

## SEO for PDFs – Optimizing PDF for Search

This article focuses on optimizing PDFs for search. There are multiple areas that must be optimized so that you may obtain the greatest visibility for your documents. We'll show you each of those areas within the PDF Document Properties using screen captures from Adobe Acrobat Pro DC.

### What is a PDF?

*“Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format used to present and exchange documents reliably, independent of software, hardware, or operating system. Invented by Adobe, PDF is now an open standard maintained by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). PDFs can contain links and buttons, form fields, audio, video, and business logic. They can also be signed electronically and are easily viewed using free Acrobat Reader DC software.”*

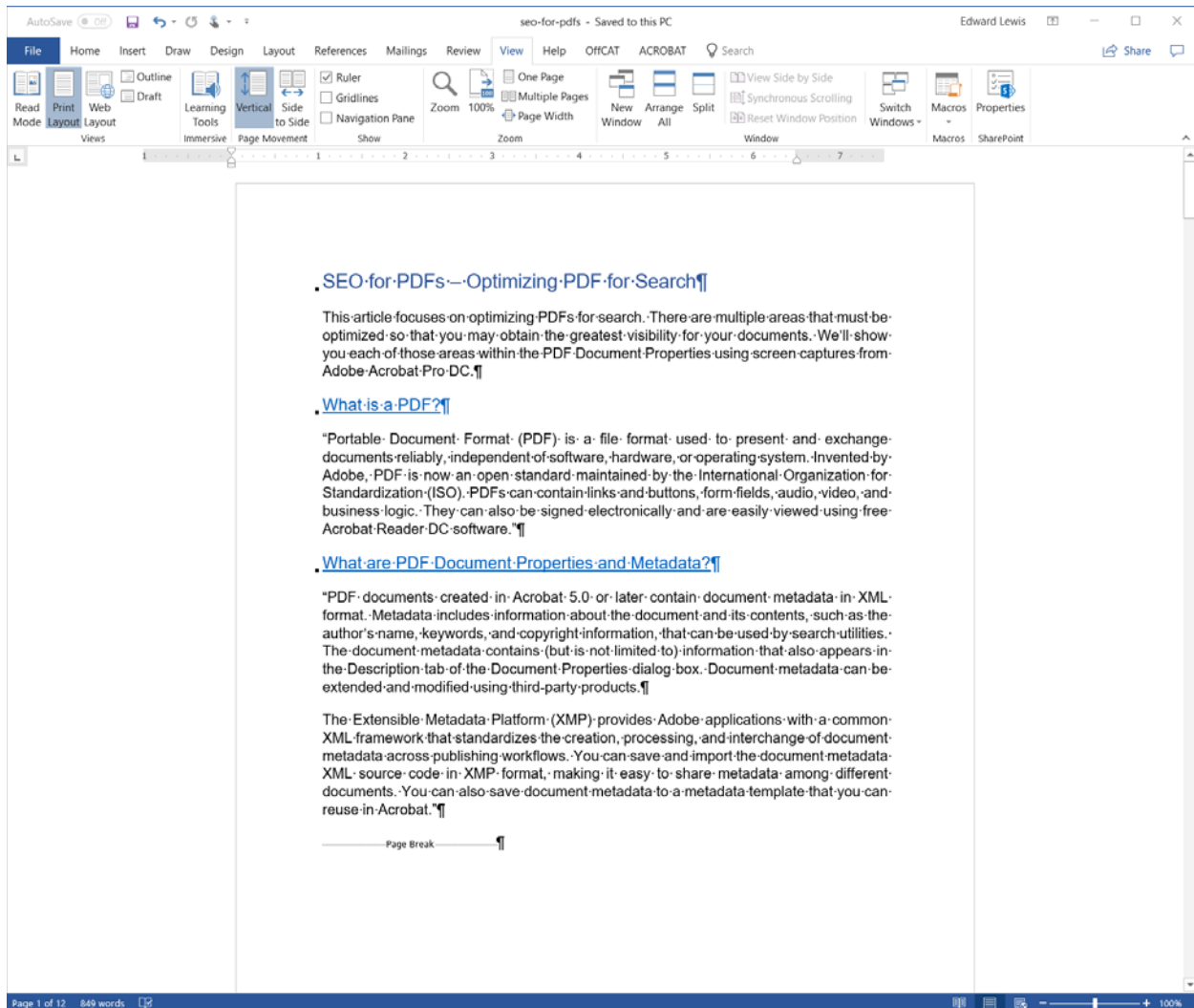
### What are PDF Document Properties and Metadata?

