Creating Accessible PDFs Using Adobe In-Design

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Authors:

NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

Walei Sabry

Christian Valle

Arthur Jacobs

Layout Designer:

Christian Valle

This guide is meant to assist you in using Adobe In-Design to create accessible PDF files. The process has two steps.

1. Using Adobe In-Design to create a tagged PDF
2. Using Adobe Acrobat Pro to adjust some of the tags in the PDF

This guide only has the Adobe In-Design instructions. A second guide on using Adobe Acrobat Pro to fix the PDF tag structure will be available soon.

Table of Contents

Choosing Your Layout

Choosing the correct layout can enhance your process by exposing a lot of the tools that you will need for accessibility. The layout can be changed by following these instructions.

- Navigate to the upper right-hand side next to the Adobe Stock search box.
- Choose the layout labeled Typography.

Preparing and Applying styles

Creating paragraph styles can enhance the process of formatting your content. It can also ensure that you are formatting the document for accessibility as you work on the document. This will save you a lot of time.

Creating a Body Paragraph Style

Here are instructions on how to create your Body Paragraph style. It will be the style you use for normal paragraphs and lists that are in your documents.

Step 1: Navigate to the Paragraphs Tab

- In the right-hand side pane choose Paragraph Styles.
- You can also find Paragraph Styles in the Menu Bar by choosing Type then Paragraph Styles.
- Mac Shortcut: ⌘ and F11.

Paragraph Style Options

General	Style Name: [Basic Paragraph]
Basic Character Formats	Location:
Advanced Character Formats	**General**
Indents and Spacing	
Tabs	Based On: [No Paragraph Style]
Paragraph Rules	Next Style: [Same style]
Paragraph Border	Shortcut:
Paragraph Shading	
Keep Options	Style Settings: — Reset To Base
Hyphenation	
Justification	[No Paragraph Style] + next: [Same style]
Span Columns	
Drop Caps and Nested Styles	
GREP Style	
Bullets and Numbering	
Character Color	☐ Apply Style to Selection
OpenType Features	
Underline Options	
Strikethrough Options	
Export Tagging	

☐ Preview   Cancel   OK

Step 2: Add new Style

Basic paragraph will be your normal style.

- Create a new style by selecting the plus sign.
- Double click on the newly created Paragraph Styles and a dialogue box will appear

Step 3: Setting the Attributes of your Style

On the left of the dialogue box there is a list of things that can be edited.

- Under General, you can name your style here.
  - You can name this style body paragraph.

- Under Basic Character Formats, you can choose font family, font style, font size and leading/line spacing.
    - Font Family: We recommend Ariel, Avenir, Verdana, Helvetica, Tahoma.
    - Font Style: For body paragraphs we recommend regular.
    - Font Size: We recommend 14 or 16 point. Never go lower than 12.
    - Leading: if the font size is 12 point, set leading to 15 point. If the font size is 14 point set leading to 18 point.
- Under Indents and Spacing, you can set your Alignment and spacing
    - Alignment: set this to left aligned
    - Space After field: for body paragraphs we recommend to set it to 0.2".
- Under character color, you can change the color of the font. Be sure to choose something that will have good contrast.
- Export Tagging: at the end of the list is export tagging, here is where you choose the accessibility tag for this style. This is the most important part of creating a style.
    - In the section labeled tag for EPUB and HTML, there is a dropdown labeled tag. choose automatic. This will ensure that your paragraphs and lists are tagged correctly.
    - In the section labeled tag for PDF, there is a dropdown labeled tag. choose automatic. This will ensure that your paragraphs and lists are tagged correctly.
- Click OK to complete creating your Body Paragraph style.

Styles Attributes Reference

The following are our recommendations for the attributes to use when creating all of your styles. It is organized into two types of documents. Documents with a table of contents and documents that do not have a table of contents. Note, we recommend including a table of contents for all documents that are longer than three pages.

If there is no table of contents

For a shorter document that is three pages or less, we recommend to use the following styles.

Heading 1 Style

This will be your title style. Only apply this style to the title of your document.

- Style name: Title or Heading 1
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 24 point
- Leading: 30 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h1) tag

Heading 2 Style

This style will be used for broad sections of your document. For example, you would apply it to the "Description" heading of an event flyer.

- Style name: Heading 2
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 18 point
- Leading: 23 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h2) tag

Heading 3 Style

This style will be used for sub-sections of your document.

- Style name: Heading 3
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font

- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 16 point
- Leading: 20 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h3) tag

Heading 4 Style

- Style name: Heading 4
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 14 point
- Leading: 18 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h4) tag

Heading 5 Style

- Style name: Heading 5
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold and Underlined
- Font Size: 12 point
- Leading: 15 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h5) tag

If there is a table of contents

We recommend creating the following styles for a document that has a table of contents and is longer than three pages.

