



Océ

Adobe PDF Printing for Wide Format

How to avoid wide format PDF printing problems



How to avoid PDF printing problems for Wide Format Printing

Executive Summary

PDF files are widely accepted, easy-to-view and reliable. That makes them one of the most commonly used files for electronically distributing, viewing and printing all types of data and information. There are many different versions of Adobe® PDF files, which may cause users some problems when printing these files, for example:

- Missing fonts
- Color space issues
- Trapping issues
- Missing images.

Because of the increased number of people using PDF printing as well as the increase in the number of versions, Océ offers this guide on how to resolve these PDF printing problems.

A very good way to get around the most common PDF printing problems is through the use of the PDF Preflight tool. PDF Preflight is the process of detecting and fixing any potential issues you may have before printing your PDF document.

The Value of the PDF/X File Format

The simplest tool you can use to troubleshoot a PDF file is a full version of Adobe® Acrobat® Professional software. Both Adobe Acrobat 8.0 Professional and Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro software have preflight tools available to detect and correct common errors using “fix-ups.”

Preflighting PDF files should alert you to potential issues before actually printing the documents. In many cases, the problem PDF files can be corrected. While using PDF Preflight can fix a good majority of PDF issues, it cannot fix every problem. There are just too many variables involved in PDF creation that have an effect on printing.

One of the easiest ways to avoid a large majority of PDF printing problems is to use the PDF/X standard. PDF files can be easily created in or converted to the PDF/X standard using Adobe Acrobat (and many third party applications). The PDF/X standard is supported by Adobe® PostScript® 3™ software and most third party processing software when using the direct PDF printing

method. It was designed for the exchange of print-ready pages in the graphic arts and prepress world. PDF/X-1a and PDF/X-3 are two versions of this standard. Either one should work well, but Océ recommends using PDF/X-3 when possible.

The PDF/X standard requires that all fonts be embedded, appropriate PDF bounding boxes be specified and colors be correctly defined. Using PDF/X eliminates the most common errors in file preparation: missing fonts, color space issues, missing images, page box problems, and overprinting and trapping issues.

The PDF/X standard doesn't support transparency. So, the flattening is done when the PDF/X is created. The result is that a PDF/X file generally process more quickly than PDF files that contain transparency. They properly define all page box settings. And because PDF/X encapsulates all the required page elements, they usually have less printing issues. The one disadvantage is the file size can sometimes be larger than other PDF versions. When encountering a problem printing a PDF, the first course of action should be to convert it to PDF/X-3.

PDF/X can also be set as a default when originally generating PDF files in Adobe products and some other PDF generators.

Standardizing on PDF/X may provide more consistent and reliable output with your printer or software.

There are many other pre-flighting tools available in Acrobat that can correct printing problems. If the issues cannot be corrected, it should alert you to potential trouble. At the very least, you'll know there is a problem before printing and disturbing the documents.

Shown is an in depth guide on how to use Preflight to assist you with any potential PDF issues you might have.

Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro Preflight and Print Production Tools

Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro Help feature has a good explanation of the Preflight and Print Production tools. This will provide you with a good understanding of what variables can be checked and corrected.

1. Open Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro software. (Fig. 1)
2. Select Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro Help...from the Help menu