*“PDF documents created in Acrobat 5.0 or later contain document metadata in XML format. Metadata includes information about the document and its contents, such as the author's name, keywords, and copyright information, that can be used by search utilities. The document metadata contains (but is not limited to) information that also appears in the Description tab of the Document Properties dialog box. Document metadata can be extended and modified using third-party products.*

*The Extensible Metadata Platform (XMP) provides Adobe applications with a common XML framework that standardizes the creation, processing, and interchange of document metadata across publishing workflows. You can save and import the document metadata XML source code in XMP format, making it easy to share metadata among different documents. You can also save document metadata to a metadata template that you can reuse in Acrobat.”*

## Word > View > Print Layout

Page 1 of the Word Document viewing in Print Layout. Note the “Heading 1” for the first heading in this document. “Heading 2” is utilized for all primary headings thereafter. These “Heading 2” are linked to the Adobe PDF Help Topics.



## Word > View > Properties > Advanced Properties > Summary

You MUST complete at minimum the Title and Subject aka Description. I will normally include Author, Company and Category information.



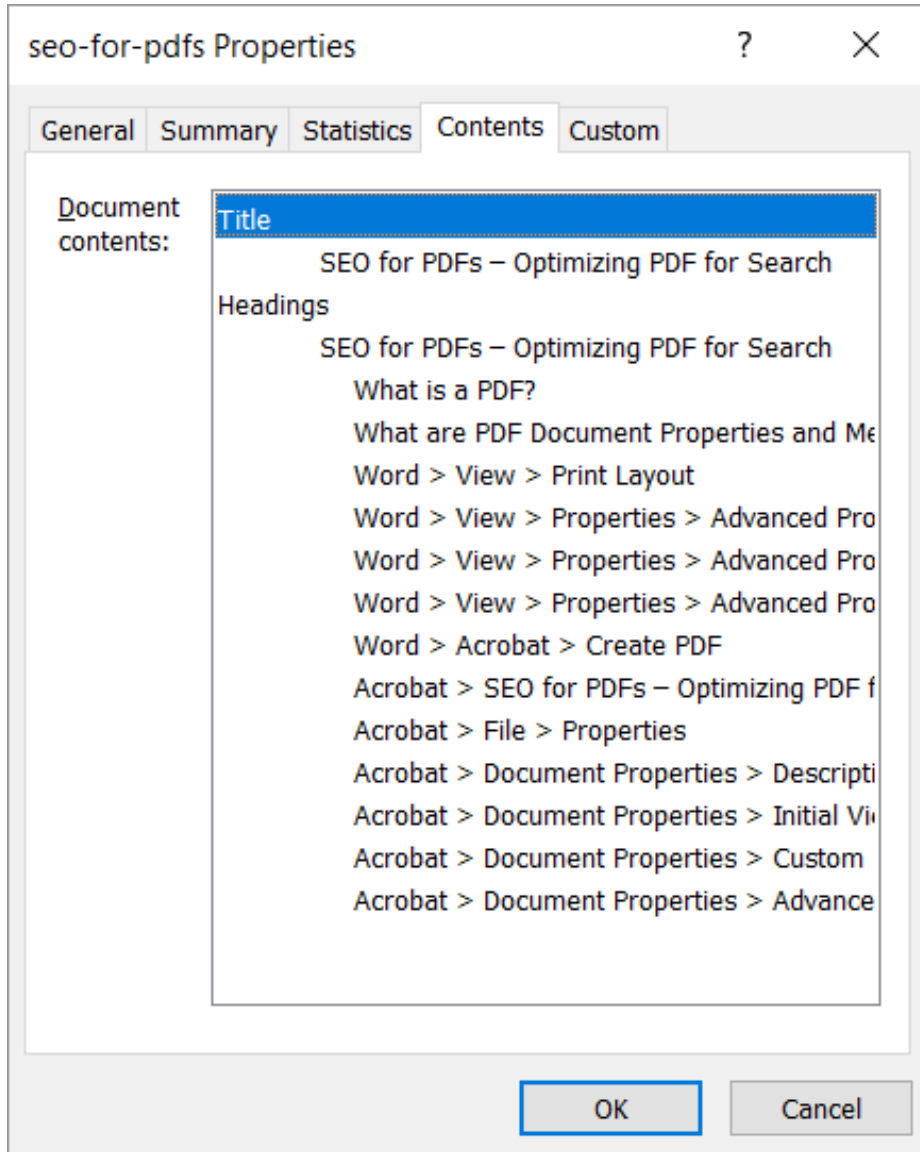
The image shows a screenshot of the 'seo-for-pdfs Properties' dialog box in Microsoft Word. The dialog has a title bar with a question mark and a close button. It features five tabs: 'General', 'Summary', 'Statistics', 'Contents', and 'Custom'. The 'Summary' tab is selected. The fields are filled with the following information:

