THE SHERIDAN GROUP

11.2.06

How to Create a Prepress-Quality PDF Using General PC Applications

Introduction

The intent of this tutorial is to provide easy-to-follow guidelines for creating prepress-quality PDF files from general PC applications. One of the most frequent problems encountered with PDF files without first configuring output settings is non-embedded fonts. Using these instructions, you will be able to greatly minimize the chances of font substitution, or other problems, when PDF files are generated using problematic utilities and/or incorrect settings.

Please note that images prepared for print require a higher resolution than those prepared for on-screen display. Be sure to import the highest quality images available for making print quality PDFs.

Using the Adobe PDF Virtual Printer (or, *How to Avoid Using PDFWriter*)

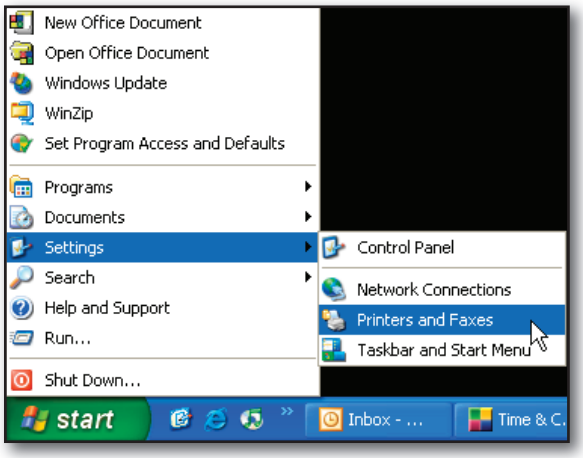
The following instructions have been created with one requirement: you must have Adobe® Acrobat Standard, or Adobe® Acrobat Professional installed on your computer. The "Adobe PDF" virtual printer that is installed with these applications will be configured and used to create PDFs. The Adobe PDF printer, once set up properly, simplifies the process of generating high quality PDFs from most any application.

The *PDFWriter* macro that is accessible via a PDF icon (for instance, in Word) should be avoided. Character substitution or complete drop-outs can occur when using this tool for PDF creation. Setting aside a little time to configure the Adobe PDF Virtual Printer is a better long term solution.

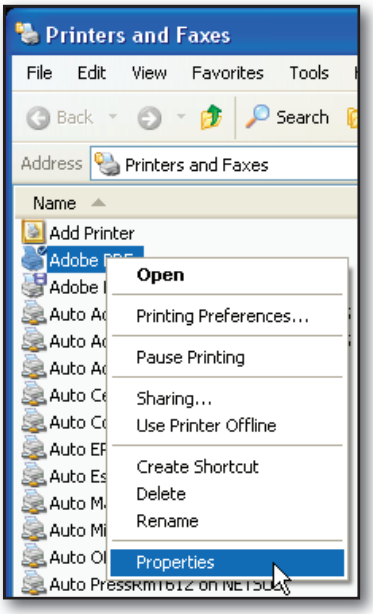
"Ready, Aim, Print!" in 2 Steps

Step #1: Configure the Adobe PostScript printer

Acrobat automatically configures the Adobe PDF printer for the most part, but you must make a few changes to make sure, for instance, that TrueType fonts do not change appearance or become substituted. ***Note that this only needs to be done once!***

