

Solid conversion

It's easy to save Web pages as PDF files, but what about preparing them for editing in other formats? **Drew Turney demonstrates.**



Bonus CD software

• Solid Converter PDF 1.0 (full-working version) • Solid Converter PDF 2.0 (demo).

Skill level

Beginner
Point-and-click application.

Requirements

One or more PDF documents • the full-working version of Solid Converter PDF 1.0 or the demo of Solid Converter PDF 2.0.

Time to complete

10 minutes

Those with Adobe's latest tools know how easy it is to take content such as a Web page and save it in the Portable Document Format (PDF) for later use. But what about carrying out the same process in reverse? Contrary to what you may think, you don't need an HTML editor, page layout application or even a Web designer.

Most PDF conversion apps are great for working on corporate-style documents with a few columns and an image here and there. However, if you try to use them with a complicated layout full of tables, boxes, different fonts and image formats, you'll end up with a mess.

Solid Converter PDF is a point-and-click utility that works well with 90% of Office-style functions. It installs as a standalone application along with plug-ins for Microsoft Word and the full version of Adobe Acrobat (but not Acrobat Reader).

To get started, you need to install Solid Converter PDF. The full-working version of Solid Converter PDF 1.0 and the demo version of Solid Converter PDF 2.0 are included on this month's cover CD set.

STEP BY STEP

Opening a PDF in Word and Acrobat can be as simple as right-clicking on your file in Windows Explorer and selecting the correct option. Both Acrobat and Word feature "Open PDF" buttons on the toolbar that can be used to achieve the same

result. Alternatively, you can open a PDF through the standalone application, and export it to a number of rich text formats. Enacting any of these methods opens the Solid Converter PDF engine; a four-step process that sets the preferences for the file you want to end up with.

First, choose the pages you want to convert. Then decide whether you want to maintain a pages columns. Keeping them ensures that the text flows the same way as in the original documents. The alternative is best used when you have a PDF containing pages with no ordered text or with tables. Although there aren't many instances where you'll need this option, it's nice to see the choice is there.

The next step offers options such as maintaining character spacing and a choice of save locations. When all options are selected, a PDF is automatically generated.

Solid Converter PDF 1.0 doesn't support vector graphics, but Solid Converter PDF 2.0 supports both bitmap and vector images.

BACK TO THE WEB

Once you have the contents of a PDF in Microsoft Word, there are a few ways of moving it from your desktop to the Net. But why would you want to convert it into a Web page when surfers can just download the Microsoft Word document?

Remember that not everyone uses Microsoft products. Mac and Linux users, for instance, can't natively access Word DOC files.

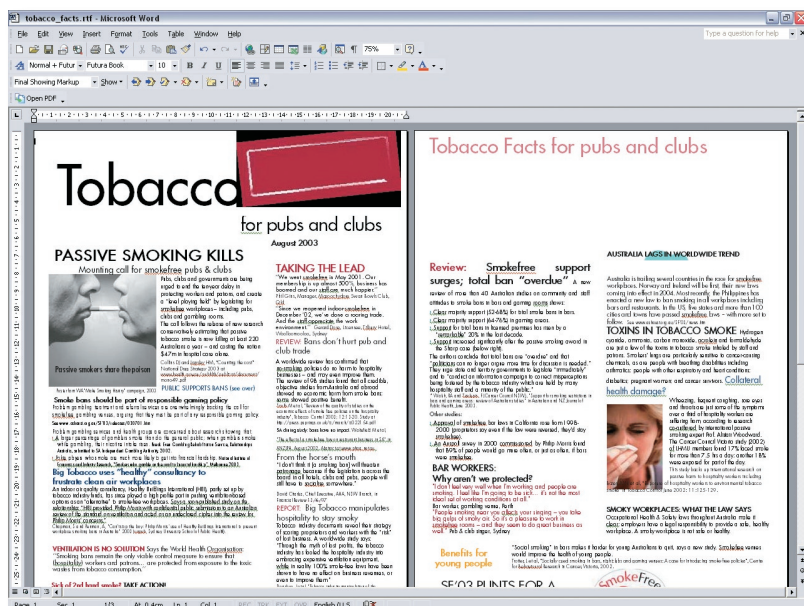
Solid Converter PDF saves converted PDFs as RTF files, a standard that maintains some complex formatting but can be read by all the major word processing applications on every platform.

Taking a text document and saving it as an HTML page straight from Word gives mixed results — it doesn't retain any columns. But if all you need is the text flowing from left to right, it can be styled in an HTML editor like FrontPage or Dreamweaver later, or even in a word processor or text editor.

For simple layouts, you can create HTML files without even leaving Word. Drop in pics from your local system, arrange the text in simple tables, and then save your file as an HTML document.

In order to view it on the Web, the necessary images need to be stored (optimising them if necessary) with the page in a root folder and then uploaded to your Web server via FTP.

The PDF is a self-enclosed file you're not meant to extract anything from, but the combination of a utility like Solid Converter PDF and a text or HTML editor can save a lot of work and can make your content even more accessible. **ETIC**



► **That's rich:** PDFs are saved in the rich text format to allow native use on all platforms.