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10 things you do with PDF, but (perhaps) know you shouldn't

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Executive Director & co-chair Specifications Subcommittee,
Marketing Officer & co-chair Packaging Subcommittee

David

- Started working at Enfocus in 1996
(Tailor, PitStop...)
- Helped to start the Ghent Workgroup in June 2002
- Co-founded Gradual Software in 2004
(Switch)
- CTO at Four Pees from 2008
(working with callas software, axaio software,
Elpical, InSoft...)

Christian

- 30 years of experience in several companies and roles:
 - Gap Systems (Implementation Consultant & COO)
 - Enfocus (International Sales Account Manager)
 - Nestlé (eBusiness Project Manager & Graphic Chain Expert)
 - Société Alsacienne d'Aluminium, now AMCOR (Prepress Manager)
- Founder & Owner of bleuprocess (2007), founder & CEO of agileStreams (2018), offering consultancy in process automation & in packaging

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Editing PDF with Illustrator



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Illustrator is **NOT** a PDF editor

- Many PDF constructs are not supported
 - Will be replaced by something similar *or* simply deleted
- Documents with mixed color spaces are not supported
 - You have to chose for either RGB or CMYK
- Beware of “PDF Compatibility mode”
 - Allows discarding edits done outside of Illustrator!

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Importing Illustrator into InDesign



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Importing Illustrator in InDesign

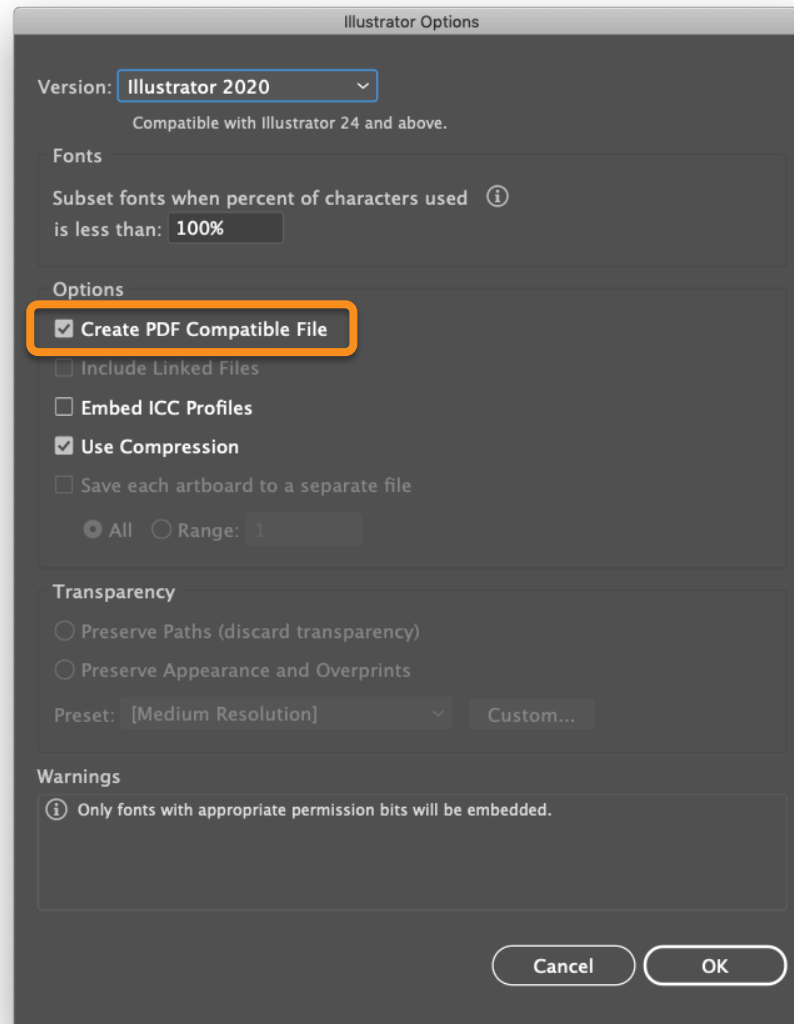
How does that exactly work?

- It has been advertised by Adobe (already a long time ago), that it is not necessary to export Illustrator to EPS to import them into InDesign
- It is indeed very handy to directly import the AI file, and not having to generate another file
- But, do you exactly know how it works?

About hybrid AI files

- You probably have noticed that when saving a file in Illustrator, the application proposes (by default) to make a PDF compatible file
- This is what is called an hybrid AI file. This file contains « 2 sides », where one is the AI (proprietary) format and a second one is a PDF rendition of the file

About hybrid AI files



How InDesign manages Illustrator import

- If you import an Illustrator file into InDesign, this is indeed the « PDF side » of the file that you're importing!
- We're not trying to tell you to stop doing like this... we're just warning you about this in case you have strange behaviours happening later in the process
 - In that case, have a look at the import... does it look exactly the same than the original Illustrator file?