- Title:** SEO for PDFs – Optimizing PDF for Search
- Subject:** This article focuses on optimizing PDFs for search. Tl
- Author:** Edward Lewis
- Manager:** (empty)
- Company:** XSymmetry
- Category:** SEO, PDF
- Keywords:** (empty)
- Comments:** (empty)
- Hyperlink base:** (empty)
- Template:** Normal
- Save Thumbnails for All Word Documents

At the bottom of the dialog are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons.

## Word > View > Properties > Advanced Properties > Contents

Here you can view the “Outline” of your Word Document. Using proper formatting allows the automation of Document Bookmarks using the Heading elements.



Word > View > Properties > Advanced Properties > Custom

I will sometimes delve into the Word Custom Properties and choose Publisher and other relevant properties. The Base Target \_blank was recognized on an external link used in the Word Document, it was set when adding links to Heading 2.

The screenshot shows the 'seo-for-pdfs Properties' dialog box with the 'Custom' tab selected. The dialog contains the following elements:

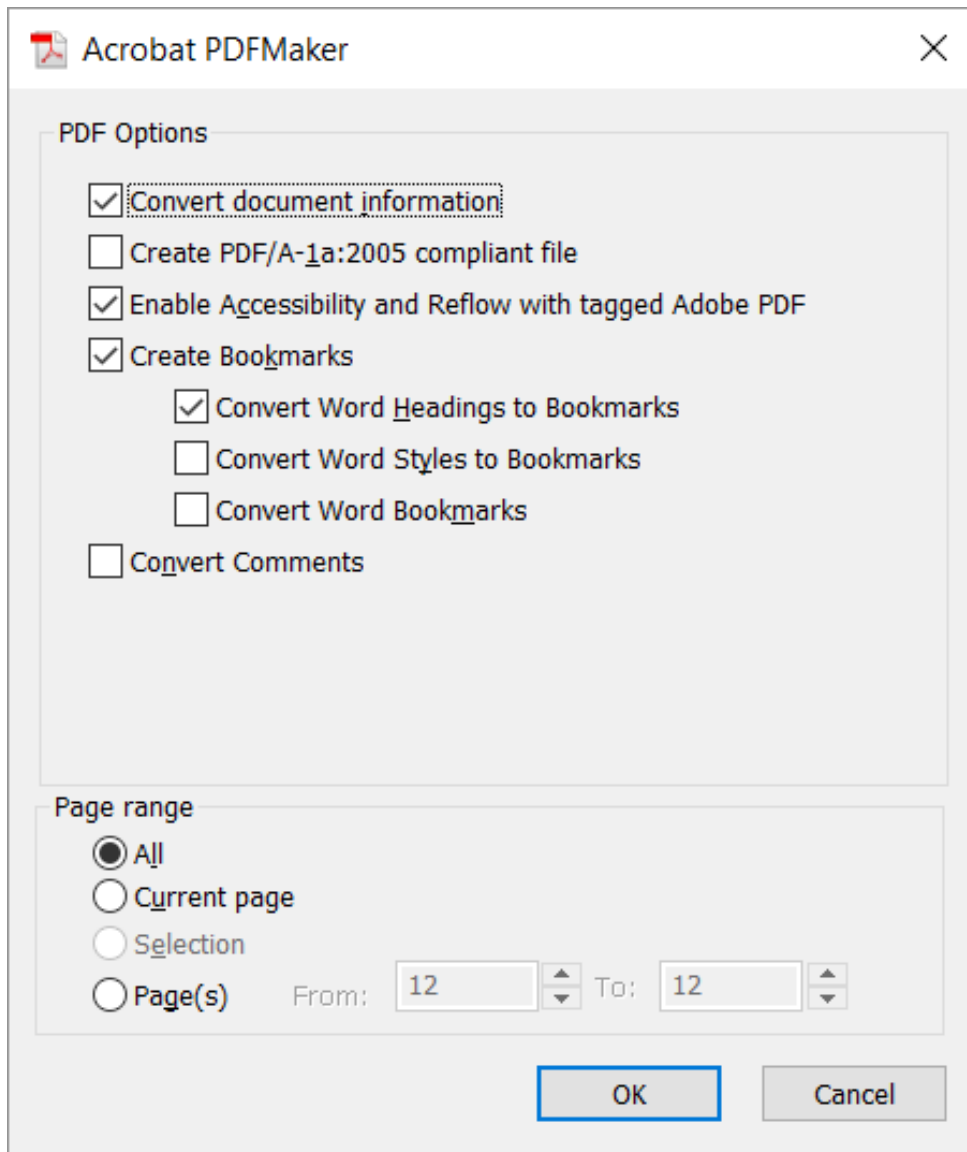
- General** | **Summary** | **Statistics** | **Contents** | **Custom**
- Name:** An empty text box with an **Add** button to its right.
- A list box containing: Checked by, Client, Date completed, Department, Destination, Disposition. It has up and down arrow buttons.
- Type:** A dropdown menu currently set to **Text**.
- Value:** An empty text box with a  **Link to content** checkbox to its right.
- Properties:** A table listing existing custom properties.

