

Using Adobe PDF Files For Document Storage and Email



Introduction

We hear a lot these days about protecting our natural resources. For years we have talked in the computer industry about saving paper, but it never really seemed to materialize. But some things have changed in recent years that may just help us all save a few trees, mainly the development of the PDF file.

What is a PDF file? PDF stands for Portable Document File. It was developed as a means of allowing people to view documents regardless of what type of computer system the document was created on. All you need is a compatible version of the PDF software.

Download The PDF Software

To get started you download to your local PC one of the many PDF programs on the Internet. We have used two products here at DataWeld. One is PDFFactory and the other is PDF 995. Both work fine. They typically cost less than \$50.

When the program is downloaded it installs just like any other PC printer driver would and shows up in your Windows printer dialog box. When you are ready to print, you print to an electronic PDF file instead of a laser printer.

View Any Document On The Screen

The first major benefit you will realize is that you can easily print ANY REPORT to your screen without having to print the report. It is faster than printing, you don't have to leave your PC to go get the report, and if you just wanted to see a particular piece of information you have not wasted a piece of paper. The ecological benefits are obvious, but once you start printing reports to a PDF file and viewing them on the screen you will not want to print them any more.

A common example is your Daily Invoice Register. Instead of printing out the entire report, print it to a PDF file and view it on the screen. You can check for errors or other problems and if everything is OK run your update. No wasted paper!

Creating A Filing System

From time to time you may still need to go back to that invoice register we just talked about. To always have instant access to the invoice register or any other report for that matter, just save the report to a PDF file on your PC or server. Disk space is cheap on PC's and servers these days so with the PDF concept you now have a very inexpensive electronic filing system. Here is what you do.

First, set up a directory on your PC or server for reports you want to save. Let's call it "Ace Welding Supply Reports". In Windows Explorer, you would do the following:

- Click on your C drive
- Right click on any open space in the list of folders (directories) on the right side.
- Click on New
- Click on Folder
- Then type in the name of the folder (directory) you want to create.
- To create a sub folder (directory) click on the name of the folder then right click on any open area and repeat the process.

What you are doing is creating a filing system just like a filing cabinet. You are creating a filing cabinet for each module, Accounts Receivable as an example. The sub folders or directories are the drawers within each filing cabinet.

The following structure is one you could use for archiving your PDF reports:

Major Directory: Accounting Reports

Sub Directories for Major Modules: Accounts Receivable

Accounts Payable

Billing

General Ledger

Inventory

Purchasing

Cylinders

End of Month

Sub Directories for Major Modules: Within the major modules, create a year folder such as 2012. Then within this folder you can create a folder for each month. An example would be simply January or 2012-01-January. Following a naming sequence like this will make your directories appear in chronological order making them easy to view and find.

Here is how it would work. You want a copy of a purchase journal showing how various expenses were distributed when you entered a batch of invoices. The date you want is January 15, 2012. When you originally saved the purchase journal you would print it to a PDF file and give it a name such as Purchase Journal-2012-01-15. You can abbreviate, but spelling it out makes it less likely to get confused.

When you go to find the report, you would go to the ACCOUNTING REPORTS directory as we discussed above. You would then go to ACCOUNTS PAYABLE and then to 2012 and finally to January of 2012. In that directory you would find the purchase journal with all of the detail for January 15, 2012. Your naming convention may be different, you may want a separate directory for Purchase Journals within Accounts Payable. Or you may just want one Accounts Payable directory and anything related to Accounts Payable is in that directory. You can make it as simple or complex as you want to reflect how you want to organize your data.

One common way of establishing directories would be:

Accounts Payable

Purchase Journals

2011

January

Filename.pdf

February

Etc

2012

Disbursements Journals

2011

2012

Check Processing

2011

2012

You can add other directories for additional storage of PDF files. You might make one for Sales Reports or Bank Transactions. But **YOU SHOULD ALWAYS PRINT CRITICAL** reports such as the ones described above to a PDF file and save them in the appropriate directory. This process makes it extremely easy for you to provide information to anyone else in your company, your accountant or your bank.

