

Acrobat Insider for AEC Professionals

Tips and Tricks for Adobe Acrobat 7.0

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 MAKE IT EFFICIENT.

Learn how the U.S. Green Building Council used Adobe products to help streamline the LEED certification process

Putting It All Together

How Acrobat 7.0 Professional Helps Streamline LEED Certification

by Michael Dakan

In previous editions of [Acrobat Insider for AEC Professionals](#), we've discussed a variety of features in Adobe® Acrobat® 7.0 Professional of particular interest and usefulness to architects, engineers, and other professionals on the AEC project team. Along the way, we've looked at how these features might be applied to tasks in a typical project workflow, and we've seen how they can contribute to improved project communication, efficiency, security, and productivity.

Where We've Been

After discovering how ubiquitous the free Adobe Reader® is among computer users, we learned how to enable Reader users to participate in team collaboration, like review and comment cycles (Issue #2). In this way, we found, you can extend project collaboration to the entire project team, regardless of what platform or software they use (Issue #4).

We discussed how to combine files created in many different applications into one Adobe PDF, packaging together drawings, specifications, schedules, and other content into one file format that's easy to view and work with (Issue #3). We saw how Adobe PDF forms make data collection and consolidation automatic and easier than ever (Issue #5), and we learned how to secure and control the use of intellectual property (Issue #7).

We examined working with large architectural and engineering documents like CAD drawings (Issue #8), and we learned how adding 3D content to Adobe PDF files can help you communicate design ideas and details more effectively (Issue #9). (To review past editions of *Acrobat Insider*, visit the [newsletter archives](#).)

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Submit your story on how Adobe Acrobat has helped you and your team work together better.

IN THIS ISSUE

How the U.S. Green Building Council used Acrobat forms to streamline LEED® certification.

[This month's tips:](#)

Using conversion settings to optimize file size and quality and create archives;

Streamlining LEED Certification

This month we put these features together to see how Acrobat can make processes throughout the design and documentation workflow smoother and more efficient for all concerned.

Using Adobe technology, the U. S. Green Building Council (USGBC) created an online application for LEED certification, replacing what had been a complicated and tedious paper-based process with a convenient Web browser-based application. This new application is helping make the LEED certification process much easier and less expensive. (You can read [Adobe's story about collaborating with the USGBC.](#))

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design® (LEED) program was developed by the USGBC to create a point system to score various energy conservation and sustainability techniques in the design and construction of new buildings and the renovation and operation of existing buildings. LEED certification can be achieved on several levels (Silver, Gold, or Platinum), based on the total number of points received in different energy conservation and environmental categories.

Certification requires submitting forms for each category of points. For some submissions, additional supporting documentation may be required such as manufacturer product sheets, testing laboratory results and reports, drawings, and specifications. For these supporting documents, you can use the Acrobat 7.0 Professional features that we've outlined in this series to facilitate communication and collaboration and to provide a cross-platform format for the final submission.

How LEED-Online Works

LEED certification is exactly the kind of process that Acrobat 7.0 Professional is designed to streamline — it involves submitting forms and other content in many different formats, including text documents, worksheets, and drawings. This content needs to be reviewed and shared by many team members, all using a variety of different software and platforms. And as always, protecting intellectual property and controlling access to confidential information are high priorities.

In the past, if you wanted to get a project LEED-certified, you may have used paper-based forms and gather a multitude of copies of backup product information and reports to submit in paper form. Now, using just Acrobat 7.0 Professional or Adobe Reader 7.0, you can submit a project easily and quickly.

The starting point for LEED certification is the USGBC Web site (www.usgbc.org), which includes forms for registering a project in the LEED database, as well as forms for joining the USGBC and signing up for workshops and other educational events. These forms rely on Adobe PDF forms technology that is non-server based and sends data via Web services to an SAP back-end system. On this site you'll also find links to information about becoming a LEED Accredited Professional, the USGBC, and the LEED certification process; view demonstrations and Web-based seminars; read white papers; and purchase

preserving fonts in converted files.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

How Good Fulton & Farrell Architecture uses custom stamps to speed workflow by putting paper-based processes online.

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.*

REQUEST A TIP

Have a question about Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional? A suggestion for a future edition of *Acrobat Insider*? Send it in; we'll address the most popular requests in upcoming issues.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about how the Adobe Acrobat family of products can streamline processes, improve document security and more at Adobe's [AEC Web site](#) or [click here](#) to view an OnDemand online presentation.

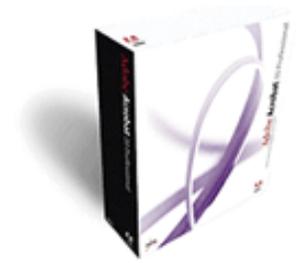
books and publications.

Register a project on the USGBC site to enter it into the LEED-Online database and access LEED forms. (Courtesy of the U.S. Green Building Council)

After you've registered your project on the USGBC site, you can log into the LEED-Online Web site, where you can download or complete online all the PDF forms (called "Letter Templates" or "Submittal Templates") you need to accumulate points toward LEED certification. You can work on the certification point categories in whatever order you find necessary and upload backup documentation for each category as it becomes available. You can view the status of individual categories as well as the point accumulation for the overall project.

