

Portable Document Format (PDF)

[Go up to Terms and Definitions](#)

Discussion

Portable Document Format (PDF) provides a digital format for representing electronic documents independently of the environment in which the documents are created, viewed, or printed. ISO 32000-1 defines PDF as a digital format for representing electronic documents that supports exchange and viewing independent of the creation, viewing, or printing environments.

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PDF supports document presentation, exchange, distribution, archiving, and review. A PDF document preserves page-oriented layout, text, graphics, images, fonts, annotations, metadata, and other document features.

PDF differs from a [report](#). A report is a structured information artefact that contains facts, distinguished by dimensions, within a defined reporting context. PDF provides one possible representation or presentation format for report content.

PDF also differs from [Report Semantics](#). Report semantics defines the meaning of reported facts, dimensions, reporting contexts, report structures, rules, and interpretation constraints. PDF presents or transports report content, but PDF structure alone does not establish the full meaning of the reported facts.

PDF differs from [XBRL](#) and [JSON](#). XBRL provides a machine-readable business reporting standard. JSON provides a lightweight structured data interchange syntax. PDF primarily provides a document representation format for exchange and viewing.

Definition

digital document representation format that supports exchange and viewing independent of creation, viewing, or printing environment

Source

ISO 32000 Portable Document Format and Adobe Portable Document Format descriptions, specialised for use in the FX Demo Reference Architecture. Adobe identifies PDF as Portable Document Format and describes it as a format created for electronic document exchange.

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Note

PDF is not equivalent to a report, a report model, or report semantics. A PDF file presents or conveys report content, but the governing report model, facts, dimensions, rules, and semantic sources define the report's meaning.

PDF rendering fidelity does not guarantee [Semantic](#) fidelity. Automated processing of PDF content requires care, as extracted text, tables, figures, captions, and reading order may not align with the document's intended logical structure.

Example

An FX regulatory report may be rendered as a PDF for human review. The PDF preserves the report's visual layout, including headings, tables, signatures, and explanatory notes. The report semantics still come from the reported facts, dimensions, reporting jurisdiction, reporting entity, validation rules, and report model.

The same report content may also be represented as XBRL, JSON, RDF, a database extract, or another machine-processable format.

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