Try this!

- Uncheck the « Create PDF Compatible file » setting while saving the Illustrator file... this is what you will see when importing the file in InDesign 🤔

This is an Adobe® Illustrator® File that was saved without PDF Content.
To Place or open this file in other applications, it should be re-saved from Adobe Illustrator with the "Create PDF Compatible File" option turned on. This option is in the Illustrator Native Format Options dialog box, which appears when saving an Adobe Illustrator file using the Save As command.

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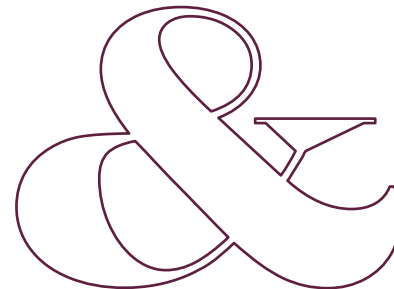
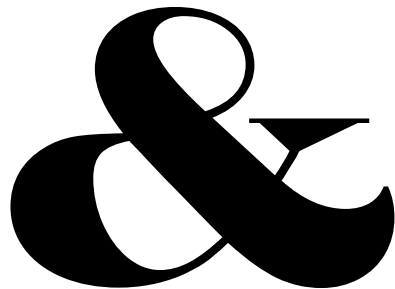
Converting Text to Outline



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What is it?





Why not? Hinting

Kittens on my kitchen table fu
moving silently over above be
white walls closing clothing st

Kittens on my kitchen table
foot moving silently over ab
author). All white walls clos



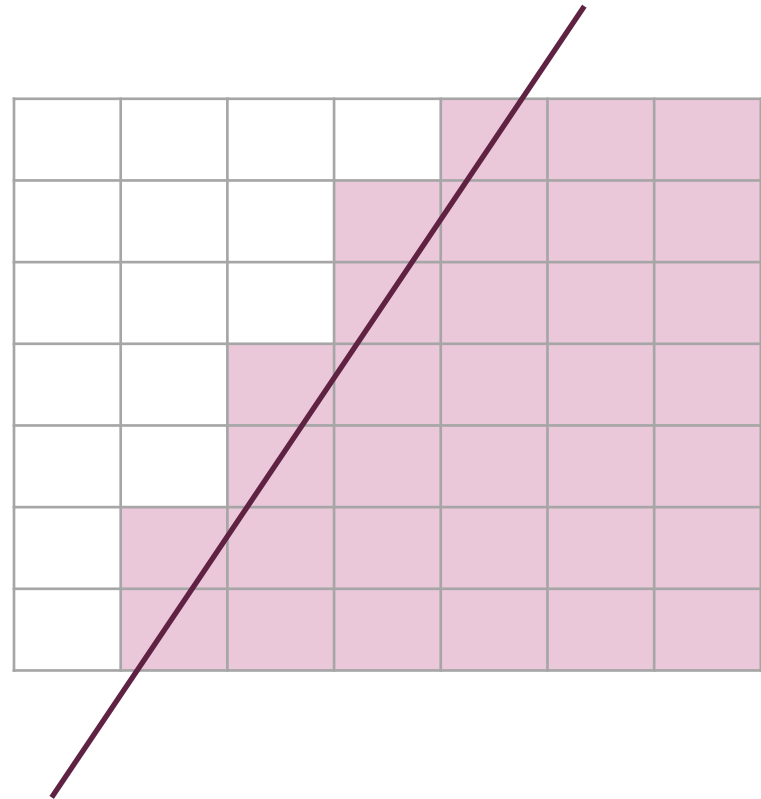
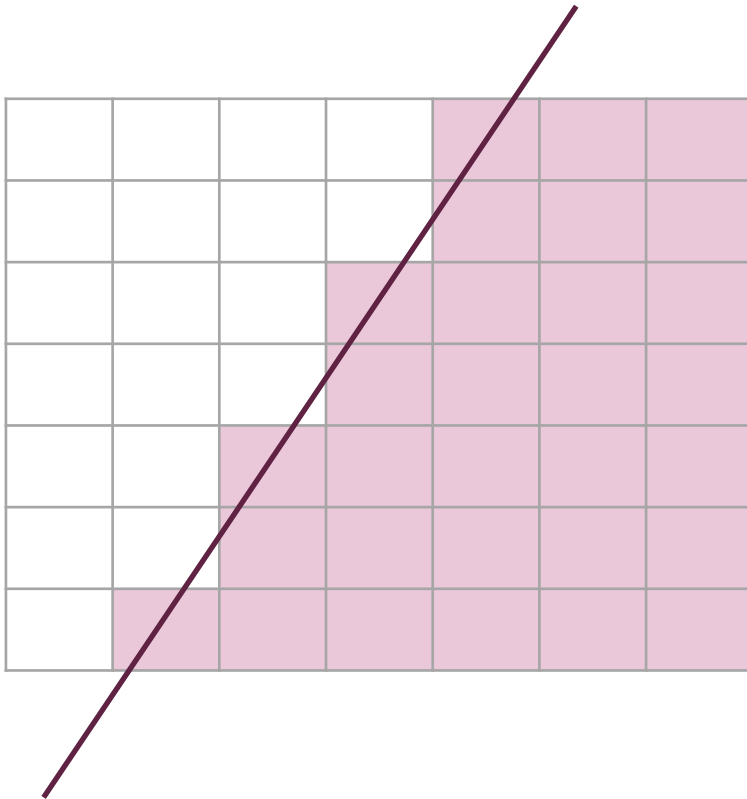
Why not? Hinting