To learn more about using LEED-Online, you can watch a [slide-based demonstration](#) that walks you through the process, or participate in a recorded [Web-based seminar](#).

Because of the large volume of forms and backup documentation involved, the Adobe PDF technology in LEED-Online is a bit more elaborate than in the USGBC Web site. The LEED certification process uses Adobe PDF-based forms as the front-end, a custom Microsoft .NET application for middle-ware, and a SAP enterprise-level database back-end. Thanks to the use of Adobe PDF forms for handling data input, the user experience using either Acrobat or the Adobe Reader remains simple. The user isn't aware of what's happening behind the scenes.



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The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "LEED-Online: Certified Project Details - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows a URL from leedonline.usgbc.org. The page header features the LEED logo and "LEED NC 2.1 TEST PROJECT-B". The main content area is titled "INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: INCREASE VENTILATION EFFECTIVENESS (CREDIT 2)" and "DESIGN APPLICATION". Below this, there is a "CLAIM OF CREDIT STATUS" section with fields for "Attempted On:" (11/3/2005), "Credit Status:" (Attempted), and "Assigned Team Role:" (Civil Engineer). A "Unattempt" button is visible. The "CREDIT TEMPLATE" section includes a "DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE" button and an "Adobe Reader" icon. Below this is a table for "Required Documents" with columns for "Document Name" and "Uploaded Documents". Two rows are shown: "ADPI Calculations Documentation" and "Airflow Simulation Results for Each Zone Documentation". Each row has a "Document Name" input field, a "Browse" button, and "Upload" and "Cancel" buttons.

This LEED-Online form lets you enter certification credit information and upload backup documentation. (Courtesy of the U.S. Green Building Council)

Archiving in PDF/A Format

During the certification process, you can save intermediate completed forms and status screens for use in internal communication and follow-up. Then, when your application is complete, you can archive the application and backup documentation along with all of the completed forms in Adobe PDF format for your records. If you need long-term archival records, you can save the files using the PDF/A settings in Acrobat. PDF/A was recently approved as the official ISO standard for long-term archival records.

For more information on the PDF/A format and using Acrobat for archiving, see the [AEC Tech newsletter #151](#) or read the whitepaper "[PDF as a Standard for Archiving](#)."

Putting It Together

The USGBC and LEED Web sites illustrate one application of Adobe PDF technology and use only a few features of Acrobat 7.0 Professional. But they show how a very complex and tedious paper-based process can be streamlined and simplified for the user by presenting information and gathering data in Adobe PDF format.

Likewise, the *Acrobat Insider* newsletters to date have covered a range of Adobe Acrobat 7.0 features that we believe are very useful to AEC professionals. But we certainly haven't covered them all. In future issues we'll look at how other organizations have streamlined their processes using Adobe PDF technology. We're confident that you will find even more valuable features and uses for Adobe PDF technology as you explore and use Adobe Acrobat 7.0 and its future

SUCCESSORS.

Tips and Tricks

Change PDF Conversion Settings for Optimizing and Archiving

By changing the PDF conversion settings, you can determine whether Acrobat 7.0 optimizes for smallest file size or best resolution during the conversion process. Or you can create an archival PDF by converting the file to PDF/A format (the ISO standard for long-term archives). From the Edit menu in Acrobat, select Preferences and under Categories, select Convert to PDF. In the Converting to PDF box, you can select from several types of authoring programs and change how Acrobat converts them into PDF format. Click the Edit Settings button to specify a processing method: Standard (the default), High Quality Print, Smallest File Size, PDF/A, or PDF/X (the PDF-based ISO standard for the Print industry).

For many applications, you can also access advanced settings to adjust the compression options for different elements of the PDF file. You may want to experiment with these settings if you have problems with file size or readability. The Standard setting is the best compromise for most Adobe PDF documents, but you have a variety of options for fine-tuning your PDF output.

You can also adjust these settings when you use PDFMaker from within authoring applications. Go to the Adobe PDF menu in the application, and select Change Conversion Settings.

Watch Your Fonts in CAD Documents

When you create Adobe PDFs from CAD programs that are not supported with PDFMakers from Adobe, you can control file size by specifying how fonts are handled. If you can adjust the output for export and printing from the CAD program, try to maintain any TrueType fonts used in the CAD file as true fonts, and don't allow TTF fonts to be converted into vector-based font outlines if you can avoid it. This will keep that part of your Adobe PDF files smaller. Converting fonts to vector strokes can increase file size dramatically if a lot of TTF text is used.

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 for Acrobat 7.0](#), 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**.

For a full list of [features and system requirements for Acrobat 3D](#), 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 3D. Acrobat 3D for Windows, available on CD-ROM or by download, is \$995.**

*Supplies are limited.

**Price listed is the Adobe Store direct price, and is listed in U.S. dollars. Reseller prices may vary. Price valid in the U.S. and Canada only. Applicable local sales tax and shipping may apply.

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