a text editor.
 - No text converted to image, except:
 - Part of a decorative element.
 - Part of a graph with an alternative text.
- Font size
 - Font size is readable.
 - Recommended minimum size { Body text: Arial 12 pt.
Footnotes: Arial 9 pt.
- Other recommendations
 - Sans-serif fonts.
 - Avoid cursive and fantasy fonts.
 - Limit the number of fonts to a maximum of 2 or 3.





- **Meaningful images and charts**

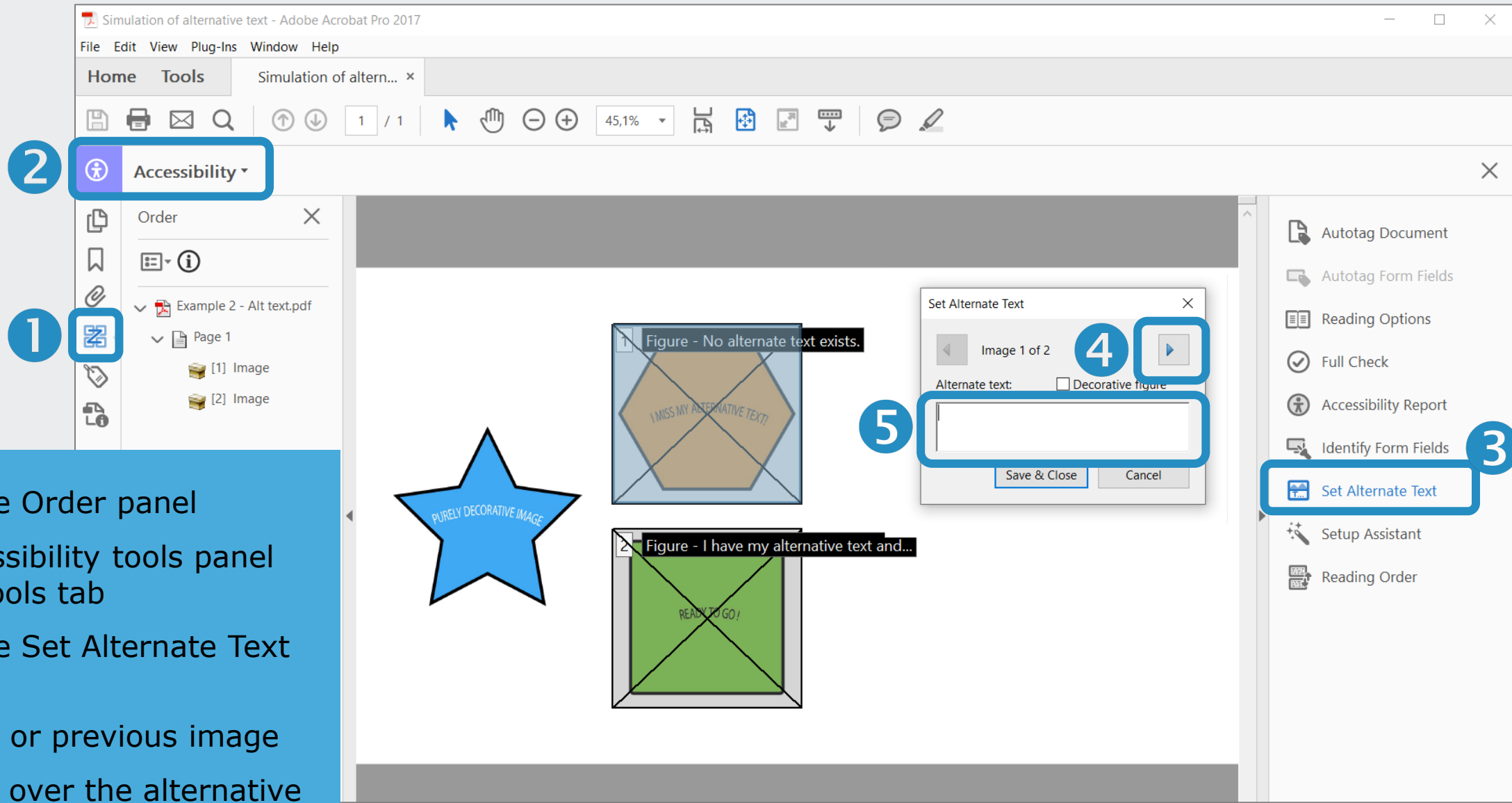
- Need an alternative text.

- **Artifacts**

- Decorative images excluded from the reading order.



Checking alternative text for images



Checking alternative text for images (2)

Simulation of alternative text - Adobe Acrobat Pro 2017

File Edit View Plug-Ins Window Help

Home Tools Simulation of altern... x

1 2

Accessibility

Order

Example 2 - Alt text.pdf

Page 1

[1] Image

[2] Image

PURELY DECORATIVE IMAGE

Figure - No alternate text exists.

Figure - I

Right click

6

Alternate Text

Alternate Text:

I have my alternative text and I am ready for accessibility!

