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## Assess Reading Order

Another important check is reading order. Reading order is the order in which an assistive technology like a Screen Reader (Job Access With Speech JAWS) will read aloud the document to the user. When you convert a document from Word or PowerPoint over to Adobe PDF format, you are carrying over the tags (labels) that identify each component of that document into PDF.



The reading order depends on these tags (labels) that are carried over into the Adobe PDF document. Tags indicate to the user what items make up the document (headings, links, tables, images, text) and the order in which they will be read to the user of assistive technology. A PDF document may visually seem organized and easy to follow for a sighted user, but if the native documents were not created with accessibility in mind before converting these over into PDF, JAWS and any other screen reading software will unveil a jumble of incomprehensible words to a blind/low vision user trying to access the document. Fortunately, there are a few things you can do in Adobe Acrobat to check for reading order of your PDF.

In Adobe Acrobat, reading order can be checked by assessing the Order Panel and the Tags Panel. Both panels should display the same order so that the content can be read in the same order whether it stays as a PDF or is exported into a Text (Accessible) version. The exported Text (Accessible) version of the PDF displays content in the order specified by the Tags Panel of the PDF. The Read Out Loud Feature in Adobe Acrobat and screen reading software such as Job Access With Speech (JAWS) also reads content in the order indicated by the Tags Panel. Edit the tags and order panels appropriately so that they match by following the steps indicated in the sections below. Since most of your edits to the PDF will be done using the Order Panel and the TouchUp Reading Order Tool, once you are done doing edits in the Order Panel, go to the Tags panel and make sure the tags read in the correct order as shown in the Order Panel. Just because the reading order is correct in the Order Panel does not mean it is correct on the tags panel. Remember, assistive technology reads PDF content based on the reading order indicated in the Tags Panel so be sure it is correct!

### Using the Tags Panel

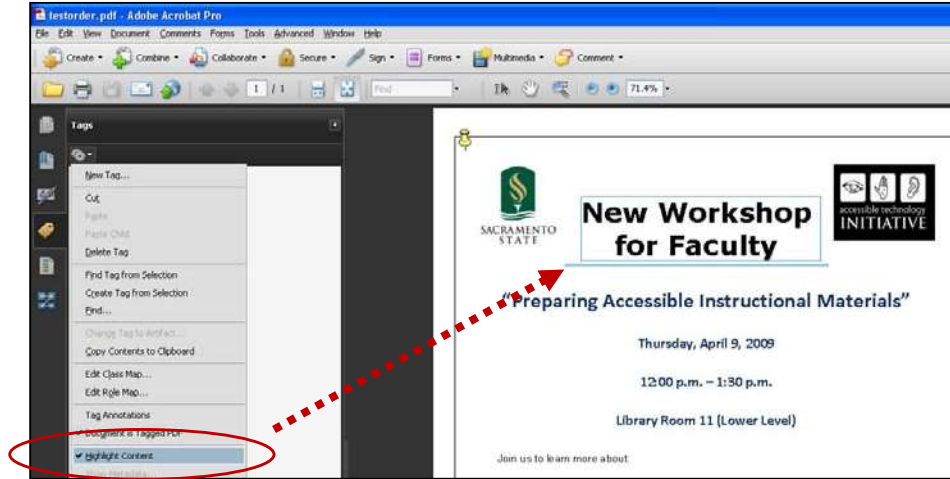
As mentioned earlier the tags panel displays all the structural elements contained in your document such as paragraphs, headings, links, lists, images etc. The order in which these items are displayed is the order in which they will be read out loud to a user of assistive technology, thus, it is important to ensure that the tag order is correct and that tags are not missing. Begin by opening the tags panel:

**step 1.** If the tags panel is not showing on the navigation bar, go to the View menu > Navigation Panels > select Tags. This will open the Content, Order and Tags panels in a small window. You can dock each panel on the left navigation bar by clicking on the tab name for each panel and dragging and dropping into the navigation panel. Click on the tags panel to view the tags panel (see **Tools of the Trade** section to learn how to dock these panels).

**step 2.** In the tags panel you will see an icon labeled tags which has a (+) expand button next to it. Click the expand (+) button to expand the list of tags. The expanded tags list may still contain collapsed items so you will need to make sure to click on all of

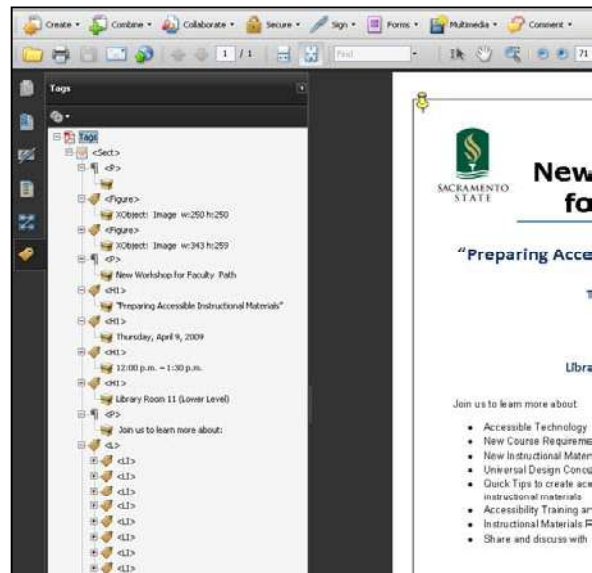
the (+) expand buttons to see all tags contained in document. Take note of the tag order.

