

2.13 Formatting Hyperlinks in Acrobat

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Hyperlink Creation and Editing

Links are made accessible in Adobe Acrobat through different processes based on their type, destination and contextual placement. In particular, internal links that open page destinations and external links that open webpages are tested and edited differently. We will walk through testing both along with creating hyperlinks in Acrobat.

Inspecting Internal Hyperlinks

Internal hyperlinks should be checked for their keyboard and mouse functionality as well as their page destination.

To Check Keyboard Functionality:

1. Continuously toggle the 'Tab' key down the page until the internal link is highlighted.
2. Press 'Enter' to verify the link navigates to the intended location within the document.

To Check Mouse Functionality:

1. Find and hover the cursor over the same internal hyperlink. A 'select hand' should appear in place of the cursor, indicating the presence of the link. Left-click the link.
2. Check to ensure the link navigation is as intended and the same as when using a keyboard.

To Edit a Page View Destination:

1. Navigate to and right-click the hyperlink in the normal document viewing window. Select 'Delete Link'.
2. Open the **Edit PDF** tool. In the **Edit PDF** viewing window, highlight the entire text to be designated as a link. Right-click the text and select 'Create Link'.
3. In the 'Create Link' window that appears, 'Link Appearance' settings can be set. Ensure the 'Go to a page view' option is selected in the 'Link Action' section.
4. Select 'Next'. The 'Create Go to View' window will appear. Use the mouse or scrollbars to find the target view for the link. The zoom of this view will also be saved. Once the orientation and zoom of the document is in place, press 'Set Link'.
5. Return to the hyperlink and use a mouse or keyboard to verify the link destination.

Inspecting External Hyperlinks

Like internal links, external hyperlinks must be checked for functionality with a keyboard and mouse. Webpage navigation should also be tested with external links.

To Check Keyboard Functionality:

1. Continuously toggle the 'Tab' key down the page until the external hyperlink is highlighted.
2. Press 'Enter'. Verify the link navigates to the web location inferred by the link name, contextual description and alternative text.

To Check Mouse Functionality:

1. Find and hover the cursor over the external hyperlink. Unlike an internal page link, the external hyperlink should prompt a 'hand' selection icon with a 'W' for 'Web'.

2. Left-click the link to verify it also works with a mouse and opens the intended webpage.

To Check URL Navigation:

1. Right-click the hyperlink and choose 'Edit Link'.
2. In the 'Create Link' window, open the 'Actions' tab and select the 'Open a web link' item in the 'Actions' list box. Press 'Edit'.
3. Use the dropdown list that appears to either select a previously used URL or type a new one. Select 'OK' in the edit window and then again in the properties window to finalize changes.

Creating and Optimizing a Hyperlink

Links need to be set up in a way that they can be universally recognized and accessible. Note that, as covered in the earlier alternative text module, any created link will need to be given alt text.

Otherwise, the procedure to create a link is as follows:

1. Open the **Edit PDF** tool and highlight the text that will be converted into a hyperlink.
2. For simplicity, format the link in the standard blue underlined style. Open the color box, found in the **Edit PDF** 'Format' section, to select the darkest shade of blue (which will allow the link to be recognizable but also meet minimum contrast requirements). While the text is still highlighted, select 'Underline'. Although text style and color can also be changed in a later link editing window, using the **Edit PDF** format tools will preserve the uniformity of text and hyperlinks within the document.
3. Right-click the text in the document viewing window and choose 'Create Link'. The 'Create Hyperlink' window will appear.
4. The appearance of a selection box surrounding the link can be adjusted in the 'Link Appearance' section. Open the 'Link Type' dropdown menu and choose 'Invisible Rectangle' to make the box invisible.
5. Find the 'Link Action' section to choose whether the link will 'Open a file' or 'Open a web page'. It is important to note that if 'Open a file' is selected, only web-based file links or links to directories available to the intended viewer of the document will work for a hyperlink.
6. Choose 'Open a web page' and then 'Next'. Enter the URL destination and select 'OK'. Open the link to verify proper functionality.

The hyperlink should now be properly formatted, set up and ready to be tagged.

Tagging Hyperlinks

Basic Hyperlink Structure

To be accessible, hyperlinks must always be superimposed by or 'nested' in the tag that also holds the content surrounding it. The general tag structure for hyperlinks is as follows:

- 'Paragraph' or 'P' (or, occasionally, another tag type is where the tag designating the hyperlink will be nested).
- 'Link' (which will usually be placed to split in between the content under the paragraph tag in the tag tree, to reflect the location of the link within the text, unless it is a standalone link).

- 'Link - OBJR' or 'Link Object Reference' (is always placed directly before the hyperlink text container in the tag tree and represents the clickable box surrounding the link which can be changed to be visible or invisible).

To note, containers for the text elements surrounding a hyperlink should be automatically split into two parts, one before and one after the hyperlink, when a new link is created. In some cases, the content following the hyperlink may need to be manually selected and tagged with the 'Reading Order' window to create the proper tag and content structure.

Restoring a Link Object Reference Tag

The 'Object Reference' tag is designed to make the link and the surrounding selectable area recognizable to a screen reader or other assistive technology. There are cases where the 'OBJR' tag is missing from the tag tree.

To Find and Restore an OBJR Tag for a Hyperlink:

1. Select to highlight the corresponding 'Link' tag in the tag tree. Open the **Tags** 'Options' menu and select 'Find'.
2. In the 'Find Element' window, open the 'Find' dropdown menu and choose 'Unmarked Links'.
3. With the link in view on the page, ensure 'Search Page' is toggled. Press the 'Find' button.
4. 'Find Next' can be used if multiple untagged links are in the page. When the hyperlink is highlighted, select 'Tag Element'.
5. A 'Link - OBJR' tag will appear inside the previously highlighted 'Link' tag and directly above the link content container.

The link is now identifiable and able to be selected by assistive technology.

Conclusion

In this module, we've covered testing, creating, editing and tagging accessible hyperlinks in Adobe Acrobat. The next module will go through scenarios for arranging accessible forms in Acrobat.