Name	Value	Type
Base Target	_blank	Text
Publisher	XSymmetry	Text

At the bottom of the dialog are **OK** and **Cancel** buttons.

## Word > Acrobat > Create PDF

When creating a PDF from Word, the above items are checked by default when viewing “Options” before saving the PDF. The “Create Bookmarks” and “Convert Word Headings to Bookmarks” are checked. This is where proper formatting in the original documents is imperative. Without the Headings, you will now need to manually create bookmarks, and this can be a tedious process – trust me!



Acrobat PDFMaker

PDF Options

- Convert document information
- Create PDF/A-1a:2005 compliant file
- Enable Accessibility and Reflow with tagged Adobe PDF
- Create Bookmarks
  - Convert Word Headings to Bookmarks
  - Convert Word Styles to Bookmarks
  - Convert Word Bookmarks
- Convert Comments

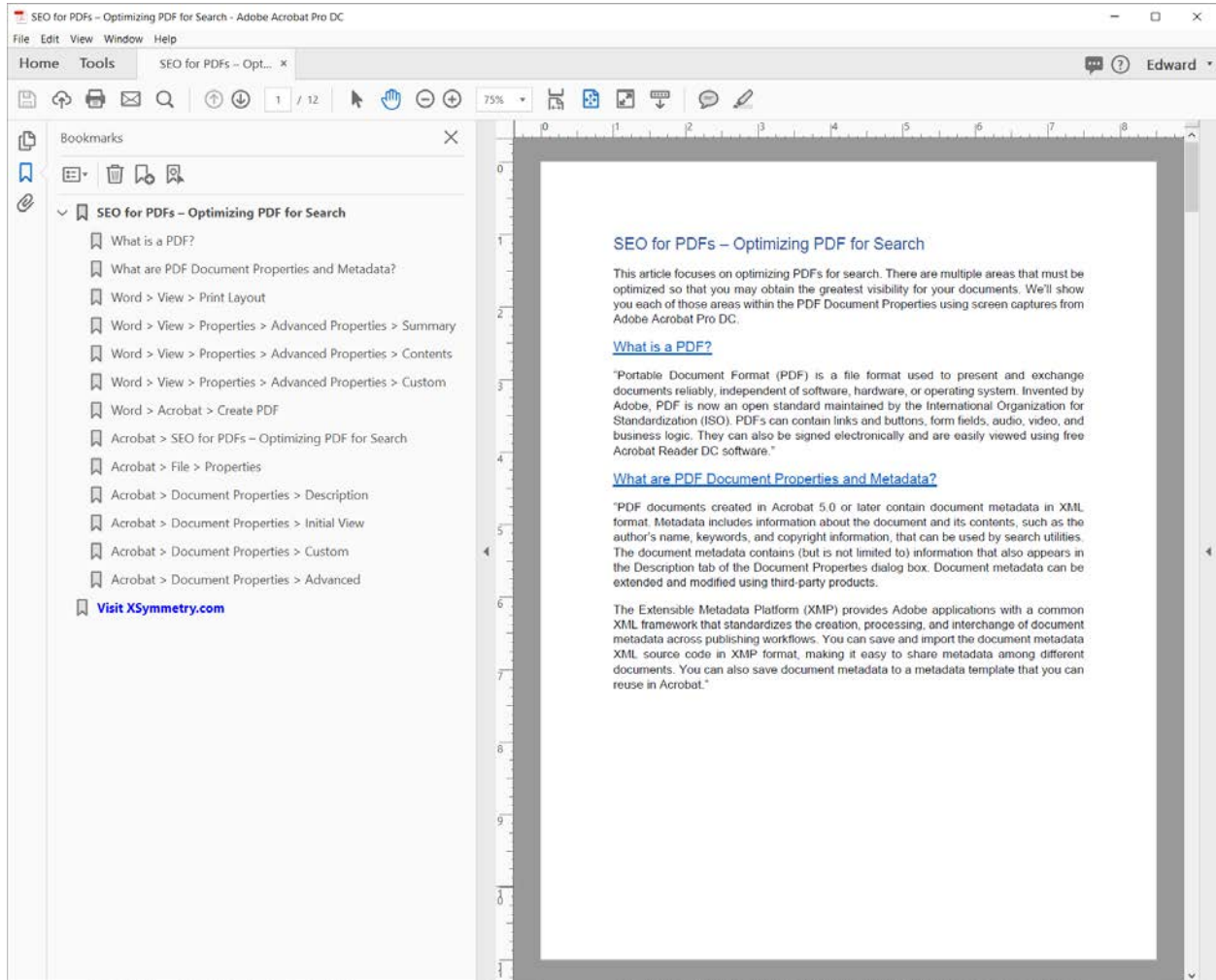
Page range

- All
- Current page
- Selection
