

Ensure digital documents are accessible by everyone

What does accessibility mean?

Accessibility refers to designing content and systems in a way that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with them effectively. For digital documents, accessibility ensures that users with visual, auditory, cognitive, or mobility impairments can access and understand the content using assistive technologies like screen readers, Braille displays, and voice input tools.

Why is accessibility important?

- **Legal compliance:** Many countries have accessibility laws (e.g., ADA and Section 508 in the US and the European Accessibility Act in the EU) that require digital content to be accessible.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensures that people with disabilities are not excluded from accessing vital information such as government documents, healthcare forms, educational materials, and financial statements
- **Business value:** Enhances brand reputation, expands audience reach, and reduces legal risks

What Is PDF/UA?

PDF/UA stands for PDF/Universal Accessibility and is defined by the ISO 14289-1 standard. It provides guidelines for creating accessible PDF documents that support assistive technologies and aims to ensure that PDF files are:

- Readable by screen readers
- Fully navigable by keyboard
- Structured with semantic tags
- Compatible with accessibility tools



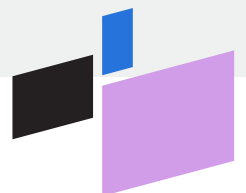
Challenges due to lack of PDF/UA compliance

User challenges

- **Screen reader incompatibility:** Blind or visually impaired users can't access content.
- **Navigation issues:** Users can't move through documents easily via keyboard or assistive tools.
- **Information loss:** Visual elements without alternative text (alt text) can't be interpreted.
- **Cognitive overload:** Poor structure or disorganized content makes comprehension harder.

Business challenges

- **Legal risks:** Non-compliance may result in lawsuits, fines, or exclusion from public tenders.
- **Limited audience reach:** Failing to support people with disabilities reduces engagement.
- **Negative brand image:** Lacking PDF/UA compliance reflects poorly on the company, which is viewed as lacking inclusivity and social responsibility.



Accessible document generation in OL Connect

The Chromium-based OL Connect Designer, available with the 2026.1 release, supports the generation of accessible, PDF/UA-compliant documents as part of its modern, standards-based design foundation.

This enables organizations to build accessibility into document design from the outset, supporting compliance requirements while improving usability for all audiences. Integrating accessible PDF output support in OL Connect enables users to generate documents that comply with PDF/UA (ISO 14289-1) standards and provide additional benefits.

Accessibility compliance

- Ensures documents are readable by screen readers, helping users with visual impairments access content
- Helps meet government accessibility regulations (e.g., ADA and Section 508 in the US and the European Accessibility Act in the EU)—especially crucial for public sector, insurance, healthcare, and financial institutions

Legal protection

- Reduces risk of non-compliance lawsuits or being disqualified from government tenders that require accessible communications

Enhanced user experience

- Improves navigation with tagged content, bookmarks, and a logical reading order
- Ensures all users, including those with disabilities, can interact with statements, invoices, and forms effortlessly

Improved automation and QA

- Enables consistent generation of compliant accessible PDFs through automated workflows—no need for manual remediation
- Reduces document rework and quality assurance overhead by building accessibility into the design phase



Generating compliant PDF/UA documents is just one part of creating accessible content.

True accessibility requires additional effort—template designers must follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) guidelines.

Logical structure tree

Defines the content structure within a PDF document, including headings, paragraphs, lists, tables, and more. Closely aligns with the Outline view in OL Connect Designer.

Alternate text for images

Alternate text offers a written description of visual elements for users relying on screen readers or Braille output devices. It is added through the Attributes panel, Source view, or dynamically via a script.

Language

In OL Connect Designer, the language of a document is determined by the language code defined in the Locale setting (e.g., "fr-CA" for French-Canada). This drives date and number formatting based on regional conventions and is used to enable OL Connect's Translation feature.

The language specified for the document is also embedded in the accessible PDF output as required by the PDF/UA standard, enabling screen readers to accurately pronounce the text.

Document title

The document title can be set either on the PDF options page of the Output Preset or directly within the template, ensuring it appears correctly in the window title rather than the filename.

Font embedding

OL Connect automatically embeds all necessary fonts to meet PDF/UA compliance standards.