

PDF/A Requirement Coming - The foundation for documents found in the US Courts Electronic Case Management system (CM/ECF) has long been based on the portable document format or PDF. This is an open standard format made popular by Adobe and although it may seem that all PDFs are the same there are differences in PDF format. The National Archives will be requiring Federal agencies to adopt the PDF/A format which embeds all fonts and removes hyperlinks and any scripts that might be found in the document. The idea is that the PDF must be self-contained and not rely on any outside elements to fully display its contents. This link from Adobe was written by an attorney that could provide some help in understanding PDF/A.

<http://blogs.adobe.com/acrolaw/2010/11/ready-for-cmecf-changes-conforming-existing-pdf-files-to-pdf/a/>

You can begin using PDF/A today but a future release of CM/ECF will **require** you to upload only PDF/A documents (think 12-18 months). The PACER service center has some information on their web site about PDF/A. They provide a link where you can test whether your PDF program can view PDF/A documents <http://www.pacer.gov/announcements/general/pdfa.html> However, it does not address if your software can create PDF/A. Additionally, the District Court in Nebraska developed a helpful FAQ page that can be found here: <http://www.ned.uscourts.gov/cmecf/pdfa/faq/>

Our last announcement generated a high volume of calls to our Help Desk and unfortunately there are so many software programs and scanners we don't have a list of what will support PDF/A creation. You will need to contact the vendor of your program and scanner and ask them or visit their web site. If you find that your software /hardware is not compliant, you need to start planning your upgrades but keep in mind this is 12 to 18 months away.

Earlier we stated that versions of Acrobat back to version 5 can create a PDF/A document but that is incorrect. Version 5-7 will allow you to view a PDF/A document but not create them. You must use version 8 or higher or consider another PDF creation program.

In these later versions, you only need to make the change to the default settings once per computer and then all PDFs will be created as PDF/A going forward. Our court uses Acrobat 8/9 and Word 2007 so we can provide the steps to change the defaults for those programs **only**.

A. Adobe Acrobat 8 or 9

1. Open your list of printers
2. Right-Click Printing Preferences
3. Under Default Settings pick PDF/A -1b (either version is fine) and click OK

B. For MS Word 2007 with Adobe Acrobat installed using the Create PDF button

1. Click the Office ball
2. Click the Acrobat Tab
3. Click Preferences
4. Under Conversion Settings choose PDF/A -1b (either version is fine) and click OK

C. For MS Word 2007 with Adobe Acrobat installed using File SaveAs

1. Click File SaveAs
2. In the Save as Type box, choose PDF then click the Options buttons
3. Click the PDF/A checkbox and then OK twice

For general questions you can reach the Help Desk at 410-962-0834 but please rely on your vendors for your specific software and hardware.