



BUG-BYTES

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WHAT IS A PDF GENERATOR?



SAVE DOCUMENTS IN A UNIVERSAL FORM

BACKGROUND

PDF stands for *Portable Document Format*. It is a universal file format used to distribute documents containing text, images, and multimedia that are device-independent. That is, those receiving PDF files can view them with a reader without having to own a program identical to the one used to generate the PDF file.

A PDF generator is a software program used to convert a formatted document file into an easy to read document that preserves all of the formatting, text, and other attributes of the original file. The person receiving the PDF file can view it with a free reader such as Adobe Reader or Foxit Reader.

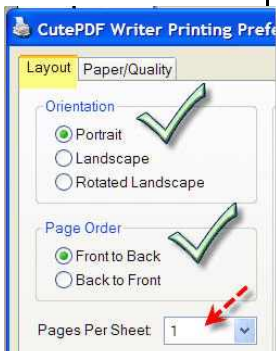
A PDF generator program, such as Adobe Acrobat (paid), PDF995 (shareware), or CutePDF (Free) installs a PDF print driver that replaces your default printer during the file conversion. We discussed print drivers in the August issue of Bug-Bytes.

Paid PDF programs offer more features, but free versions, such as *CutePDF* from www.cutepdf.com/index.htm, will suffice for most users. CutePDF is configurable to control the file size.

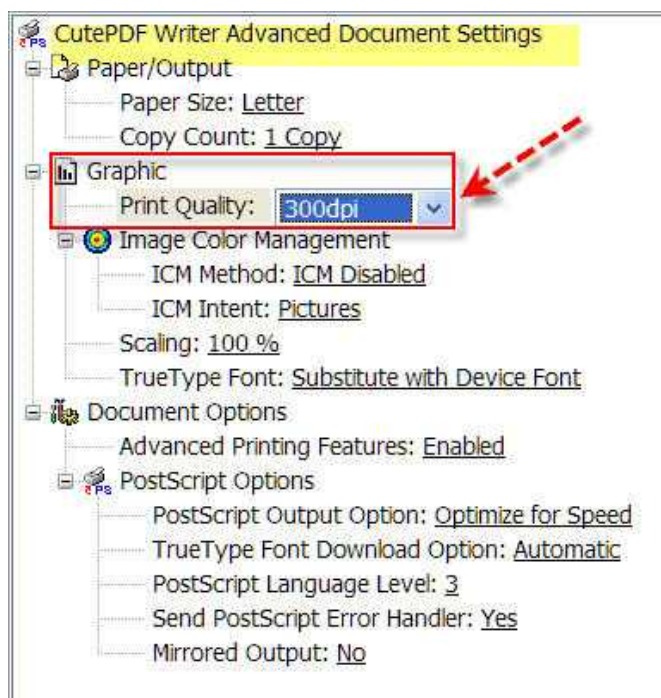
The right screen shot shows the simple configuration menu.



CutePDF



WordPerfect users can create PDF files by clicking on File, publish to PDF.



Change the graphic setting from the default of 600 dots per inch (dpi) to 72dpi for web use or 300dpi for very good print output. This will decrease the resulting file size.

HOW TO USE A PDF PROGRAM

Download a PDF generator program. *CutePDF Writer* is a good place to start. It is free from <http://www.cutepdf.com/download.htm>. Install the program. In so doing, it creates a print driver that is added to your printer list as seen in the control panel (Start, Control Panel, Printers and Faxes).

To create a PDF version of any document, click on File, Print. "Print" the document in the application that you are using, but select the PDF driver as though it was an alternate printer. Configure the PDF print driver to send the output to the file folder of your choice. Thereafter, when you "print" a document using the PDF print driver, the document you are printing will be converted to a PDF

file. Send the PDF file to anyone by email, print the file, or view it at a later time.

If you did not already do so, download a free PDF reader. These are two popular choices. www.adobe.com and www.foxitsoftware.com. Foxit is the faster of the two.

IS BIG BROTHER WATCHING YOU?

THE STATUS OF ONLINE INFORMATION



From time to time computer users are amazed or horrified to learn that some personal information about them is readily available on the internet. How you view such a revelation depends entirely upon your outlook on life. Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Do you see life's glass as being half full or half empty?

For instance you can type an address or telephone number into your favorite search engine and you may come up with a map to that address and possibly the name of the person with that listed phone number. If you type a person's name into a search engine, you may come up with partial information about them. Is that big brother watching you as some folks would like us to believe? Certainly not. I will tell you why.

Public records have been with us since the dawn of history. What has changed is that it is now much easier to access those records when those records are computerized. Common public records include telephone directories, utility records, court records, criminal records, records of home sales, birth announcements and registrations, marriage licenses, and death notices. Newspapers sometimes print personal information.



In the past, you had to hire a detective agency to find missing persons or to research background information about a specific individual. Today, you can use people search engines to find some of that data for you. Nevertheless, if you want any serious information, you have to pay for it, but then that has always been the case.