PACK MY BOX W
THE LAZY DOG V
WYVERN FOXY S
pack my box with
dog effect coffin
wyvern foxy syry
Of the greatest ar
look with too mu
the human mind a

PACK MY BOX W
THE LAZY DOG V
WYVERN FOXY S
pack my box wit
dog effect coffin
wyvern foxy syry
Of the greatest a
look with too mu
the human mind



Why not? Thin fill vs. fat fill





Example

There are old cars. And then there are classics.

► Strictly speaking, we work with metal, glass and rubber too. But then we mould these mere materials into something more like passion. You

can see an example of our work on this page. It's the 230 SL of 1963. And you can see many more examples on this page: www.mercedes-benz.com/classic.

There are old cars. And then there are classics.

There are old cars. And then there are classics.

can see an example of our work on this page. It's the 230 SL of 1963. And you can see many more examples on this page: www.mercedes-benz.com/classic.



Mercedes-Benz
The Future of the Automobile.

Strictly speaking, we work with metal, glass and rubber too. But then we mould these mere materials into something more like passion. You

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Mercedes-Benz
The Future of the Automobile.

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Converting Text to outline
using transparency flattening



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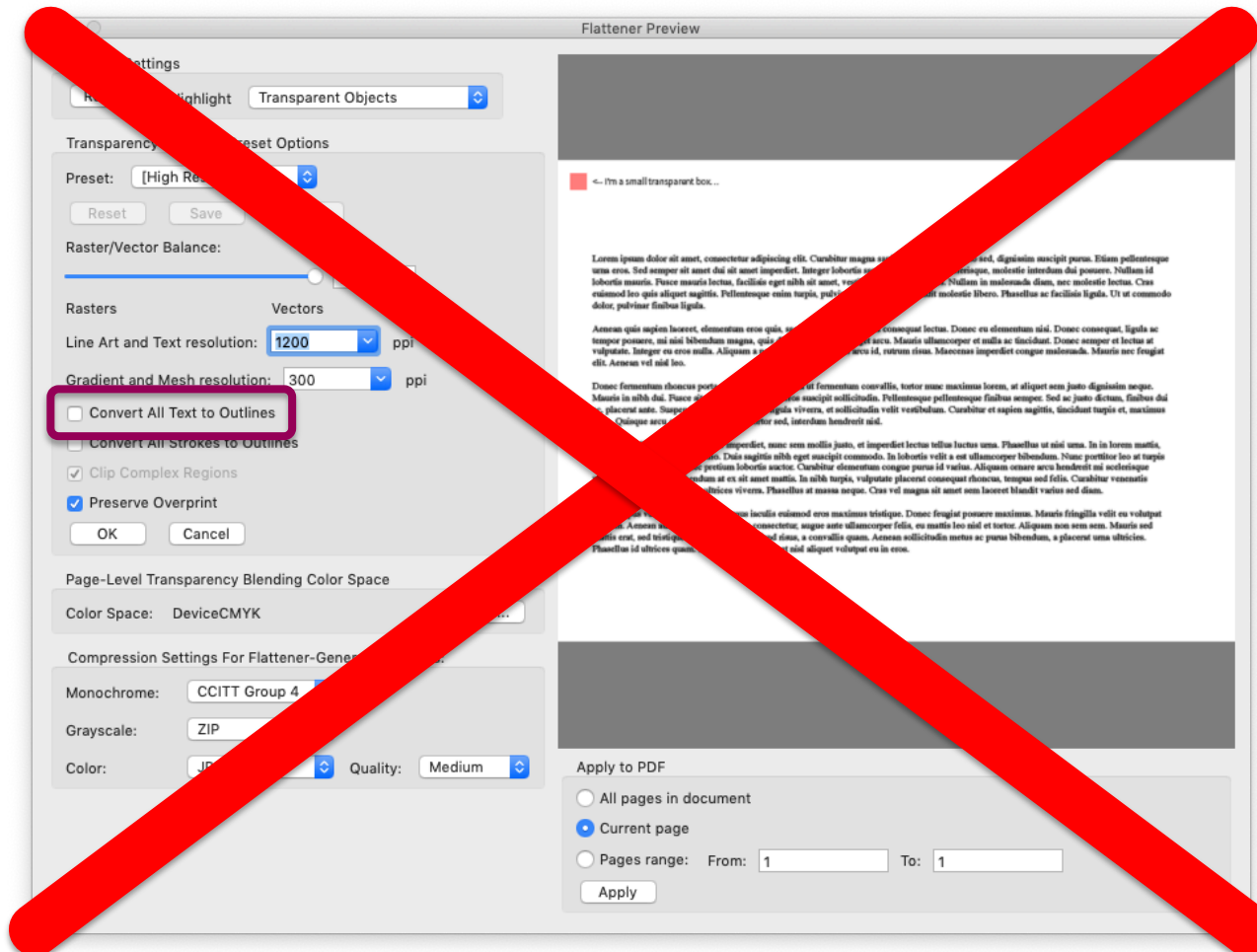
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Transparency flattener is **NOT** a tool for outlining text!