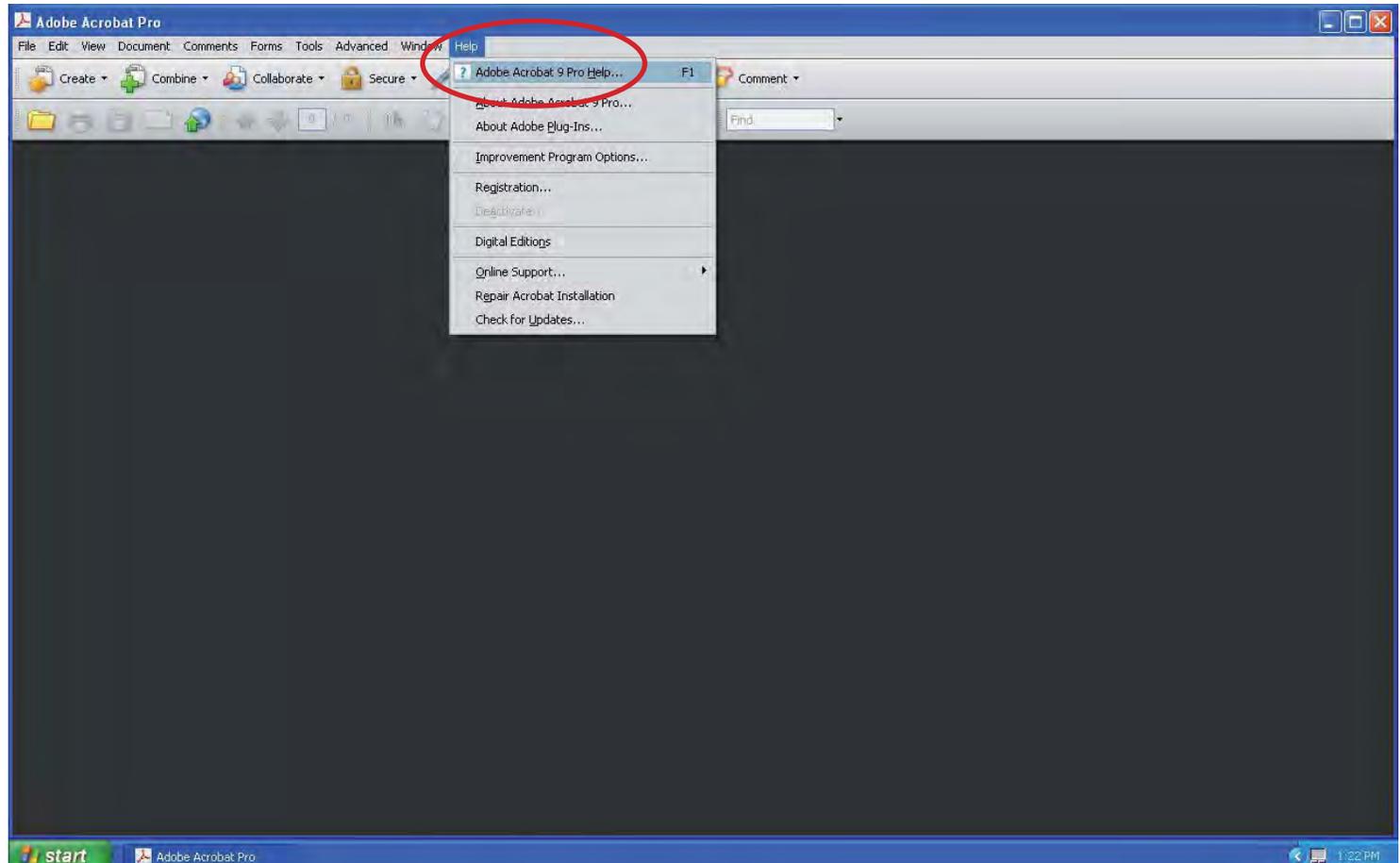


Fig. 1

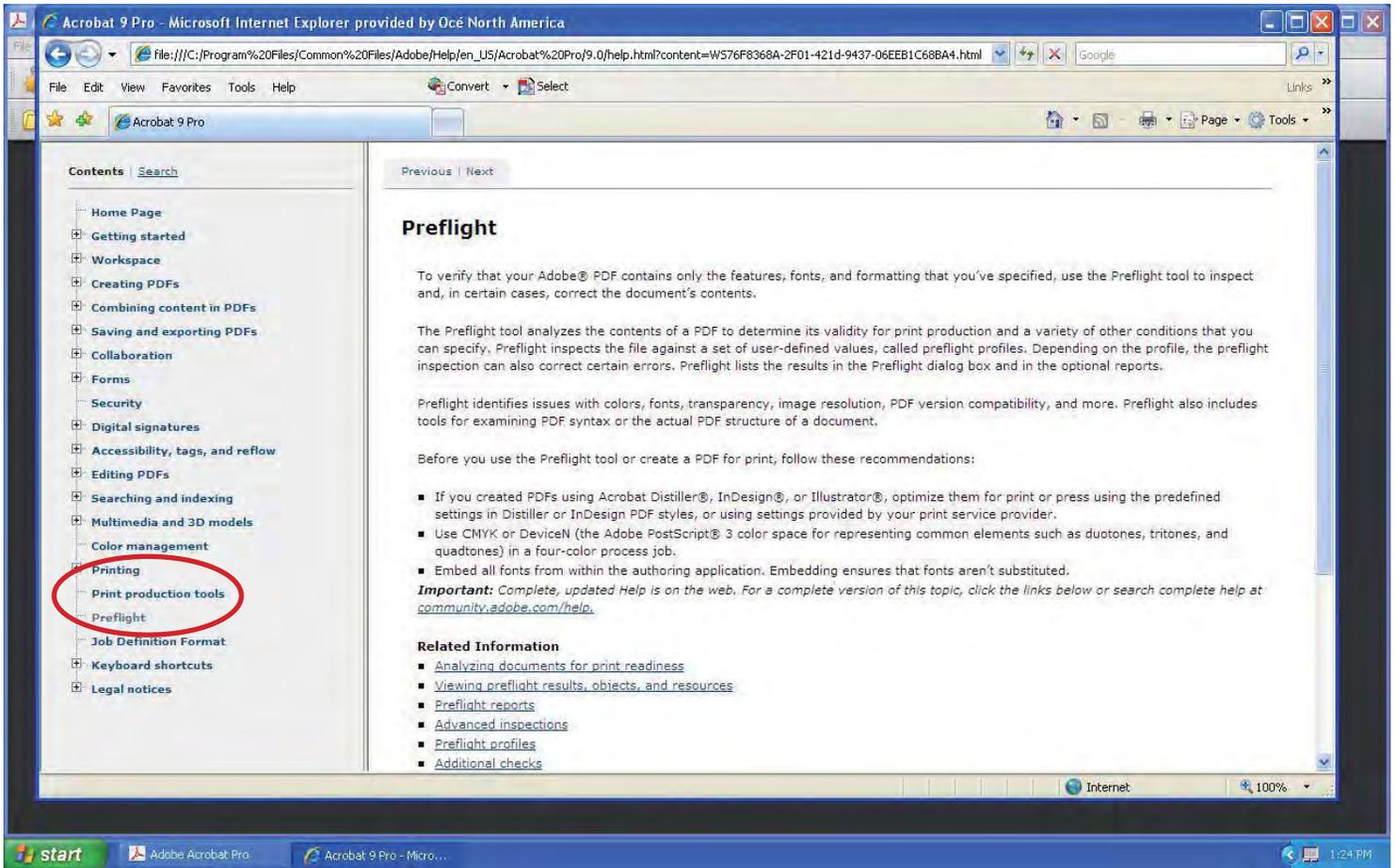


Fig. 2

3. Select Print Production Tools or Preflight from the Contents (Fig. 2).

Using Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro software to Convert a PDF to PDF/X

You should always make a backup copy of the original PDF files before working on them in Acrobat software. Acrobat software will save over the existing file (without warning) when applying fix-ups or converting files.



1. Select Preflight from the Advanced menu (Fig 3).
2. In the Preflight dialog box, click Standard
3. Select Save as PDF/X and then click Continue.
4. Select Save as PDF/X-3 and click Continue (Fig 4).
5. Select Create PDF/X-3 (SWOP) as the conversion profile. (Fig. 5).
6. Select the Apply Corrections checkbox to have Acrobat software automatically fix errors during the conversion. (You can view a list of the fixups that will be applied by clicking the question mark icon.) (Fig 6.)
7. Click Save As and name the new PDF file. This will convert the PDF based on the selected profile and settings (Fig 7).

