

Using PDFs to Distribute Technical Documentation: Dos & Don'ts

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Plan carefully

- Things that are left “to be decided later on” invariably mean redoing tasks and/or ending up with unresolved problems
- Establish a clear idea of anticipated use, such as:
 - Print / Online / Interactive
 - Reference vs. sequential



2 PDF metadata (DocInfo)

- **Descriptive information that can be displayed or searched in Acrobat**
 - **Title is used by web search engines and Acrobat's Search**
 - **Title can be displayed in Acrobat's title bar as a default document viewing setting**
 - **Spoken by screen readers**



Page labels

- **Supported in Acrobat/Reader 4 and higher:**
 - **Displayed in the status bar, Go To and Print dialog boxes**
 - **Displayed when dragging the vertical scrolling bar (in a single page display mode)**
 - **Displayed when thumbnails are displayed**



Bookmarks

- **Provide an interactive table of contents**
- **Easily add value to a PDF, without complicating its printing aspects**

Bookmarks should include...

- **Key navigational items such as the table of contents, index and various lists you have created.**
- **Custom bookmarks for external links such as a link to a web site, to other PDFs, or to facilitate user feedback**



Links

- **Table of contents, index, lists**
- **Cross-references**
- **Web links, e-mail addresses**

Test your PDFs

- All interactive features, text accessibility
- Do not distribute a PDF you haven't examined!

