Convert a PDF File to a Text File

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Have you been wishing you had a piece of software that would convert PDF files to text files that you can edit? And maybe also didn't cost an arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such software called easy-Converter Desktop that costs about $20. That sounds like a good buy to me. But it only works with Windows (2000, XP, Vista and Win 7). So that leaves a lot of people, namely Linux users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a free, online utility that does the same thing. And your operating system doesn't come into it. Open your browser and go to http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.asp and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that says "Convert PDF to Word for Free" you'll see a place to browse your computer and select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you'll just download the file directly.

Find your file and double click it (or click once then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it *only once*, and wait; larger files may take a while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won't work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do a lot of files, or large ones, it would be great to have an application on your computer to do it—thus eliminating the time to upload.
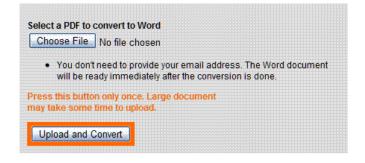
The next step is downloading the text file. I'm not sure why the instructions say to Right Click on the link to download the file, because for me at least it didn't work. I **Left** Clicked instead and the download dialog opened.

You'll see that the file is a rich text file (.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened by Word, OpenOffice Writer, Abiword, or other word processors or text editors and be available for editing. When you save it you can save it as a .doc if you like.

The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice) or you can choose another from a drop-down list. The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
LCACE
c/o Group Ambassador
"J.J." Johnson

Membership

Membership in LCACE is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only $10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the *LCACE News Journal* and access to all club libraries and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club hotline, and are now available on our web site at - http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!
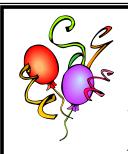
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DONALD MARTIN

Time to clean out your closet. Bring it to the meeting and place it on the **FOR SALE** or **FREEBIE** tables. All items placed on the FOR SALE table MUST have your name and asking price attached to it. If you just want to get it out of your closet, then place it on the FREEBIE table and hope one of your club members has a better home for it. All items not sold or taken must be reclaimed by the end of the meeting.

FYI

Lake County has launched a new emergency alert Web site to keep residents informed and prepared during emergencies. The site is located at www.alertlakecounty.com

During an emergency, the Web site will be used to keep residents informed about developing conditions and what actions to take to keep themselves and their families safe.

It also provides residents and businesses with information about preparing for emergencies, emergency response efforts and how to sign up for emergency alerts, and find related links to emergency and relief organizations.

The launch of Alert Lake County coincides with National County Government Month, established to highlight county government services and programs that protect and enhance the health, welfare and safety of residents.

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"Hello, Bob? It's your father again. I have another question about my new computer. Can I tape a movie from cable TV then fax it from my VCR to my CD-ROM then E-mail it to my brother's cellular phone so he can make a copy on his neighbor's camcorder?"

Robin's **RAM**blings

26 members and guests celebrated the 27th anniversary of **L**ake **C**ounty **A**rea **C**omputer **E**nthusiasts at our April 17, 2010 meeting. The beautiful, fun-filled Saturday afternoon was highlighted by a party with birthday cake, fresh fruit, coffee, and birthday signs. Linda Busch brought jelly beans in memory of Mr. "G" (Lawrence Grauzas, senior) who always gave jelly beans to the ladies. Thank you Winnie, Linda, Mike, and Lester for all your hard work preparing for and setting up the party.

Donna Kalinoski ably conducted the election of the board and president.

LCACE officers until April, 2011 are:

Robin B. Seidenberg-president
Linda Busch-vice president
Winnie Frost-treasurer
Bobby Jacobs-secretary
Lester Larkin-membership chair/webmaster
Julio Rivera-program chair/club historian
Linda Koudelka-publicity chair
Mike McEnery-president emeritus/newsletter editor

Patricia Ortseifen pocketed $12 in our 50/50 raffle. Guest John won *McAfee Anti-Virus*. Lester Larkin happily took home 100 jewel cases and Marshia Hobson won a copy of *WebPlusX2*.

