

# 1 What is Acrobat?

Acrobat is the name for a family of document interchange products written by Adobe Systems, Inc. The underlying file format is the Portable Document Format (PDF). The idea is that any document you would normally print, you can now instead turn into PDF, which represents the exact appearance of the printed document. The PDF file can then be viewed by anyone with an Acrobat Reader. Text can be cut out of a PDF file in Rich Text Format (RTF) but the document cannot be edited in any real sense.

Since PDF is platform-independent, and reading and writing software is available for a variety of platforms (Windows, Macintosh, various flavours of UNIX), documents can be exchanged freely between users of those platforms.

As well as representing the printed pages of your document, Acrobat supports additional navigational aids such as hyperlinks, bookmarks and thumbnail views. Acrobat has now reached version 2.1. Ver-

sion 2.1 readers can read version 1 documents fine, but version 1 readers may miss out some of the extra features in version 2.1 files.

## 1.1 Making Acrobat Documents

To make Acrobat (PDF) documents you need either PDFWriter or Distiller. PDFWriter is like another printer driver, but it writes out PDF files instead of printer commands. Distiller converts PostScript files to PDF. Both cost money, though PDFwriter is quite cheap. Distiller is more expensive, but can handle documents with embedded EPS files and even be used to support automatic hyperlink creation.

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## 1.2 Reading Acrobat Documents

Acrobat Reader is now free. It allows PDF files to be viewed and all the standard extra features (links

etc.) to be used if present in the file. Acrobat Exchange is like the Reader, but also allows links, bookmarks, annotations etc. to be added to PDF files. With Exchange, pages can be re-ordered, deleted and imported from other PDF files, and plug-in extensions can be added. Exchange costs money.