For instance, one of the biggest and best known people search sites is www.intelius.com. The information contained therein, as they note on their web site, is only as

accurate as the data recorded by the different sources. Sometimes, the data is not very accurate.

If you are particularly sensitive about your personal data you can take steps to reduce the amounts of data that are available about you. However, suppressing all of your personal data is almost impossible. Remember, there exists a large body of public records that will always relate to you. Even if you change your name, that fact becomes a part of public records.

- You can get an unlisted phone number
- If you have a web page, you can remove ALL identifying information including your e-mail address. Bots (small programs used to automatically gather information) can search for personal information on the World Wide Web. However, why have a personal web page if you don't want any personal information to show on your web page? Instead, if you are really concerned, delete your web pages.

If you are an optimist, take comfort in the fact that friends you have not heard from in years may try to contact you, or you may want to contact them. I was contacted in this way by a friend from grammar school, by a fraternity brother from college, and by some people with whom I worked before retirement.

For me, the pluses of having access to simple personal data (address, phone number, email addresses) far outweigh any possible negatives. I particularly enjoy the ease of mapping an address as a travel aid. Mapping works for business addresses and for residences. Mapping programs (such as <http://www.mapquest.com/> and <http://maps.google.com>) give driving directions and even compute the time and distance for prospective trips.

For me, computer information is a big help rather than a hindrance. My cup is overflowing. How is your cup doing?

SPEAKING OF MAPS

THERE ARE A WEALTH OF MAPS ONLINE

Maps are not restricted to driving maps. Special purpose maps abound and are fun to use. Check out some of these maps.

NATIONAL FIRE MAP: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/fire/>

OFFENDERS MAP: <http://www.familywatchdog.us/Search.asp>



USGS PUBLICATIONS: <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/>

EARTH/SATELLITE MAPS: <http://earth.google.com/>

SATELLITE MAP VIEWS: <http://terrafly.com>

DISTRIBUTION OF WORLD RELIGIONS:

http://www.wadsworth.com/religion_d/special_features/popups/maps/matthews_world/content/map_01.html

ENGLAND, WALES, AND SCOTLAND GEN MAPS:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~genmaps/>

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS DISTRIBUTION:

<http://www.valpo.edu/geomet/geo/courses/geo200/religion.html>

ELECTION DISTRIBUTION MAPS:

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/election/>



STARBUCKS AND McDONALD MAP:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~ina/ifographics/starbucks.html>

Interesting map locations:

<http://edge.i-hacked.com/100s-of-interesting-google-maps-locations>

MAP LINKS FOR MAP LOVERS:

<http://research.umbc.edu/~roswell/mipage.html>

CIA REFERENCE MAPS:

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/docs/refmaps.html>



FLOOD RISK MAP:

http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/static/landing1.jsp?WT.mc_id=FEMA_Google1&WT.srch=1

US CENSUS DATA with map function:

http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

See screen shot at the bottom left.

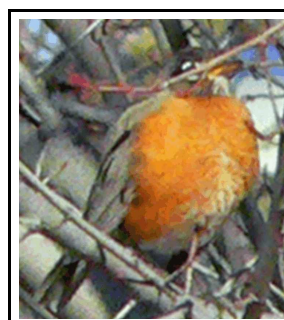
Q and A – WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OPTICAL ZOOM AND DIGITAL ZOOM?

Digital cameras are popular computer accessories. They add to the fun you can have with your computer as you share photos with your family and friends.

Digital cameras include an optical zoom setting and an additional digital zoom setting (optical plus digital zoom setting). **Optical zoom** relates to the telephoto power of your camera's lens (called zoom). **Think optics.** Like a telescope, we rate the resolving power of your lens in powers of x, 2x, 3x, 4x and much higher. The quality of your physical lens determines the quality of the image at the higher zoom settings whether you have a film camera or a digital camera. A cheap glass or plastic lens will not achieve the sharp photos that a high quality lens will produce nor reproduce colors as well as for the original scene.

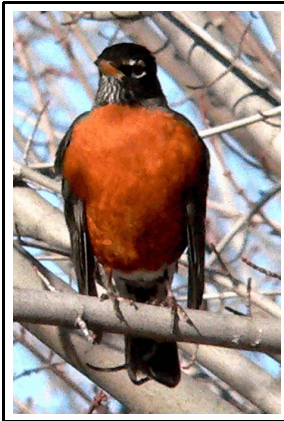
Digital zoom uses software manipulation of the picture's pixels to try to duplicate a telephoto lens. It artificially adds pixels to pictures. The results are not as sharp as what you get with your camera set in pure optical zoom mode.

Multiply the optical zoom rating of your camera by the digital zoom number to calculate the maximum zoom your camera can achieve. For instance, my Panasonic digital camera has a 12X optical zoom with a 4X digital zoom option. Thus, it can achieve up to a zoom of 48X.



At 48X

As an experiment, I shot a picture of a robin in a tree from about 200 feet away using the 48X maximum zoom setting. You see the robin but it is fuzzy. I then took a picture of the robin using only the optical zoom at its maximum setting of 12X. You see more tree and less robin, but the robin is very sharp.



