

Acrobat® Insider for AEC Professionals

Tips and Tricks for ADOBE® ACROBAT 8

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Every PDF in Its Place

Adobe Acrobat Organizer keeps track of all your PDF files

by Michael Dakan

In the past few issues of [Acrobat Insider](#), we've looked at several new features of Adobe® Acrobat® 8 Professional, including PDF Packages, shared reviews, Web conferencing, and online collaboration with Adobe Reader® 8. This month we explore a handy tool that you, like many Acrobat users, may not know about. Called **Adobe Acrobat Organizer**, it automatically keeps track of all the PDF files you create with Acrobat 8 or that you access from anywhere on your computer, network, or Internet location. Organizer is particularly valuable for finding and organizing all sorts of AEC project information and data.

What is Acrobat Organizer?

Organizer is a workspace within Acrobat 8 Professional that helps you find PDF files that you've previously opened and those that you've organized into collections and favorites. From within Organizer, you can open, print, email, and combine PDF files, or initiate an email review process, all without having to access these functions from within the complete Acrobat program.

To make it easier to find files, Organizer enables you to see where all your PDF documents are stored at a single glance. You can search for a file by looking at the history of when they were created or last accessed. (The history is tracked automatically for all PDF files you've accessed, so you don't need to do anything to initiate the historical tracking.) You can also organize your PDF files into custom categories (called "Collections") such as project, type of file, project phase, and so forth.

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IN THIS ISSUE

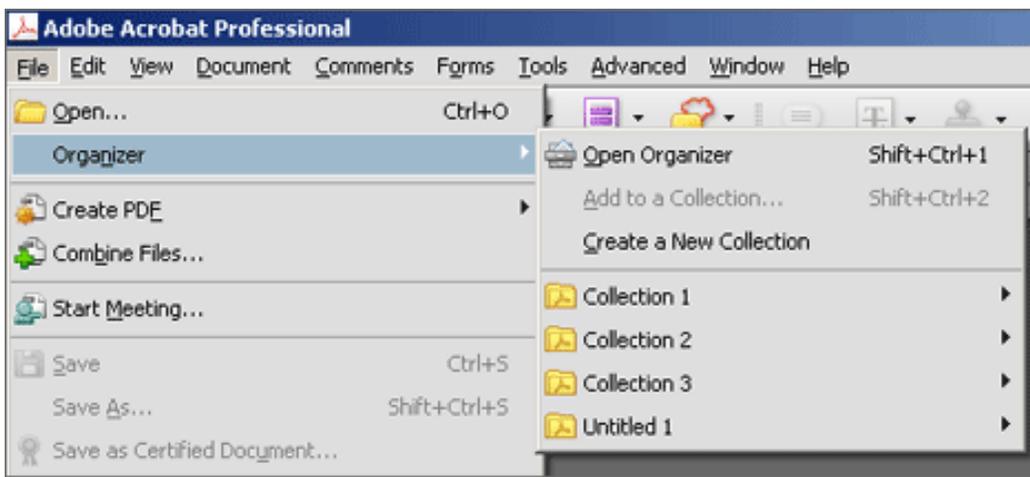
Use Adobe Acrobat Organizer to save time finding and organizing all your work-related files.

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You start Organizer from the File menu in Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional.

The best part is that Organizer doesn't make additional copies of files you put into Collections; rather, it creates shortcuts to the file locations and leaves the files where they are. Thus, you can put PDF files into multiple Collections without creating duplicate files or crowding your hard drive.

Using Organizer

To open Organizer, start Acrobat and select Organizer and then Open Organizer from the File menu. This displays the Organizer workspace, which contains three panes:

- **Categories pane** —shows folders and Collections
- **Files pane** — lists the PDF files in the subcategory or folder selected in the Categories pane
- **Pages pane** — displays thumbnails for every page of all PDF files that are selected in the Files pane

By default, the Categories pane is on the left side of the workspace, the Files pane is in the middle, and the Pages pane is on the right side. The workspace is completely customizable, and you can move and resize the panes as you need.

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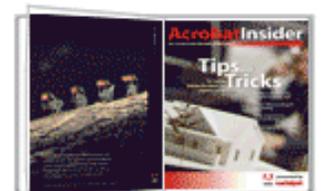
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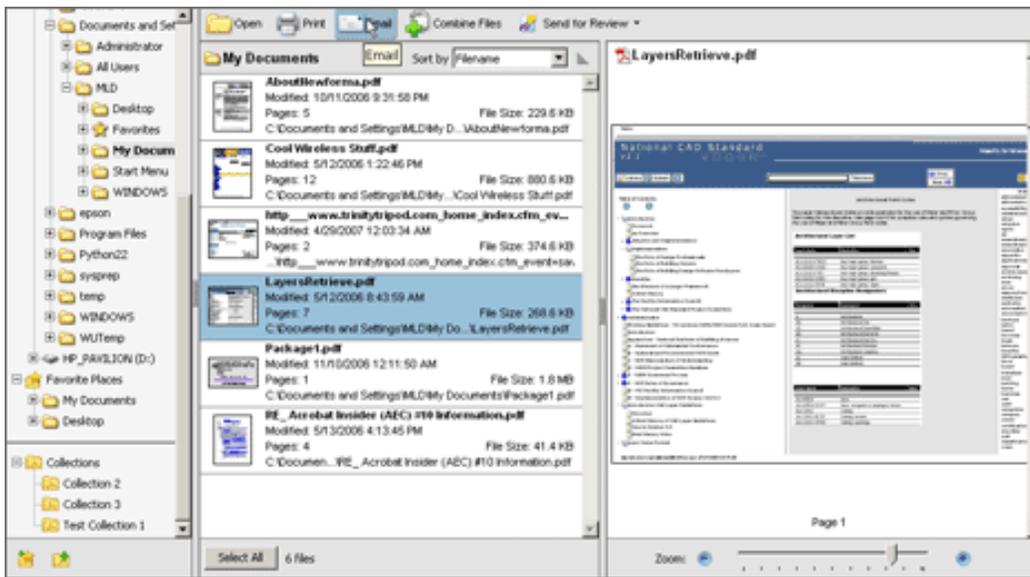
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Organizer includes a Categories pane on the left, a Files pane in the center and a Pages pane on the left. Use the slider to zoom the file preview.

