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ABBYY PDF Transformer 3.0 Pro - PC

Your complete PDF solution?

by Paul Lester published on 8 July 2009

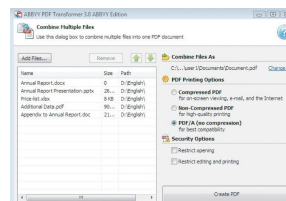
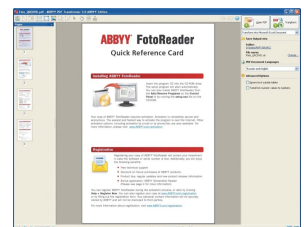
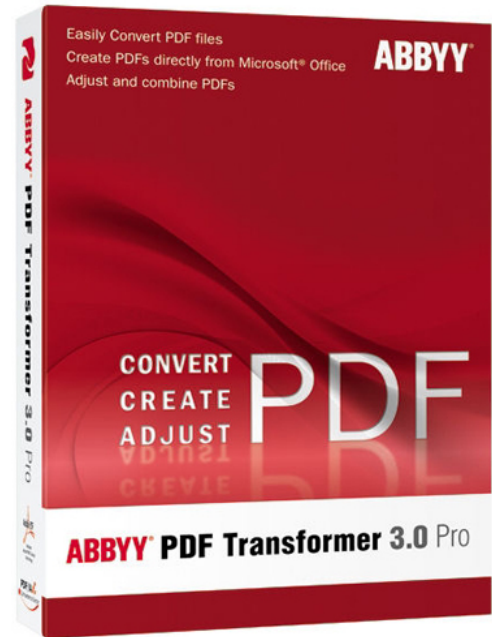
Thankfully there are a range of ways to convert and manage PDF documents without shelling out for the full Adobe package, and ABBYY's PDF Transformer 3.0 Pro attempts to offer a worthy alternative to rivals such as Expert PDF.

The bulk of PDF Transformer's functionality is contained within three main components, accessible individually depending on the task at hand. At the basic level, it's possible to create a PDF from a range of documents including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, HTML and standard text files.

PDFs can be compressed for fast distribution and the software is compatible with PDF/A format for easy indexing and long-term archiving. It's also possible to add password-access security for either opening or editing/printing a file and to enable Bates stamping to place markers on documents for easy identification. The "Convert PDF" option is a little more powerful and is also compatible with most Microsoft Office documents, searchable PDF and PDF/A files, with the option to omit images and control text flow.

Finally, the software offers the option to convert multiple files into a single PDF document for added convenience, with similar conversion and security options available.

An added bonus comes in the form of the ABBYY Screenshot Reader, which can capture and send a window or area of the screen to Word, Excel, file, email or clipboard. Other additional features such as the ability to black-out sensitive or outdated information using the Redaction function, the creation of custom stamps to quickly label documents with important information and retention of live hyperlinks are welcome, and most of the main features are also available through the context-sensitive right-click menu, which adds the ability to append a document to an existing PDF file.



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We'd go into a bit more detail about the general operation and usability of the software but there's really no need, since it goes about its business very effectively without requiring a lot of user interaction or fine-tuning. We were pleased by how fast and straightforward PDF Transformer was to use, its ability to manage the latest PDF standards and developments and the range of compatible formats it can handle. Obviously there may still be a bit of work to do in terms of restructuring a document to fit a new layout, but this is an inevitable problem with conversion and the software does what it can to make this process as painless as possible.

However, in comparison to rivals like Expert PDF, it's considerably more expensive and while a bit faster, easier to use and with increased compatibility for Office document conversion, the need for these additional features will have to justify the expense. It also omits the ability to edit created PDF documents, and though conversion is fast and easy enough to make this a relatively minor problem, some may bemoan the lack of this added convenience.

VERDICT

From a usability point of view there's little to criticise with PDF Transformer, but from a practical one it's difficult to justify the added expense over rivals like Expert PDF unless you'll take advantage of features such as direct Excel and PowerPoint conversion and PDF/A support.

In summary, PDF Transformer is a tidy, easy to use package that does its job extremely well, even if it would have benefited from a lower price-point.

At a glance

What is it?

Quick and easy PDF conversion and management

Good

Good support for MS Office formats, multiple document conversion, fast and easy to use, supports the latest standards

Bad

Pretty expensive, lack of PDF editing features

Verdict

PDF Transformer does its job well and is extremely fast and easy to use, but the cost will need to be justified with good use of the more advanced features

Price £59.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10