OK Don't Add Alt-Text

5

4

3

Reading Order

Draw a rectangle around the content then click one of the buttons below:

Text/Paragraph Figure

Form Field Figure/Caption

Heading 1 Heading 4 Table

Heading 2 Heading 5 Cell

Heading 3 Heading 6 Formula

Reference (q) Note (z) Background/Artifact

Table Editor

☒ Show page content groups

☒ Page content order

☐ Structure types

☒ Show table cells

☒ Display like elements in a single block

☒ Show tables and figures

Clear Page Structure... Show Order Panel

Help Close

Autotag Document

Autotag Form Fields

Reading Options

Full Check

Accessibility Report

Identify Form Fields

Set Alternate Text

Setup Assistant

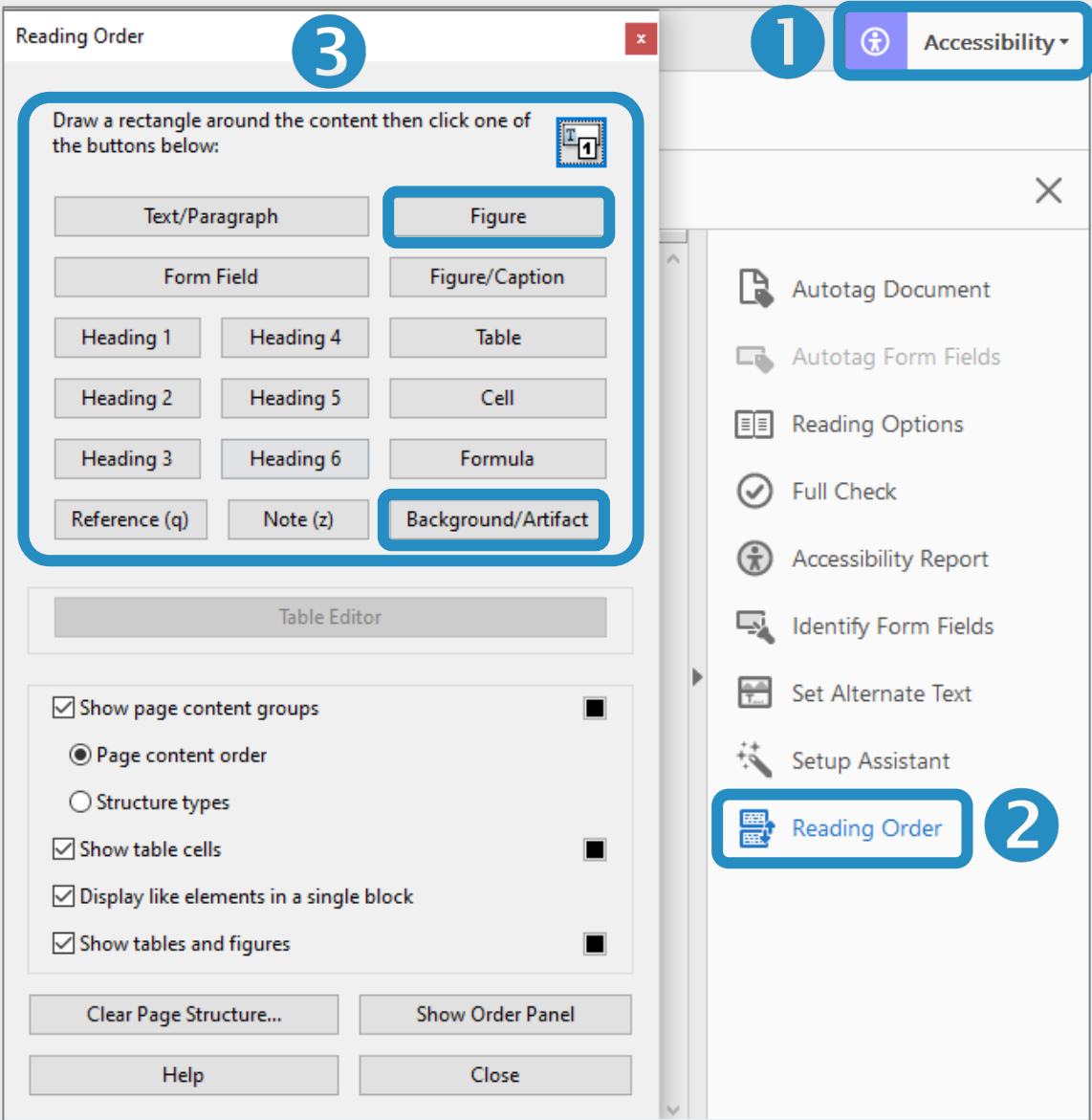
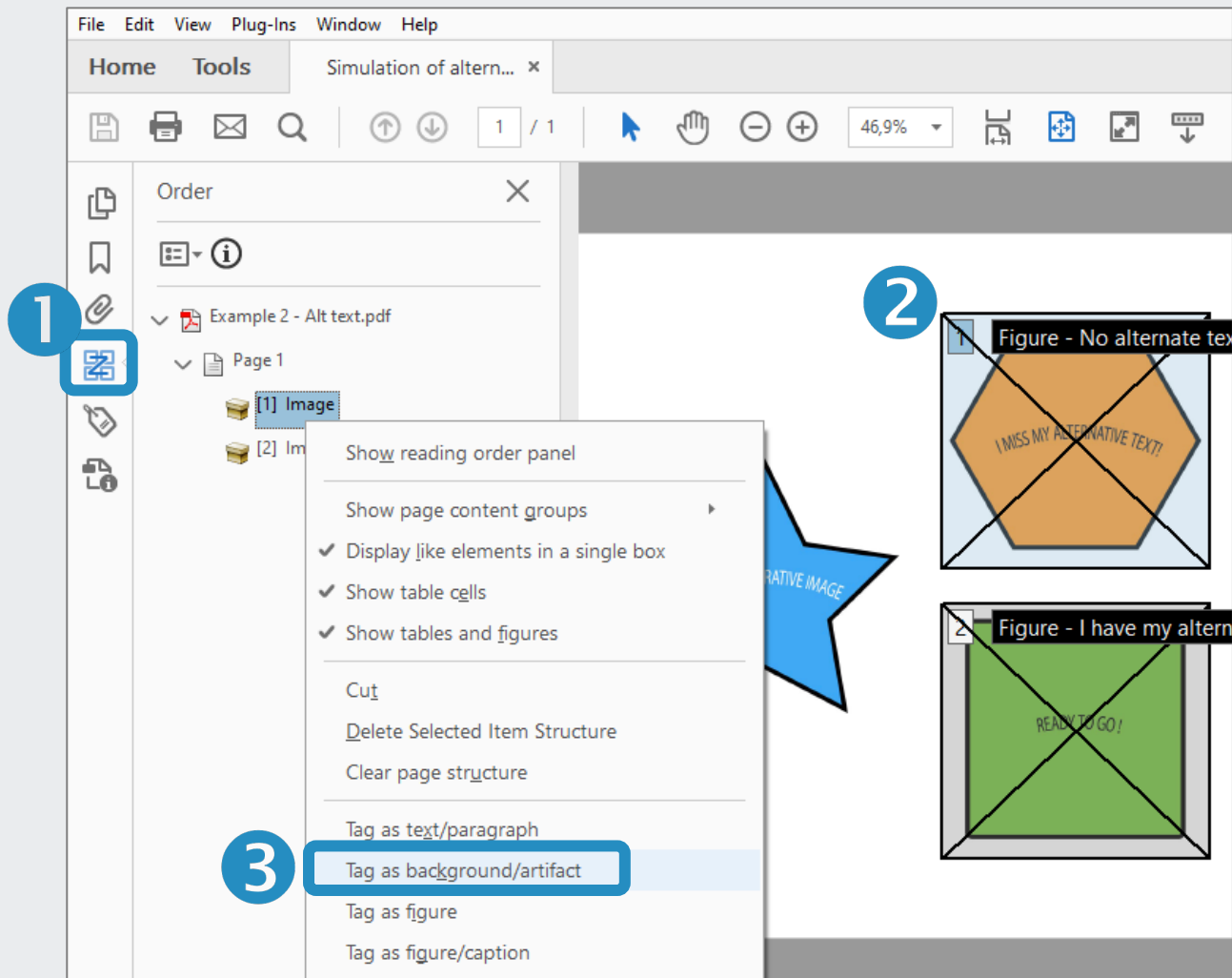
Reading Order