If the conversion is successful, a green check mark appears in the Preflight dialog box. If the conversion fails, a red X appears in the Preflight dialog box. Even if the conversion fails, some of the fix-ups have still been applied.

Clicking the Create Report button allows you to generate a report detailing information about the PDF file and what was changed to make it PDF/X compliant.

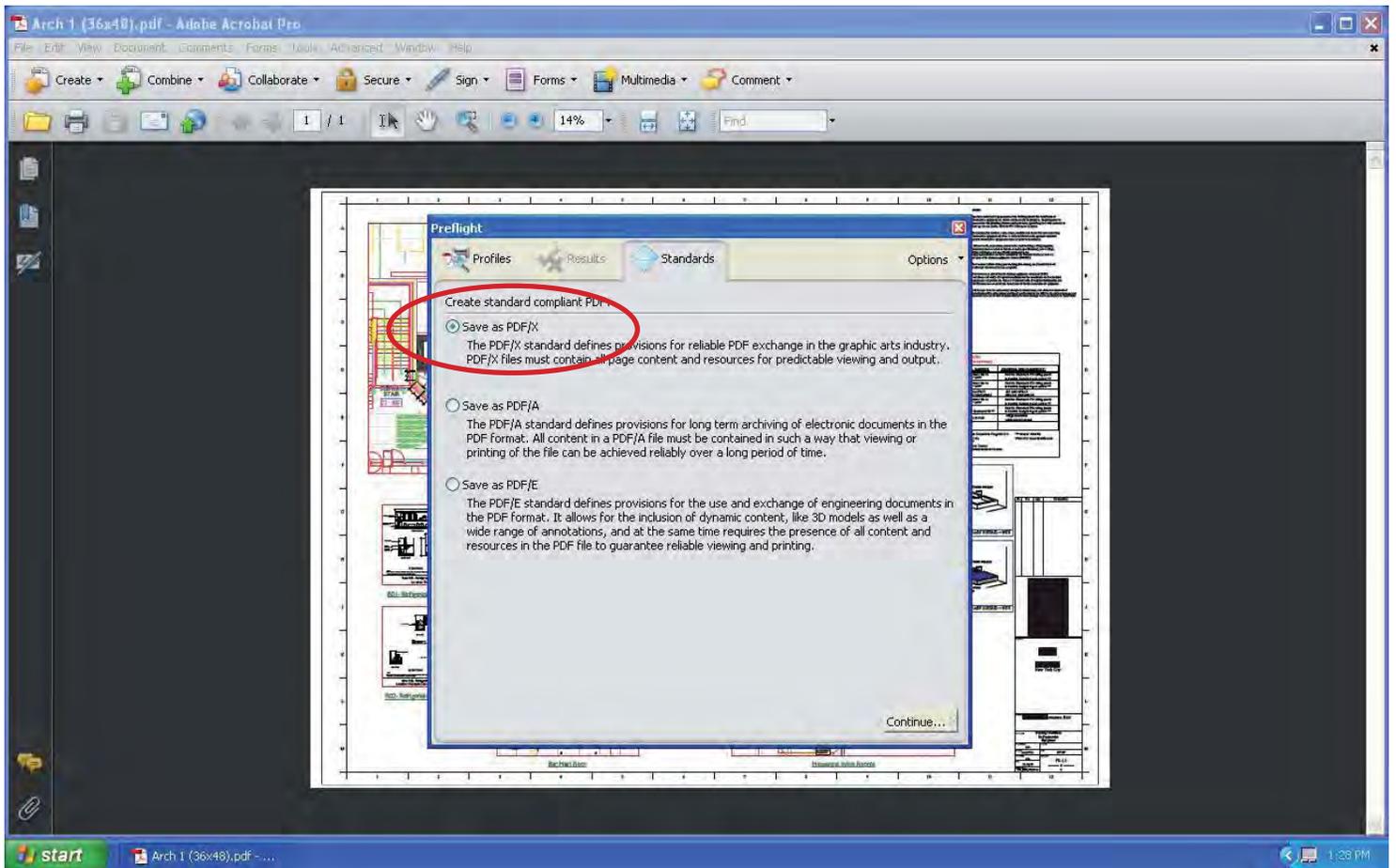


Fig. 3

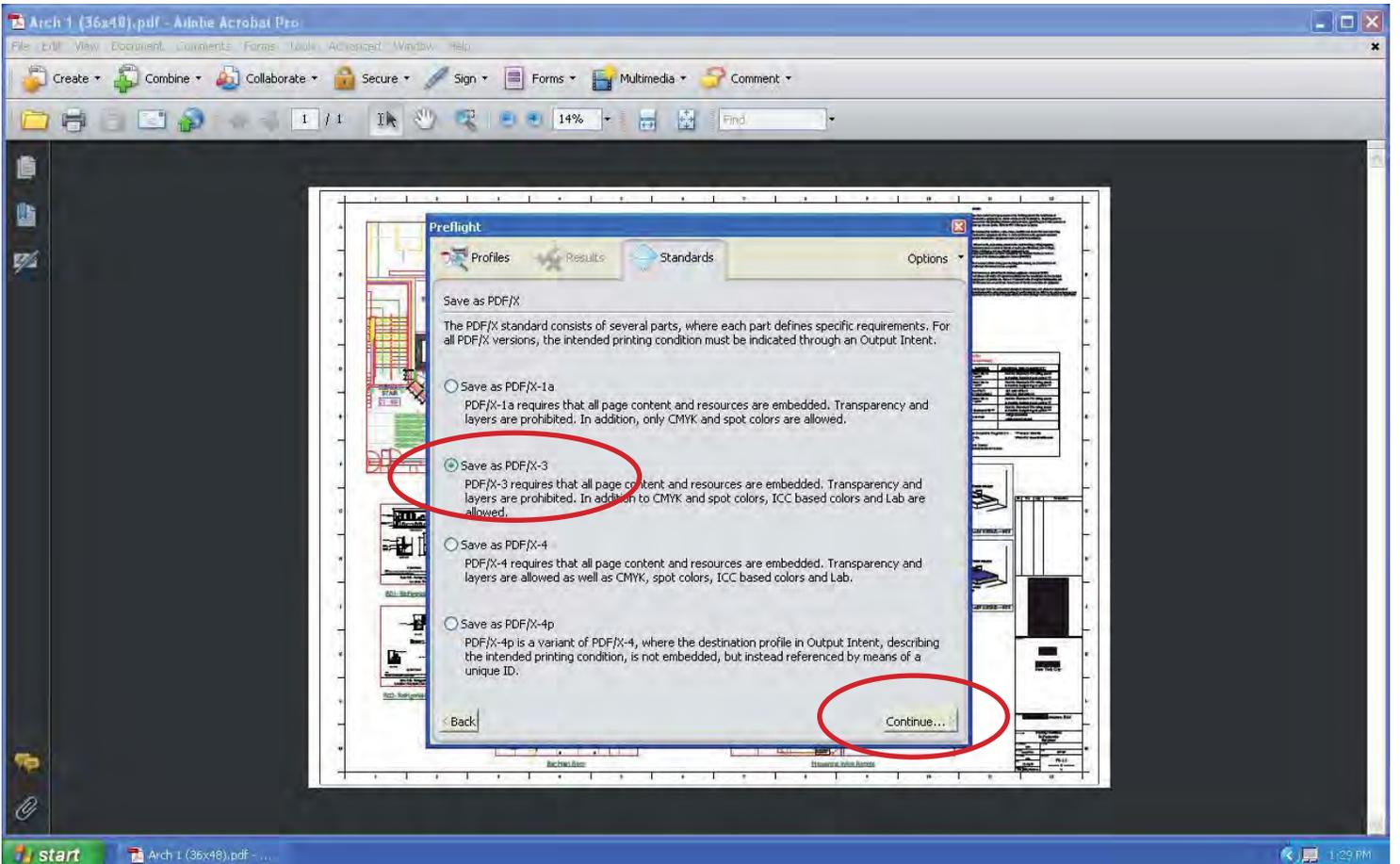


Fig. 4

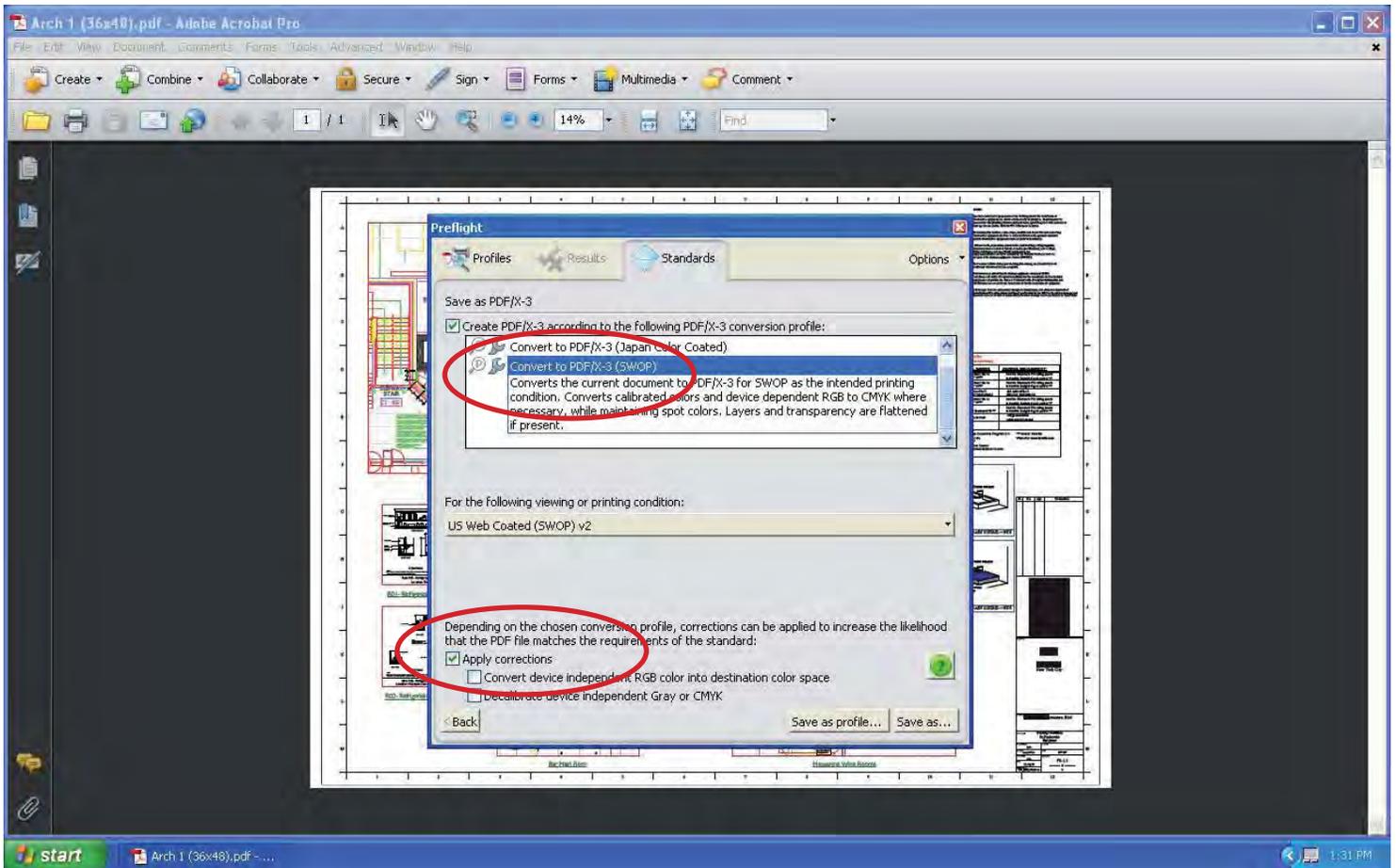


Fig. 5

These reports may be helpful to track common problems or when explaining what was fixed in order to get the file to print.

