

8 Easy Steps to Optimize a PDF for Search



Optimizing case studies, FAQs, reports, specifications, and brochures will increase your chances of being found by buyers who are looking for your products and services.

PDF documents are treated just like any other content in web searches. So, prepare your PDF documents as you would any other content: optimize before you publish (upload) to ensure that search engines can index and search them.

1. Create your PDF in a text-based program. Web crawlers can index content when you use Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat. A PDF saved as an image file cannot be crawled.

2. Incorporate SEO best practices when crafting content. Optimize your PDF content as you would any other content for your site. Use keywords that your buyers or customers would use to find you. If SEO (search engine optimization) concepts are new to you, [here is a simple tutorial](#) to get you started.

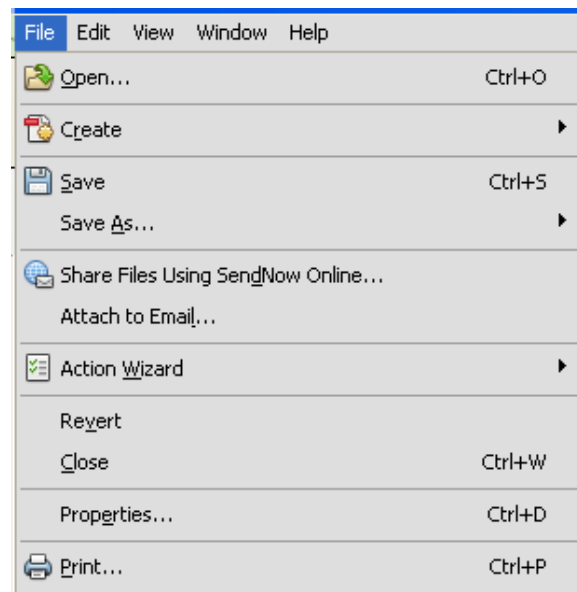
3. Include links. Include hyperlinks to related information on website pages to extend your reach to the reader who downloaded your document. Just as important, if your PDF is shared with others, you're enabling them to connect with you, too.

4. Give the PDF a meaningful file name. For example, a document about SEO optimization for PDFs could be called **8-Easy-Steps-to-Optimize-a-PDF-for-Search.pdf**. The title clearly describes the content, it contains essential keywords, and it's clarity helps the reader find the document in the future.

TIP: Did you notice that there are no spaces in the title? Using a dash in place of a space prevents the browser from adding random characters in place of the spaces. Don't just remove the spaces or you'll lose your keyword advantage; the browser ignores the dash in the search.

5. Complete the Document Properties. Open your PDF in Acrobat, and fill in the document properties by going to the Menu and clicking **File >>> Properties**.

- You'll see a screen pop up called Document Properties. Make sure you're on the **Description** tab, and fill in the **Title**, **Author**, **Subject**, and **Keywords** fields.
- Your **Title** will appear as the "meta title" in the in search results. If it's left blank a search engine will pull a phrase it considers applicable from the PDF's contents. This may or may not be relevant to your buyer; you have the opportunity to control this aspect for the search, so take advantage of it.
- Use keywords in your title for which you want your PDF to rank.



