

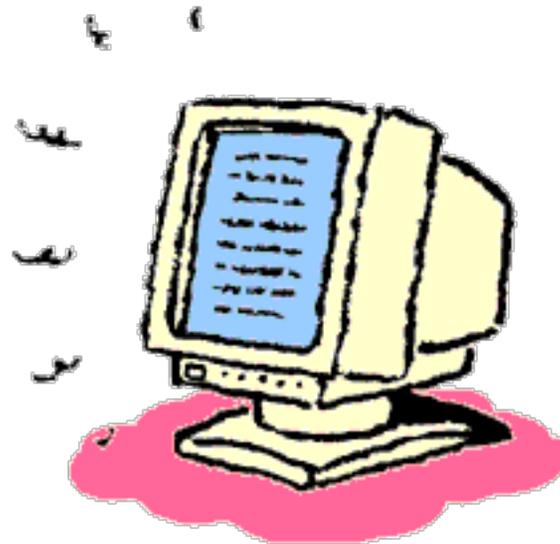


Adobe Acrobat, a teacher's best friend

by Kathy Schrock

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- FEATURE: Kathy Schrock's Tech Quest



A reader recently wrote, "My teaching partners and I like to share lesson plans and worksheets that we create on our computers. However, it's difficult to share the files electronically because we use different operating systems and word processing software. What can we do to make sharing electronic files easier?" It's frustrating when you can't open a colleague's file or when you print a worksheet from a Web site and the formatting and graphics are altered. That's where Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Acrobat Reader can really make a difference!

Adobe Acrobat vs. Adobe Acrobat Reader

Many people are confused about the difference between Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Basically, Adobe Acrobat is a program that allows you to *create, share, view, navigate, and print* electronic files called Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. The latest version, Adobe Acrobat 5.0, costs about \$250 per individual license, with substantial

discounts for educational institutions

The Acrobat Reader program, which can easily be downloaded for free (see Web site, below), only allows you to view, navigate, and print Adobe PDF files. Many sites publish worksheets and forms as PDFs because users can open the Reader to view and print the sheet, keeping its original format, fonts, and graphics, even if they don't have the program that was used to create the original. With the Reader, you can also fill in PDF forms, such as workshop registrations, requests for materials, and grant applications. You can also search a PDF document for a keyword. This feature is very helpful when you are looking for a specific term in a long document, such as a specific curricular area in a 100-page document about your state standards. Many

and volume licenses.
(Registered users of
earlier versions can
upgrade for \$99.)

Here's how it works:

After you create a
document using a
program such as Microsoft Word,
Appleworks, or Pagemaker, simply use
Acrobat to convert the document into a
PDF file. This file preserves the exact
look and content of the original,
including fonts, colors, graphics, and
layout. You can even add links to Web
pages, video, and audio files to the
document. There are many options for
sharing the document. You can print it
out, e-mail it as an attachment, save it
on a disk or CD-ROM, or post it on
your school server or the Internet. The
size of the PDF file is often much
smaller than the original file, so it can
be sent or downloaded faster than your
original documents -- especially those
with lots of graphics. A PDF file can
then be read by any computer that has
the free Acrobat Reader installed. A
new service offered by Adobe also
offers "Create Adobe PDF Online."
For a small fee, you can convert
documents to PDF files through the
Adobe Web site. It's a great way to
view some of Acrobat's features. Visit
<http://createpdf.adobe.com/> for more
information or to register for three
free-trial uses.



common software programs now come with the free
Acrobat Reader. If yours didn't, or if you want to update
your version, you can download it free at
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>
Once you have the Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on
your computer, visit these URLs for some classroom
"goodies" to start the school year.

[Kathy Schrock's Guide to Everything: Evaluation](#)

Kids' Rule for Online Safety (created by Larry Magid at
SafeKids.com):

<http://www.creativeclassroom.com/archive.html>

Features of Adobe Acrobat

Adobe Acrobat 5.0, the most recent version, has many useful features. Here are just a few.

Archiving Web pages You can download and convert a Web site into a single Acrobat PDF file, with the links and graphics intact. Basically, you make a static copy of the site on your computer -- a useful feature when you are gathering research information, creating presentations, or want to keep a site exactly "as is" for future use. Make sure to get permission beforehand from the site's Webmaster in order to adhere to the copyright and fair-use guidelines.

Adding comments Use Adobe Acrobat when creating documents that need to be reviewed and commented on by many people, such as group projects for a graduate class. Reviewers can add electronic sticky notes, text highlights, graphic mark-ups, audio, and more to Adobe PDF documents from within their Web browsers. You can then sort the comments by author, date, type, or page number.



You can print documents such as these with Adobe Acrobat Reader.

"Repurposing" Adobe PDF content The latest version of Adobe Acrobat allows you to save entire Adobe PDF files to other formats,

Using PDFs on portable digital assistants If you have the Adobe Acrobat program, there is a piece of freeware called "PDF2Doc" which allows you to take an item already in PDF format and convert it to a file format which can be read by the Palm operating system. (See <http://tinystocks.com/pdf2doc.html> for details.) Ansyrr has created the same type of program for the Windows CE devices. (See <http://www.ansyr.com/products/mobileoffice.asp> for details.) As more schools get portable digital assistants into the hands of administrators, staff, and students, this also becomes an effective way to share information.

Making eBooks If you are using eBooks (electronic books) in your school or district, you can use Adobe Acrobat to create them. Acrobat will retain the formatting, look, and feel of the original document, and they can be opened by anyone. Learn more about how to create Adobe PDF files for eBooks at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrdis/createbooks.html>

Resources

Web sites

www.adobe.com/products/tips/acrobat.html

Log on for tutorials on using Acrobat.

www.planetpdf.com/mainpage.asp?webpageid=679

Access tips and tricks for using Adobe Acrobat.

www.pdfzone.com/products/software/

Learn about various PDF-related tools.

Books

Adobe Acrobat 5.0: Classroom in a Book (Adobe Systems, 2001). This manual has lessons to help beginners learn how to use Adobe Acrobat.

PDF with Acrobat 5: Visual QuickStart Guide by Ted Alspach (Peachpit Press, 2001). This book about Acrobat will be available later this month.

such as Microsoft Word, so that you can "repurpose" their contents. This comes in handy, for example, when you come across a PDF file that you feel adds value to a report you are creating for the school board. Rather than retype it, simply save the Adobe PDF file to the Rich Text Format (RTF), import the RTF file into your word-processing application, and add it to your report.

This month's Tech Quest addresses ISTE standard I.D: Demonstrate continual growth in technology knowledge and skills to stay abreast of current and emerging technologies; and V.D: Use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning.



Kathy Schrock, a retired technology director and the creator of *Kathy Schrock's Guide for*

Educators. E-mail your Tech Quest questions to ccmedit@inch.com