Batch Conversion in Adobe Acrobat Software

Droplet options can specify how your Preflight droplet processes PDF files that are dragged, or “dropped” into your droplet icon in order to be immediately processed. Creating a droplet in Acrobat software allows you to batch process PDF files. Simply drag and drop multiple PDF files onto the droplet, and Acrobat software will automatically process them. When you inspect files using a droplet, you can separate successful files from problem files and review results in a Preflight Batch Summary Report. Detailed reports can also be generated for each file, if you choose.

Remember to always make a backup copy of the original PDF files before working on them in Acrobat software. Acrobat software will save over the existing file (without warning) when applying fix-ups or converting files.

Creating a droplet

1. Select Preflight from the Advanced menu. (Fig 8).
2. Choose Create Preflight Droplet from the Options menu in the Preflight dialog box.
 1. Choose a Convert to PDF/X-3 (SWOP) from the pop-up menu.
 2. Select the first checkbox under On success: and then choose Move PDF file from the menu.
 3. Click the Success folder... button and select a directory where the successfully converted files will be saved.
 4. Select the first checkbox under On error: and then choose Move PDF file to error folder.
 5. Click the Error folder... button and select a directory where the files that were not converted will be saved.
 6. Click the checkbox for Display a summary PDF with a list of files for which Preflight found errors or warnings.