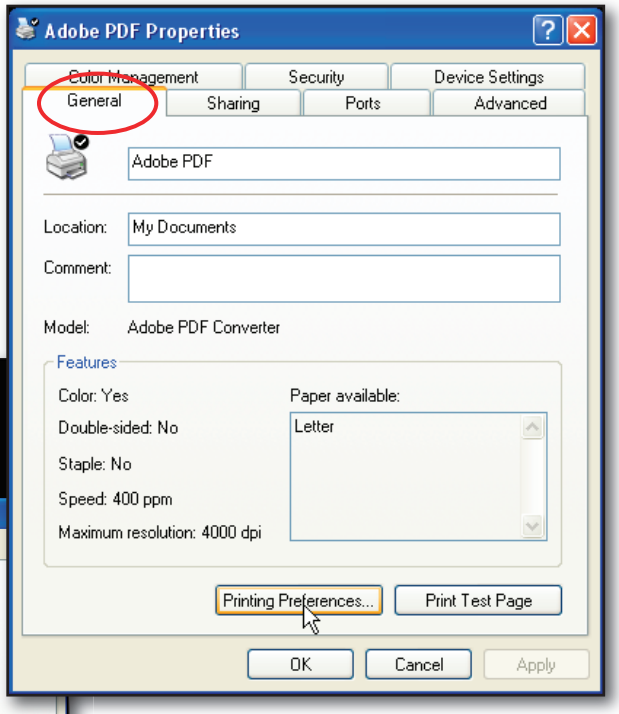


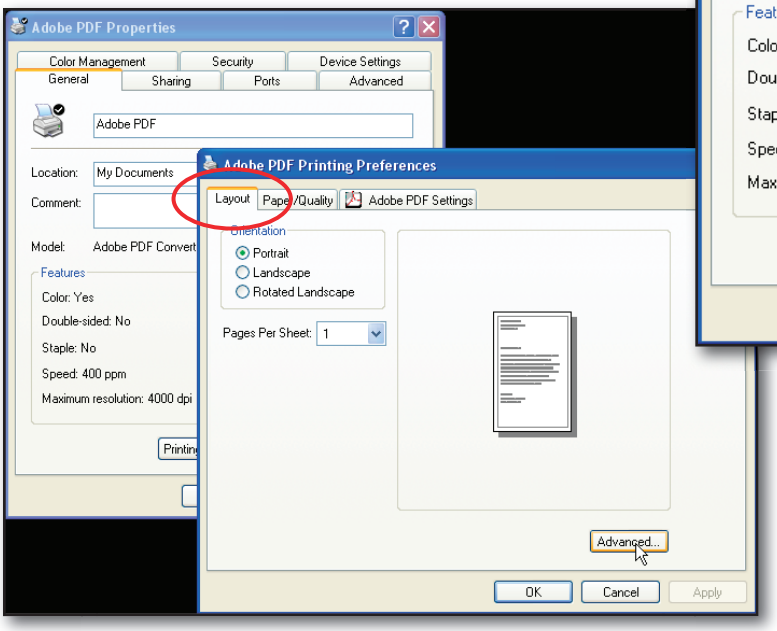
- Choose **Start->Settings->Printers and Faxes**.



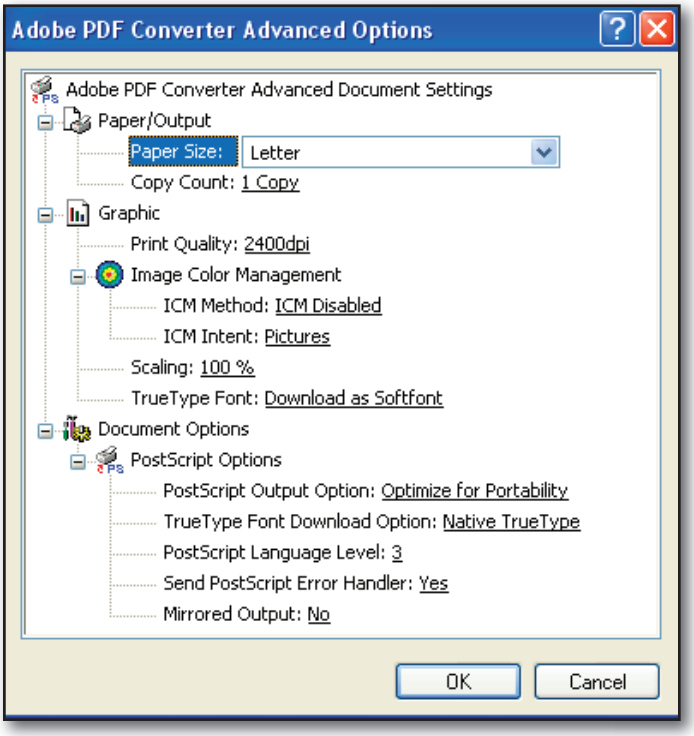
- Right-click *Adobe PDF*, and then choose *Properties* from the pop-up menu.