- First of all, you shouldn't outline text 😏
- Transparency flattener is a tool to... well, flatten transparency!
 - As everyone (should) know, transparency flattening is not an easy task, and a lot of things are happening during the flattening to preserve the visual aspect of the file
 - Creating outlines while flattening transparency is an option of the flattener to achieve the expected result
 - That means that if you think you're clever 🧐 to hijack a feature, actually, you're not 😬



Transparency flattener is **NOT** a tool for outlining text!



REALLY need to outline text?

- If you REALLY need to outline text in a PDF file, you MUST use tools that are designed for outlining fonts
 - Acrobat Preflight / callas pdfToolbox
 - Enfocus PitStop
 - Etc.
- If you have the original file, you also can use the outline text feature of the authoring tool (if exists)

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Converting CMYK to CMYK using ICC Profiles



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Color conversions – how?

CMYK

ISOCoated v2

?

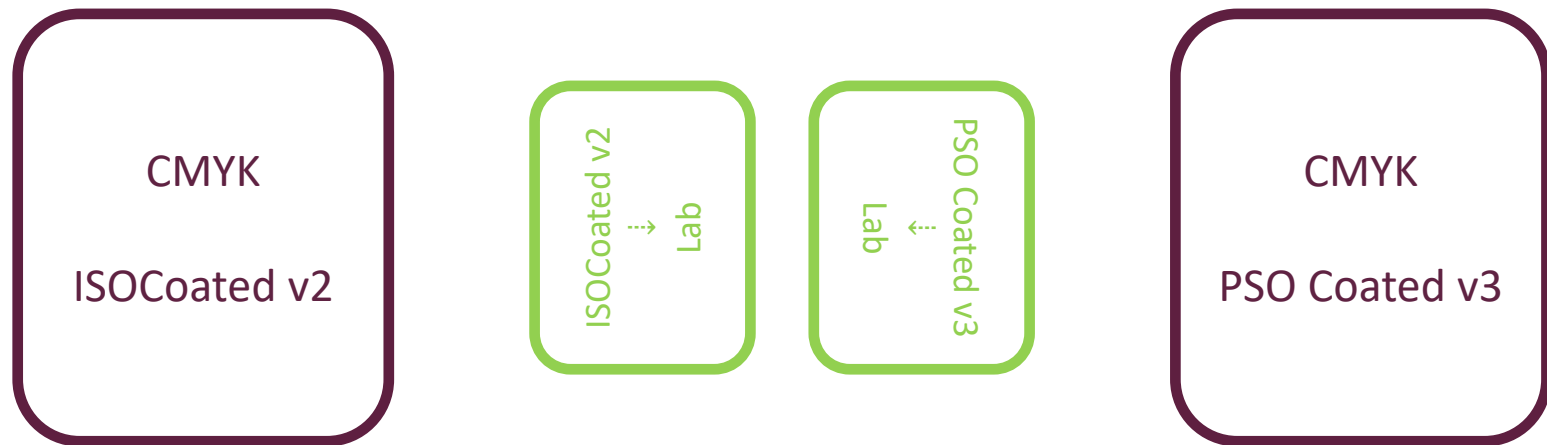
CMYK

PSO Coated v3

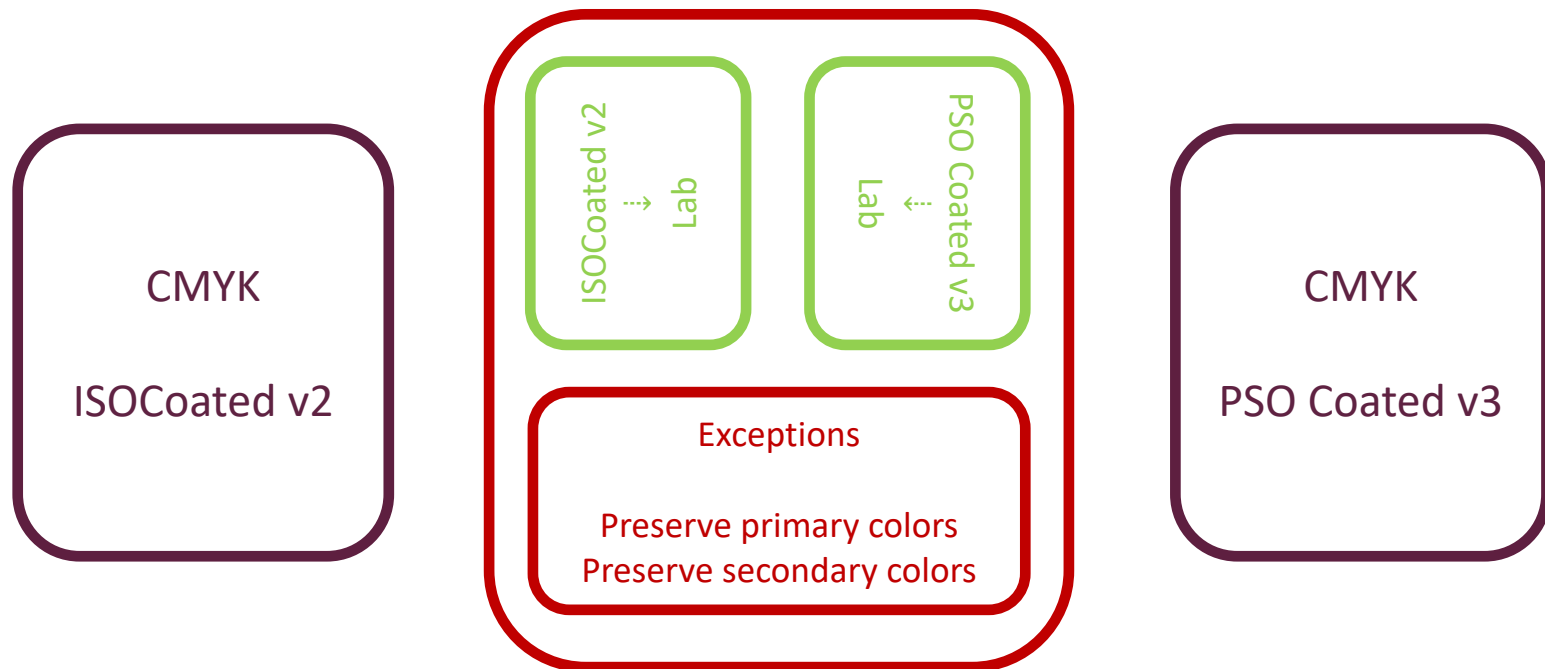
Color conversions – ICC profiles



Color conversions – ICC profile domino



Color conversions – device link



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Merge PDF files and multiple font instances



