



CommonLook®

WHITE PAPER

Achieving Fully Accessible and
Compliant PDF Documents

What is Required to Verify PDF Documents are Fully Accessible and Compliant?

In previous articles on the CommonLook website, we covered all the major aspects of remediating PDF documents. Now we will focus on the best ways to ensure that your work is complete, so you can be confident that your documents meet the accessibility standards.

If you have not been following our series, here is what is required to ensure PDF documents are accessible:

1. [Tag your document and verify the reading order](#)
2. [Confirm the metadata](#)
3. [Ensure that color/contrast meets the standard](#)
4. [Add appropriate alternative text to the images](#)
5. [Confirm your lists are properly formatted](#)
6. [Define tabs for tables](#)
7. [Remove empty tags, set tab order and create bookmarks](#)
8. [Verify compliance using a third-party testing tool, many of which are free](#)



Isn't Adobe Acrobat Pro Enough?

While Acrobat has an “Accessibility Full Check” report, the Acrobat checker is not a complete test and is not a complete remediation solution. Passing the Acrobat checker does not guarantee compliance with any standards. Acrobat will even let you save a compliance report, but that report does not warrant your work meets 100% of the checkpoints of Section 508, WCAG 2.0 AA, HHS or PDF/UA.

TIP: CommonLook Validator and CommonLook PDF are designed to be used by remediators to ensure their work is 100% compliant and allows you to test to Section 508, WCAG 2.0, HHS and PDF/UA.

Counting on Adobe Acrobat alone is a huge mistake. Instead, use one of the proven third-party testing tools that guarantee you'll meet these standards.

PDF Testing Tools

There are three PDF tools that will test for compliance with the top standards:

PAC3	CommonLook Validator*	CommonLook PDF*
<p>A free tool that can be downloaded and installed for testing PDF documents.</p> <p>It lets you test PDF documents against the PDF/UA standard (only) and provides an accessibility report.</p> <p>The PDF report that is produced is not PDF/UA compliant.</p>	<p>Free tool that works as a plugin for Adobe Acrobat Pro.</p> <p>Provides a full listing of the accessibility checkpoints that passed or failed so you can quickly drill down to the areas that need to be addressed.</p>	<p>Not a free tool, but well worth the investment.</p> <p>Allows you to fix many of the issues right in the tool.</p> <p>Provides specialized tools to ensure PDFs are meeting compliance standards.</p> <p>Generates a full accessibility report to the standard of your choice.</p>

*Tests to any required PDF standard including Section 508**, WCAG 2.0 AA, HHS and PDF/UA as well as ISO32000-1:2008.

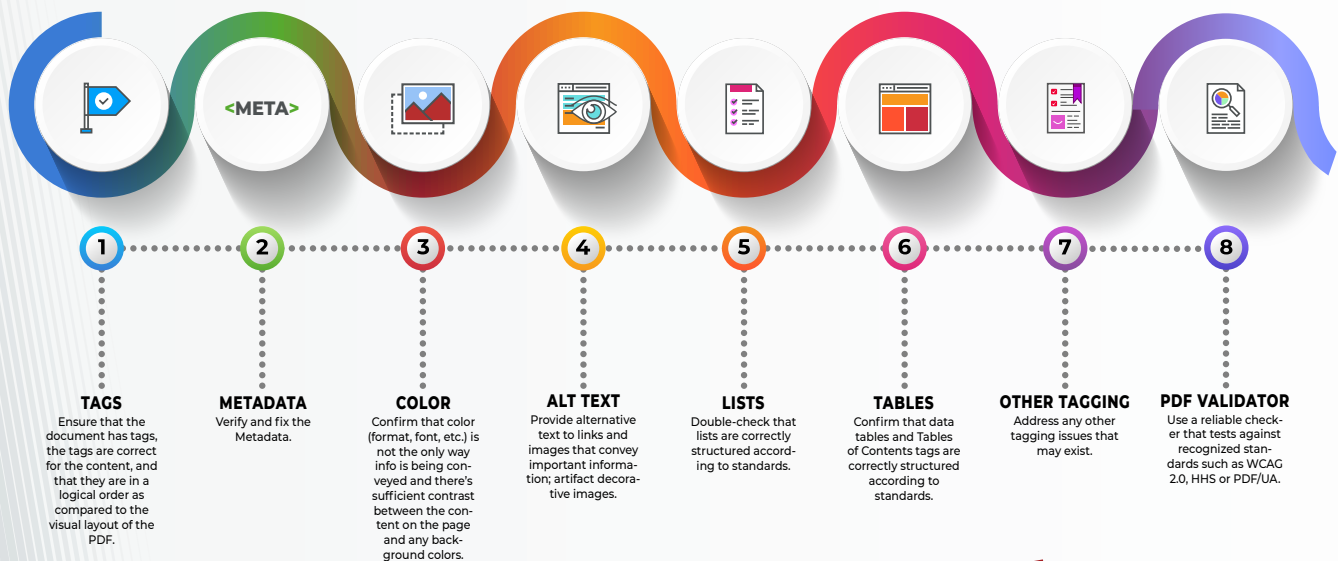
NOTE: Validator's reports are comprehensive for each checkpoint and the HTML reports are fully accessible.

**The original Section 508 and the revised Section 508 (WCAG 2.0AA)

Final Note

PDF compliance can be difficult to understand and there are many misconceptions out there in regard to what is required to ensure documents are accessible. Organizations are best served to make sure their documents meet the standards and testing using one of the free tools above is a good first step. Don't make the mistake of tagging your documents using Adobe Acrobat Pro and think that your work is done. For information, CommonLook published an eight-part series on what is required to ensure PDF files are accessible, the entire series is available [here](#).

8 Steps to PDF Accessibility



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About CommonLook

Since 1999, CommonLook[®] has been a world-leading provider of software products and professional services enabling government agencies and corporations to meet their obligations for electronic document accessibility to achieve compliance with accessibility standards.

CommonLook's product family offers significant time and cost savings throughout the document production cycle from authoring to verification, correction and management of PDF documents and document collections.

Customers include U.S. and Canadian government agencies and leading global corporations.

CommonLook is a leader in setting US and international standards for PDF accessibility through contributions from its key executives to standards-setting entities.



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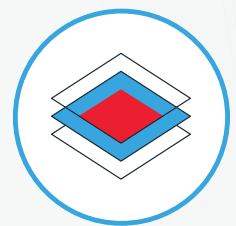
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