- Click the General tab, and then click *Printing Preferences*





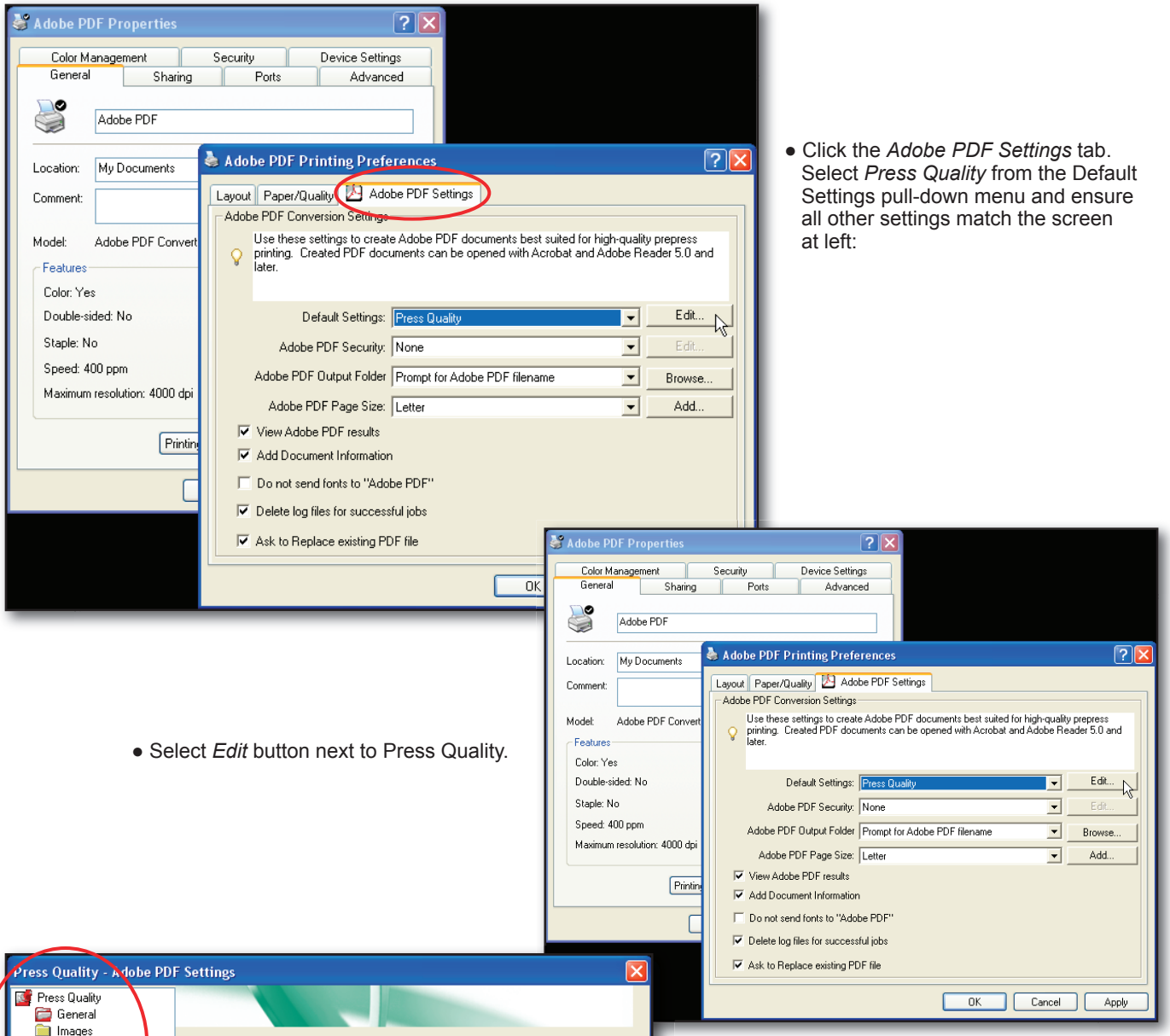
- Click the Layout tab, and then click *Advanced*.



- Click the plus sign next to *Graphic*.
- Select Print Quality: **2400dpi**.
- Select TrueType Font: **Download as Softfont**.