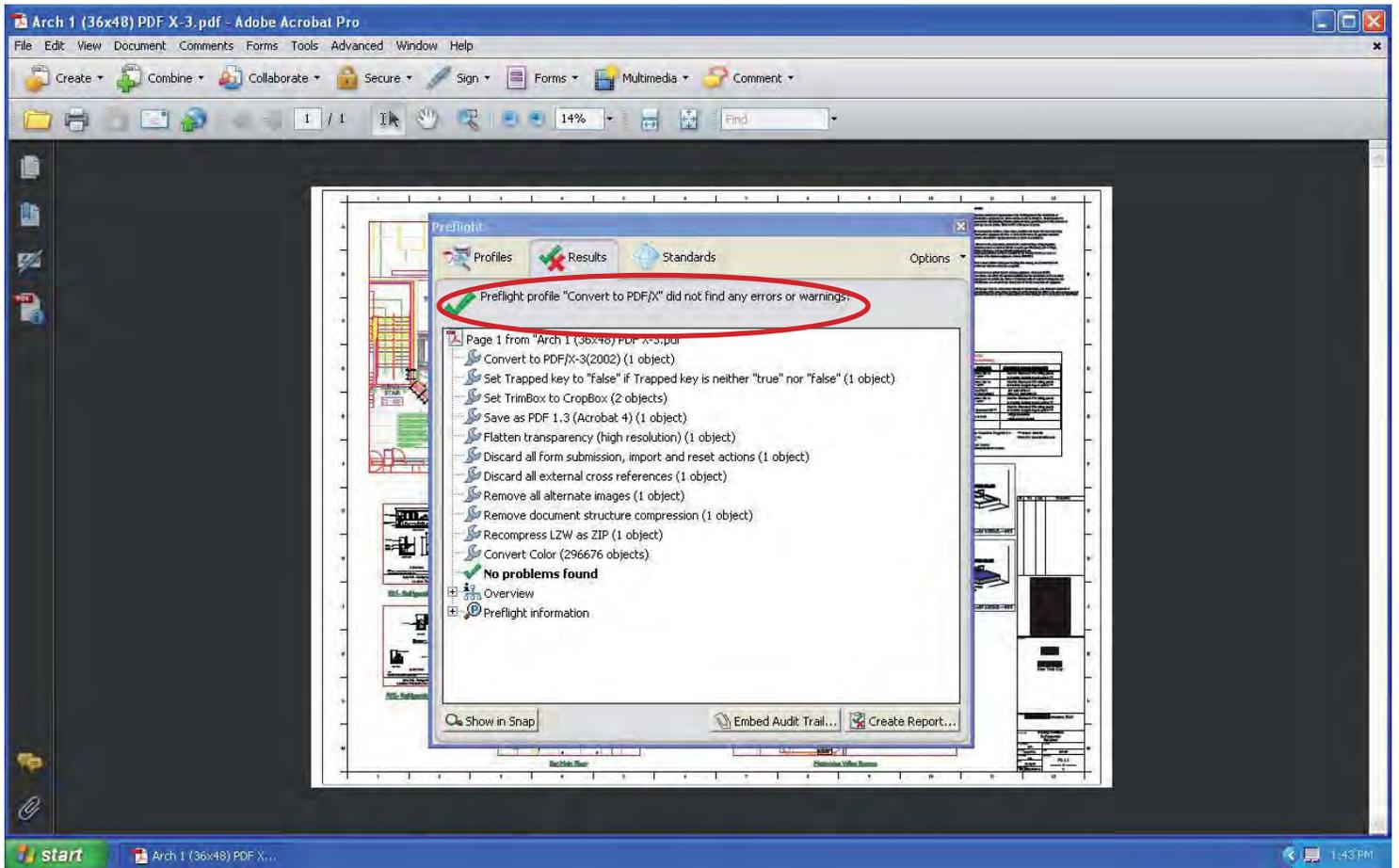


Fig. 6

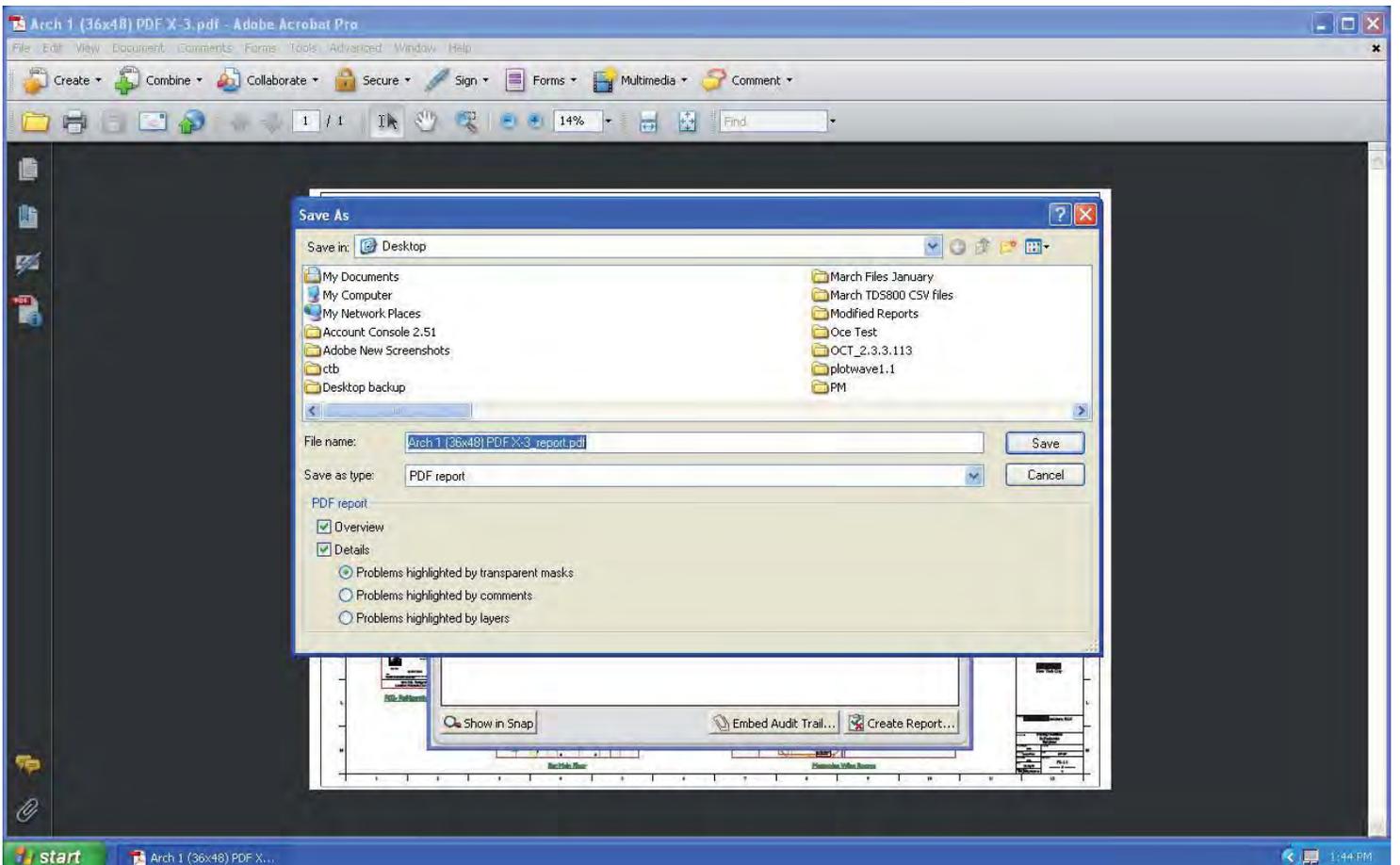


Fig. 7

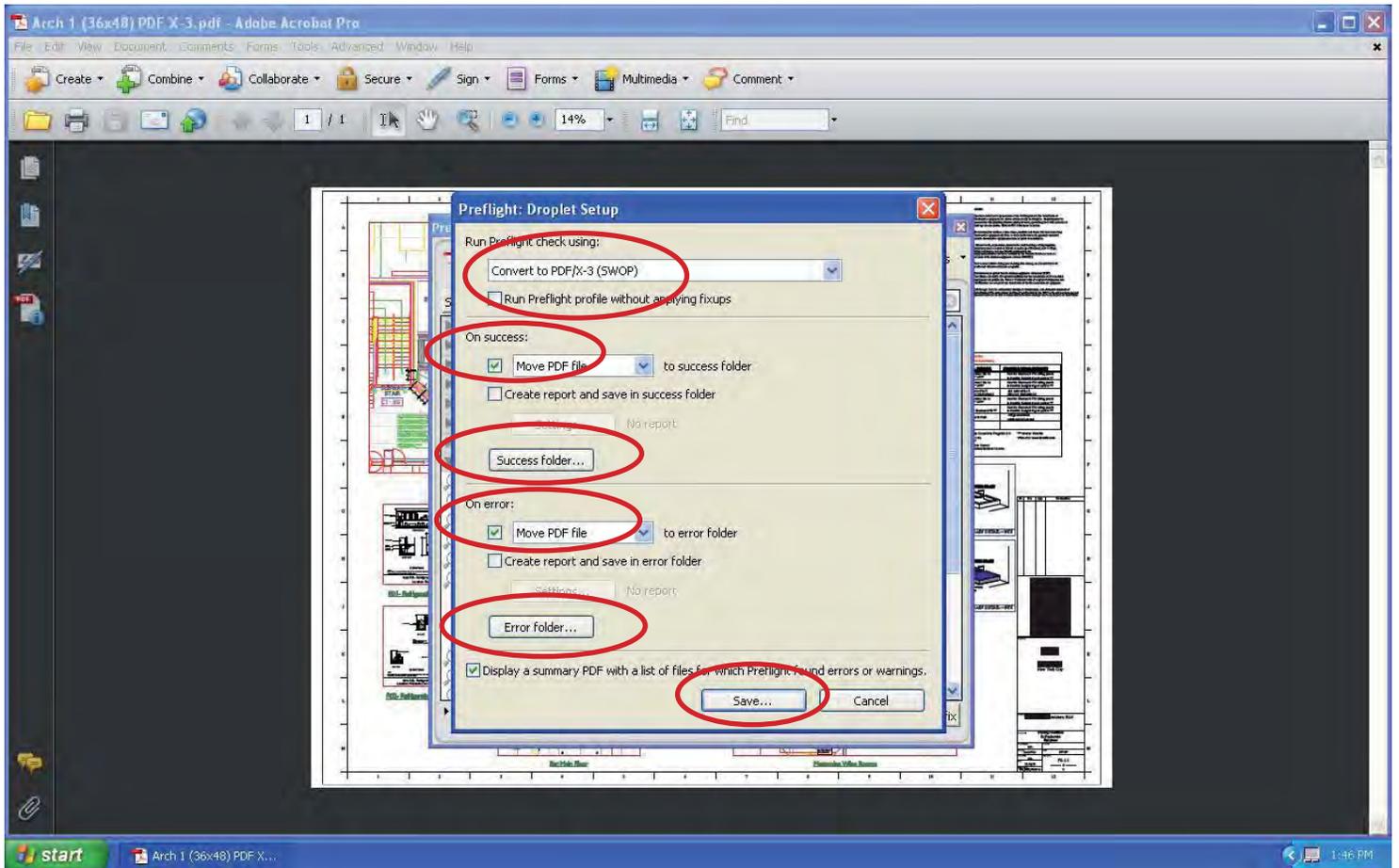


Fig. 8

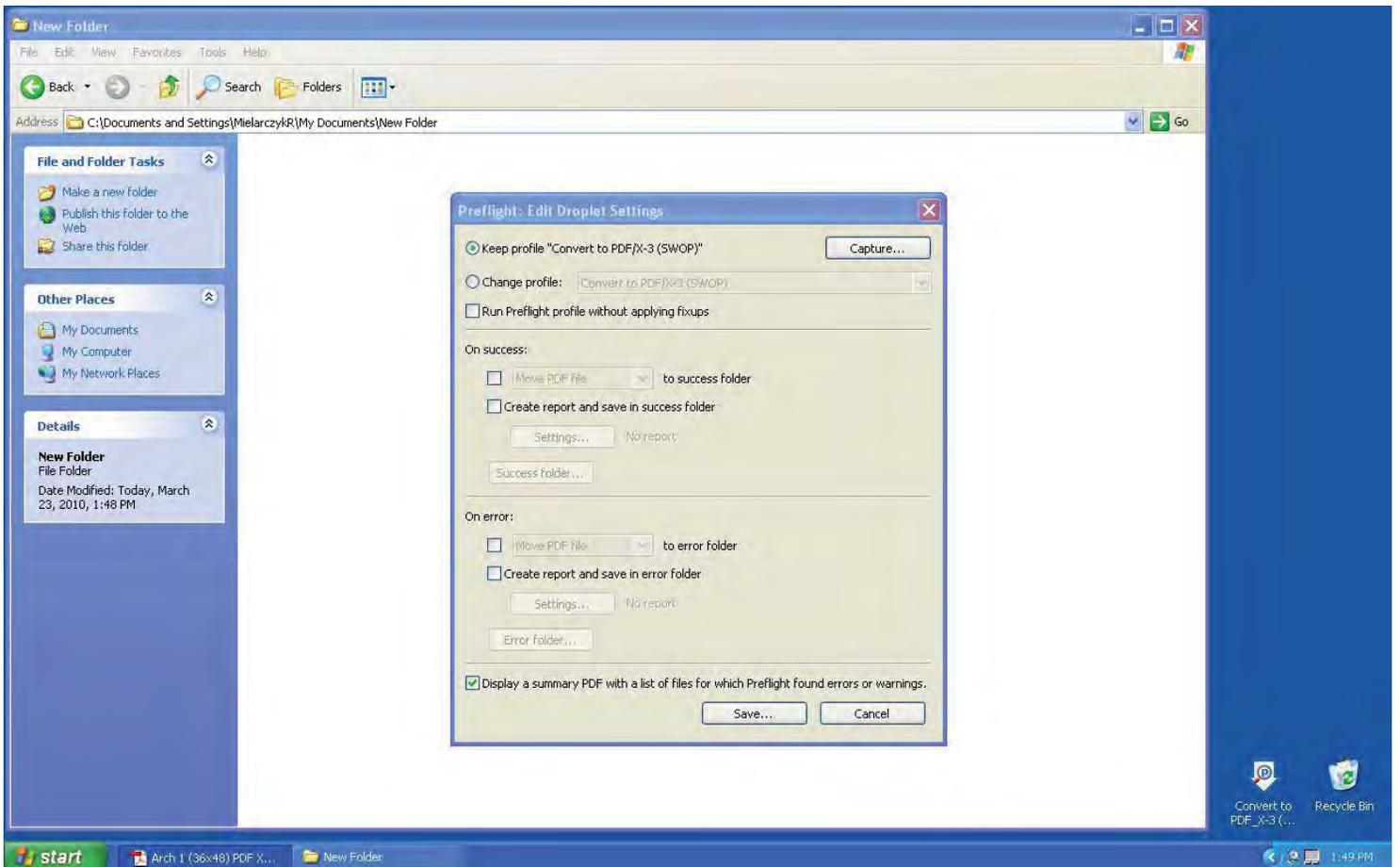


Fig. 9

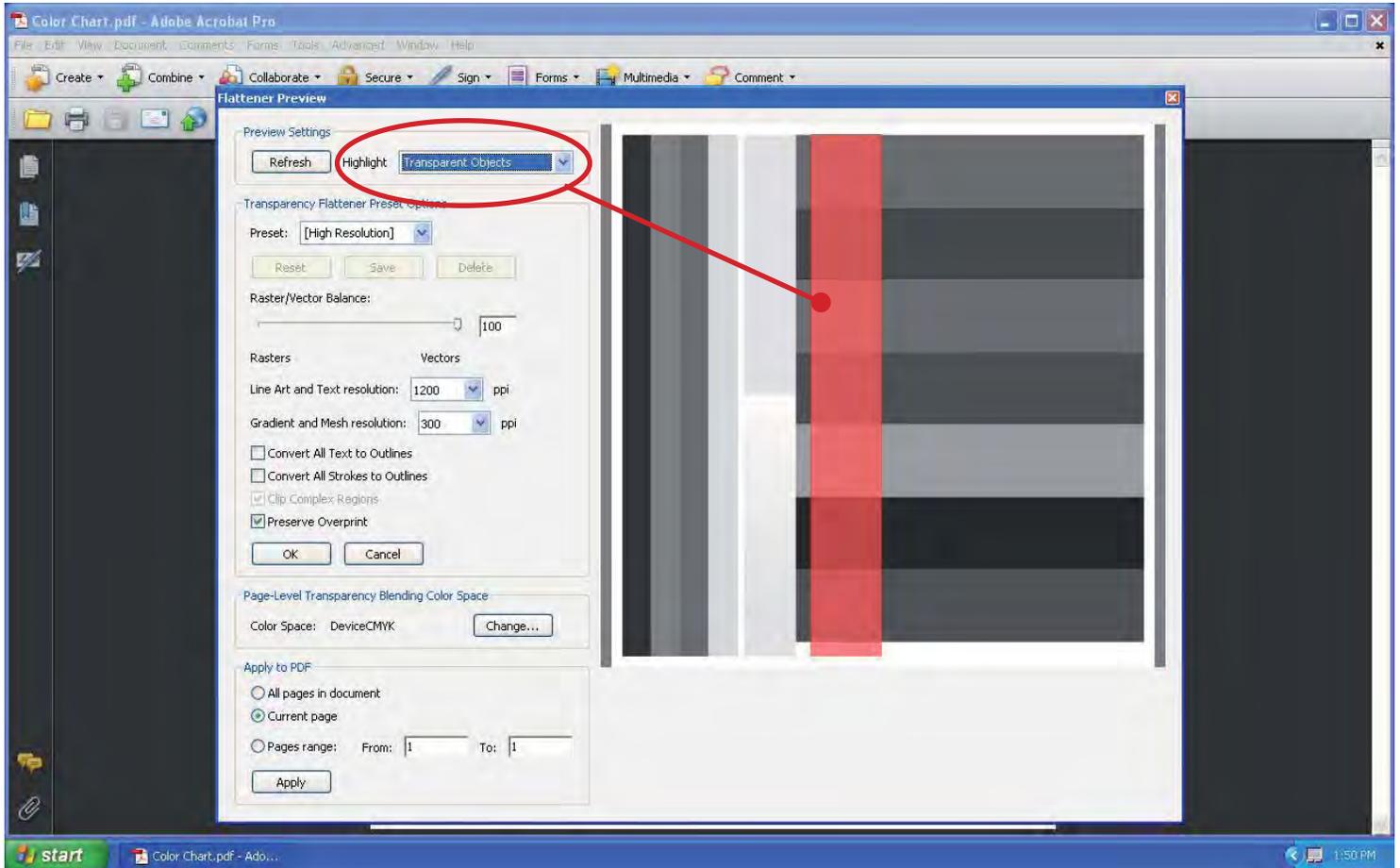


Fig. 10

7. If you wish to save a detailed report for each file that is processed, check the Create report check boxes.
8. Click the Save... button and name the droplet. (Fig 9).

NOTE: Converting files using a droplet will NOT keep the original version of the PDF file untouched in its original directory. It will rewrite the original file and append a X_3 to the end of the file name. It is strongly suggested you make a copy of the original files before using any batch processing droplet.

Editing a droplet

You can edit an existing droplet by simply double clicking on its icon.

Previewing transparencies