- Page(s) From: 12 To: 12

OK Cancel

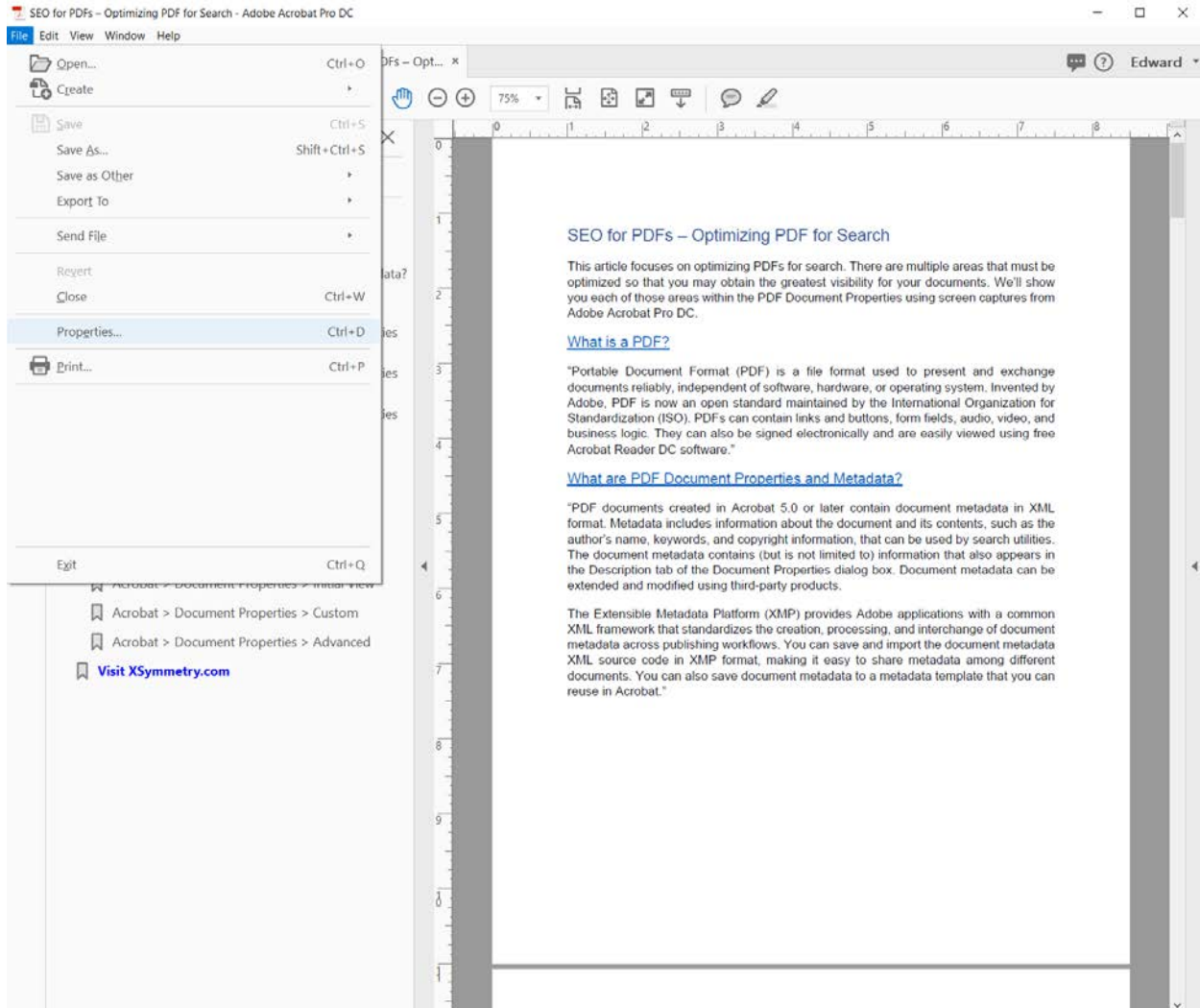
## Acrobat > SEO for PDFs – Optimizing PDF for Search

This is the “Initial View” of the PDF which has been configured during setup. Note the “Bookmarks Panel” at left, it mirrors the document outline and shows the Heading 1 and Heading 2 text. This is automatically constructed based on the “proper formatting” of the original document. If this document were using Heading 3, 4, 5 and 6, that heading text would be shown indented below their respective Heading 2 text.



## Acrobat > File > Properties

When you first create your PDF from Word, the “Initial View” uses default values which “usually” need to be changed, this is done via the Properties.





## Acrobat > Document Properties > Description

Note that these document properties were imported from the original Word Document titled “SEO for PDFs – Optimizing PDF for Search.” In many instances, you won’t have access to the original Word Document and will need to complete the Document Properties for the PDF. This is the most important area to optimize. You MUST complete at minimum the Title and Subject aka Description.

The screenshot shows the 'Document Properties' dialog box with the 'Description' tab selected. The 'Description' section contains the following fields:

- File: seo
- Title: SEO for PDFs – Optimizing PDF for Search
- Author: Edward Lewis
- Subject: This article focuses on optimizing PDFs for search. There are multiple areas that must be optimized so that you may obtain the
- Keywords: (empty)

At the bottom of the 'Description' section, the following information is displayed:

- Created: 2018-05-29 07:25:56
- Modified: 2018-05-29 07:27:33
- Application: Acrobat PDFMaker 18 for Word

An 'Additional Metadata...' button is located to the right of the 'Created' and 'Modified' fields.