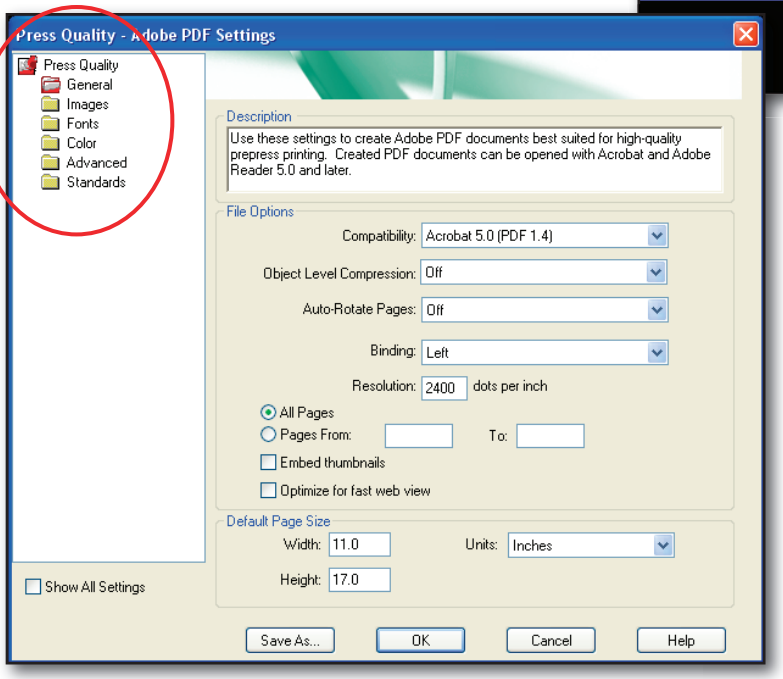
- Click the plus sign next to PostScript Options.
- Select PostScript Output Option: **Optimize for Portability**.
- Select TrueType Download Option: **Native TrueType**.
- Select PostScript Language Level: **3**.

- Choose OK.



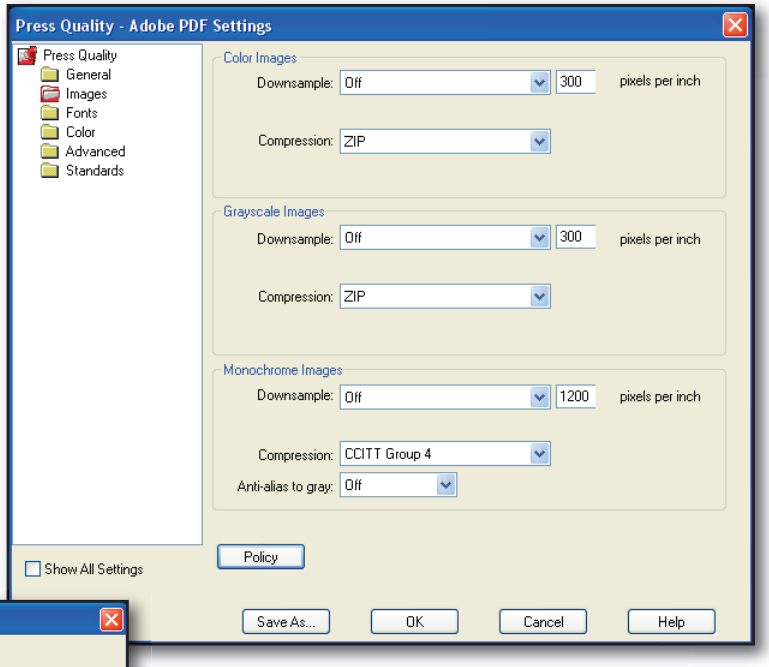
- Click the *Adobe PDF Settings* tab. Select *Press Quality* from the Default Settings pull-down menu and ensure all other settings match the screen at left:

- Select *Edit* button next to Press Quality.