1. Activate the Order panel
2. Open Accessibility tools panel from the Tools tab
3. Activate the Reading order tool
4. Right click on the image
5. Select "Edit Alternate Text..."
6. Full control over the alternative text

Tagging an image as an artifact

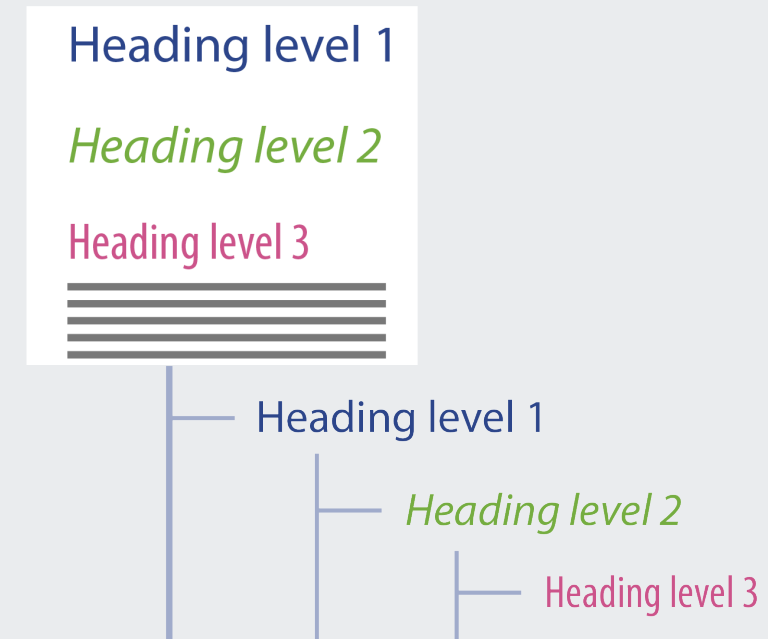
Option 2

Option 1





- Headings
 - Tagged as headings.
 - They are properly nested.
- Lists
 - Tagged with list tags.
 - The nesting of list items represent the list structure.
- Tables
 - Tagged as tables.
 - With a header row.
 - Not used for the layout purposes.



Checking the structure with Callas pdfGoHTML 2

File Edit View Certified PDF PitStop Pro Plug-Ins

Home Tools Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

1 / 3 142%

Bookmarks

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Publication timeline

Lists of characters

Synopsis

Chapter One – Down the Rabbit Hole

Chapter Two – The Pool of Tears

Chapter Three – The Caucus Race and a Long Tale

Chapter Four – The Rabbit Sends a Little Bill

Chapter Five – Advice from a Caterpillar

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (commonly shortened to Alice in Wonderland) is an 1865 novel written by English mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll. It tells of a girl named Alice falling through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world.

More information at [Website of Alice](#).



Publication timeline

The following list is a timeline of major publication events related to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland:

- 1865: First UK edition (the second printing).
- 1865: First US edition (the first printing of above).
- 1869: Alice's Abenteuer im Wunderland is published in German translation by Antonie Zimmermann.
- 1869: Aventures d'Alice au pays des merveilles is published in French translation by Henri Bué.

Callas pdfGoHTML 2

Sect

H1

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

P

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P

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P

Fig.



Alt

Alice, the rabbit and the mad hatter at the tea party

H2

Publication timeline

P

The following list is a timeline of major publication events related to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland:

List

LI

LBody

- 1865: First UK edition (the second printing).

Structure versus no structure: Acrobat Pro

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland - Adobe Acrobat Pro 2017

File Edit View Plug-Ins Window Help

Home Tools Alice's Adventures i... x

1 / 3

50,5%

Bookmarks

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

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Example 4 - No structure.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Pro 2017

File Edit View Plug-Ins Window Help

Home Tools Example 4 - No str... x

1 / 3

53,9%

Bookmarks

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Publication timeline

Lists of characters

Synopsis

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Chapter Two – The Pool of Tears

Chapter Three – The Caucus Race and a Long Tale

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Structure versus no structure: Callas pdfGoHTML 2

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

File | C:/Users/jerezma/AppData/Local/Temp/1/com.callassoftware.pdfGoHTML/pdf2...