In the Categories pane, History is at the top, with Adobe PDF files shown from Today, Yesterday, Last 7 Days, Last Thirty Days, and so on. Next down in the default layout is a typical Explorer-type file tree showing your hard drive, network, and Favorite Places. At the bottom is a list of Collections you have created, sorted alpha-numerically by Collection name.

When you click an individual file name in the center pane, you see thumbnail views of the pages in that PDF file on the right side of the workspace. You can zoom the thumbnail to show as much of the page as you need to find files of interest. (If you've accessed a PDF file through a Web browser, however, no thumbnail is shown here.)

To open a file from within Organizer, double-click it in the Files pane. When you open a file in Organizer, all the functions of the full Acrobat program are available — you can edit the file, add a signature, mark up and comment it, or use any of the other tools in Acrobat.

Getting the Most from Collections

Collections are the key to getting maximum value from Organizer, and it is very easy to set up and add files to a Collection. To create a new Collection from within Organizer, right-click the top Collections folder in the Categories pane and select Create a new Collection. To add a file to an existing Collection, you can drag and drop it from the Files pane into a Collection in the Categories pane; you can also use the right-click menu.

ACROBAT 3D

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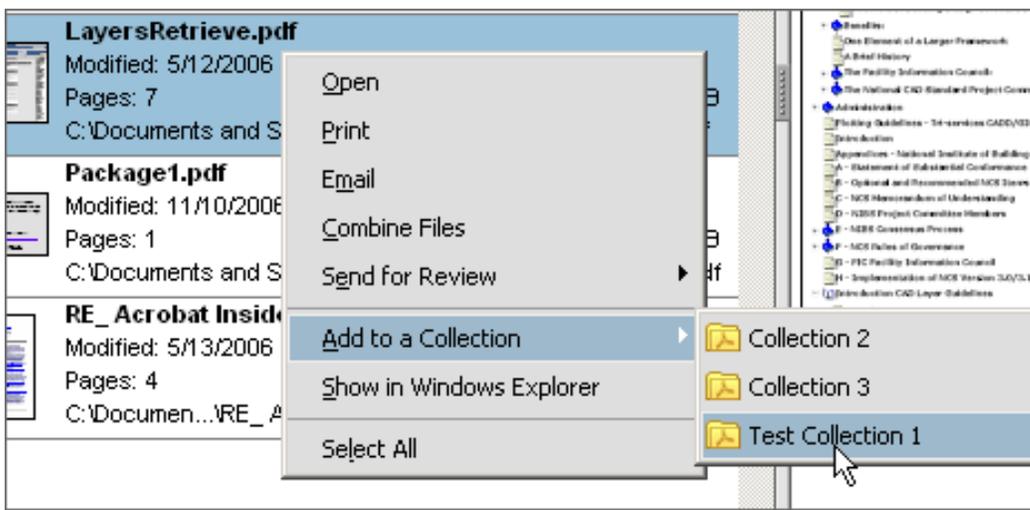
We welcome your tips for AEC-specific uses of Acrobat 8 Professional. If your tip is published, you'll receive a Cadalyst t-shirt.*

Or if you have a question about Acrobat 8, ask us and we may address it in an upcoming issue.

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Add a file to a Collection by dragging and dropping or by selecting a file and then right-clicking.

I have used Organizer extensively to keep track of information of various sorts for research on *Cadalyst* articles on a variety of subjects. Much of the information I use comes from multiple sources, including Web pages and press releases, and most of it is either furnished as downloadable Adobe PDF files or can readily be converted into a PDF document. So it only makes sense to standardize on this format for all sorts of project information. Then I use Organizer to help me to find and organize all that information.

Design and AEC professionals will find Organizer very valuable for keeping track of project information and data of all sorts. You will find it easy to organize information by project phase such as preliminary design research into building-type information, design development research into construction materials and equipment, construction document information like details and specification data, and bidding information on contractors, and so on.

Try out Organizer and I'm sure you will find many uses for this valuable and flexible tool for finding, tracking, and organizing your Adobe PDF files.

Tips and Tricks

Keeping Track of Project Emails

You can use Organizer to track and organize project emails sent and received for a project, for instance, by first converting the messages into an Adobe PDF file. As each message is sent or received, you can add it to an Organizer Collection by project number/name and Adobe PDF file name.

Alternatively, you might start with a single PDF named ProjNumNameEmails, for instance, and add it to a project/phase Collection. Then you can use the Convert and Append command in your email PDFMaker, and add subsequent emails as additional pages to the PDF file. Since Organizer tracks only a shortcut to the original PDF instead of the entire PDF file, whenever you open the file you'll see the latest saved copy of the entire sequence of emails.

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.

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