# Accessibility Tips and Publication Checklist
Tips to optimize accessibility & prepare PDF documents for viewing on the Internet

To create accessible documents, consider the following factors while you are creating documents that will be converted to PDF format and made available on the Internet. The screen shots shown are using MS Word 2003. This checklist addresses some important elements of creating an accessible document.

For detailed instructions, authors should reference the Help feature of the software application they are using., When authoring a document in its native format (i.e. Word, etc.) add as many accessibility features as possible **before converting** the document to PDF format. Accessibility features can be added and/or corrected further using Adobe® Acrobat.

☐ Format your document with styles

- Always use document **style formats**, such as **heading 1** and **Heading 2**, to identify structural elements of documents
- To access Styles **choose Format > Styles and Formatting**
- Do not use tabs to simulate two-column text**. Choose Format > Columns** to create columns in Word documents
- Use the Bullets and Numbers feature for lists**. Choose Format > Bullets and Numbering**
- Additional help on Styles can be found in the **Help feature** of the MS Office application you are using.
- Online tutorial by Microsoft - Format Your Document with Styles - An online tutorial by Microsoft
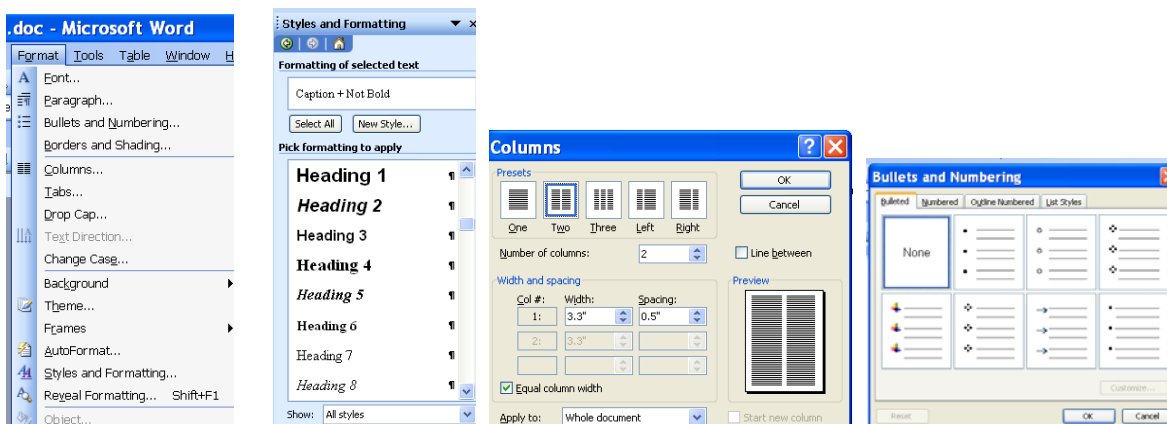
☐ Add Alternate Text to Images, Objects, or Grouped Objects

Images need alternative, or ALT text assigned to them, because screen readers can not understand images, but rather read aloud the alternative text assigned to them. In Internet Explorer, we can see this ALT text when mousing over the image and llooking at the tooltip that appears. The ALT text should simply repeat, word-for-word any text contained within that image or the caption to the image. **ALT text should always describe the content of the image**

1. Select the image/object **> right-click** on the selection
2. Select **Format Picture or Format Object**.
3. **Select the Web tab** – in the Alternative Text box **type the descriptive text** for the image> Click **OK**
   Note: Add alternate text to ALL images or objects. If you have grouped objects, you can enter one Alt Text for the grouped object. Use descriptive information. **Hint:** To save typing time, if you use a caption with the image, copy/paste the text of the caption.
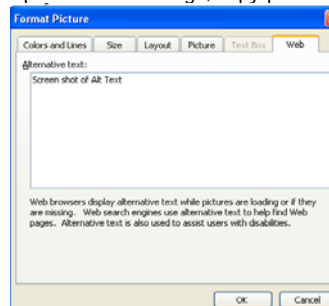
## ☐ Add Alternate Text to Hyperlinks

By including Alt Text for links, people using screen readers will hear the Screen Tip e.g. "go to Plant-Materials Publications" rather than being read the entire hyperlink address http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/publications.