Browser DefaultBasicStructure TagsEasy ReaderInvertedLow visionLow vision invertedDyslexia

hide imageshide ALT texts

Sect

H1

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

P

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P

More information at [Website of Alice](#).

P

Fig.



Sect

Microsoft Word - alice demo fina

File | C:/Users/jerezma/AppData/Local/Temp/1/com.callassoftware...

Browser DefaultBasicStructure TagsEasy ReaderInvertedLow vision

Low vision invertedDyslexiahide imageshide ALT texts

Part

P

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

P

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Fig.

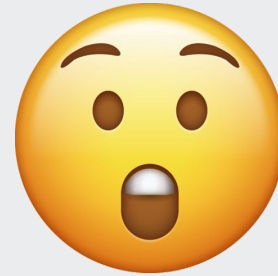


Part

P

Publication timeline

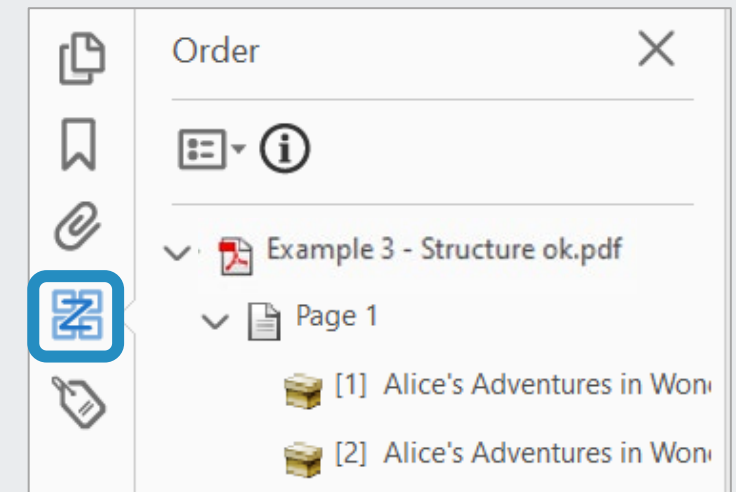
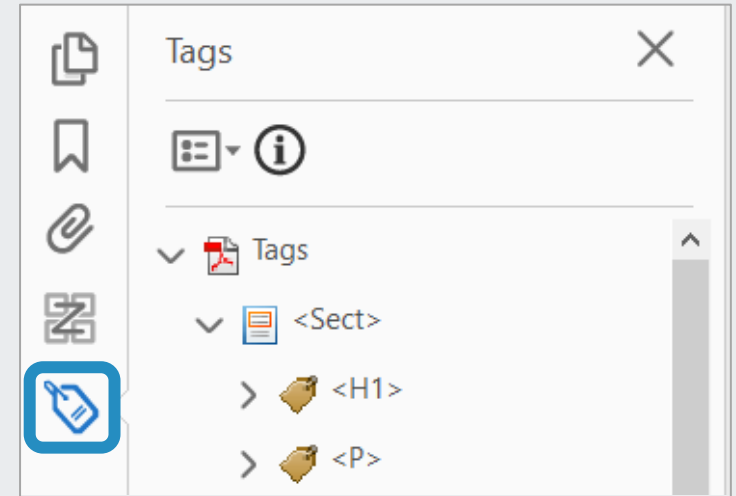
Reading order



Reading order (2)



- Tags reading order
 - The order of the tags in this panel corresponds with the logical reading sequence.
- Layer reading order
 - The order of the elements in this panel represents the logical reading sequence.
- Other reading orders
 - Top to bottom.
 - Left to right.



Checking the reading order

Callas pdfGoHTML 2

Order panel
Tags panel

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland - Adobe Acrobat Pro 2017

File Edit View **Plug-Ins** Window Help

Home Tools Alice's Adventures i... x

1 / 3 50,5%

Order

- Example 3 - Structure ok.pdf
- Page 1
 - [1] Alice's Adventures in Won
 - [2] Alice's Adventures in Won
 - [3]
 - [4] Publication timeline
 - [5] The following list is a time
 - [6] - 1865: First UK edition (th
 - [7] Image
- Page 2
- Page 3

Figure - Alice, the rabbit and the mad ...

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Source: Wikipedia

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland x +

File | C:/Users/jerezma/AppData/Local/Temp/1/com.callassoftware....

Browser Default Basic **Structure Tags** Easy Reader Inverted Low vision Low vision inverted

Dyslexia hide images hide ALT texts

Sect

H1 Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

P Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (commonly shortened to Alice in Wonderland) is an 1865 novel written by English mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll. It tells of a girl named Alice falling through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world.

P More information at [Website of Alice](#) .

P

Fig.



Automatic accessibility checkers



Adobe Acrobat Pro Accessibility Checker

✓ Full Check



PDF Accessibility Checker (PAC 2024)

📋 Results in Detail

Both are needed!!

Accessibility Checker of Acrobat Pro

Accessibility Tools Panel > Full Check

1

Accessibility

3

Detailed report

2

Full Check

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland - Adobe Acrobat Pro 2017

File Edit View Plug-Ins Window Help

Home Tools Alice's Adventures i... x

Save Print Email Find 1 / 3 44,8%

Accessibility Checker

Document (2 issues)

- Accessibility permission flag -
- Image-only PDF - Passed
- Tagged PDF - Passed
- Logical Reading Order - Needs manual review
- Primary language - Passed
- Title - Passed
- Bookmarks - Passed
- Color contrast - Needs manual review

Page Content

Forms

Alternate Text

Tables

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

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- 1869: Aventures d'Alice au pays des merveilles is published in French translation by Henri Bue.