At 12X

Here is the same robin, but taken from about 50 feet away using the 12X optical zoom rating. The camera has a control that lets you move the zoom lens from a wide angle to maximum zoom in increments. I moved the control all the way to the maximum zoom (12X).

As you can see, the picture is much sharper and the colors are more intense. The robin is just tense. Fortunately, robins are not as skittish around people as

some other types of birds. This robin picture, and the one on the previous page, were cropped so that the bird appears about the same size in the picture.

Review your camera's manual if you are unsure how to change your camera's settings. Normally, you change the settings after pressing the menu button. You then scroll through the various menus. Be aware that you may need to scroll down the menu to see choices that are beyond those shown initially at the bottom of any particular menu.

CONTROL YOUR DESKTOP AND QUICK LAUNCH AREA

DESKTOP

Is your desktop cluttered with too many icons, icons that slow the start of your computer? Do you still see the same icons that shipped with your computer—icons such as offers to connect you to AOL, Compuserve, Earthlink or some other ISP—icons that you have never used and never intend to use? Well, it is time to clear those off your desktop. Right click on any icon you want to remove and click the delete button on your keyboard.

The unsightly mess will soon be gone and you will be able to more easily find the remaining icons that you do want to see. Fear not. When you delete icons on your desktop, those with a small arrow in the bottom corner, you are only deleting a shortcut to the actual program, not the program itself. So feel free to get rid of any unneeded shortcuts.

You may ask, why should it take less time to load your computer if you get rid of the superfluous icons? Because Windows has to separately draw each and every one of

those icons on the screen before completing the startup of your computer. Unless you have a very fast graphics board, and a very fast computer, it takes noticeably longer to start your computer with a screen full of icons.

Windows XP addressed this problem by periodically offering to place unused icons in a folder on your desktop. Putting icons in a folder is a trick that you can adopt for other icons as well.

For instance, you can create special purpose folders to make it easier for you to access frequently used icons. For instance you might want to create a Maintenance folder that contains links to your favorite defragmenter, spyware blocker, mail backup program, registry cleaner, etc. You might create a Photo Program folder for your favorite photo editing programs, and a Utilities folder for icons to favorite utilities.

The beauty of the folder approach is that it gives you instant access to your favorite programs, WITHOUT slowing startup. At startup, Windows recreates the folders on your desktop, but there are far fewer of them than the icons that the folders contain.

To create a folder on our desktop, right-click on a blank space on the desktop, and select New from the drop-down menu. Select Folder and give it a name. Drag icons to the folder that relate to it. There, isn't that easy?

QUICK LAUNCH

Do you see a quick launch area with icons at the bottom left of your screen? If not, right-click on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen, select Toolbars, and then select Quick Launch. See the screen shot below.



The quick launch area is another place to store frequently used icons. Drag icons to this area and remove them from your desktop. When you drag an icon, a solid vertical bar shows up to show you where the icon will be placed as you release the left mouse button. Click on the double right arrows to reveal additional icons. Drag the vertical column

of small dots to the left or right to show fewer or more icons.

**THUMB DRIVES ARE NOT CREATED
EQUAL
ONLY THE BEST ARE GOOD ENOUGH FOR READYBOOST**

Thumb drives are very effective way to transfer data between computers, and to store data to take with you on the road. Carry your computer repair kit in your pocket when you help other members, or a thumb drive to share photos with your family and friends.

However, be aware that there are big differences between thumb drives in how fast they can read and write data, the features of the drives, and their comparative costs. Some drives are deadly slow and others are exceedingly fast.

However, the differences among thumb drives are critical if you want a really good experience with Vista's new technology called ReadyBoost. As of this writing, only the drives of two manufacturers provide a superior experience, and then only a few of their models at that. Let me backup a moment. *ReadyBoost is a means of speeding the loading of programs at startup, and the loading of some other programs as well using electronic memory rather than reading the data from the much slower hard drive.*

So what is the big deal. The big deal is that it takes very fast memory that can read and write uniformly across all of the flash memory chip. Unfortunately, the bulk of thumb drives advertised as being ReadyBoost capable, provide only a small boost in performance. We are talking major brands here. I speculate that the reason for this dismal performance is that the concept is very new, and manufacturers have had little competition up to this point. As time goes on, I'm sure that manufacturers will develop better and better flash drives for this purpose.

See the following link for some real world tests.

<http://www.activewin.com/reviews/hardware/memory/vista/readyboost.shtml>

Products that stand out from the crowd are the Patriot XPorter XT, and Apacer Steno HA202 200X and Apacer Steno HT203 200X. The HT203 comes with a docking station to make it easy to use with a laptop computer where the USB ports are very close together. I personally use two of the HA202 thumb drives (for two computers).



Handy Steno HA202 200X

**Enhanced for Windows
ReadyBoost**



Handy Steno HT203 200X

**Enhanced for Windows
ReadyBoost**