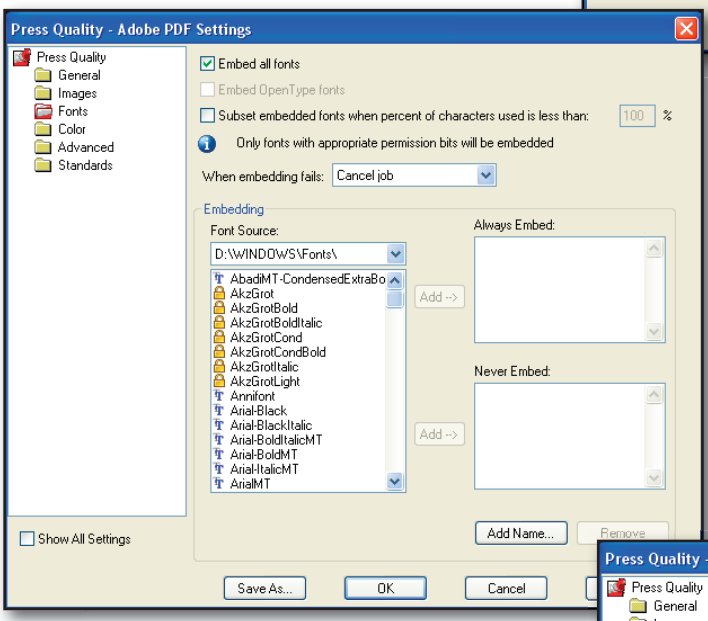


General screen

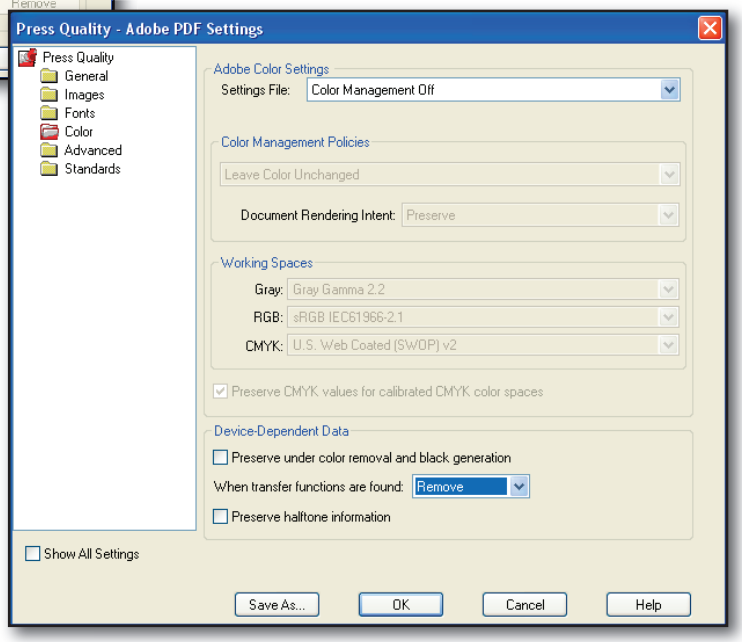
- Selecting *Edit* will bring up the joboptions screens. Ensure all settings match the following (6) screens by clicking on each of the tabs in the upper left corner of the screen.