**step 3.** To highlight content on your PDF as you click through tag items, click on the **Options** drop down menu > select **Highlight Content**.



**step 4.** Move tags around by clicking on a tag so that it is highlighted and dragging and dropping it to the correct location.

In this example (at right), the Tags Panel shows reading order beginning with an empty paragraph and a figure. The Read Out Loud Feature in Acrobat and screen reading software like JAWS will read the PDF by announcing the figure information since it goes by what is delineated in the tags panel.

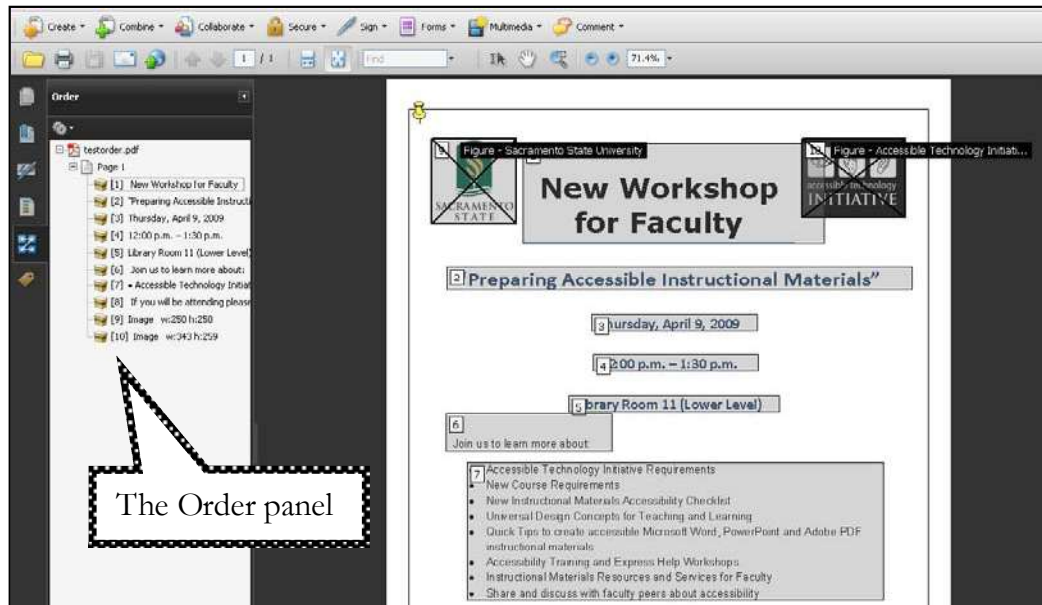


## Using the Order Panel

When you open your PDF document in Adobe Acrobat the first thing you will notice are a series of menus at the top and left side of the window. The **Order Panel** is located on the Left side of the window (Navigation Panel) and allows you to view, re-order and re-tag structured PDF information. To view the Order Panel do the following:

- step 1.** Click the **Order** button located on the navigation panel on the left side of the window. If the Order button is not docked on the left side of the window:
- Go to the **View** Menu, select **Navigation Panels**, and select **Order**. The **Order** button will now be available for you to select from the Navigation Panel on the left.

*step 2.* The Order Panel will display. In the Order Panel you will see the outline of all the pages and components that make up your document. If this outline is not already expanded, you can select the maximize button (+) next to the name of the document in the Order Panel to expand it.



When you select the Order Panel, a series of numbered gray boxes will highlight the different components that make up your PDF document indicating numerically the reading order of each component and section on each page. The numbers match up with the numbered items you see in the Order Panel. Notice that when you select an item from the order panel, the gray boxes on the document will become highlighted in light blue. The gray numbered boxes start at number 1 on each page of the PDF document. Take note of any items in the document that are labeled numerically in the wrong order. This will affect in the order the items are read to a user using a screen reader and in the order the information appears in a text version of the PDF document.

Notice that the reading order for the PDF document shown above begins with “New Workshop for Faculty” in the Order Panel. This does not match the reading order in the Tags Panel which begins with information about figures in the PDF as seen in our example in the **Using the Tags Panel** section of this document. You will need to correct the reading order in the Order Panel to match that of the Tags Panel, or if you want the PDF to be read in the order the Order Panel displays, you will need to go back into the tags panel and re-arrange the tags accordingly.

To correct the reading order of a PDF document do the following:

*step 1.* From the **Order** Panel, navigate to the page of the document that has the incorrect reading order.

*step 2.* Expand the outline of items for that page by clicking the expand (+) button.

*step 3.* You will see a series of small tan box icons next to each component on that page.

Noting the number of the items on the page, place your cursor on the tan box for the component you want to re-order, and drag and drop the box above or below items in the outline. The selected item will be re-numbered according to the location where it

was dragged and dropped. Verify between the document view and the order panel that the items are numbered correctly.

*step 4.* After editing the reading order go back to the Tags Panel and make sure the tags panel matches the order panel. If it does not, then begin re-ordering tags as appropriate.