Source: Wikipedia

Autotag Document

Autotag Form Fields

Reading Options

Full Check

Accessibility Report

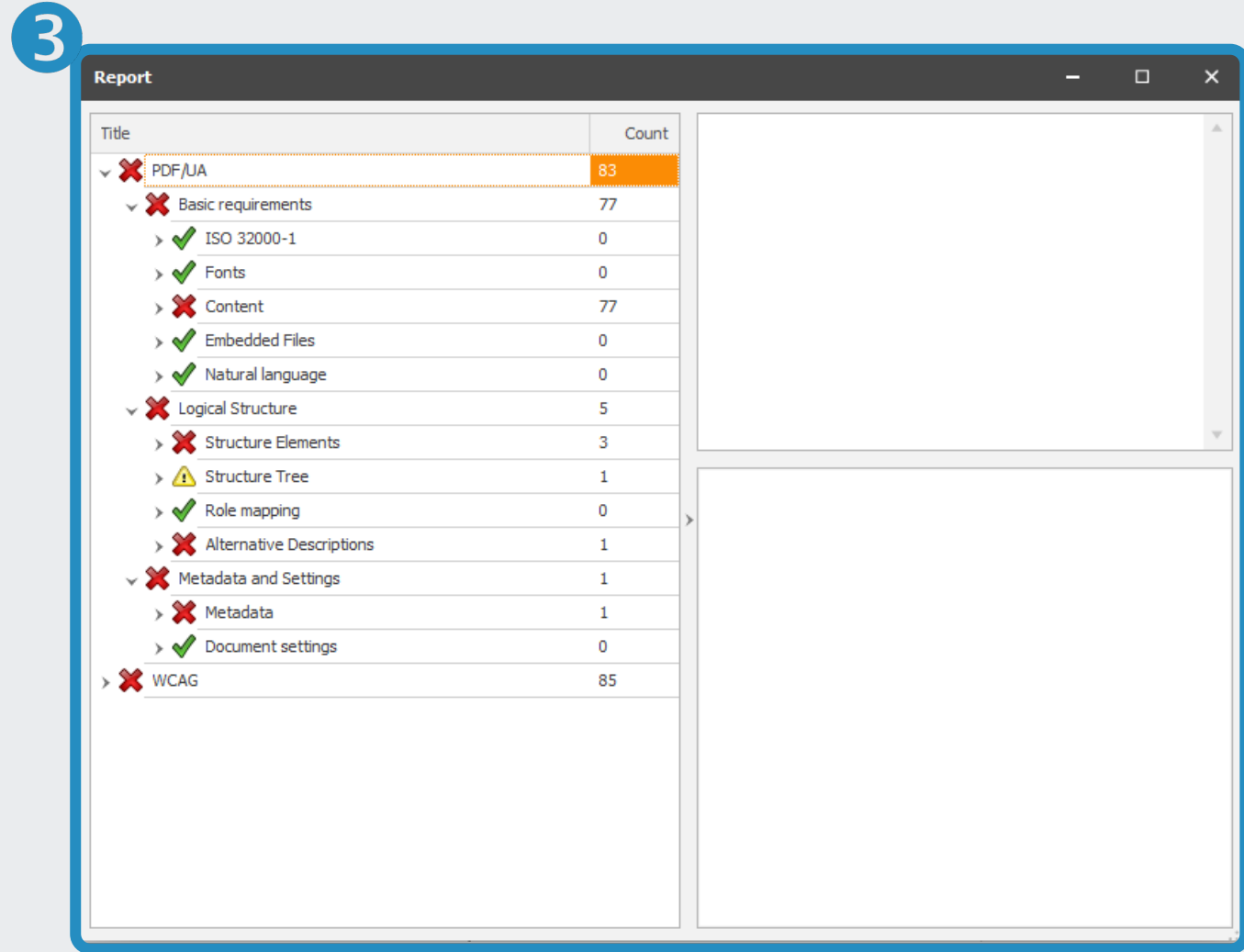
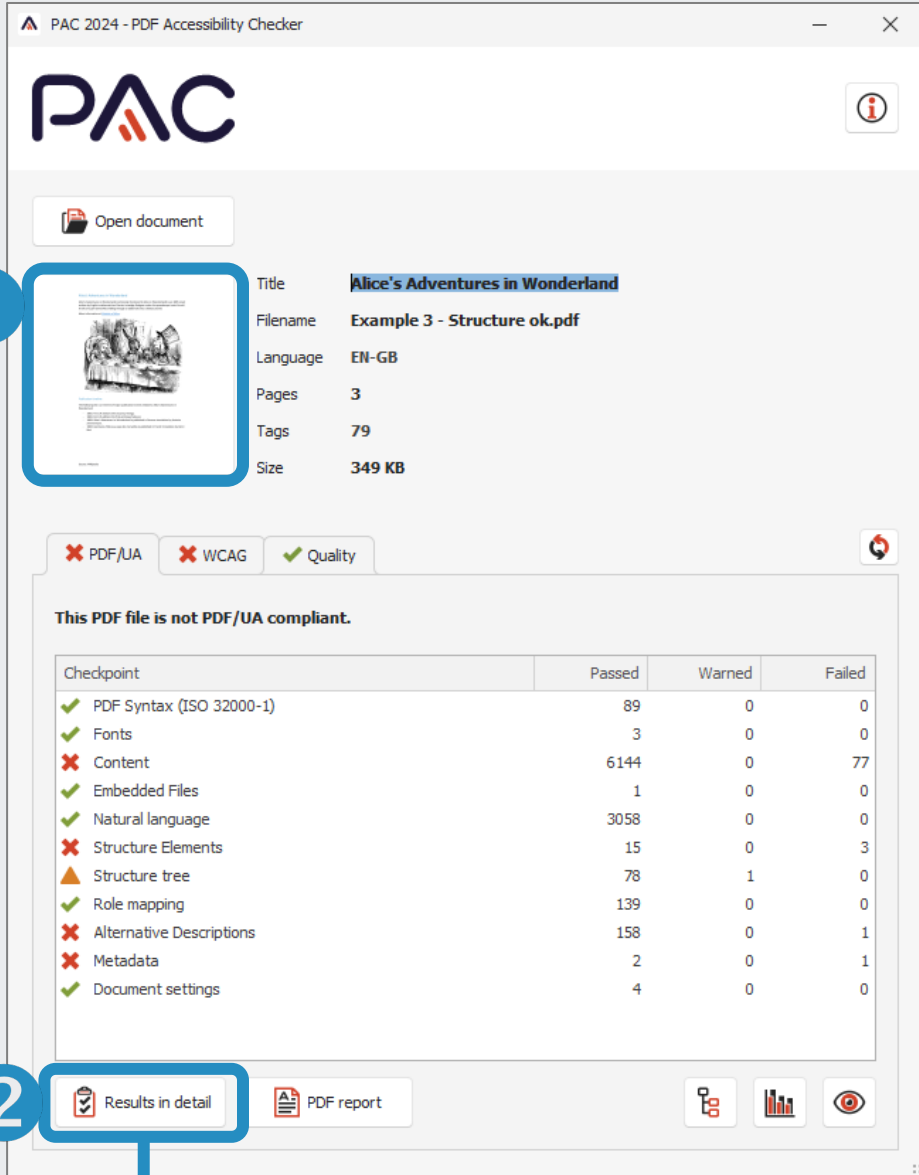
Identify Form Fields

