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Acrobat Insider for AEC Professionals
Tips and Tricks for Adobe Acrobat 7.0

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KEEP IT ACCURATE.

Handle large-format documents with precision with Adobe Acrobat 7.0

Make Large-Format Documents Feel Small

Acrobat 7.0 Professional and Adobe PDF Files Make It Easy to Navigate and Collaborate on Large-Format Drawings and Documents

by Michael Dakan

Until recently, I thought that it was going to be difficult to get some members of the AEC community to embrace electronic delivery and use of construction documents. They're used to a big roll of drawings that they can lay on a table and page through.

Now, though, I believe that Adobe® Acrobat® 7.0 Professional may have changed all that. The ease of use and convenience associated with the tools in Acrobat 7.0 — combined with ever-larger lightweight LCD monitors and large-screen laptop computers — might just convince even the most hard-line old-timer that working with electronic Adobe PDF drawing files is actually faster and easier than wrestling with a big, heavy roll of paper drawings.

Acrobat 7.0 Professional is designed to make it easy for CAD-proficient users, as well as those who are not as CAD-literate, to view and work with large-format documents. It enables them to participate in electronic review and comment cycles, annotate drawings, get precise measurements for take-offs, and more. Many of the navigation tools, such as pan and zoom, operate similarly to equivalent functions in CAD programs. The menu system and toolbars also make it easy for non-CAD users to view and navigate large drawings in Adobe PDF format.

One challenge of viewing and working with large-format documents on a computer is that it's difficult to make the information large enough to view while still fitting within the relatively small confines of a computer monitor. To deal

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IN THIS ISSUE
Search, pan, zoom, and bookmarking tools make it easy to work with your large Adobe PDF documents and drawings.

This month's tips:
Maintain accurate scale in CAD-based Adobe PDFs; upgrade to Acrobat 7.0.7 for AutoCAD® 2006 and Acrobat 3D support

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE
In next month's *Acrobat Insider,* learn how Acrobat 3D can help you and your team work more effectively with 3D content.

SUBMIT A TIP
We welcome your tips for AEC-specific uses of Acrobat 7.0 Professional. If we publish your tip, we'll send you a *Cadalyst* t-shirt.*
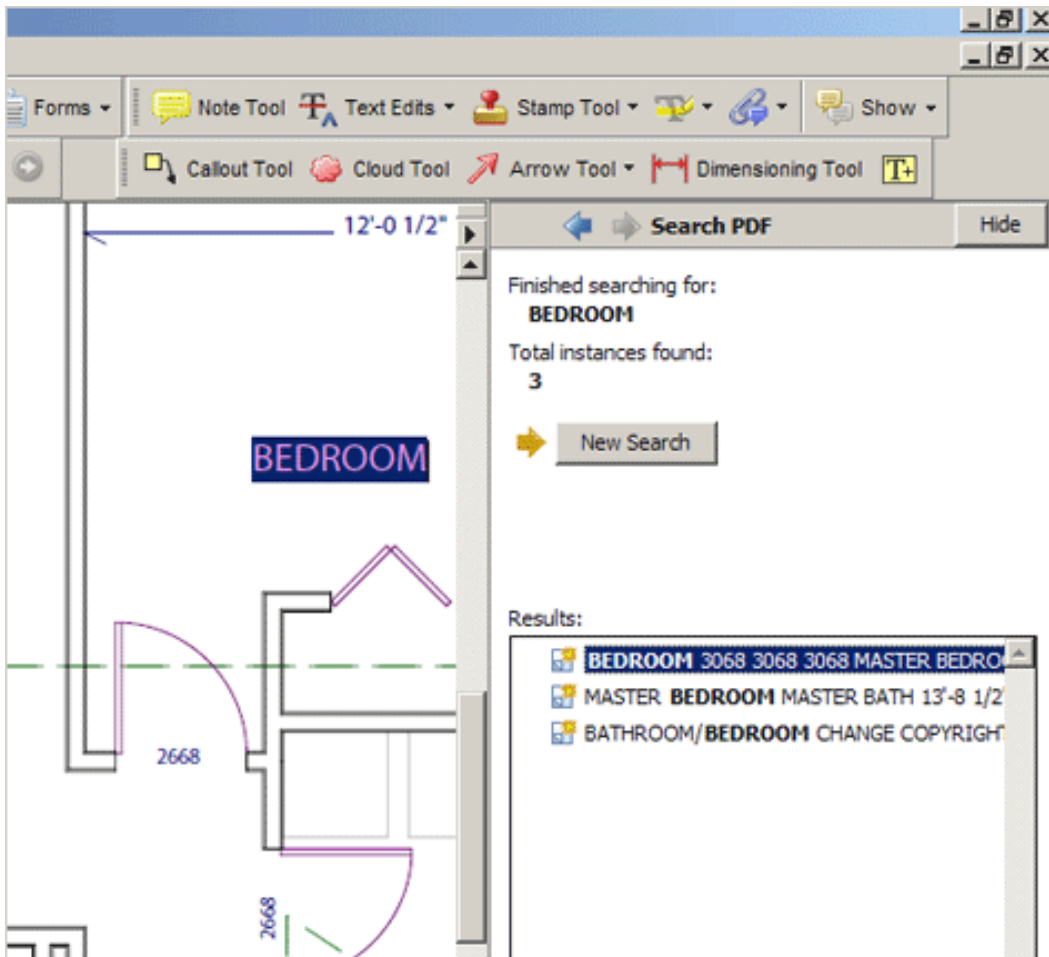
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with this problem, Adobe Acrobat 7.0 provides a full array of text search, pan, zoom, and bookmarking tools to help you find information and navigate large drawings with ease. (Note that these tools are available **only** when you create the Adobe PDF using the PDFMaker button or command, not when you use other methods.)