Title Style

- Style name: Title
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 24 point
- Leading: 30 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (P) tag

Heading 1 Style

- Style name: Heading 1
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 18 point
- Leading: 23 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h1) tag

Heading 2 Style

- Style name: Heading 2
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold

- Font Size: 16 point
- Leading: 20 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h2) tag

Heading 3 Style
- Style name: Heading 3
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 14 point
- Leading: 18 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h3) tag

Heading 4 Style
- Style name: Heading 4
- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Bold
- Font Size: 12 point
- Leading: 15 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h4) tag

Heading 5 Style
- Style name: Heading 5

- Font Family: Arial or any Sanserif font
- Font Style: Underlined
- Font Size: 12 point
- Leading: 15 point
- Align: Center or left
- Space after: change to 0 or set it to your preference
- Font color: be sure to use high color contrast
- Export tagging for EPUB/HTML and PDF: choose the (h5) tag

Applying Styles

Once you have created your styles, you can apply them to your content by following the steps below.

- Select the text you want to apply a Style to.
- Then choose the Style you want to apply to the selected text by going to the Paragraph Styles pane. You can find the Paragraph Styles pane by going to the menu bar then choosing Type then Paragraph Styles.
- Mac Shortcut: ⌘ and F11.

Creating Lists

To create lists that will have proper tags when exported, follow the steps below.

- Select the text you want to apply a Bulleted List to.
- After selecting the text go to the menu bar then choosing Type then Bulleted and Numbers Lists the choose Apply Bullets.

Note: When formatting a Bulleted List, you should always use a style with its export tagging set to "Auto" in order for the Bulleted List to be exported with the proper tags.

Creating Hyperlinks

The following are instructions for creating accessible text or image hyperlinks.

- Select the text by highlighting it or select the image by clicking on it.
- In the Menu Bar, Choose Type then Hyperlinks & Cross References.
- Choose New Hyperlink. A dialogue box will open.
- In the Link To: drop down box, choose URL.
- In the Destination section, insert the website URL.
- Go to the Appearance section. Then under Character Style, make sure the style is Hyperlink.
- Next to Appearance is Accessibility. If the link is an image, this is where you put the Alt-Text for the image. For text links, leave the accessibility field blank.
  - Example of alt-text, MOPD logo or visit the MOPD website.
- Under PDF Appearance, leave the default Invisible Rectangle.
- Click OK.

Adding Alt-Text to an Image:

All meaningful images need to be described using alt-text. Descriptions assist blind readers in understanding visual content. Alt-text should Be used to add descriptions to logos, icons, pictures, illustrations, maps etc.

Images that are decorative can be hidden from screen readers. Examples of decorative images include a vertical or horizontal bar, a watermark or a ribbon that adds no meaning to the content

Below are instructions on how to add alt-text to an image.

- Click on the image to select it.

- In the menu bar, choose Object then Object Export Options. A dialogue box will pop up.
- Choose the Alt-Text tab. Change Alt-Text Source to Custom.
- Write your description in the textbox below.
- Click Done.
- Note: For decorative images, enter empty quotation marks ("") and the images will be hidden from screen readers.