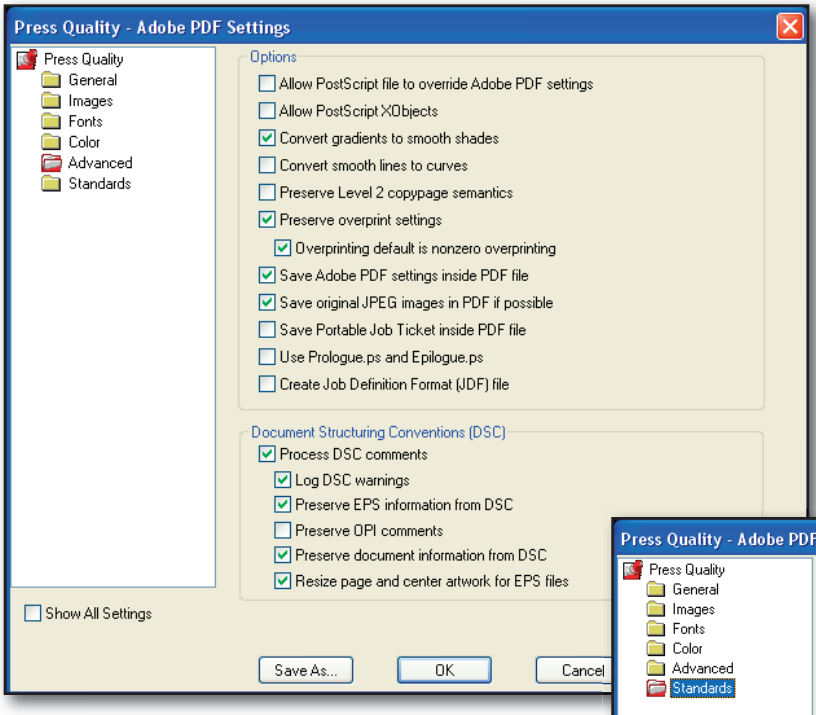
Images screen



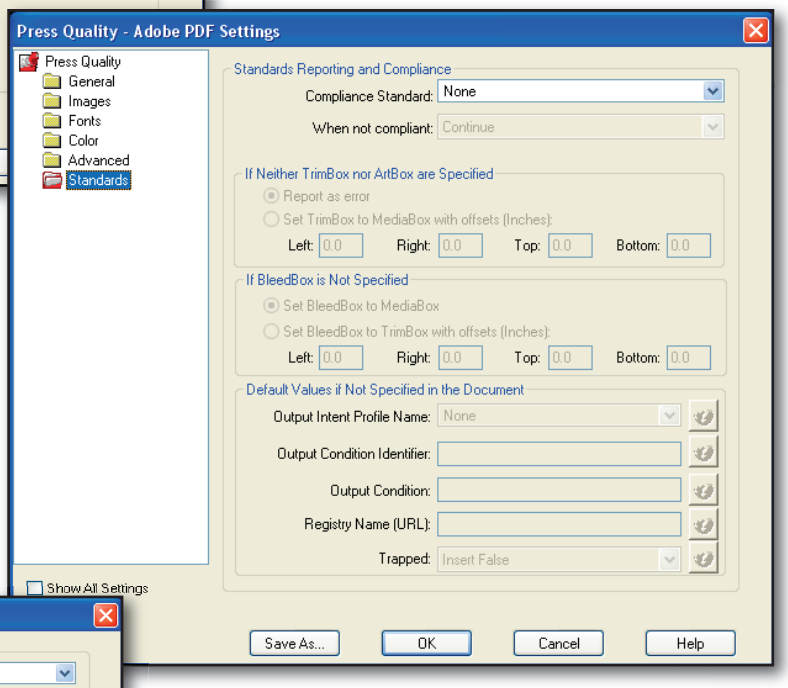
Fonts screen



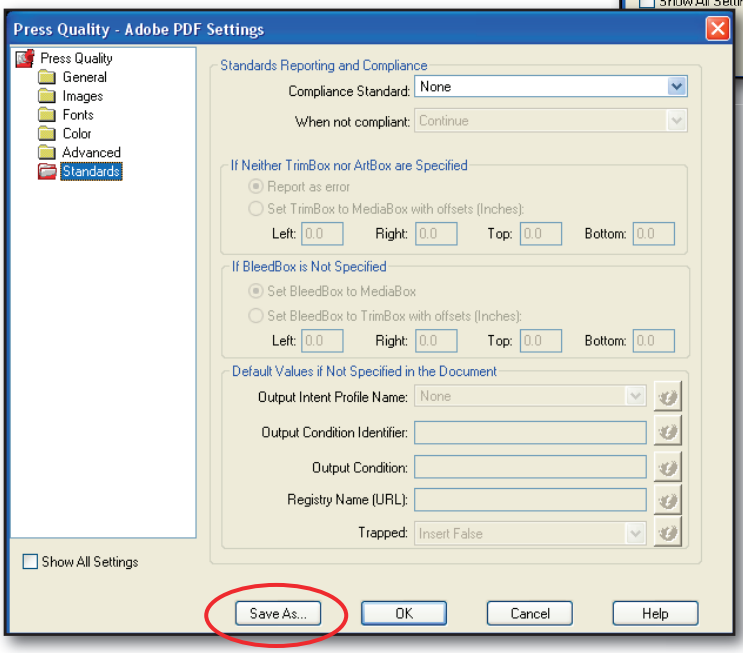
Color screen



Advanced screen