1. **To add Alt Text to links Right-click** on the Hyperlink - Select **Edit Hyperlink**
2. Select **Screen Tip** – Enter Alt Text in **Set Hyperlink Screen Tip** (a screen tip will appear and can be read aloud by screen reader)
3. Note: **Text to Display** will change the hyperlink to the text that is displayed.
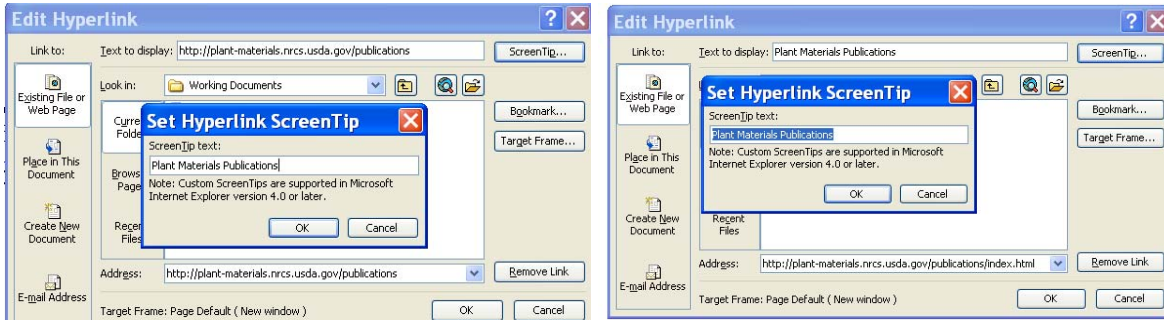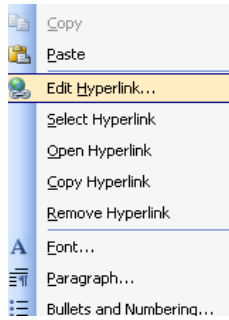
☐ Reduce Image Size

1. **Right click** the image - Select the **Picture tab**.
2. Select **Compress Pictures -** Select **Apply to All** pictures in document
3. Select Resolution to **Print - (Note: 200 dpi will print a high quality image)** In Options select **Compress** pictures
4. In Options select **Delete cropped areas** of pictures
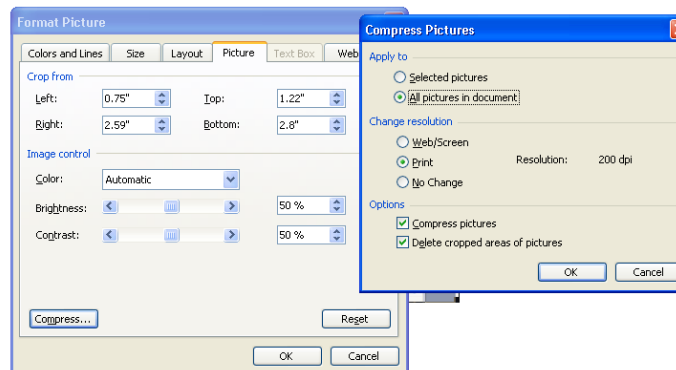
☐ File/Document Properties

Identify the document to your audience by providing a document title, narrative description of contents (SUBJECT), and key words/terms. This will greatly improve search ability on the internet. Search engines use this meta tag information. The more information you provide, the better the odds your document will be found by search engines.

1. Open the document - Select File
2. Select Properties – Enter information – separate key words/terms with commas.
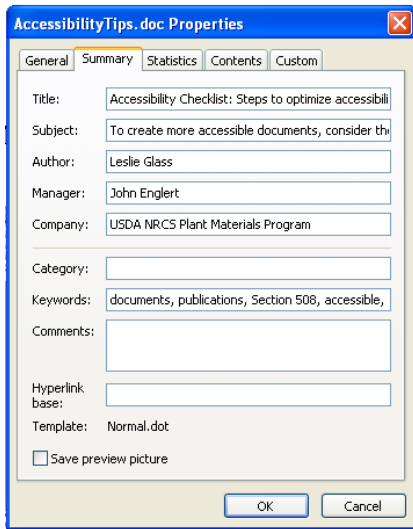
Note: Enter a descriptive paragraph in the subject line. This text is what will appear in Internet search engine results next to the document's title. Usually the opening paragraph of the document is perfect for this purpose. Copy/Paste this text into the Subject. Entering key words and terms separated by a comma increases the search ability and relevance of the document to Internet Search Engines.