Creating Tables

Tables are a great way to present data and statistics. Tables should not be used for layout purposes. When tables are used to create a specific layout for a page, that page becomes inaccessible to screen readers. Tables should only contain tabular data. Examples of tabular data include schedules, contact information, statistics, survey results, charts etc.
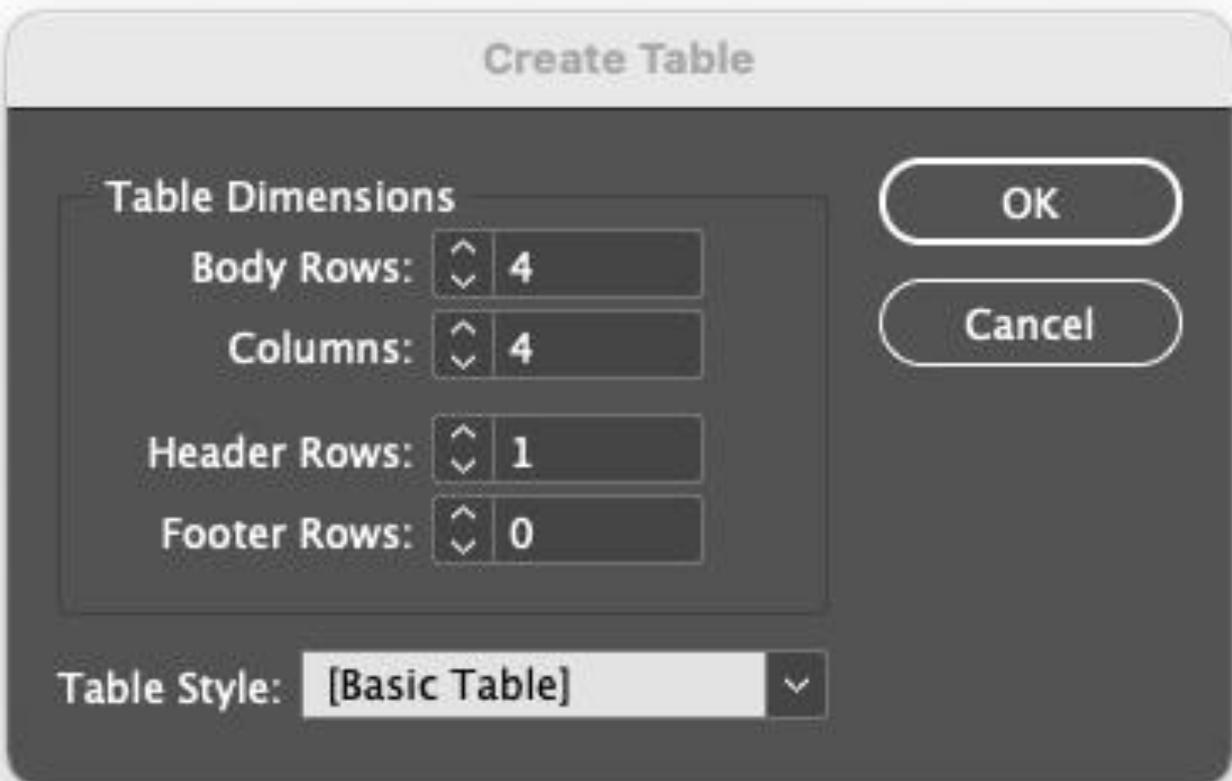
Below are instructions on how to create an accessible table.

- In the menu bar, choose Table then Create Table. A dialogue box will pop up.
- The Table Dimensions area is where you set the number of rows and columns.
  - Body Rows: set the number of rows here.
  - Columns: set the number of columns here
  - For Header Rows, set the number to 1.
- Click OK. You are not done yet.
- The mouse pointer should change to an icon of a table. Draw the size of the table using the mouse. If you click once, the entire page will become a table.
- Double click each cell to edit it.

Anchoring Images and Tables to Paragraphs

For screen reader users, images and tables will be read out of order if they are not associated with a paragraph that is near them on the page. This is accomplished by anchoring the image or table to a nearby paragraph or heading. Once anchored, that image or table will be included in the reading order for screen readers.

Below are instructions on how to anchor an image or table.

- Click the object to select it. A blue box should appear around the object.
- Drag that box to the paragraph you want to anchor the object to. It should be the paragraph before or after the image.
- After it is anchored, the blue box changes to a blue box with an anchor in it.
- Note: if you anchor an image in the middle of a paragraph, it will split up the paragraph into two when it is read by screen readers.

Below are instructions for removing an anchor.

- Go to the Menu bar, select Object then choose Anchored Object.
- Click on Release.

Setting the Reading Order

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of creating an accessible document is setting the reading order. This will ensure that screen readers will read the document in a logical order for blind users.

Note: In order to set the reading order correctly, it is very important to make sure that all paragraphs and headings each have their own text box around them. To add a text box, navigate to the toolbar at the top of the screen and click the T icon. Then draw a text box around each item that is a paragraph or heading.

After making sure all relevant items have a text box around them, you can use the Articles pane to set the reading order. Below are instructions on how to use the Articles pane.

- In the Menu bar, go to Window then choose Articles. A dialogue box pops up.