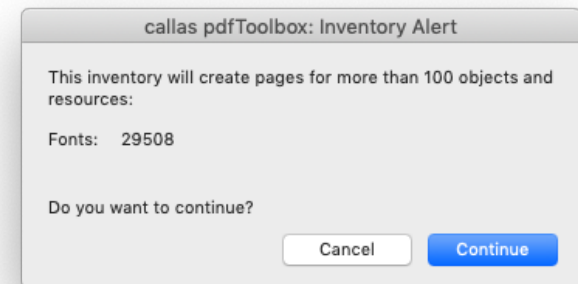
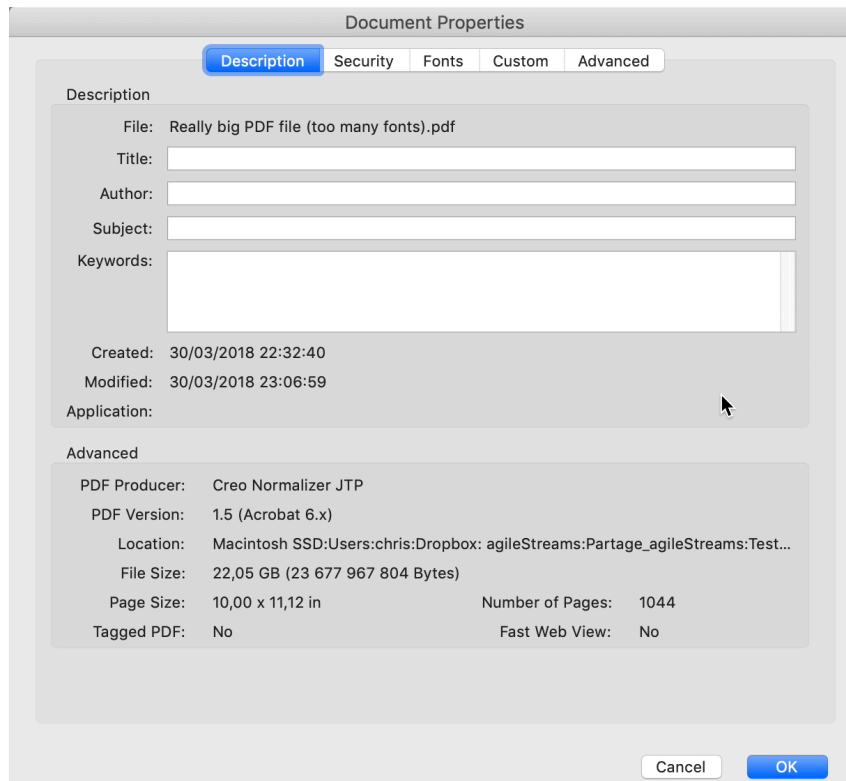
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Font embedding

- Creating a good PDF means embedding fonts!
- It is advised to subset the embedding to:
 - Only keep the necessary glyphs for the document
 - To make sure that the embedded font is the one used later in the process (e.g. RIP/DFE)
- There is only one case where it is advised to fully embed the font during PDF generation:
 - Several pages needed to be merged later in the process

Example of merged PDF List fonts & Inventory



This file weight 22Gb... with 20Gb of fonts!



Inventory Report

Inventory report for Document:"Merged Files.PDF"

Font 1 (out of 27) on page 1

Glyphs used in PDF:

| | |
|------|------|
| A | a |
| 1000 | 1000 |
| 1 | 1 |

Font properties:

Type 1 font: "MinionPro"
PostScript name: Mi
Unicode CMap is present
Encoding: WinAnsiE
Font is a subset
Embedded: True
Font descriptors
Maximum height
y-coordinate of t
Maximum depth
Italic angle in degrees
Width of the dot
Average width of
Desired spacing
Maximum width
Width to use for
Vertical width of
y-coordinate of t

437

PostScript name: ZRBSWY+MinionPro-Regular
Various properties
Fixed-width font: False
Serif font: True
Symbolic font: False
Script font: False
Uses the Adobe Standard Roman Character Set: True
Italic: False
All-caps font: False
Small-caps font: False
Force bold at small text sizes: False

Inventory report for Document:"Merged Files.PDF"

Font 2 (out of 27) on page 2

Glyphs used in PDF:

| | |
|------|------|
| B | b |
| 1000 | 1000 |
| 1 | 1 |

Font properties:

Type 1 font: "MinionPro"
PostScript name: Mi
Unicode CMap is present
Encoding: WinAnsiE
Font is a subset
Embedded: True
Font descriptors
Maximum height
y-coordinate of t
Maximum depth
Italic angle in degrees
Width of the dot
Average width of
Desired spacing
Maximum width
Width to use for
Vertical width of
y-coordinate of t

437

PostScript name: ZRBSWY+MinionPro-Regular
Various properties
Fixed-width font: False
Serif font: True
Symbolic font: False
Script font: False
Uses the Adobe Standard Roman Character Set: True
Italic: False
All-caps font: False
Small-caps font: False
Force bold at small text sizes: False

Inventory report for Document:"Merged Files.PDF"

Font 26 (out of 27) on page 26

Glyphs used in PDF:

| | |
|------|------|
| Z | z |
| 1000 | 1000 |
| 1 | 1 |

Font properties:

Type 1 font: "MinionPro"
PostScript name: Mi
Unicode CMap is present
Encoding: WinAnsiE
Font is a subset
Embedded: True
Font descriptors
Maximum height
y-coordinate of t
Maximum depth
Italic angle in degrees
Width of the dot
Average width of
Desired spacing
Maximum width
Width to use for
Vertical width of
y-coordinate of t

437

PostScript name: ZRBSWY+MinionPro-Regular
Various properties
Fixed-width font: False
Serif font: True
Symbolic font: False
Script font: False
Uses the Adobe Standard Roman Character Set: True
Italic: False
All-caps font: False
Small-caps font: False
Force bold at small text sizes: False