Welcome to LCACE's newest member, Josep Kusiak. Everyone, if you haven't already done so, it's time to pay your LCACE dues.
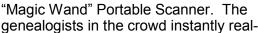
Marshia Hobson started our Show and Tell with her Sprint mobile hotspot which allows up to five people to connect to the internet wirelessly. She then took out her silver Dodge Viper wireless optical mouse (www.roadmice.com). When you left click, the left headlight flashes; the right headlight flashes when you right click (It's a good thing they don't make a yellow Hummer

mouse!). After the oohs and ahs subsided, Marshia pulled out a guitar shaped USB flash drive.

Marshia was a tough act to follow, but club founder J.J. Johnson managed to do so. J.J. surprised everyone with his new iPad (OK, we all thought he would buy one; the question was when.). Ubercool! J.J. then blamed Mom (Dorothy Sutherland) for his purchase of a VuPoint Solutions "Magic Wand" Portable Scanner. The genealogists in the crowd instantly realized how incredibly useful this could be for their work. Members helping members (spend money).

Fred Barnett then demonstrated Julio Rivera's gift, a USB 2.0 IDE adapter, which allows him to connect an old hard drive to a new computer and use it as an external hard drive. Bobby Jacobs spoke to us about Fred's favorite program, *Vault 3*; she was impressed with author Eric Bergman-Terrell's speedy response to her tech support questions.

We have exciting programs scheduled for 2010:

May 8-Creating a genealogy website-Bobby Jacobs

June 12-Wendy Warden will present Digital Nature Photography which the Grayslake Area Public Library will co-sponsor

July 10-Picnic at the home of Liz and Fred Barnett, 651 Alleghany Road, Grayslake

August 14-Show and Tell and Ask the Gurus

September 11-

October 9-

December 4-Holiday party-State Bank of the Lakes-1-5 p.m. Save the date!

Happy computing!

the default location—or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very nice, too—for **mostly text** documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer which contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded it and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect—and perfectly editable.

For me, using Ubuntu Linux, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

BluePack S3

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ
The Journal of the Tucson Computer Society, January 2010
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We have so many portable devices these days that it's hard to keep track of which charging cord goes with which device. We certainly don't want to carry all the cords along wherever we go. Often, we forget to check if a given device needs charging. All these problems! BluePack S3 to the rescue!

If you have an iPhone, iPod or a Blackberry, you'll want to have a BluePack S3. It's a small external battery for charging these three devices and more. In the box is the BluePack S3, a cord with a 3 5 mm plug (for charging the BluePack S3), a USB plug and a wall socket plug. There are three similar cords, one for Blackberry, one for iPhone and iPod, and a third for any device using a micro-USB plug. The Blackberry cord can actually be used on any device with a mini-USB socket for charging, which many MP3
players do.

The box also has three booklets: a Quick Guide, a Warranty Card and a Usage Manual (3½ pages of English, same for 10 other languages). There is also a very nice fabric carrying case with a drawstring for the device and cables.

Charging is with the three-ended cable. It takes a couple of hours to fully charge the device. There is a 3-light indicator and a button on the edge of the device; a press of the button shows all three lights if fully charged, two or one if not.

A built in flashlight is accessed by pressing and holding the button. Once charged, you attach one of the three charging cables to your Blackberry, iPhone, iPod, MP3 player or other device. This will both charge your device and also allow it to play if discharged.

The BluePack S3 is very small, about the size of a deck of cards but half as thick. It's very convenient to put in a shirt pocket or purse. I found the BluePack S3 very easy to use. I recommend it to anyone with any of the devices it can power.

About: BluePack S3
Vendor: Dexim
www.dexim.net
Price: about $66

Tips and Tricks

Deleting a Hyperlink

Part of Microsoft Excel's compatibility with the Web is to allow you to define hyperlinks in your workbooks. There may come a time when you no longer need a particular hyperlink. Fortunately, deleting a hyperlink in Excel is very easy to do. All you need to do is follow these steps:

1. Right-click on the hyperlink. Excel displays a Context menu.
2. Choose the Hyperlink option from the Context menu. Excel displays a submenu.
3. Choose Remove Hyperlink from the submenu. Excel dutifully removes the hyperlink.