Search for Text in One or More Documents

Using Acrobat 7.0, you can find all occurrences of a word or phrase in a single Adobe PDF document or in all documents in the same folder. Just click the Search button on the File toolbar and enter the text you're looking for in the Search PDF pane. You can set other search options (such as whether to include comments or match upper- and lowercase letters).

Every instance of matching text is listed in the Results box. Click an item in the list to jump to the highlighted text in the document itself. Using the Search tool is a quick, easy way to find all instances of an item — such as the phrase "gypsum board"— in a sheet of details or a complete set of drawings without having to scroll up and down to visually find what you're looking for.

The Search PDF dialog box lists each occurrence of the word or phrase you're looking for. To go to the text in the document itself, click a link in the Results box.

Pan and Zoom Quickly Without Getting Lost

The pan and zoom tools in Acrobat 7.0 operate very intuitively and probably pretty much as they do in your favorite CAD program.

If you use a wheel mouse, you'll find that it works as you would expect and is especially versatile for large-format drawings. For instance, when you use the Hand Tool to pan around a large drawing, you can move the wheel to pan up or down the sheet. If you hold down the Ctrl key while you move the wheel, you can zoom in or out, making the image larger or smaller while keeping the view centered on the cursor's location. To zoom without holding down the Ctrl key, use the Dynamic Zoom tool (Tools menu / Zoom / Dynamic Zoom). By experimenting with different tools and various Ctrl or Shift key combinations, you'll quickly come up with your preferred method of working with the mouse.
