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ROSENDAHLS
front-runner for PDF/A compliancy in Denmark

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Danish media services provider Rosendahls implements callas pdfaPilot to supply accessible PDF/A documents for public authorities

The Rosendahls group is a company with a rich tradition and roots going back to 1902. Located in Copenhagen, Odense and Esbjerg, it has offered a comprehensive range of services in the areas of communication, publishing, warehousing and distribution for more than a century. Rosendahls is on top of new developments and continues to be a technology front-runner to support its customers. As many of those customers traditionally come from public administration organizations, Denmark's embracing of the ISO PDF/A standard had a direct impact on Rosendahls.

PDF/A, the ISO standard for PDF files to be stored in long-term archives, has been steadily increasing in importance, especially for use by governments and public administrations. In April 2011, the Danish Ministry for Economics, Innovation, and Education decided to require accessible PDF/A documents as the compulsory format for all public sector documents. As a full-service provider, it was important for Rosendahls to be able to convert existing documents to PDF/A and check compliancy with the ISO standard when needed.

Well prepared with callas pdfaPilot

The standardisation by the Danish government on PDF/A didn't take Rosendahls by surprise. While HTML was still the required format for agencies, Rosendahls already saw the European trend towards PDF/A. It started looking for a solution to support this upcoming standard early; the corresponding market research culminated in a visit to the 4th international PDF/A conference in Rome in the fall of 2010. The conference provided a wealth of information and access to experts from the different vendors with PDF/A technology.

"This is when we decided to use pdfaPilot by callas software", Jens Bjerre Kirkegaard, Document Accessibility Specialist at Rosendahls, recalls. "Our requirements for creating valid PDF/A files were best met by pdfaPilot, which also offered convincing reliability and an easy-to-use intuitive operation". Rosendahls faced additional challenges because it had to be able to provide accessible PDF/A files, which requires support for the technically 'more challenging' part of the PDF/A standard known as PDF/A-1a, but pdfaPilot easily meets those challenges. "On top of that," continues Jens Bjerre, "callas pdfaPilot offers a range of additional features such as splitting PDF documents or creating hand-outs for example and those come in very handy in our daily use".

callas pdfaPilot is ideal for the demanding workflow at Rosendahls because it supports direct conversion to PDF/A from a wide range of formats such as Microsoft Office, Open Office, Postscript and a variety of image files. It is built using the same technology licensed by Adobe for Adobe Acrobat and provides seamless scaling for large-volume environments. The fact that so much of the work can be automated gives Rosendahls additional time for the manual steps required for accessible conversion.

Accessibility equals workflow-heavy

For the media services provider who often receives individual documents from many different sources – which creates very different requirements opposed to high volumes that always have the same structure – the ability to automatically convert to and validate PDF/A is particularly important. "We convert either to PDF/A-1a or PDF/A-2a", Kirkegaard explains, "We usually have to process Word, InDesign, or PDF documents, and callas pdfaPilot automatically resolves many
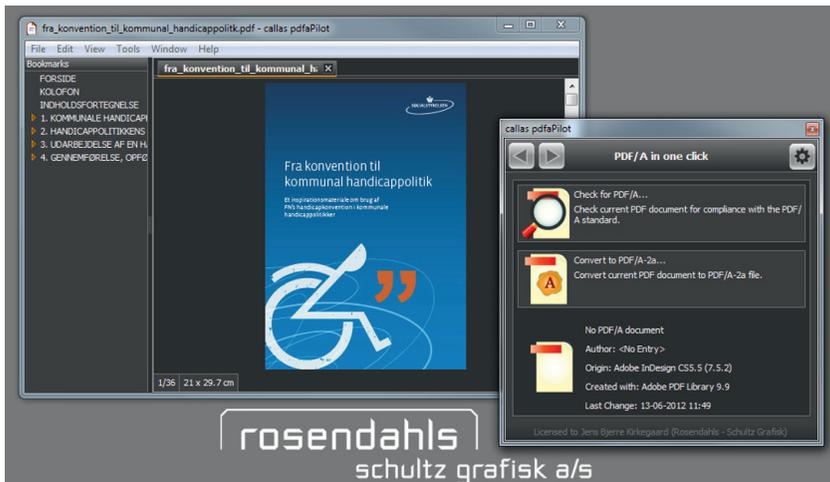
pdfaPilot: PDF/A in one click

stumbling blocks for us. E.g. it checks for and removes unnecessary metadata, marks or corrects incorrect color spaces or embeds fonts retroactively".

The fact that pdfaPilot can 'repair' problematic documents or – if this is impossible – recreates them completely from scratch, saves Rosendahls a lot of time and work. But there is still a lot to do for the accessibility specialist Jens Bjerre Kirkegaard: "Provisioning of accessible documents is a demanding and often finicky task which requires a lot of know-how and a few manual steps", he explains. It is impossible to setup a completely automated workflow, especially when receiving diverse and often-problematic native document formats. But here as well pdfaPilot comes to the rescue by providing manual editing of metadata, colors, images and many other PDF properties.

Meeting challenges in a changing environment – support included

For challenges surrounding PDF/A and accessible documents Jens Kirkegaard benefits from the fast and competent support of the callas distribution partner Actino Software. "Media service providers such as Rosendahls are often confronted with the fact that customers want their heterogeneous documents provided as PDF/A files but they have no idea how complex the required work really is", Actino director Michael Karbe explains.

Since the installation of the first version, Actino has been supporting their customer Rosendahls reliably and has worked closely with callas software to resolve any questions or problems that arose during the project. callas software integrated all improvements into further development of pdfaPilot. "The continued development of the PDF/A standard also requires adjustments to the PDF/A toolsets", Dietrich von Seggern, Business Development Manager at callas software explains. "We are highly dedicated to this area and thanks to constant updates to pdfaPilot, we can ensure comprehensive implementation of all requirements and therefore provide optimal conformity."

Today: Accessible PDF/A documents with pdfaPilot 3.0 and axaio MadeToTag

Rosendahls recently migrated to the latest version of pdfaPilot: version 3.0. This version allows embedding documents inside a PDF/A file and implements support for the PDF/A-3 standard. This allows Rosendahls to embed all documents belonging to a certain project or file inside their accessible PDF/A documents. And whenever they want to take advantage of PDF/A-3, the solution is ready for them.

Accessibility and creating accessible PDF files is a topic that really drives callas software and its sister company axaio software. The InDesign plug-in MadeToTag was created by axaio software to simplify and speed-up preparation of Adobe InDesign documents before they are converted into accessible PDF/A files.

Jens Kirkegaard explains its importance: "Accessible PDF files require a clear structure and this is accomplished by adding tags to the PDF. These tags provide additional information about the structure and order of text, provide alternative text to clarify what embedded graphics represent and can discriminate between real content and design elements. These tags are essential for good accessible documents."

Using axaio MadeToTag, which is now in public beta, it becomes much easier to quickly and reliably add those tags to InDesign documents. Once the document is then converted to PDF, it becomes a high-quality accessible PDF/A document.

"The effort involved in converting agency documents to accessible PDF/A documents depends on the complexity of the layout. Sometimes one simply reaches the limits of the cost-benefit ratio. For my work, it is a considerable relief to know that a lot of the steps which previously had to be completed by hand are now done by callas pdfaPilot", Kirkegaard explains.

The PDF/A trend is really taking off in Denmark, so Rosendahls is expecting a major increase in its future order volume. Thanks to callas pdfaPilot and the service from Actino Software, they are already well prepared and equipped for it.

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