2.12 Formatting Lists in Acrobat

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Arranging Basic List Structure

For the visual learner, lists can break up the information in a way that is easy to read and understand. They are only accessible if a screen reader or other assistive technology can also properly navigate and convey the list structure to a user relying on it to do so. Let's examine what makes up a properly tagged list and how to properly separate the elements within it.

Confirming the List Tag Structure

Lists are tagged in Acrobat to be an expandable tree with a parent tag that contains a tag for each list item. The tag types and structure are as follows:

- 'List' or 'L' (is the parent tag for all the tags of a list).
- 'List Item' or 'LI' (is used to separately identify each item in a list).
- 'List Body' or 'LBody' (is also found within the 'List Item' tag, after a label tag, and contains the descriptive content of the list item).

Separating Label and List Body Content

The demarcation symbols or labels that mark each item of the list will often be grouped with the actual content in the 'List Body' or other tag. These elements must be separated in the tag tree to prevent the list label from being identified and read as part of the list body content.

To Separate List Labels from the List Content:

1. To find the first list item in the tag tree, highlight the list item with the 'Reading Order' window, open the **Tags** 'Options' menu and choose 'Find Tag From Selection'.
2. Examine the list item containers in the tag tree. The list item will likely be expanded from a 'List Body' tag within the 'List' and 'List Item' higher order tags.
3. Using the crosshair from the still open 'Reading Order' window, highlight only the list item label or symbol in the document viewing window.
4. Press the 'Background/Artifact' button in the 'Reading Order' window.

The list label will now be properly separated from the list body in the tags tree.

Formatting Complex Lists

Some lists, such as those that span multiple pages or have sub-list structures, will have to be manually structured in the tag tree to ensure that they are accessible. We will discuss both examples.

Tagging Multi-Page Lists

If a list spans two or more pages, Acrobat will often structure it into multiple lists in the tag tree. Confirming each list has a uniform tag structure will prevent confusion and a loss of meaning as tags are interpreted by assistive technology.

To Compile the Tag Structure for a Multi-Page List:

1. Open the **Tags** menu and find the beginning of the list, marked 'L', in the tag tree. To quickly do this, use the 'Reading Order' window to highlight some of the topmost content of the list. Then open the **Tags** 'Options' menu and choose 'Find Tag from Selection'.

2. Scroll down the list tag tree to find the second instance of the 'List' or 'L' parent tag. Expand the content under this tag to see the list items.

3. While holding the 'Shift' key, select the topmost and then the bottommost 'List Item' tag under the second 'List' parent tag.

4. Select and drag the group of 'List Item' tags into the first 'List' parent tag and place them at the bottom of the list.

5. Delete the now empty 'List' tag. Repeat this process for any remaining pages.

Creating a Sub-List

If a sub-list is present within a list of the document, it will be tagged the same as any list in Acrobat but placed within a 'List Body' tag. The sub-list structure will resultingly be identifiable and understandable by a screen reader.

To Structure a Sub-List within a List Tag:

1. Use the 'Reading Order' window to highlight the list item surrounding the sub-list. In the **Tags** 'Options' menu, choose 'Find Tag from Selection'. If the rest of the surrounding list is formatted properly, the sub-list items that appear in the tag tree will likely be tagged as a 'List Item' within the main list tag.

2. Start the sub-list by first creating a new 'List' tag to be set within the current list. Open the **Tags** 'Options' menu, choose 'New Tag', select 'List' in the 'Type' dropdown menu and press 'OK'. The new 'List' tag, 'L', should appear adjacent to the highlighted 'List Item' tag.

3. Drag the 'List' tag into the 'List Body' or 'LBody' tag that is within the previously selected list item tag. Ensure the new 'List' tag is placed under the content of the list body to assure proper reading order.

4. For each item in the sub-list, add and assort the 'List Item' and 'List Body' tags within the new 'List' tag. Ensure content has been properly placed within the tags.

The sub-list will now appear as an expandable list of its own in the tag tree.

Conclusion

In this module, we've explored assembling the correct list tag structure and working with special list formatting. The next module will continue into formatting and arranging hyperlinks.