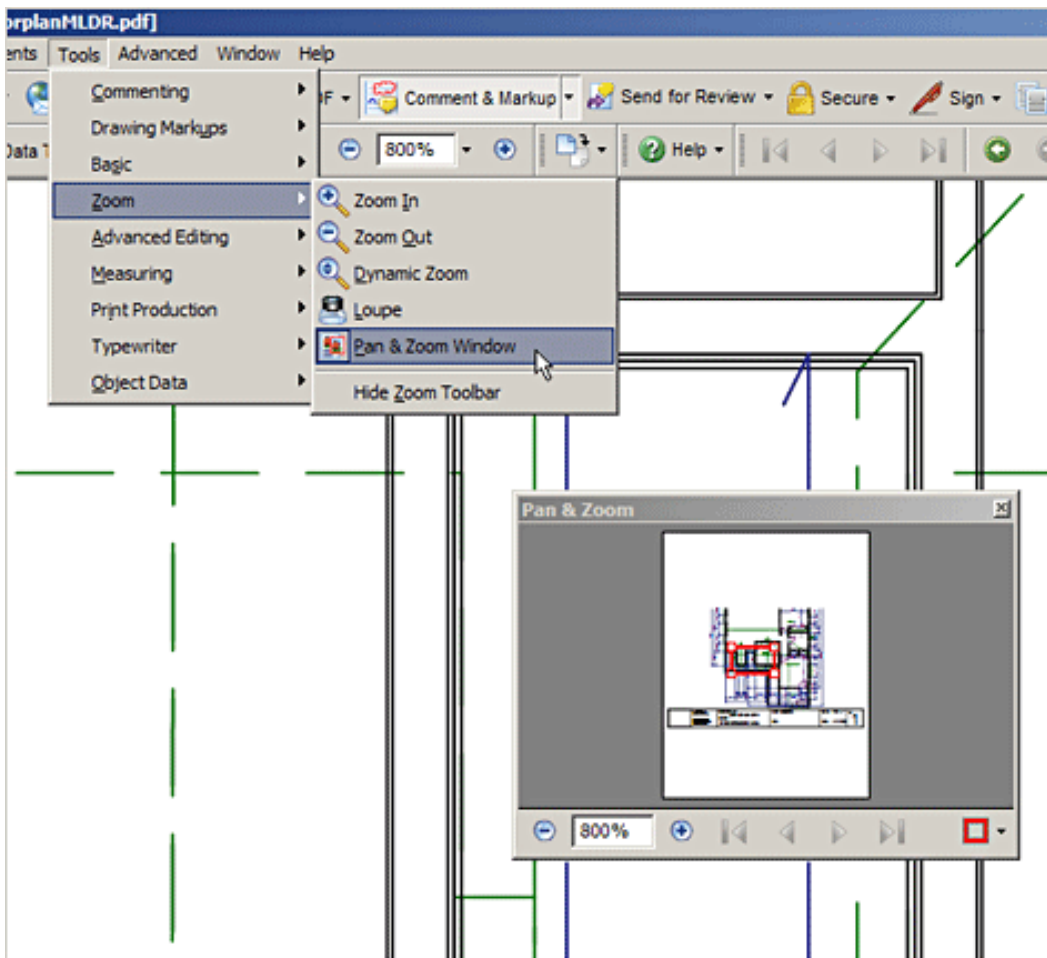
One of the handiest pan and zoom tools is the **Pan & Zoom Window** (Tools menu / Zoom / Pan & Zoom Window). This small window displays a thumbnail version of the entire document with the area you're currently viewing in a highlighted box. This not only shows at a glance what area of the drawing you're looking at, but also makes navigating much easier.

To quickly move to a different part of the document, use your mouse to drag the highlighted box in the Pan & Zoom Window. To change the zoom level in the window, resize the highlight box or click the Zoom In or Zoom Out button at the bottom of the window.

While working with a large drawing such as a floor plan, you might find it convenient to leave the Pan & Zoom Window open in a corner of the screen. That way, you won't get lost navigating at a high zoom level, and you can quickly move to different areas of the sheet.

Another navigation aid is the Loupe tool, which enables you to quickly zoom in on an area without having to change the zoom level in the main document window. It's very useful for reading notes or dimensional data on a drawing while keeping the big picture in view.

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The Pan & Zoom window enables you to easily move and orient yourself within a large drawing.

Make Navigation Easy with Bookmarks and Initial Views

One of the best ways to make it easy for other users to view and work with large-format Adobe PDF drawings is **the liberal but organized use of bookmarks**. For example, an obvious way to organize bookmarks in a set of construction drawings is to use the same kind of sheet numbering, reference marks, and detail numbering that you use for organizing a set of paper drawings, with additional bookmarks for specific purposes.