☐ Define Table Properties and Column Rows

For Tables to be properly read by screen readers they must be created using the Table structure of Microsoft Office applications. Do not use the Tab key to position text on a page to appear as a table. Do not use tables to create column effects in a document.

1. Select **Table** option from the top tool bar – Select **Insert Table**
2. **Right-click on table** – Select **Table Properties**
3. **Select** the **row** that contains the column headings,
4. **Right-click** and choose **Table Properties**
5. **Select** the **Row tab**
6. **Clear** the **Allow Row to Break across Pages** option.
7. **Select Repeat as Header Row at the Top of Each Page**.
8. Click **OK**

Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading
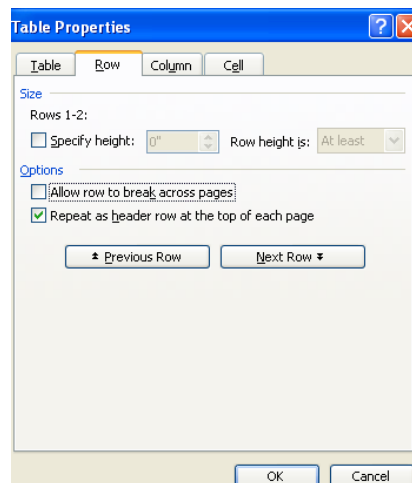
☐ Convert Microsoft Office documents to accessible PDF documents

Once you have created a document in a Microsoft Office application, it can be converted to an accessible PDF document. **Do not use Print – Adobe PDF.** Doing so creates an untagged PDF document, removing all accessibility features you added. It will also remove the alt text from images, requiring that they be added to your PDF document using Acrobat 6.0 Professional.

1. **Open** the document in the Microsoft application.
2. Choose **Adobe PDF** from the tool bar – Select Change **Conversion Settings**.
3. In the **Settings** tab, select **View Adobe PDF Result**.
4. Select **Prompt for Adobe PDF File Name**.
5. Select **Convert Document Information**.
6. Select **Add Bookmarks to Adobe PDF**.
7. Select **Add Links to Adobe PDF**.
8. Select **Enable Accessibility and Reflow with Tagged** PDF (critical for accessibility).
9. Click the **Security tab**, and then select **Enable Text Access for Screen Reader Devices for the Visually Impaired** to allow people using assistive technology to read a tagged PDF document (this is the default).
   NOTE: To access these features the permissions box must be checked. Remember to remove the check when the items are selected. **Uncheck permission**.
10. Click the **Bookmarks tab**, and select the **styles** for which you want to create bookmarks in the PDF document.
11. Click **OK**.
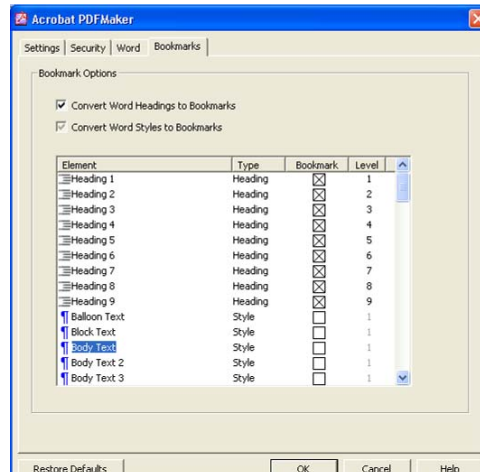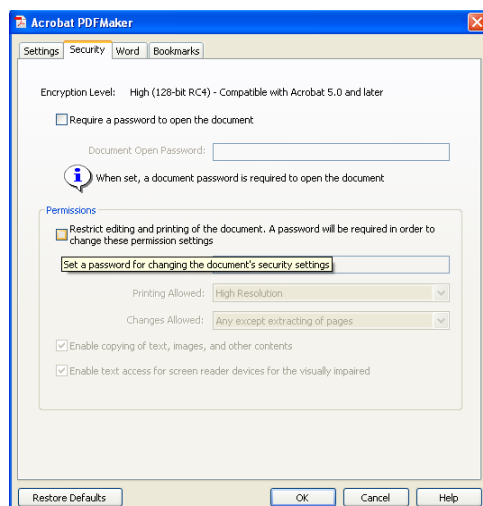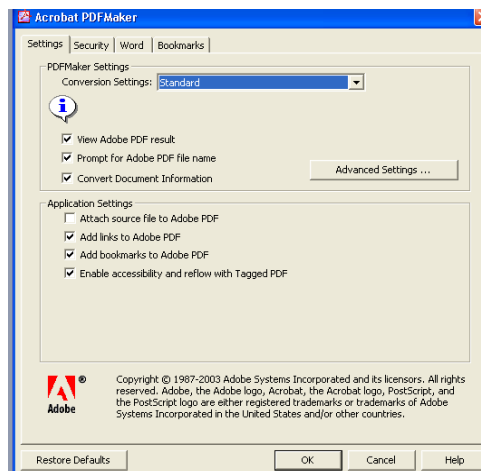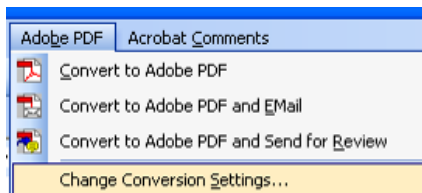
## To complete the conversion process, do one of the following:

