

Acrobat 4.0 (Windows NT 4.0): Nothing happens when I click the Create Adobe PDF icon in Microsoft Word 97. What's going wrong?

The button probably isn't working because you're currently logged on as a user other than the one who installed Adobe Acrobat 4.0. When you (or someone else) installed Acrobat 4.0 in Windows NT, the installer created default Acrobat registry keys specific to the logged-in user. If you log on as a different user, you get a different set of registry keys—which don't include the Acrobat default keys. Acrobat will still work if you try to run it under these circumstances (it will automatically add keys to the registry as necessary), but the same isn't true for Acrobat PDFMaker, which is the component used by the Create Adobe PDF function in Word 97.

There are a few ways you can fix or work around this problem. The easiest option is to relaunch Windows NT and log on as the same user who installed Acrobat 4.0. If you can't or don't want to do that, make sure you have administrator rights, log on as yourself, and reinstall Acrobat (to the same location so you don't end up with two versions of the program, which would waste disk space).

There's also a third option, but it's a little tricky. It involves manually adding the Acrobat 4.0 default registry keys to the Windows registry for your user profile, and to do this you must have administrator rights. You should not attempt this unless you're familiar with the Windows registry and have edited it before. If you have the slightest doubts, ask someone for help—making a mistake while editing the Windows registry can have grisly results (it could cause Windows or individual applications to stop working right). Adobe Technical Support won't be able to help you edit the Windows registry or troubleshoot any problems resulting from your editing job.

If you're still game to try this fix, here are the steps you need to follow.

1. If you've never started Acrobat 4.0 before, start it. This creates the registry entries you're going to modify. Then exit from Acrobat.
2. Choose Start > Run, type "regedit" in the Open text box, and click OK to start the Registry Editor.
3. Make a backup copy of the registry: Choose Registry > Export Registry File, select a location and name for the backup file in the Export Registry File dialog box, and click Save.
4. Open and select the key (it looks like a folder) called HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Adobe\Adobe Acrobat\4.0. Make sure you do not select the similarly named HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Adobe\Acrobat\4.0.
5. Choose Edit > New > Key. A new key will appear with the value "Default."
6. Name the key "InstallPath" (with no spaces and no quotation marks), and press Enter.
7. Right-click the key's Default value on the right side of the window and choose Modify from the pop-up menu,

Want to share a tip or question with other Acrobat users? Try the User-to-User forums at www.adobe.com/support.

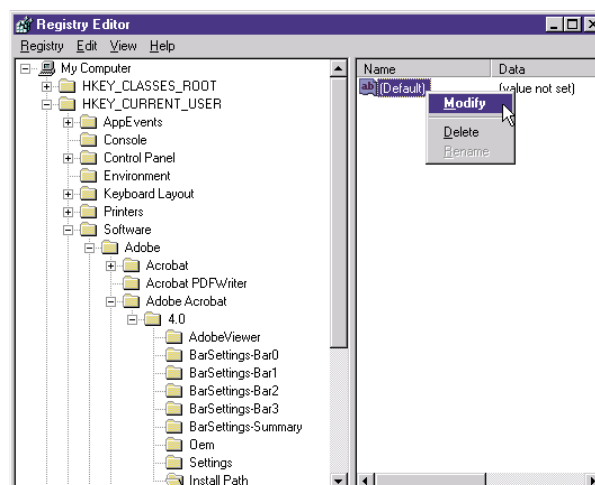
as shown in the illustration on this page.

8. In the Value Data field of the Edit String dialog box, enter the path to the folder in which the Acrobat 4.0 application file, Acrobat.exe, is installed.

For example, enter C:\Program Files\Adobe\Acrobat 4.0\Acrobat (that's the default location—if the program is installed elsewhere, enter a different path). Do not include "Acrobat.exe" in the path. Click OK.

9. Exit from the Registry Editor to save your changes.

If you relaunch Word now, the Create Adobe PDF icon should work. Please note that if you later log on with power-user or user rights (rather than administrator rights), PDFMaker won't work correctly. For more information, see document 323544, "Error 'Acrobat Distiller cannot distill this file' When Printing to Acrobat PDFMaker in Windows NT," available online at www.adobe.com/support/database.html. Also note that PDFMaker 4.0 doesn't work with Microsoft Office 2000.



The Registry Editor interface resembles that of Windows Explorer; each "key" looks like a folder. The path to the correct key is confusing—follow the directions in step 4 carefully.

What's the difference between Acrobat Distiller and PDFWriter? When should I use one instead of the other?

Acrobat Distiller and PDFWriter, both of which are included in a default Acrobat installation, are tools you can use to convert a document from its native format—from an Adobe Illustrator drawing to a Microsoft Excel document and anything in between—to Adobe PDF (portable document format). But these two tools work quite differently, and offer distinct advantages in certain situations.

