



PDF, RTF, HTML File Format Comparison – 2008-2009

Instructional Technology Development / Information Services – SAC 284, Lincoln Park

	RTF (rich text format)	PDF (portable document format)	HTML (hypertext markup language)
Loading	Fast	Slower; however, you can use your browser while downloading.	Generally fast, unless the page has a lot of graphics
Screen appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opens in the user's default word processor. - Some programs allow zoom in or out - Sometimes easier to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not adjust to user's screen; uses defaults set by author - Allows zoom in/out - Less easy to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjusts to user's settings - No zoom - Sometimes easier to read
Intended purpose	Printing	Printing	Browsing/reading on screen
Where it opens	Any word processor	Acrobat Reader (free download) or Preview	Within browser in Blackboard
Formatting, fonts, spacing, pagination, special symbols, etc.	Generally preserved well with a few exceptions	Preserved fully	Layout is not as easy as in a word processor, but HTML editors help
Printing	Better	Better	More difficult
Files	One file	One file	Can be multiple linked documents & files
Graphics	Not included	Included	Not included
Maintenance	Easy	Medium	Difficult
Platform	Cross Platform	Cross Platform	Cross Platform
Universal or Proprietary?	Universal	Proprietary. It requires additional software for creation.	Universal
Software required	Any word processor	Acrobat Reader or Preview	Browser
Annotations	Can annotate	Can annotate documents	Possible with add-in
Authoring	Can create with any word processor, such as Word, WordPerfect, Pages or Works.	Need special software Adobe Acrobat Pro or Mac OS X is available in ITD Faculty Innovation Centers.	Need software unless you can code HTML by hand; Dreamweaver software is available in ITD Faculty Innovation Centers.
Student Editing	Students can edit the document directly and easily.	Students can copy and paste the text into a word processor, but cannot edit the PDF.	Students can copy and paste the text into word processor or edit using HTML.

Questions? E-mail blackboard@depaul.edu or call 773-325-1091!