The process of setting up the folders is really quite a simple process. But if you have any questions, just give your support person a call. They will step you through the process.

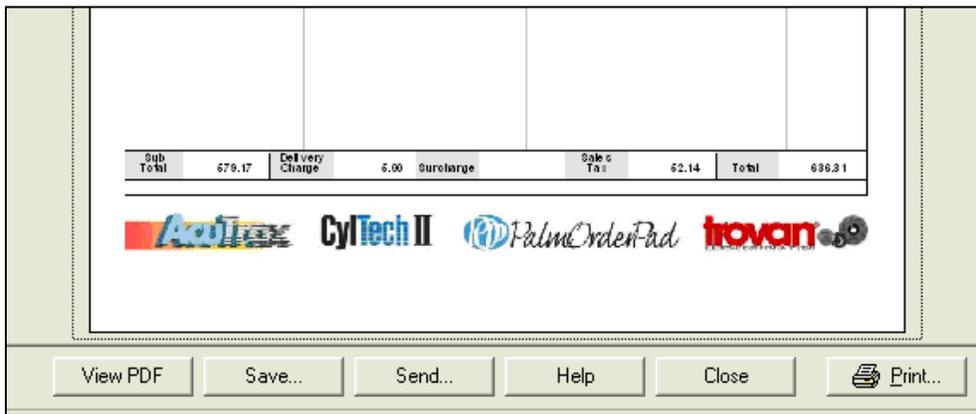
Emailing Quotes, Copies of Invoices and Statements

When you choose to print to the PDF device, the program will create a PDF file for you automatically and then give you several options. The screen below shows you the options available. They are:

View the PDF This is what you use if you want to view a report on the screen.

Save Use this option when you want to save a copy of the PDF for future reference. You will want to be sure and use a consistent naming convention and always make sure you put the PDF in the correct folder.

Send When you select this option, the program will invoke your email program (Microsoft Outlook) and attach the PDF file to it. All you have to do is to type in the email address of the person you are sending the PDF to and click send. You can use this feature to email copies of invoices, quotations, reports and much more. Anything you currently print out could potentially become a PDF which can be emailed.



Print If you decide you want to print the report or invoice after all, just click the Print button.

Statements

Statements Another way you could use the PDF concept is when you print statements. When you run statements, you can save a copy to a folder as discussed above. Then when a customer wants a copy of the statement from last month, you go to that folder.

Go to the appropriate folder and find the PDF for the month in question and double click on it. The PDF will open. Since the PDF file for statements contains ALL statements, you will need to locate the statement for the customer in question. You do this by using the search function.

You click on **Search**, then type in the name or account number of the customer who wants the statement. Once you find the statement you want, it will be on a specific page or pages. You then choose the print option and print to the PDF *but you will only print the pages* for the customer in question. For example you might print pages 100 to 101 to get a complete statement for the customer. You will then see the PDF screen and choose the option to Send as discussed above, to email to the customer.

Quotes For Customers

If your customer wants you to send them a quote for pricing on products, you can email it to them. You save the headache of printing out the quote and the customer gets the quote in an email so it is electronic and they can save it to their PC for later referral.

Reports For Salesmen

If you print out reports for salesmen such as monthly sales or even aging reports for customers, you can print them to a PDF and then email them to the salesmen.

Salesmen can print customer sales history to a PDF and email it to themselves. When they go visit the customer they can bring it up on their laptop or other device supporting PDF files.

Sending Reports to Accountants

If your accountant requests General Ledger information, bank transactions or bank statements, all of these can be printed to PDF's and emailed to them. Data can even be extracted and imported into a spreadsheet and then printed to a PDF to be emailed to your accountant giving you even more flexibility.

The possibilities are virtually limitless in terms of eliminating paperwork and speeding up processing. Just remember that if you can print it you can email it.