1. Choose **Adobe PDF** from the tool bar
2. Select **Convert to Adobe PDF**
3. **Name** the file following file naming guidelines (e.g. ndpmcbr8acctips.pdf)
4. **Save** the file
5. **Enter the file name in the POMS record**
   Note: It is extremely important that the PDF document you send to NPMC has the EXACT file name as the file name entered in POMS. Be sure to include the .pdf file extension in the POMS entry.
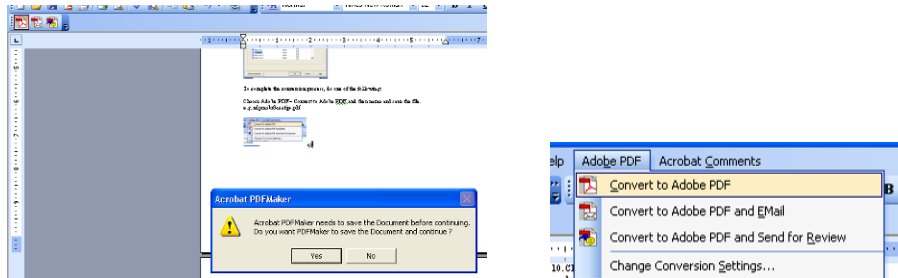
☐ Set Language Settings to English Using Adobe® Acrobat