You should note that in some versions of Excel (such Excel 2003 and Excel 2007) there is a Remove Hyperlink option directly on the Context menu displayed in step 1. If this is the case, consider yourself fortunate—you can directly remove the hyperlink without the extra steps.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that you can get rid of a hyperlink simply by clearing a cell (moving to the cell and pressing DEL). You can do this in the newer versions of Excel, but you cannot in the older versions. If you do this, the hyperlink text is gone, but the hyperlink itself is still lurking in the background. If you type some information in the cell again, you will notice it is underlined, indicating it is still a hyperlink. The reason for this is because Excel considers the hyperlink to be a format of the cell. Pressing DEL only clears the contents of the cell, not its format. You can use other editing techniques to get rid of a hyperlink, however, provided those techniques result in getting rid of formatting or overwriting the formatting.
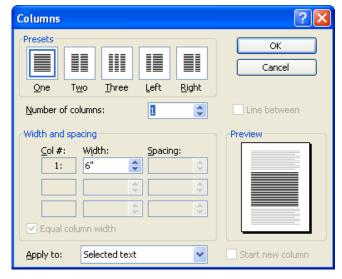
Mixing Column Formats On a Page

It is not uncommon to have a document that mixes different column layouts on a single page. For instance, let's assume you have a five-page document, and you want to format the center part of page two as three columns. You want the rest of the document to remain a single column. To overcome this formatting challenge, you can follow these steps if you are using Word 97 through Word 2003:

1. Select the text that will appear in the columns.
2. Choose the Columns option from the Format menu. Word displays the Columns dialog box.

The Columns dialog box.

3. In the Number of Columns field, specify the number of columns you desire.
4. In the Apply To box, make sure it says Selected Text.
5. Click on OK. Word places the selected text into its own section and sets it in the number of columns you specified.

If you are using Word 2007, then the steps are a bit different:

1. Select the text that will appear in the columns.
2. Choose the Page Layout tab for the ribbon.
3. In the Page Setup group, click the Columns drop-down list.
4. Pick the number of columns you want to use for the selected text.

Adobe Photoshop Elements 8 + Premiere 8

Still Top Notch.

By Louise Maye Huddelston, a HAL-PC family member and partner of a graphic outsource company
www.hal-pc.org
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If you're new to the worlds of digital photography and image manipulation, Photoshop Elements 8 offers everything you need and more. Elements 8 is a powerful, well-balanced consumer photo editing and organizing tools. Photo Recomposition feature as amazing as its larger sibling - Photoshop. Tight integration with on-line services and Premiere 8 and extensive selection of help and tutorials. Users of Elements 7 are unlikely to find a reason to upgrade.

When you open Photoshop Elements 8, you're greeted with a just two real options: Going to the Organizer or opening Photoshop Elements 8 proper. Elements 8 remains the best option for consumer photo

editing. It offers more than the competition in a package that's as attractive and unthreatening as this kind of software can be. The novice can rest assured they're getting the tip of the top. This is a very powerful program, though you might not think so with such a friendly face.

The Organizer is a large project folder with shortcuts for handling quick jobs without opening the individual programs. The Organizer bridges both Photoshop and Premiere Elements 8. The Editor has remained largely unchanged from Elements 7. That means it includes a healthy amount of the features found in its more robust and expensive sibling.

Elements 8 boasts a number of new features in an attractive and an intuitive, tabbed interface. Best improvements include an Auto Analyzer to practically automate image tagging and a new People Recognition feature that identifies people in images, plus new one-click image editing tools.

It can't be easy for a software develops keep products fresh year after year. I like the familiarity which actually reduces the learning curve! Because the software remains remarkable for the breadth and depth of its capabilities, it remains my pick. But for the new user, it's a steal with a breath taking feature/tool set.

The most exciting new addition – is the Recompose Photo tool. A refinement of the astounding content-aware scaling that appeared in Photoshop. It allows you to redefine a photo selectively to fit into a specific size or orientation by choosing which elements of the picture to remove and which ones to keep. This is digital voodoo!

runSlideShow(); Quick Fix previews in Quick Edit mode now let you examine prospective changes, making it a lot easier to get the effect you want.

The biggest changes to PE 8 come in the area of organizing. Tags are even easier to use, with a "tag cloud" to help you rapidly sort or search for files matching your most frequently used criteria. The new Auto-Analyzer can automatically apply Smart Tags to files you import.

Of more immediate usefulness is the software's expanded help section, which includes tutorials that help you learn how to perform certain common tasks. Unfortunately, you can't derive the full benefit from them without paying an extra $40 on a one-year Plus membership.