- Drag and drop the headings and paragraphs from the document into the Articles pane. Arrange them in the order they should be read.
- Note: images and tables cannot be included in the articles pane. To make sure that images and tables are read in the correct order, refer to the section "Anchoring Images and Tables."
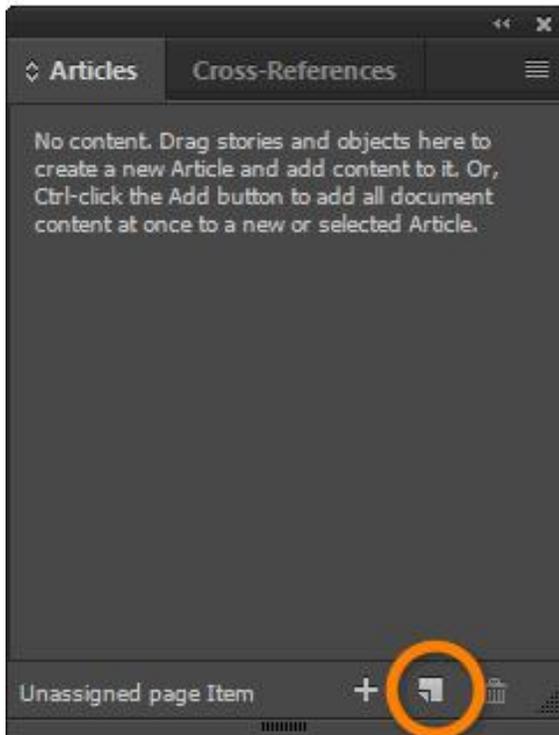
Document properties

It is important to set document properties such as document title. Below are instructions on how to do that.

- In the menu bar, choose File then File Info.
- Insert the title in the Document Title field.
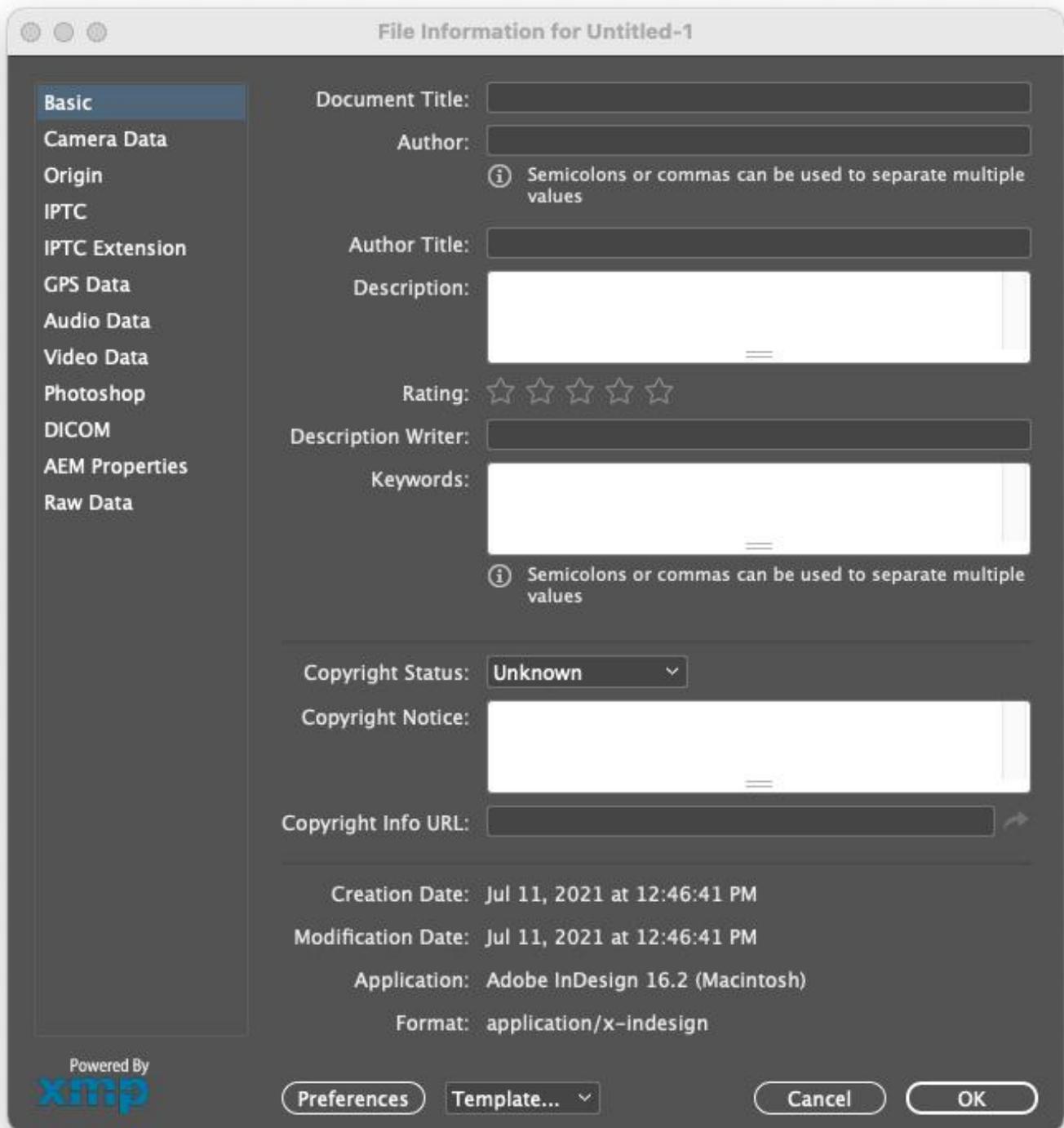
Exporting and Creating an Interactive PDF

Now that you have created your content, formatted it for accessibility, added alt-text to images and set the reading order, it is time to export your document. Follow the steps below to ensure that the accessibility tags are exported to the PDF.