1. **Open** the PDF document you created with Adobe® Acrobat
2. **Select File – Document Properties – Advanced – Set Reading options from the drop down list to English**
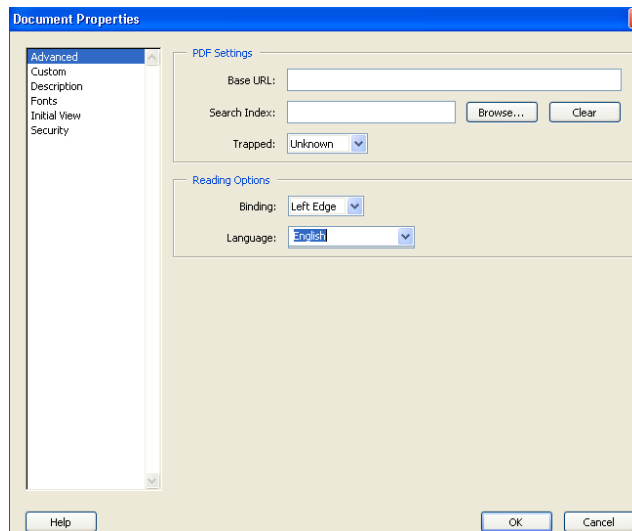
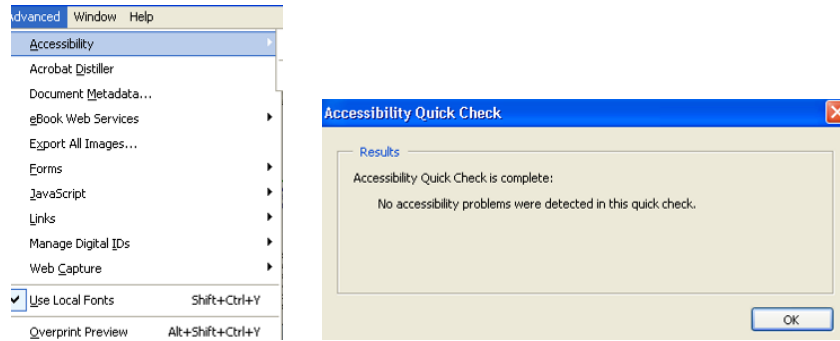## ☐ Confirm the PDF document is accessible using Adobe® Acrobat

To perform accessibility quick check, do one of the following.

In Acrobat 6.0 Professional and Acrobat 6.0 Standard
1. **Open** the PDF document
2. **From the toolbar choose Advanced > Accessibility > Quick Check**

In Acrobat Reader 6.0
1. **Open** the PDF document
2. **Choose Document > Quick Check**

☐ Confirm the PDF document retained the Document Properties

3. **Open** the PDF document you created using Adobe® Acrobat
4. **Click Advanced – Accessibility – Quick Check**
5. Select **File – Properties - Description**
6. The PDF Document Properties should show **Tagged PDF and Fast Web View.**

☐ Verify the Fast Web View Preferences setting

Follow this procedure to make sure that you have Acrobat set up to enable Fast Web View during the PDF creation process.

7. Choose Edit > Preferences (Windows) or Acrobat > Preferences (Mac OS).
8. Under Categories, select Documents.
9. On the right side of the dialog box, under Save Settings, make sure that "Save As Optimized For Fast Web View" is selected, or select it now, and click OK.
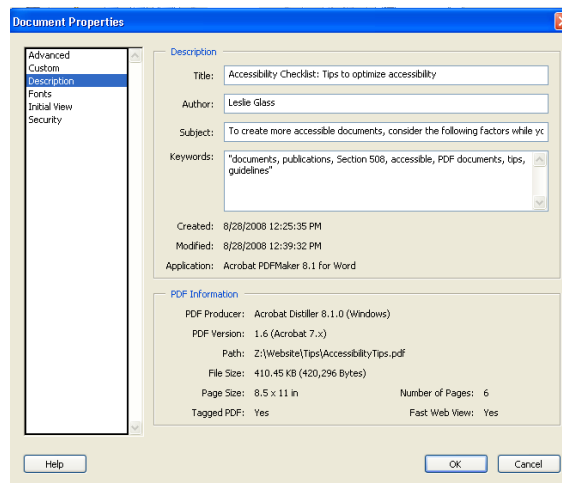
☐ Convert Untagged PDF documents to accessible PDF documents

Fast Web View restructures a PDF document for page-at-a-time downloading (byte-serving) from web servers. With Fast Web View, the web server sends only the requested page, rather than the entire PDF. This is especially important with large documents that can take a long time to download from a server.

1. If the document has not been tagged accessible, Select **Advanced – Make Accessible (Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard)**
2. If the document has not been tagged accessible, Select **Advanced – Add Tags (Adobe Acrobat Professional)**
3. **Confirm Accessibility** - Select **Advanced -** Select **Accessibility -** Select **Quick Check**

Enable Fast Web View for an existing PDF

Use this procedure after you have verified your Fast Web View Preferences setting and checked the PDF properties to be sure that the file is not already enabled for Fast Web View.

1. **Open the PDF**.
2. Choose **File > Save As**. Select the same filename and location.
3. When a message appears asking if you want to overwrite the existing file, click OK.