PDFWriter is a printer driver that converts files directly to PDF (you just "print" after choosing PDFWriter as your driver; instead of getting a paper version of your document, you get a PDF file). Distiller is an application that converts PostScript files to PDF. To use Distiller, you generally print to a file using a PostScript driver, and then process the PostScript file through Distiller. In some Acrobat installations, however, this process is quicker—Distiller can convert the original file to PostScript and then convert the PostScript to PDF.

Generally speaking, Distiller often produces higher-quality PDF files than PDFWriter, but PDFWriter is usually faster and more convenient than Distiller.

When to use PDFWriter. PDFWriter is most suitable for simple business documents and documents that contain mainly text, such as those created in Microsoft Word or Excel. PDFWriter is also a good option in the following situations:

- Your document contains no EPS (encapsulated PostScript) graphics.
- Your document doesn't use multiple-master PostScript fonts that you want to embed (PDFWriter cannot embed multiple-master fonts).
- Your system has a limited amount of RAM.
- You want to produce PDF files more quickly than you can with Distiller.

When to use Distiller. Distiller is best for any graphically intense document. Use it in the following situations:

- You need to convert documents created with desktop-publishing applications such as Adobe PageMaker, Adobe InDesign, Adobe FrameMaker, Adobe Illustrator, QuarkXPress, or Macromedia FreeHand.
- You need to choose specific resampling and compression methods for raster images (PDFWriter doesn't offer nearly the resampling and compression control that Distiller does).
- Your document contains EPS graphics.
- Your document uses multiple-master PostScript fonts and you want to embed them.
- Your document contains color-management information or uses device-independent color.
- You need to preserve PostScript features, such as DSC (document structuring convention) comments, in the PDF files.
- You need to send PDF files to a prepress shop or a service provider for high-end publishing.
- You want to convert several PostScript files to PDF in a batch process.
- You're using the Create PDF File command in Word 97 and want to include bookmarks and links.
- You want to embed Asian fonts in PDF files.

type of graphic file	original image	PDF file size	
	FILE SIZE (BYTES)	FROM DISTILLER 3	FROM DISTILLER 4
EPS	950,272	39,026	38,023
COLOR TIFF	2,506,129	64,005	253,398
GRAYSCALE TIFF	661,745	81,527	248,340
BLACK-AND-WHITE TIFF	91,236	92,298	92,112
DUOTONE EPS	680,897	229,017	227,993
TRITONE EPS	681,482	228,504	227,917

Distiller 4 is making much bigger PDF files than Distiller 3. Am I doing something wrong?

Probably not. The version of Distiller that comes with Acrobat 4 has a problem that's likely affecting your PDF file sizes—Acrobat Distiller 4.0 doesn't compress color and grayscale images correctly; it uses the same level of compression whether you choose high or medium, and the same level whether you choose low or minimum. Adobe is aware of the problem and is working to resolve it; a fix should be available by the time you read this. For more information, call Adobe Customer Services at (800) 272-3623.

The table above shows some examples of how PDF files with certain types of graphics can vary in size if produced with Distiller 3.x versus Distiller 4.0 when medium compression is selected. Your results may vary.

Now that I'm using Acrobat 4, I'm having trouble printing to my non-PostScript printer when the PDF file has more than about 100 pages. It looks like I'm running out of hard-disk space. What's wrong?

Chances are you're using a printer driver other than the one designed by the printer manufacturer, and this is causing Acrobat 4 or Acrobat Reader 4 to generate extremely large spool files (a spool file is a temporary print file that stores your print job while it "waits" to be fed to your printer). These spool files can get so big that you run out of disk space and can't finish your print job. For example, if you're printing a 60 K PDF file to a Hewlett-Packard DesignJet, you could end up with a 298 MB spool file.

This can happen with various PCL printers (commonly used with Windows systems) and some QuickDraw printers (often used with Macintosh systems). The best way to fix it is to contact the printer's manufacturer to obtain and install a driver designed specifically for your printer. Such drivers optimize the data in the spool file for a particular printer so that the spool file doesn't get unnecessarily large.

If you can't get a new printer driver right away, or if your printer manufacturer doesn't offer a specially designed driver for your printer, here are some other workarounds.

- Print to a PostScript printer.
- Print fewer pages at a time.
- Print at a lower resolution (for example, 150 dpi instead of 300 dpi)—this decreases the size of your spool file.
- If the Print dialog box you're using offers a Print As Image option, select it.
- Deselect the Fit To Page option in the Print dialog box (this will keep Acrobat from scaling your document, which can cause the printer driver to create a larger spool file).

PDF Writer is generally fine for basic office documents (left); Distiller is a better choice for graphically intense files, especially if they include EPS graphics (below).