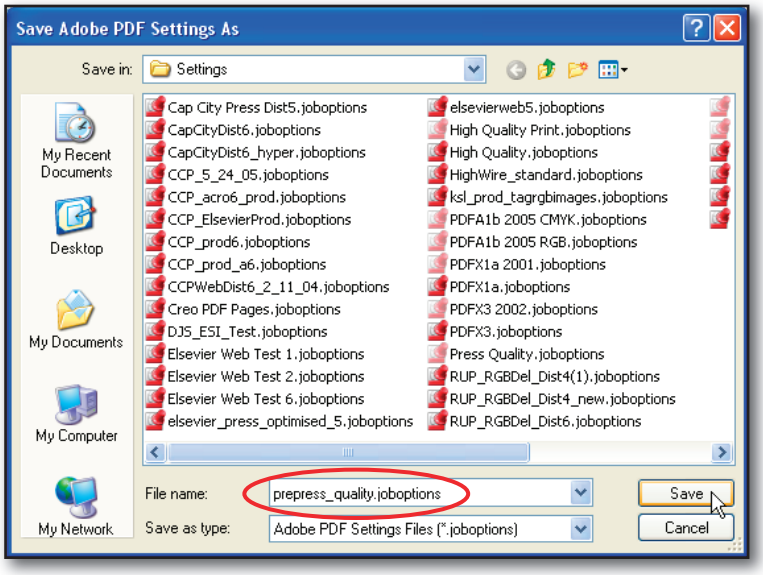


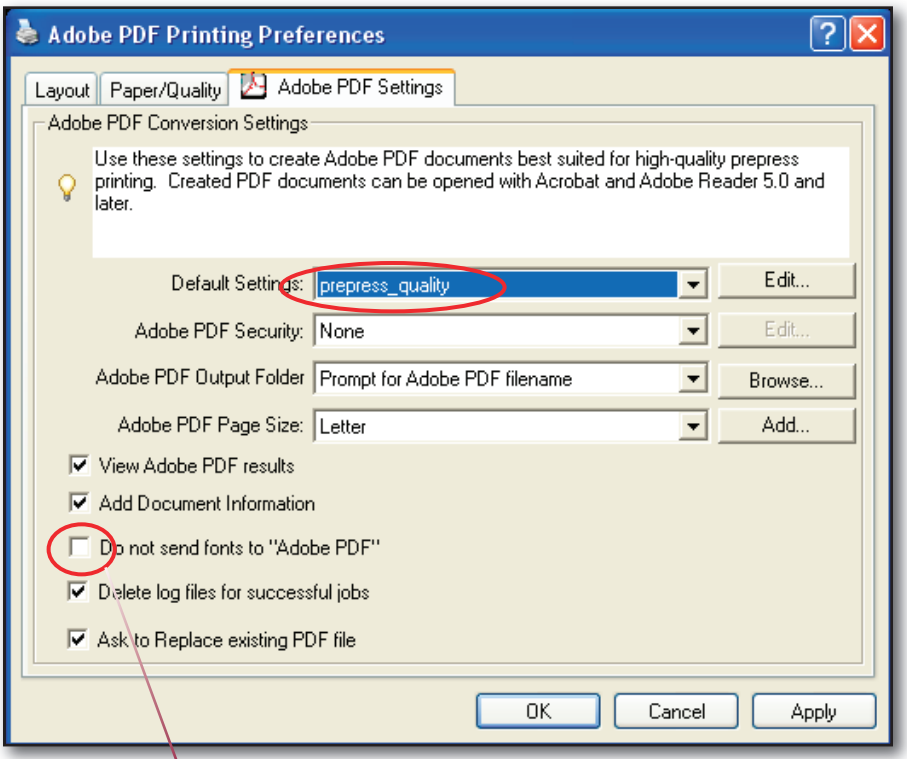
Standards screen



- Click *Save As*, and name the preset as “prepress_quality”.

- Select Save, and click OK.

