

Acrobat 6 has a bug which causes some users' forms to be malformed and, therefore, not usable with PF-Merge. This document discusses an easy solution to that problem.

Bug Description

The one-click macro, figure-1, for creating PDF file results in a bad PDF file when form fields are added.

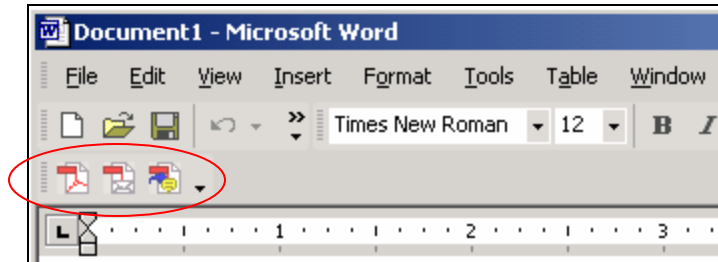


Figure 1 – Acrobat 6 Macros, **Do Not Use!**

You have a form-like document created in some other applications, e.g. in Microsoft Word. In Microsoft Word, Acrobat-6 added a print-to Acrobat icon (a one-click macro icon), see figure-1. If you selected that Acrobat icon to create your PDF file, it will be the cause of a problem – the resultant forms file may look normal but will be malformed and cannot be used in PF-Merge.

Symptom

1. You created PDF1, PDF2, PDF3 using the one-click macro in Word on an Acrobat6 machine#1. Add form fields to each PDF. Launch PF-Merge v2.1 or newer. Use PF-Merge to merge data into PDF1. Merge opens fine. Merge data into PDF2, PF-Merge completes the merge run but display PDF1 instead of PDF2, i.e., PF-Merge got stuck at PDF1. Same problem if you merge into PDF3.
2. Copy those 3 bad files over to an Acrobat5 machine#2. Repeat the above and PF-Merge open each one fine. In short, Acrobat5 does not exhibit that bug.
3. To correct the problem: Print to virtual printer "Adobe PDF" in machine#1. Add form fields (or even copy the fields from the bad PDF1,2,3). The resultant PDF form templates can be used in PF-Merge under Acrobat6. In short, the "Adobe PDF" virtual printer created a good PDF file while the one-click macro created a bad PDF (forms) file.

Conclusion

The one-click macro for creating PDF file resulted in a bad PDF file when form fields are added.

Solution

To create your PDF forms template correctly, see figure-2:

- Open your form-like document in your application (e.g., Microsoft Word if you used it to create that document)
- Press Ctrl+P to print your form-like document. However, instead of printing to an actual printer, print it to "Adobe PDF" (see figure-2), which is a virtual printer you can select from your list of printers. Type in a file name for the PDF file when prompted by the virtual printer.

- When the file is saved successfully, open it and create your data entry fields using it instead. This PDF form file will be suitable for use in PF-Merge.
 - ❖ You may also copy/paste entry fields from another PDF file instead of adding it anew, including copying fields from any malformed PDF files.
 - ❖ The virtual printer “Adobe PDF” was created by Acrobat -6’s Installer.
 - ❖ After working with any PDF files, you will notice that your file’s size grows. You can compact it to a smaller file by using Save-As instead of Save. We strongly recommend saving it into another name in case that there is problem in the Save-As. Acrobat -6 has a new feature that will also compact file size, via File menu > Reduce File Size. You can downgrade your Acrobat-6 form to an Acrobat -5 form using this method.

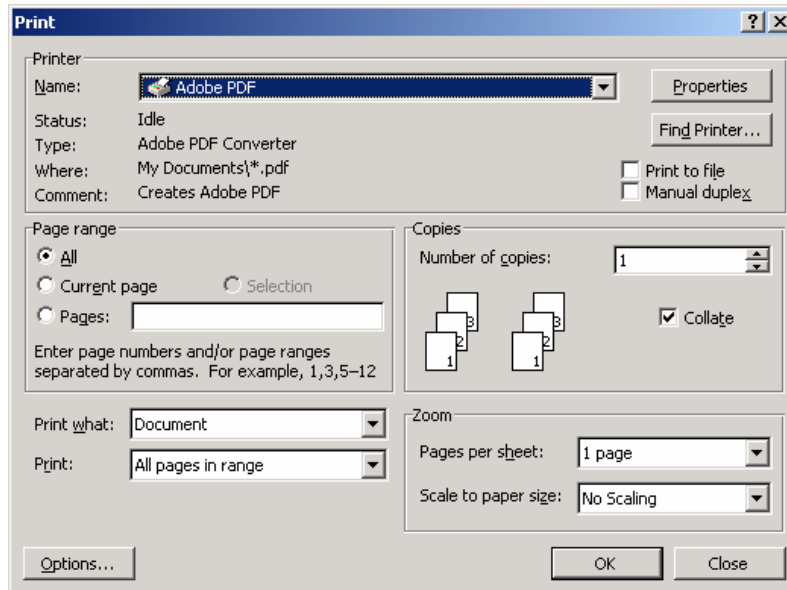


Figure 2 – Adobe PDF Virtual Printer

Differentiating a good and bad PDF file

Figure-3 is a bad PDF cause by the above bug. Figure-4 is a good PDF created by the above solution.