With a little extra time and effort, you can make a set of drawings completely hyperlinked, enabling your users to jump directly to referenced sections, elevations, details, and so forth. To create a bookmark, set the zoom level and then click the Bookmarks tab, choose New Bookmark from the Options menu, and type a name for the bookmark. We'll talk about creating saved views for 3D content in the next issue of *Acrobat Insider*, so stay tuned.

Another way to help others view and work with your large-format drawings is to **create an Initial View**, which is shown whenever the Adobe PDF file is first opened. This is especially handy for collaboration, because you can customize the view for other users' needs. For instance, you can create an Initial View of a drawing that shows a proposed change or solution that you want to run by the client or other members of the project team.

By setting the opening page, adjusting the zoom level, and displaying the Bookmark pane, you can focus the attention of your users on the area you want to discuss. To set the Initial View, select Document Properties from the File menu and click the Initial View tab.

Make Measurements a Snap

To maintain the highest level of precision when measuring drawings, zoom in as much as possible. Also be sure that Snap is turned on, and adjust snap sensitivity to achieve the necessary precision (Edit menu / Preferences / Measuring). The default snap sensitivity is 10 pixels. Assuming a zoom factor of about 100%, 3 pixels might offer more precision, depending on your content.

To set other measurement options, select a measuring tool (Tools menu / Measuring) and click the Options button in the measuring tool's dialog box. Here you can turn on or off 2D and 3D Snap and Ortho modes, display the ruler, export measurements to Excel, and access measuring preferences. You can also temporarily turn on Ortho mode by holding down the Shift key when making a measurement; this constrains your measurement in 45-degree increments. In Ortho mode, you can draw lines at a 45-degree diagonal as well as horizontally and vertically.

More Tools for Large-Format Drawings and Documents

We discussed several tools for working with architectural and engineering drawings in *Acrobat Insider #*6, The Right Data, in the Right Hands. Many of these tools are especially applicable to large-format documents, including layers, area and linear take-off measurements, and review and commenting cycles. In addition, the commenting and review tools in Acrobat 7.0 (described in *Acrobat Insider #*4) can help you track and incorporate feedback on large drawings from your project team. To learn more or refresh you memory, consult these editions of *Acrobat Insider*.

To learn even more about navigation and collaboration with large-format drawings and documents, register to attend an upcoming web seminar at www. adobeeseminars.com/go/acrobatinsider.

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Tips and Tricks

Maintain Accurate Scale in CAD Documents Converted to Adobe PDF
Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional makes it easy to maintain accurate scale in Adobe PDF files created from engineering and architectural drawings. To maintain the scale established with a CAD application, use the PDFMaker button or the Convert to Adobe PDF command to create the Adobe PDF and be sure to turn off page scaling when you print or plot the file. (In the Page Handling area of the Print dialog box, select None for Page Scaling.)

Upgrade to Acrobat 7.0.7 for AutoCAD 2006 and 3D Support
Adobe recently released the free Acrobat 7.0.7 update, adding support for AutoCAD 2006, which many users have anxiously awaited, as well as for Adobe Acrobat 3D files. Acrobat 7.0.7 update includes 3D-specific features to support files made with Adobe Acrobat 3D. You can also install the Adobe Reader® 7.0.7

update, which provides the latest support for 3D content viewing. You can download Acrobat 7.0.7 update from the Adobe website. You can also set Acrobat to automatically check for updates (Edit menu / Preferences / Updates).

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About the Author
Michael L. Dakan, AIA, is an architect, author and independent AEC technology consultant. Twice monthly he writes Cadalyst's AEC Tech News *e-mail newsletter. Contact him at michael.dakan@cadalyst.com.*

Details and Availability

For a full list of features and system requirements, visit Adobe's Web site. Microsoft® Windows® 2000 with Service Pack 2, Windows XP® Professional or Home Edition, or Windows XP Tablet PC Edition is required for use with Acrobat 7.0. Acrobat 7.0 Professional for Windows, available on CD-ROM or by download, is US$449***.

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