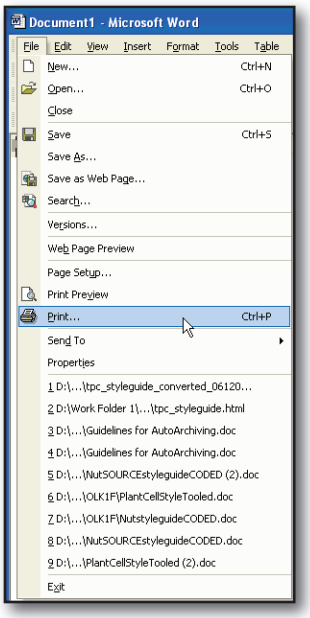




- When complete, the *Adobe PDF Printing Preferences* screen should look like this.

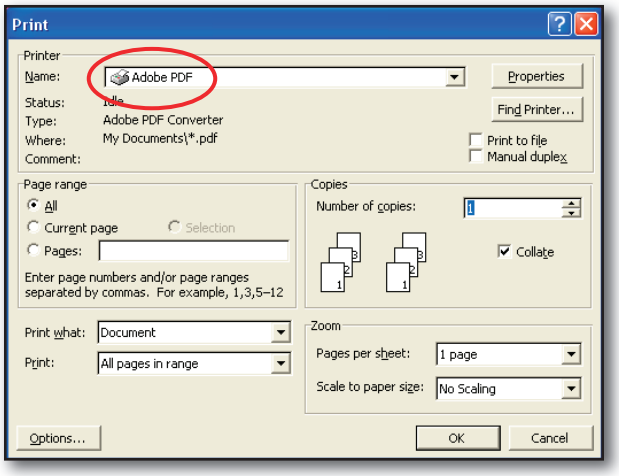
Notice that ***Do not send fonts to Adobe PDF*** remains unchecked.

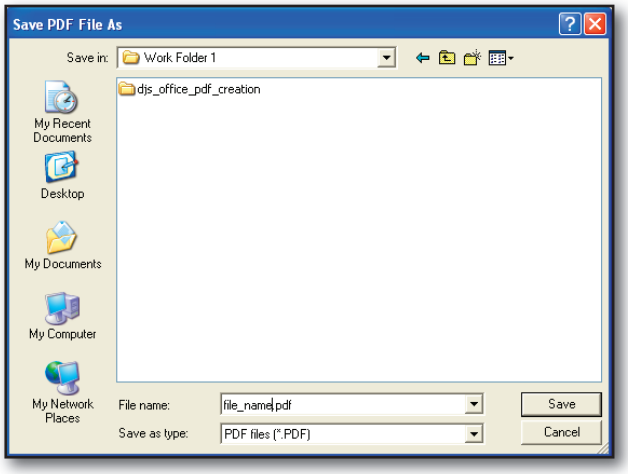
Step #2: Generate the PDF File



- Choose **File->Print** in whichever application is being used.

- Select *Adobe PDF* from the pull-down menu.





- Click OK, specify a filename and location for the PDF file, and then click *Save*.

Now creating a prepress-quality PDF is as simple as printing.

Use the Adobe PDF Printer with many applications

Because it appears as a regular printer, the Adobe PDF Printer can be used with many software applications. More custom page sizes can also be added to the Adobe PDF printer properties, if needed, by following this sequence:

1. Choose File->Print.
2. Choose Adobe PDF as the printer, and then click Properties.
3. Click the Adobe PDF Settings tab, and then click the Add button to add a Custom Paper Size.
4. Specify the page height and width, name the custom page size, and the click Add/Modify.
5. Click OK. The custom page size appears in the Adobe PDF Page Size list.

Summary

Adobe® Acrobat Professional v7.0.8 running on the *Windows XP* platform was used to generate the example screenshots for this tutorial. Other versions of *Acrobat/Windows* may contain menus that slightly differ, however, the critical parameters and options used herein are available in previous versions.

Feedback

This document is designed as reference material to simplify creation of high quality PDF files, but the goal is also to develop solutions and techniques that can work well within a broad range of online and print-production workflows. Therefore, we welcome your suggestions if you feel there is something that can be improved upon, and welcome any questions you may have concerning this data.

Please address any feedback to: dxconnectpro@tsg.sheridan.com