The new Auto QuickFix tools (Smart Fix, Color, Tone, Contrast, Detail, Color, and Red Eye) in the Organiz-

(Continued from page 7)

er's full-screen mode can handle all of the editing that many photos require before you move on to the Create and/or Share tabs. Use Elements' full edit interface for more complex issues.

Among Elements 8's handful of new or extended photo editing tools is PhotoMerge, which now includes an Exposure tool that allows you to combine two nearly identical photos, taken with different exposure values, to attain the optimum exposure.

Those users who want a bit more assistance, you will find yourself pretty well taken care of.. By clicking the down arrow next to Edit, you'll see an Edit Quick and Edit Guided menu..

Though Edit Guided it presents you with what is at first a fairly intimidating list of options, it actually works quite well by telling and showing you exactly what to do to get the result you want. "Picture too blurry? It pops up with the blur-correction tool itself, instructions, and even an Auto button to see if the software can figure it out by itself." Very friendly.

The output features of Photoshop Elements 8 include Flickr which is under More Options while UTube is right out front. You share your images via iPhone, e-mail, and web/TV.

System requirements: Adobe has historically been resource hungry and for a reason. Best minimum: Win7 64-bit, at least a 2.1GHz processor and four, preferably six, GB of RAM. It was not worth my time to save a $150 for less RAM and a slower processor.

Users who already have Elements 7 should pass on this "upgrade," since the move will feel lateral. Having said that, if you're in the market for photo editing software, Photoshop Elements 8 has a lot to recommend it, specifically the stripped-down, easily used, implementation of Photoshop proper balances ease of use and flexibility. It's beginner friendly but not oversimplified and remains sophisticated for the experienced user. For more info and updates go to www.adobe.com.

Google Voice, Free Long Distance

Reviewed by Hank Pearson, Webmaster, and has served in many capacities including President, Treasurer, and Editor, ASCIi (Arizona Society for Computer Information, inc.)
The ASCIi Clipboard, October 2009
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groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).
What is Google Voice?

A phone line? No
Instant messaging? No
A new Google telephone? No
A new wireless phone plan? No
VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol)? No
    It is totally free? Yes!
    Free long distance? Yes!
    Free phone number? Yes!
    Intelligent forwarding? Yes!
    More versatile voicemail? Yes!
    And a lot more free features? Yes!
Do you have to be at a computer to use Google Voice? No. Use Google Voice from any phone. Google Voice is free, but you need an invitation. Just Google for 'Google Voice invitation.' When you receive your invitation, select a free phone number. When someone calls your Google number, some or all of your phones can ring at once - your home phone, mobile phone, work phone, your cousin's phone where you are visiting. You can answer from any of them.
You can organize your contacts into groups and let some contacts ring all your phones, others ring certain phones, others go straight to voicemail, and still others get blocked.

You can personalize your voicemail greeting for groups or even individuals.
You can listen to your voicemail from any phone or listen online, or receive email or SMS (texting) notification. You can read voicemail transcripts visually online, and see each word underlined as it is spoken by your callers.

When you are online, you can just click a contact to call local or long distance. Or you can call from any phone by dialing extra digits. You can call any number without setting up a contact. All calls to the contiguous 48 states are free! Check out the rates for other locations

You can send, receive, and store SMS (texting) messages. You can screen calls and record calls. Similar to a mobile phone interface, you can review calls placed, received, missed, and so on.

Can you port your existing phone number? Officially, not quite yet. "We hope to offer this option in the near future." But a few people have been reported to have ported their numbers. News on this subject might change fast. To keep up with the latest stories, Google for 'Google Voice port existing number.'
There's even more to Google Voice! And it's free!

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MEMBERS

LCACE

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Take a good look, you just might see yourself.

LCACE CLUB PICTURES @:
http://lcace.org/PhotoAlbums.htm

TIME TO RENEW

All memberships are now renewable annually on April 1st. This change in the payment of annual dues will allow the treasurer to budget our money more closely. If you have not already renewed your membership, please see Lester Larkin or Winnie Frost.

Serving Lake County, Illinois

L CACE

Since 1983

Visit us @ http://www.lcace.org

May 8, 2010
Build a Genealogy Website, presented by Bobby Jacobs

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
409 S. Elmwood Avenue
Waukegan, IL 60085

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