Acrobat software allows you to preview transparent objects in a PDF. This can be helpful for identifying problem areas.

1. Open the PDF in Acrobat Software
2. From the Advanced menu, select Print Production: Flattener Preview
3. Select Transparent Objects from the Highlight menu. (Fig 10).

4. Any transparent objects will be highlighted in red.

Conclusion

More and more firms are making the move to PDF because they can easily share, view, print, and archive this type of file. As the use and utility of PDF files increase, so will the demand for plotting them on wide format plotters. Most PDF files are not created equal however. There are many different variables involved that have a negative effect on printing. Some of these include missing fonts, missing images and color space issues. Checking files is essentially used to avoid problems in processing or printing content. This can be done through preflighting your files. The earlier in a process that issues are detected, the easier it is to fix them. This implies that designers should preflight their designs before sending them to their agency or printer.



Printing for Professionals

Océ helps the people who make our world. Companies everywhere use Océ high-speed printing, technical documentation, and professional document systems to keep the wheels of business, industry and government turning. Océ also helps the world. Developing products and services that add value to the document processes of our customers, while minimizing environmental impact and protecting health and safety, has always been one of our core principles. From bank statements to utility bills, from blueprints to newspapers, from on-demand documents to wide-format display graphics, Océ helps our professional customers go “Beyond the Ordinary” in print and document management.

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