



## TECHGEAR

The new Nook Tablet (\$249) is Barnes and Noble's answer to Amazon's Kindle Fire. It has a 7-inch color screen, 16 GB of storage, and 1 GB of RAM. Like the Fire, it serves as an e-reader, web browser, and multimedia player.



## WEBLINKS



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### Ohio Employer's Law Blog ([ohioemployerlawblog.com](http://ohioemployerlawblog.com))

The only employment law blog I like better than the Texas Employment Law Update. Jon Hyman's Friday posts, WIRTW ("What I read this week"), are a good summary of all of the weekly happenings in the employment law blogosphere.

### The Supreme Court of Texas Blog ([scotxblog.com](http://scotxblog.com))

Very good resource for keeping up with the happenings at the Texas Supreme Court.

### Postcards from Elysian Fields (<http://trsullivan.mlblogs.com>)

Cerebral blog following the Texas Rangers written by MLB.com great T.R. Sullivan — keeps me up-to-date inside the club house.

### Woot Shirt (<http://shirt.woot.com>)

Offers a new, uniquely designed T-shirt a day. Very creative and only \$10 per shirt.

# Adobe Acrobat X Pro – A Lawyer's Review

BY AL HARRISON

Adobe Acrobat X Pro (\$199 upgrade/\$449 full) is the latest installment of Adobe's popular Portable Document Format (PDF) authoring and editing software. Adobe created the portable document format (now an open source format) and has released a new version of its market-leading Acrobat software about every two years. Adobe sells Acrobat at a premium over competitors. Is it worth the money?

Since PDF files have become the standard for electronic filing and safely exchanging contracts with opposing counsel, it is imperative that lawyers of all stripes avail themselves of an application that provides robust PDF creation and control capabilities. In my opinion, Adobe Acrobat X Pro continues to lead the pack in features and functionality, ease of use, and reliability for creating, editing, marking up, manipulating, and securing PDF files.

## NEW USER INTERFACE

Acrobat X Pro's user interface has undergone a metamorphosis that delivers an elegant simplicity and maximizes use of the "extra" horizontal space available on current wide-screen monitors. The menu selection bar atop the screen has been pared down from conventional selections to a quintet of File, Edit, View, Window, Help. Gone are the competing toolbars fraught with distinctive and tell-tale icons.

Instead, a pair of default toolbars now has a limited selection of icons corresponding to a minimal sequence of recurring tools prerequisite for achieving certain predictable tasks.

Akin to prior versions of Acrobat Pro, a Navigation pane is still located on the left side of the screen. New to Acrobat X

Pro are Task panes located on the right side that contain Tools, Comment, and Share panels. The Tools panel includes tasks related to Pages, Content, Forms, and Recognize Text. Illustrating Acrobat X Pro's intuitive top-down user interface, tasks related to Pages include Rotate, Delete, Extract, Replace, Crop, Split Document, Insert Pages, Watermarks, and Bates Stamps.

Returning to the streamlined toolbars, Acrobat X Pro offers customizable "QuickTools" to supplement the default set: Create PDF, Open, Save, Print, and Share. I suggest incorporating a Typewriter icon on this QuickTool bar so users can easily add text to a document, especially as this tool is now referred to as "Add or Edit Text Box" rather than the anachronistic "Typewriter" (young lawyers may not know what "typewriter" means after all). Another suggestion is to incorporate the Add Stamp tool to the toolbar for immediate access to stamps such as "Confidential" and "Draft."

Notwithstanding its elegant simplicity, the new user interface requires you to undergo some retraining to effectively invoke Acrobat X Pro's many functions. While I've incorporated it into my daily routine and thoroughly enjoy its straightforward feature breakdown, the learning curve was somewhat steeper than I anticipated. Adobe should include a user interface-focused tutorial video or perhaps enable easy, one-click access to online tutorials to facilitate transition to the new interface.

## GUIDED ACTIONS

Acrobat X Pro's new Guided Actions enable you to automate recurring chains of tasks not only to standardize protocols for accomplishing certain legal activities,



but also to eliminate errors caused by inadvertent omission of links in the prerequisite chain. You access Guided Actions via the Action Wizard within the Tools pane. Once a recurring chain is defined via a sequence of events and tasks, the defined action is accomplished via a simple click of the mouse.

A recommended application of Guided Actions is Redaction, which permanently eradicates sensitive information. Preferably, every instance of sensitive information in a document or set of documents should be searched using pre-loaded or custom-defined patterns, if appropriate, to guarantee 100 percent eradication.

While I like the Action Wizard, I feel the same about it as the new user interface — I'd like to see more assistance. A new user of Acrobat X Pro won't necessarily realize that "Action Wizard" is no mere "Wizard." Indeed, seeking assistance by referring only to "Wizard" via Adobe's resources produces no results for "action wizard." As a modest suggestion, the Help indexing schema should include "Wizard, Action" and not just "Action Wizard" to increase the likelihood that a user will receive timely help rather than frustration.

## ENCRYPTION

Although not new, encryption within Acrobat X Pro has been rendered more secure than prior versions. Acrobat X Pro uses 256-bit encryption in conjunction with a bias toward a strong password. Indeed, the application now includes a new Password Strength meter to encourage users to select a sufficiently secure password.

A PDF file may be secured with either a security certificate or a password with password security being the most common approach for law offices. PDF security may be required to open a file and/or to print or edit a file. Restricting edits of emailed files is a recommended practice for attorneys and may easily be automated via the Acrobat X Pro Action Wizard invoking a predetermined password or

by invoking a password selected in real-time. If a client requires a soft copy of multiple documents, Acrobat X Pro's Security Envelope facilitates encryption of multiple files and file types with a single password or security certificate.

## INTERACTIVE FORMS

Acrobat X Pro has reduced creating fillable PDF forms to a handful of clicks (or less) of the mouse. Once the Forms Wizard is invoked and a fillable PDF form is created, the downstream user just needs freely available Adobe Reader to interact with the form.

From a preexisting PDF document, the Forms Wizard guides you through a series of steps to automatically designate which fields are fillable. Then, you just change the selected field names if you wish and click the Distribute button to render the fillable PDF form ready for action. Since the various fillable fields are enumerated top-down on the right side of the forms editing screen in the sequence that the fields appear on the screen, you can easily change the field sequence.

## OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION

Acrobat X Pro has enhanced OCR accuracy and efficiency. The new engine analyzes each page based upon its particular attributes and mixture of text and graphics with the objective of achieving improved fidelity. Also, smaller, vector-based characters make converted text easier to read.

## CONCLUSION

Adobe Acrobat X Pro defines the forefront of PDF functionality with a feature set second to none. Redaction, encryption, and OCR continue their march toward perfection. Interactive forms generation is now easy enough for users. The Guided Action Wizard affords a fail-safe vehicle for recurring sequences of events and tasks. The new user interface is a delight. Judiciously placing icons on the QuickTools enables you to quickly access your favorite features. ✪



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