



Fillable Forms Tip Sheet

Tips for Making Fillable Forms from Word Documents

Authoring Forms in Word

1. Avoid using background images behind form fields and text. Background images and graphics can interfere with the Adobe form wizard's ability to auto-detect fields in a document.
2. Group related fields such as contact information, payment information, etc.
3. Be sure to add descriptions for all images/graphics that convey information.
4. Use the underscore character for smaller text boxes and the rectangle object tool to insert multi-line form fields. The rectangle tool also works best for checkboxes—as Adobe will read underscores as text fields.
5. If you plan to post Word copies of your forms on the Web—be sure to save the files in the original Doc format (.doc). Docx format requires a compatibility tool for users of older versions of office—and makes use of some formatting options which are not backwards compatible.
6. Reduce the size of graphics and photos before inserting them into your forms. You can use image editing software (i.e. Photoshop) to reduce images.

Converting Forms to Fillable PDF Format

Adobe Acrobat is required for making fillable PDF forms.

1. Emails sent via a fillable form will go to the email specified in your Acrobat preferences. To enter your email address in Acrobat, select **Edit → Preferences → Identity** from the main menu.
2. Use the form wizard in Acrobat to auto-detect fields in your document.
3. Review the document to insure that all fields have been detected. To add a new field in form editing view, select “Add New Field” and select the type of form field that you would like to add.
4. Be sure to “distribute” your PDF form before sending by selecting **Forms → Distribute Form** from the main menu in Acrobat. This will create two new files—a responses file and a PDF file for distribution (with “Distributed” amended to the filename).

The Media Center provides personalized training and support for Adobe Acrobat. Please contact us for assistance and training at: cdsweb@hawaii.edu.