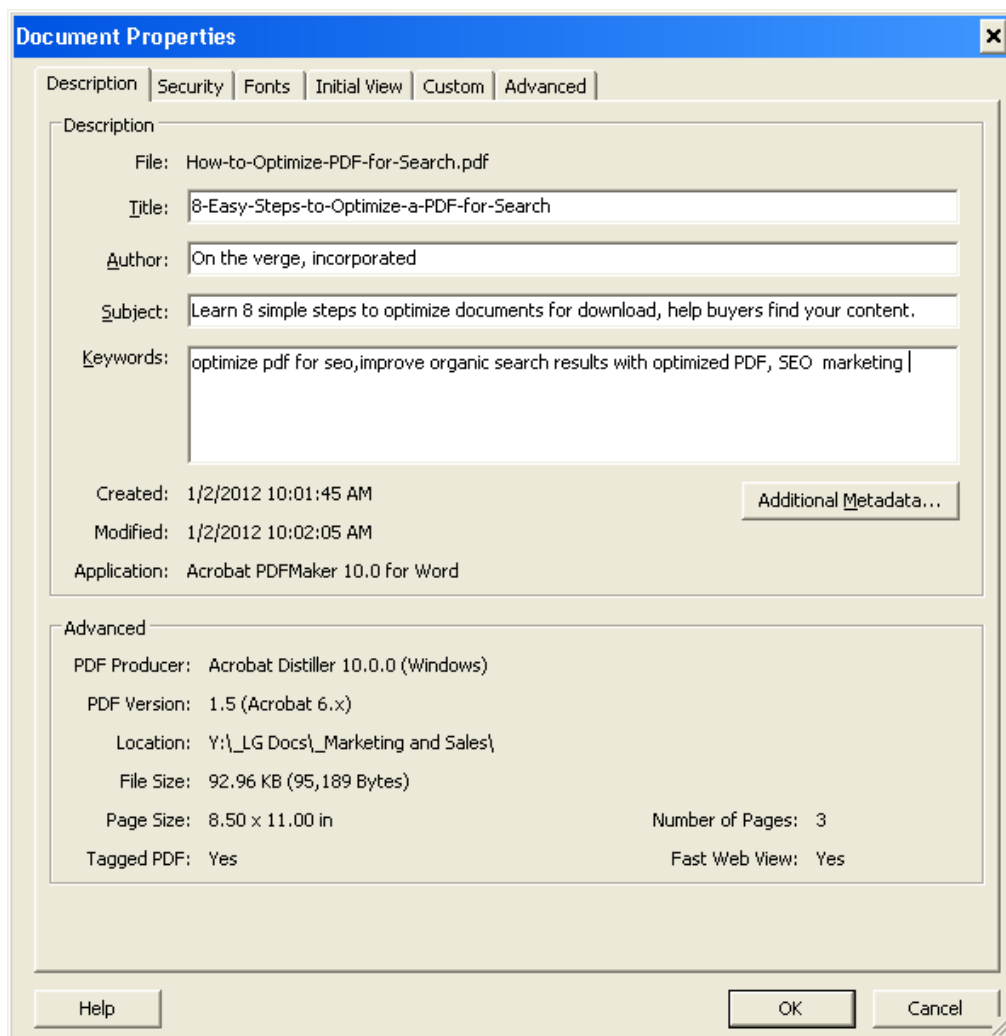
It's more likely that searches made about "you" will be based on your company name rather than your own name. If that's the case for you, then use your company name as the author.

- The **Subject** field should be used as the "meta description". The meta description is displayed by search results as they appear in your browser.

Your document is more likely to be found by optimizing this description for keywords and it's more likely to be selected if it clearly describes the content. The description needs to match the content.

- Fill in the **Keywords** field with 3 or 4 keyword phrases you're targeting in your PDF, separating each phrase with commas.

TIP: Keyword phrases are known as long-tail keywords. The use of phrases instead of individual words narrow search results, which is a good thing. Single words can result in millions of hits, which is not helpful to the buyer or to your SEO efforts.



6. Get your content out there. Once you click OK and save the document, upload your PDF to your website or to a landing for search engines to find and index.

TIP: Valuable content can be “gated”, meaning that the reader needs to provide information to access it. If you take a gated approach, then keep the process as frictionless as possible. Request a minimal amount of information, such as an email address. Requiring too much information, especially information not relevant at an early stage of engagement, can result in the viewer leaving for less hostile territory.

7. Version control. Not everyone has the most recent version of Adobe / Adobe reader, nor are search engines always up to date. Play it safe and save your document in the prior version to the one you are currently using.

8. Size matters. You need to make easy for your reader to download. A large file can take considerable time to download and may cause a reader to abandon the download.

TIP: Get rid of superfluous (hidden) code and compress your PDF document for faster downloading and sharing. Use the built in Adobe optimizer or google “PDF optimization” to find a selection of freeware that can do the job.

You’ve invested considerable time, energy, and creativity, in creating your content. Make sure it’s always working for you!

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