Set Alternate Text

Setup Assistant

Reading Order

PDF Accessibility Checker 2024



Detailed report

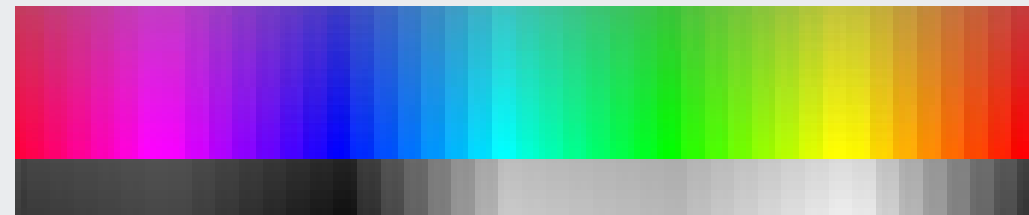
2

Checking the colour contrast





- Text contrast ratio 4.5 : 1 (WCAG AA)
 - Contrast for regular text against the background.
- Text contrast ratio 3 : 1 (WCAG AA)
 - Contrast for large text against the background.
 - Large text is a text that is larger than 18 pt or larger than 14 pt if bold.
- Non-text contrast ratio 3 : 1 (WCAG AA)
 - Contrast of graphical objects against adjacent colours.



Tools to check the colour contrast



..... [Colour Contrast Analyser](#) (Windows and MacOS)



..... [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#) (online)



..... [Adobe Color](#) (online)



..... [GIMP](#) (Windows and macOS)



..... [Coblis — Color Blindness Simulator](#) (online)

Colour Contrast Analyser



Colour Contrast Analyser (CCA)

Colour Contrast Analyser (CCA) Edit View

Contrast ratio3.3:1

Foreground colour

hsl(50,100%,60%)HSL

↕⇅🖌️

Background colour

#238391HEX

⇅🖌️🔍

▼ Sample preview

example text showing contrast🖨️

WCAG 2.1 results

▶ 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) (AA)

✔️ Pass for large text only ❌ Fail for regular text

▶ 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced) (AAA)

❌ Fail for large and regular text

▼ 1.4.11 Non-text Contrast (AA)

Paraphrased

The visual presentation of user interface components (their states – including focus indication – and boundaries) and graphical objects has a contrast ratio of at least **3:1** against adjacent color(s)

✔️ Pass for UI components and graphical objects



WebAIM Contrast Checker



WebAIM

web accessibility in mind

services

articles

resources

projects

community

Search:

Introduction to Web Accessibility

WebAIM Training

Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

Foreground

Hex Value

#20399D

Color Picker

Alpha

Luminance

Background

Hex Value

#FFFFFF

Color Picker

Luminance

Contrast Ratio

9.84:1

[permalink](#)

Normal Text

WCAG AA: **Pass**

WCAG AAA: **Pass**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Large Text

WCAG AA: **Pass**

WCAG AAA: **Pass**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Graphical Objects and User Interface Components

WCAG AA: **Pass**

Text Input

Related Resources

- [Contrast and Color Accessibility](#)
- [Quick Reference: Testing Web Content for Accessibility](#)
- [WebAIM Auditing & Evaluation Services](#)
- [Web Accessibility for Designers](#)
- [Link Contrast Checker](#)
- [Contrast Checker Bookmarklet](#)

Adobe Color and GIMP colour picker

1

Color WheelExtract ThemeExtract GradientAccessibility Tools

Tools

Contrast Checker

WCAG 2.1 Level

AA

Import Colors

Text Color

#FFFFFF

Background Color

#DB592A

Contrast Ratio

3.84 : 1

Preview

Regular Text

A high color contrast makes anything easier to read

Fail for 17pt and below

Large Text

A high color contrast makes anything easier to read

Pass for 18pt and above / 14pt bold and above

Graphic Components

Pass for icons and actionable graphics

5

2

GNU Image Manipulation Program

File Edit Select View Image Layer Colors Tools Filters Windows Help

filter

2. Hardness 050 (51 x 51)

Basic

Spacing 10.0

Layers Channels Paths

Crop

Current layer only

Delete cropped pixels

Allow growing

Expand from center

Fixed Aspect ratio

1:1

Position

0 0

px

3

Change Foreground Color

0..100 0..255 LCh HSV

R 14.5

G 55.3

B 75.7

L 54.8

C 39.3

h 246.3

HTML notation: 258dc1

Current: Old:

Help Reset OK Cancel

4

Change Foreground Color

0..100 0..255 LCh HSV

R 94.5

G 78.0

B 38.0

L 82.5

C 56.2

h 82.7

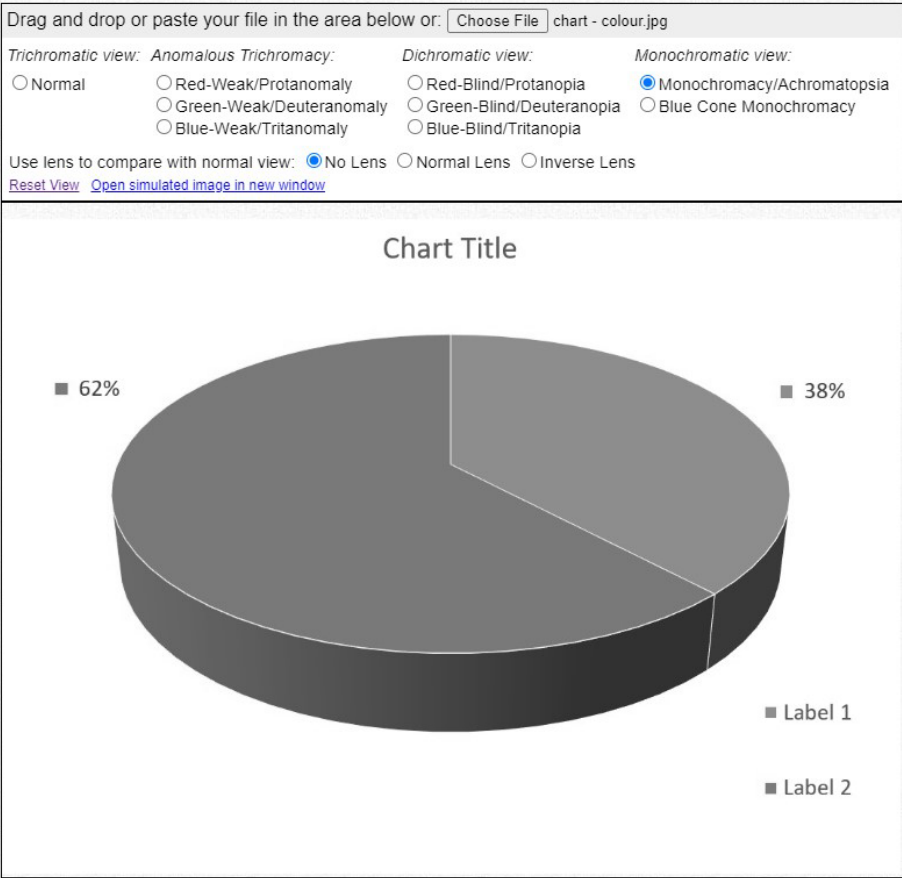
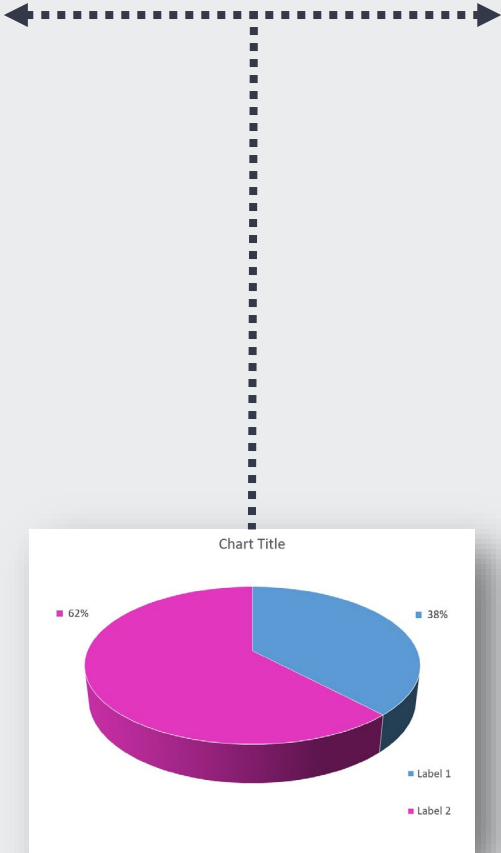
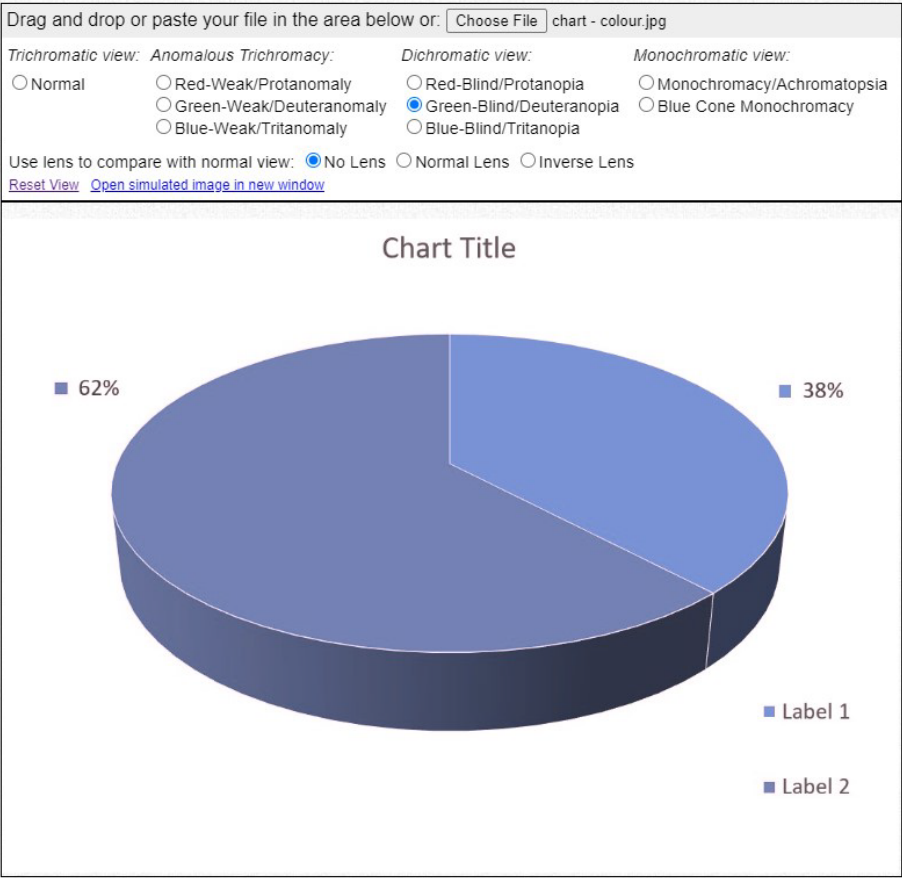
HTML notation: f1c761

