

Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional Review

By Rick Borstein

Acrobat 7.0 is the latest incarnation of Adobe's tools for creating and working with files in the PDF (Portable Document File) format. There are over 700 million copies of the free Adobe Reader in use, so virtually everyone with a PC can view a PDF. Although creating a PDF is probably the main reason law firms purchase Adobe Acrobat, there are a lots of other great tools within the Acrobat package. Let's take a look . . .

Acrobat 7.0 comes in two flavors—Standard (\$299 SRP) and Professional (\$449). *See feature table at end of article*) If you own a previous version of Acrobat, you can upgrade for \$99 for Standard and \$149 for Professional.

The first thing I noticed after installing Acrobat 7.0 is the decreased launch time. Previous versions of Acrobat—even the free Reader—took forever to launch. The new versions launch in only 3-5 seconds. PDF conversion has speeded up, too.

Acrobat installs three buttons into the toolbar of Microsoft Office applications that make it simple to create PDFs:

1	Convert to Adobe PDF
2	Convert to Adobe PDF and email
3	Convert to Adobe PDF and send for review

The last option deserves additional discussion. One major change in Acrobat 7.0 is the ability of the Professional version to *review enable* a PDF document. This allows anybody with the free Adobe Reader 7.0 to add comments to the document. Review initiators can a much wider variety of people, both inside and outside their organization.

Adobe provides the means to add sticky notes, highlight text, add stamps, and instructions to insert, replace or delete text. If you send a *review-enabled* file to someone with the free Adobe Reader, the program automatically turns on the review toolbar. Helpful instructions appear in a panel to the side of the document.

When the recipient has completed the review, a click in the Review toolbar sends the comments back to you via email. Acrobat 7.0 Professional can also export comments added to Adobe PDF documents to the original Word and AutoCAD files, which eliminates the time-consuming rekeying of changes into the original document.

Most work in Acrobat is completed using task buttons in the application toolbar. For example, a click on the Create PDF button offers choices for creating PDFs from a single file, multiple files, web pages or a scanner. You could, for example, select a Word file, and Excel document and several TIFFs and convert them to single PDF in a single step.

Acrobat helps deliver on the promise of the paperless office. One new feature in Acrobat 7.0 is the ability to scan and OCR in one step to create a searchable PDF that looks just like the original.

Adding security to PDFs is much easier in Acrobat 7.0. Instead of creating the settings manually each time you want to secure a file, Acrobat 7.0 now allows you to create a named policy for a group of frequently used security settings. These policies can be applied any time you need them. You can set usage restrictions on a file to protect your work product. For example, your client wants to review the will you created, but hasn't paid the entire fee. What to do? Just send them a PDF with the security set so that the file can be viewed onscreen and comments added in the free Adobe Reader, but not printed.