Inventory report for Document:"Merged Files.PDF"

Font 27 (out of 27) on page 27

Glyphs used in PDF:

| | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 8 | 9 | | | | | | |
| 1000 | 1000 | | | | | | |
| 1 | 1 | | | | | | |

Font properties:

Type 1 font: "MinionPro-Regular"
PostScript name: MinionPro-Regular
Unicode CMap is present
Encoding: WinAnsiE
Font is a subset
Embedded: True
Font descriptors
Maximum height above the baseline: 989
y-coordinate of the top of flat capital letters: 651
Maximum depth below the baseline: -360
Italic angle in degrees counterclockwise: 0
Width of the dominant vertical stems of glyphs: 80
Average width of characters: 0
Desired spacing between lines: 0
Maximum width of characters: 0
Width to use for un-encoded characters: 0
Vertical width of the dominant horizontal stems of glyphs: 0
y-coordinate of the top of flat non-ascending lowercase letters:

437

PostScript name: ZRBSWY+MinionPro-Regular
Various properties
Fixed-width font: False
Serif font: True
Symbolic font: False
Script font: False
Uses the Adobe Standard Roman Character Set: True
Italic: False
All-caps font: False
Small-caps font: False
Force bold at small text sizes: False



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Redistill



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Redistill – refry

- Call it what you want, it's still not a good idea 😊
- What?
 - Convert from PDF to Postscript and back to PDF
- Why?
 - To “fix” documents there is a problem with
 - Forces a “rewrite” of all PDF content

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Overprint Preview



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Overprint Preview

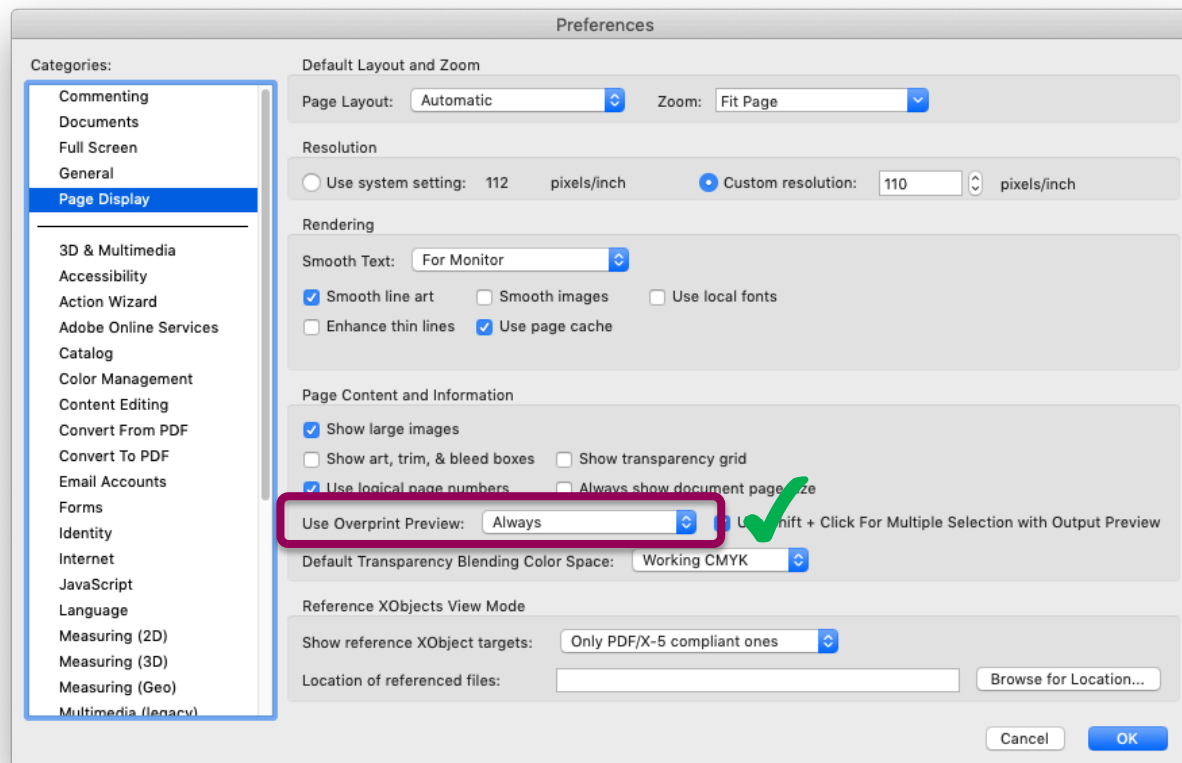
- As graphic arts users, we MUST see on screen exactly the same result than the final print
- Therefore, overprint MUST be previewed to simulate the final result/final print
- This discards all applications that are not honoring the overprint, such as Apple Preview and all apps based on Quartz/WebKit (Safari, Chrome, etc.)