To display either figure-3 or figure-4, open your PDF in Acrobat-6, then:
File menu > Document Properties > General

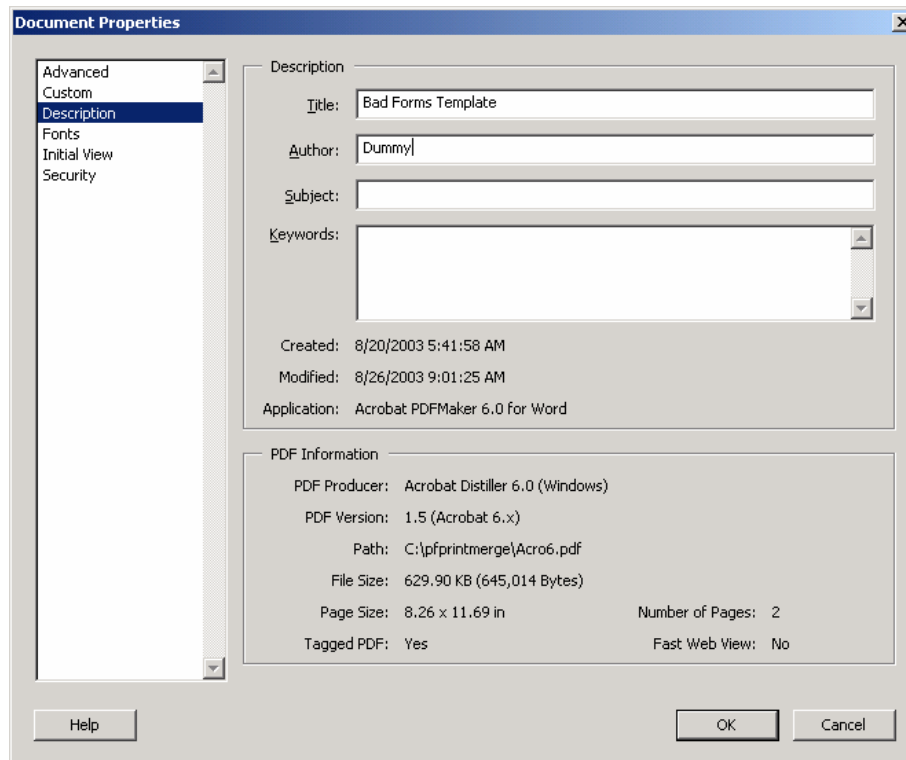


Figure 3 – Bad PDF due to bug

Notice your “Application” field reads “Acrobat PDFMaker 6 for Word”. That’s the problem due to the bug.

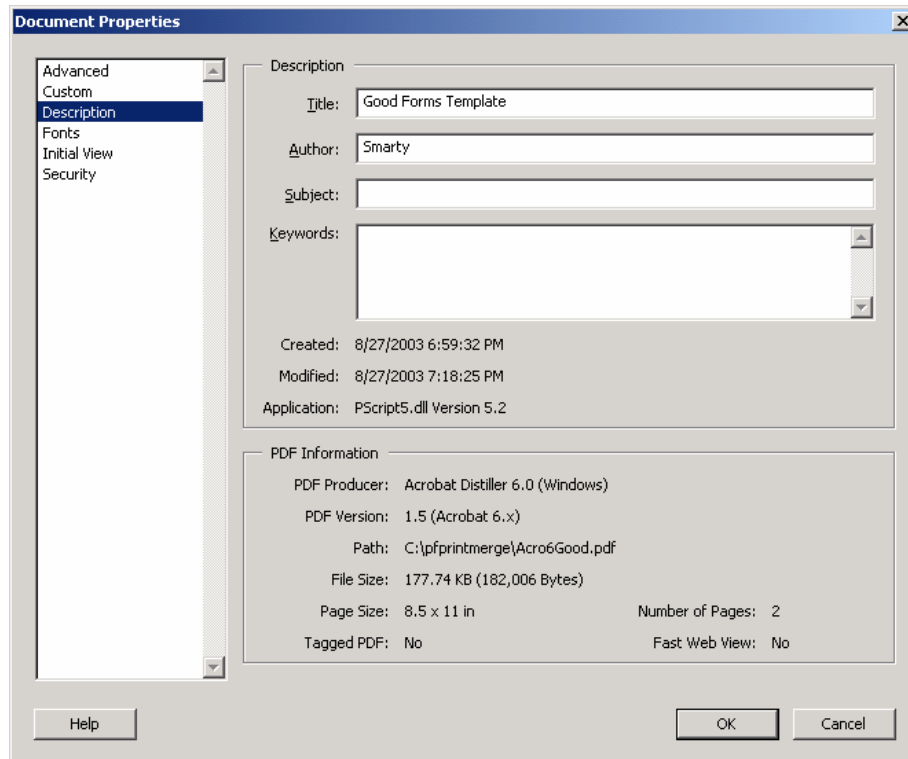


Figure 4 – Good PDF created via the solution

Notice the “Application” field reads “PScript5.dll Version 5.2”. That is due to the solution.