

2.10 Designating PDF Artifacts

Contents

Getting Started with Artifacts.....	2
An Efficient Approach to Artifacting.....	2
The Rapid Artifacting Technique.....	2
An Important Note for Untagged Content.....	2
Artifacting Special PDF Elements.....	3
Header and Footer Artifacts.....	3
Dot Leader Artifacts.....	3
Path Artifacts.....	3
Ensuring Tags Reflect Relevant Content.....	4
Conclusion.....	4

Getting Started with Artifacts

Any content within an accessible PDF that is not relevant to a screen reader or any other assistive program, such as decorative images, erroneous spaces, lines for formatting and so on, must be hidden from the read order and tag tree for the document. All content of this type must be designated as an artifact. In this module, we will be ‘artifacting’ both tagged and untagged content as well as exploring special cases for designating artifacts.

An Efficient Approach to Artifacting

Many special PDF elements, such as document borders and dot leaders, must often be manually hidden from the tag tree. However, unmarked content can be quickly found and removed with the **Tags** menu.

The Rapid Artifacting Technique

PDF elements such as tabbed spacing, headers and footers can be quickly located and hidden without manually selecting and designating them within the PDF document.

To Rapidly Designate Artifacts:

1. In the **Tags** menu, find and select the tags root labelled ‘Tags’. Open the ‘Options’ dropdown menu and select ‘New Tag’. Name the new tag ‘hide’ in the type field and select ‘OK’. Now select the new ‘hide’ tag that has appeared directly under the ‘Tags’ root.
2. Open the tags option menu and select ‘Find’. In the ‘Find Element’ window, open the ‘Find’ dropdown list and select ‘Unmarked Content’. Select the ‘Find’ button. The first unmarked element will be found and highlighted within the document window.
3. Select the ‘Tag Element’ button. The element is now tagged under the ‘hide’ tag, which will later be set as an artifact.
4. In the ‘Find Element’ window, select ‘Find Next’ to continue tagging unmarked PDF elements under the ‘hide’ tag. If the working document has scanned elements, selecting ‘OCR Suspects’ under the ‘Find’ dropdown menu will allow mistakenly recognized text or characters to be found and tagged as well.
5. Once all unmarked content has been found, a ‘Find Complete’ window will appear. Select ‘OK’ to close this window.
6. Find and expand the ‘hide’ tag that was created in the **Tags** menu by selecting the ‘carrot’ icon next to its name. Select all containers within this tag (by first selecting the top item under the tag, scrolling down to the bottom of the list and then selecting the last item while holding the ‘Shift’ key).
7. Under the **Tags** ‘Options’ menu, find and open ‘Change Tag to Artifact’.
8. A ‘Create Artifact’ window will open. Select ‘Layout’ as the artifact type and press ‘OK’. All content that was placed in the ‘hide’ tag will now be set as an artifact.
9. Delete the empty ‘hide’ tag by right-clicking the tag name and selecting ‘Delete Tag’.

An Important Note for Untagged Content

When using the ‘Find’ window to locate artifacts, missed content will sometimes appear that will need to be set within the tag tree and reading order. It is important to watch for any relevant content during this artifacting process, as this content will otherwise be hidden and left out for screen readers.

Artifacting Special PDF Elements

Content that can't be accessed from the **Tags** 'Find' option must be manually designated as artifacts within the tag tree. This is normally done by highlighting the content in the **Tags** menu, opening the 'Options' menu and then selecting 'Change Tag to Artifact'. However, for special elements of the document that involve style and formatting, the content may be dispersed into multiple tags or hard to find. To artifact these special PDF elements, it is easier to use the 'Reading Order' window (available within the **Tags** menu). The 'Reading Order' tool should be used to artifact paths, dot leaders and header/footer content.

Header and Footer Artifacts

Elements placed as headers and footers are often repetitive and do not provide context or meaning when interpreted by assistive technology.

To Artifact Headers and Footers:

1. In the **Tags** menu, open the 'Options' dropdown list to select 'Reading Order'.
2. Use the 'Reading Order' target cursor to highlight all content within a header or footer.
3. Once the elements are highlighted, select 'Background/Artifact' in the 'Reading Order' window. This will artifact the selected header or footer elements.
4. Repeat this process to artifact the remaining header and footer elements within the document.

While most headers and footers are irrelevant to screen readers and will be hidden, some header and footer content (such as the opening header or information containing the document version) will sometimes be considered relevant enough to be placed within the reading order.

Dot Leader Artifacts

Found almost exclusively in a table of contents, dot leaders are the groupings of dots separating each subject title from their page number. As these 'dots' and the page numbers make no contextual sense to a screen reader, they must be set as artifacts.

To Artifact Dot Leaders:

1. In the **Tags** menu, open the 'Options' dropdown list to select 'Reading Order'.
2. Within the 'Reading Order' window, ensure the 'Show page content groups' option is unchecked. This will allow dot leaders to be more easily selected.
3. Using the mouse cursor, highlight the dot leaders and page number following the content that will stay tagged (which in this case is the first table of contents item). To tailor the selection of the content, holding the 'Shift' key will allow additional content to be highlighted, while holding the 'Ctrl' key allows content to be partially deselected.
4. Select 'Background/Artifact' in the 'Reading Order' window.

The dot leaders and page number for this item has now been artifacted.

Path Artifacts

The lines that form table borders, section breaks and underlined text are often identified as 'paths' in Acrobat. This content will be artifacted to prevent the 'path' name from being identified in the read order.

To Artifact Paths:

1. In the **Tags** menu, open the 'Options' dropdown list to select 'Reading Order'.

2. Use the selection cursor to highlight the line or path to be set as an artifact. Where precision is needed (particularly for underlined text), it is advisable to magnify the document within the viewing window to make selecting the path easier.
3. Once the path is selected, press 'Background/Artifact' in the 'Reading Order Window'. The path is now set as an artifact.

Ensuring Tags Reflect Relevant Content

Content set as artifacts through the methods found in this module may leave some tags in the document's tag tree empty. After designating all artifacts within the PDF, these tags should be removed from the read order.

To Remove Empty PDF Tags:

1. In the **Tags** menu, open the 'Options' dropdown menu.
2. Select 'Delete Empty Tags'. Any tags that contained only 'artifaced' content should be deleted.

Conclusion

In this module, we've covered the general process of designating artifacts as well as special cases for setting PDF formatting elements as artifacts. The upcoming modules will focus on formatting specific elements, such as tables, form fields and lists, for PDF accessibility.