Acrobat & Overprint Preview

- For Acrobat, you can control the behaviour of the overprint preview
 - Don't show if you are in an office environment
 - show if you are in graphic arts
- To ensure that you will NEVER end up with a disappearing text (typical example), you should set up the overprint preview to « Always »

Where do I set this up?

- Acrobat Preferences > Page Display category



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Convert To image



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Why? Why not?

- Obvious – because the PDF *doesn't work*.
 - Convert the PDF into a rasterized version = it's simpler and will now work
- Bad idea?
 - Well... maybe 😊
 - Mostly depends on *how* you do this
 - Use a PDF tool, not Illustrator or Photoshop
 - Make sure there are no problems with overprint
 - Watch out for resolution, especially for files with text

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Local Fonts in Acrobat



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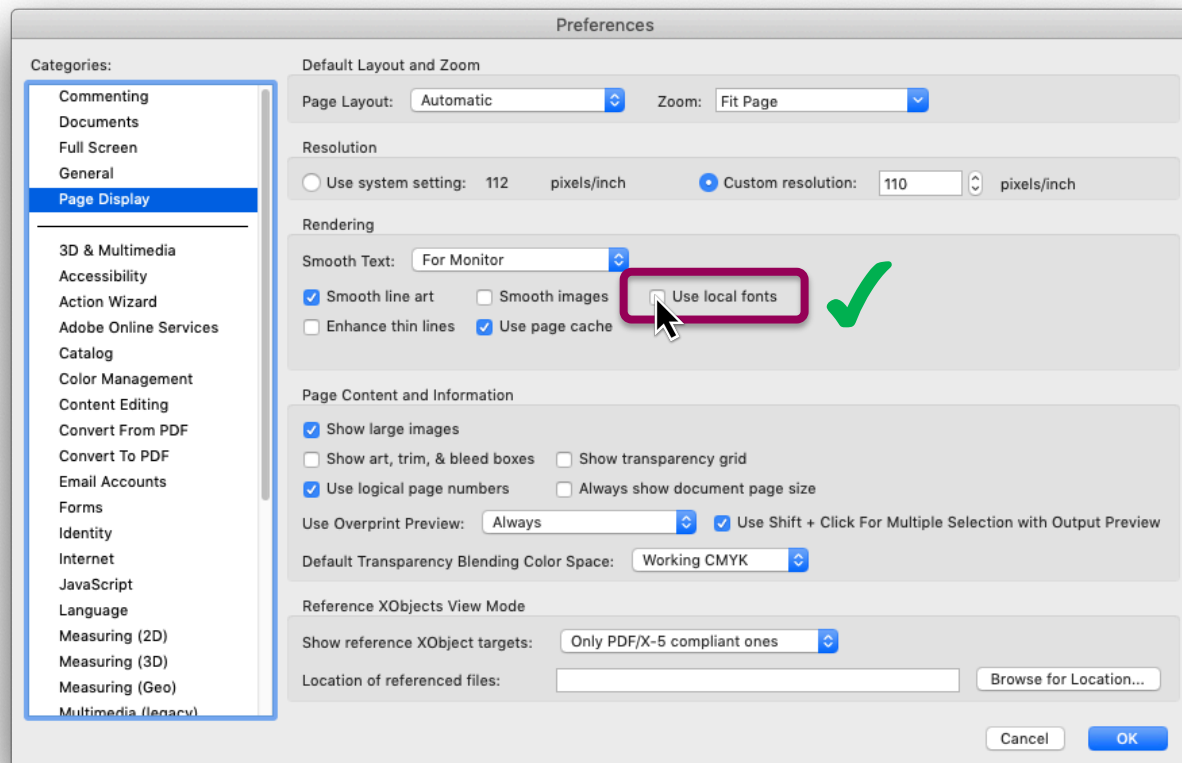
Use of local fonts

What does this mean? Is it bad?

- By default, Acrobat uses your local fonts
- When « Use local fonts » is on, if a font is missing in your file, Acrobat will look on your machine if the font is available and use it
- That means that with this setting, you will never be aware of any font problem on your file!
- The only way to ensure that the recipient of your file will see the same result than you is to uncheck that setting

Where do I set this up?

- Acrobat Preferences > Page Display category



Local fonts on/off

- Local fonts on
 - looks how I wanted, but **WRONG!**

I don't feel like me when I'm not embedded

- Local fonts off
 - doesn't look how I wanted, but **REAL!**

I don't feel like me when I'm not embedded



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