Current: Old:

Help Reset OK Cancel



Color Blindness Simulator



Color filters in Windows 11



Start > Settings > Accessibility > Color filters

The image shows a Windows 11 desktop with the Start menu open. The path to the Color filters settings is highlighted with numbered callouts:

1. Windows logo icon in the taskbar.
2. Settings app icon in the Start menu.
3. Accessibility category in the Settings app.
4. Color filters option in the Accessibility settings.
5. Color filters settings window.

The Color filters settings window (5) shows the following options:

- Intensity: Slider
- Color Boost: Slider
- Reset intensity and color boost to defaults: Button
- Reset: Button
- Color filters: Radio buttons for:
 - Red-green (green weak, deuteranopia)
 - Red-green (red weak, protanopia)
 - Blue-yellow (tritanopia)
 - Grayscale
 - Grayscale inverted
 - Inverted
- Keyboard shortcut for color filters: On (toggle)

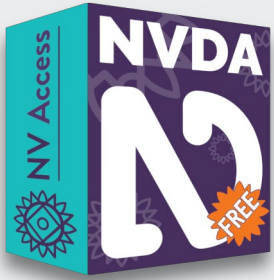
Shortcut for filters: Win + Ctrl + C

3

Screen readers



Free screen readers



..... **NVDA** (Windows)

[Check our videos about how to test different types of files with NVDA](#)



..... **Voice Over** (macOS and iOS)

Already included in the operating system

Preparing Acrobat Reader or Acrobat Pro



1. Check settings for Acrobat Reader

Edit > Accessibility > Setup Assistant...

Select:

- Infer reading order from document
- Read entire document at once

2. Check settings for Acrobat Pro

Edit > Preferences > General... > Reading

Select:

- Reading Order: Infer reading order from document
- Page vs. Document: Read entire document at once

Accessibility Tool > Reading options:

- Reading Order: Infer reading order from document
- Reading Mode Options: Read the entire document



Tips for using NVDA to check PDF files



1. Know how to exit NVDA

Click NVDA icon in the taskbar > Exit

2. Add Focus Highlight plugin

To install: right click NVDA icon in taskbar, Tools > Manage add-ons > Get add-ons

Click Focus Highlight > Download stable version.

3. Mute the sound when not needed

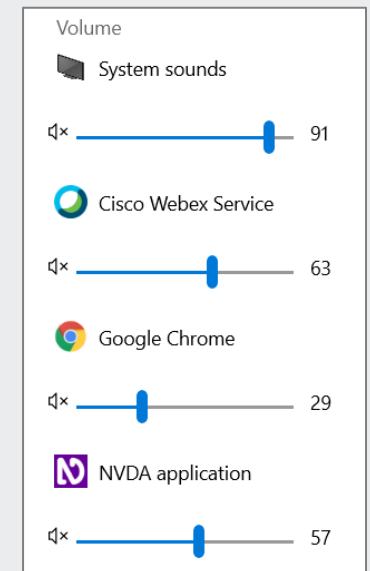
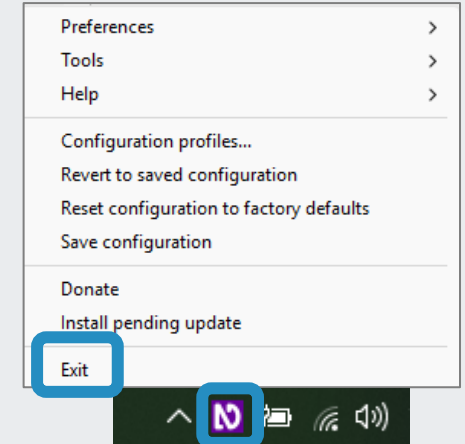
Insert + S

4. Instead of sound you can activate speech viewer

Right click NVDA icon in the taskbar > Tools > Speech viewer

5. Control the loudness of NVDA speech with Volume Mixer tool

Taskbar > Speakers > Open Volume Mixer > Adjust volume for NVDA application when it runs



Shortcut keys for NVDA



Modifier key (NV)

Insert key and/or CapsLock key

Note for MAC users

Possible to run NVDA if Windows10 is installed as a parallel OS.

Modifier key: Num Pad key "0".

Read from cursor till end

Laptop keyboard: NV + a

Desktop keyboard: NV + Down

Pause reading

Ctrl

Chose where to start read

Double click in the document

Read next/previous line

Down / Up

Go to next/previous heading

h / Shift h (Only works if document contains headings)

Open Elements List to see all Links and list of all Headings

NV + F7 (Required setting: Read entire document at once)

Go to next/previous table

t / Shift t (Only works if document contains tables)

Questions?

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