- In the menu bar, choose File then Export. A dialogue box will pop up.

- In the field save As, input the Name of the document.
- Choose where to save your PDF.
- Under Format, choose Adobe PDF (Interactive).
- Then click Save. You are not done yet. Another dialogue box will pop up called Export to Interactive PDF.
- Make sure "Create tagged PDF" is checked.
- Make sure that "Create Acrobat Layers" is checked.
- Click Export.
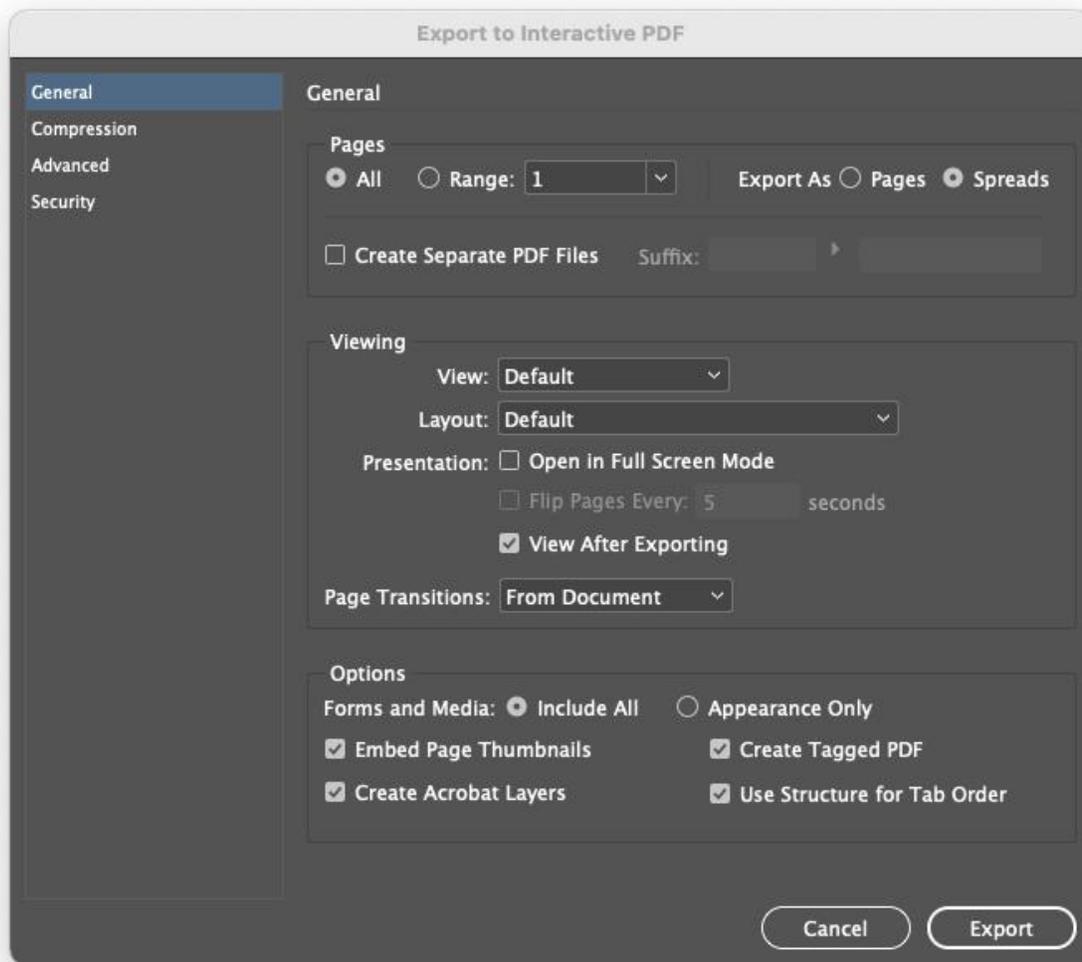
After Exporting

Now you have exported a PDF file with accessibility tags. The next step is to use Adobe acrobat Pro to make some minor adjustments to the tagging of the PDF.