The 'Advanced' section contains the following information:

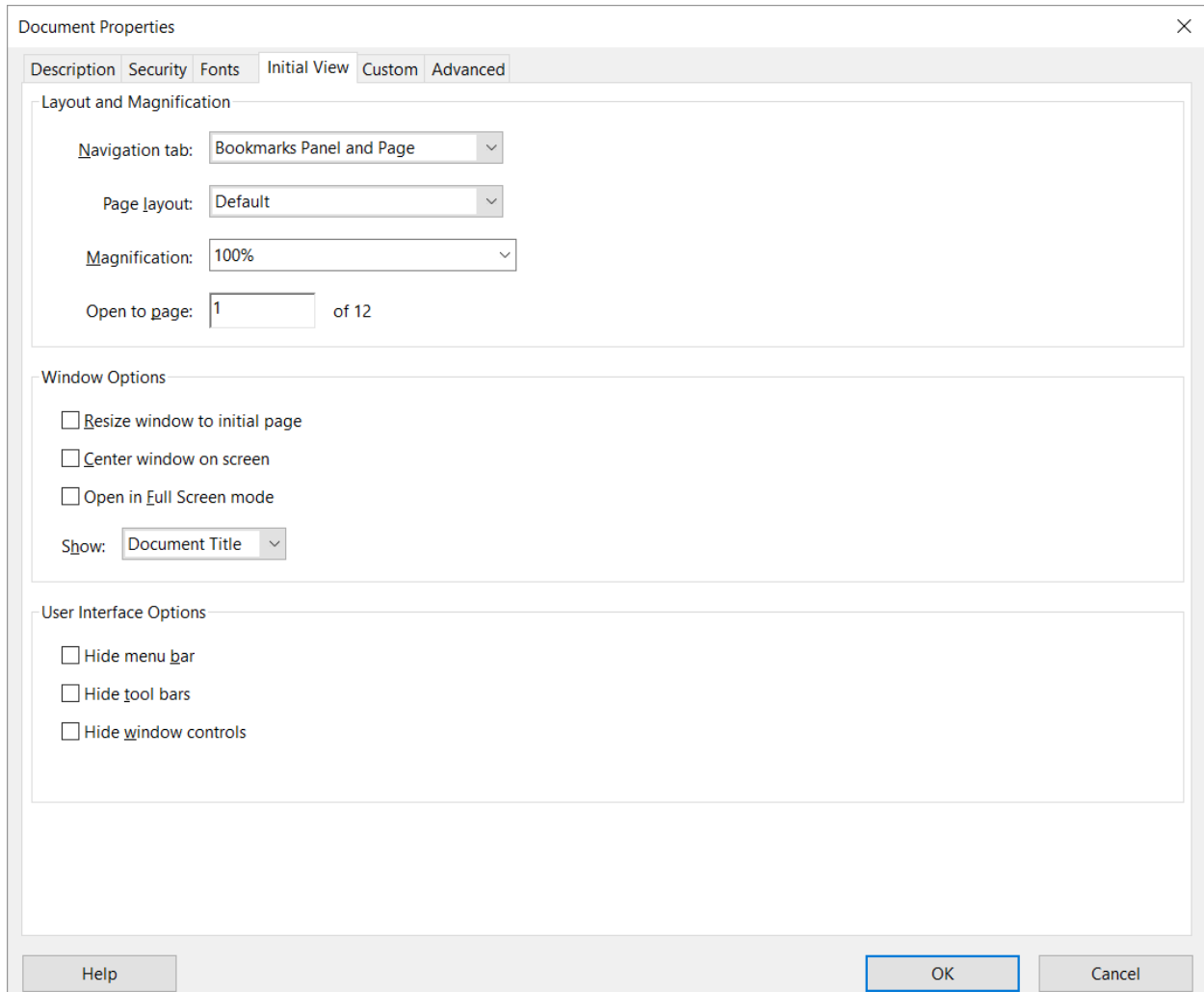
- PDF Producer: Adobe PDF Library 15.0
- PDF Version: 1.5 (Acrobat 6.x)
- Location:
- File Size: 676.72 KB (692,966 Bytes)
- Page Size: 8.50 x 11.00 in
- Number of Pages: 12
- Tagged PDF: Yes
- Fast Web View: No

The dialog box has a 'Help' button on the bottom left, and 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons on the bottom right.

## Acrobat > Document Properties > Initial View

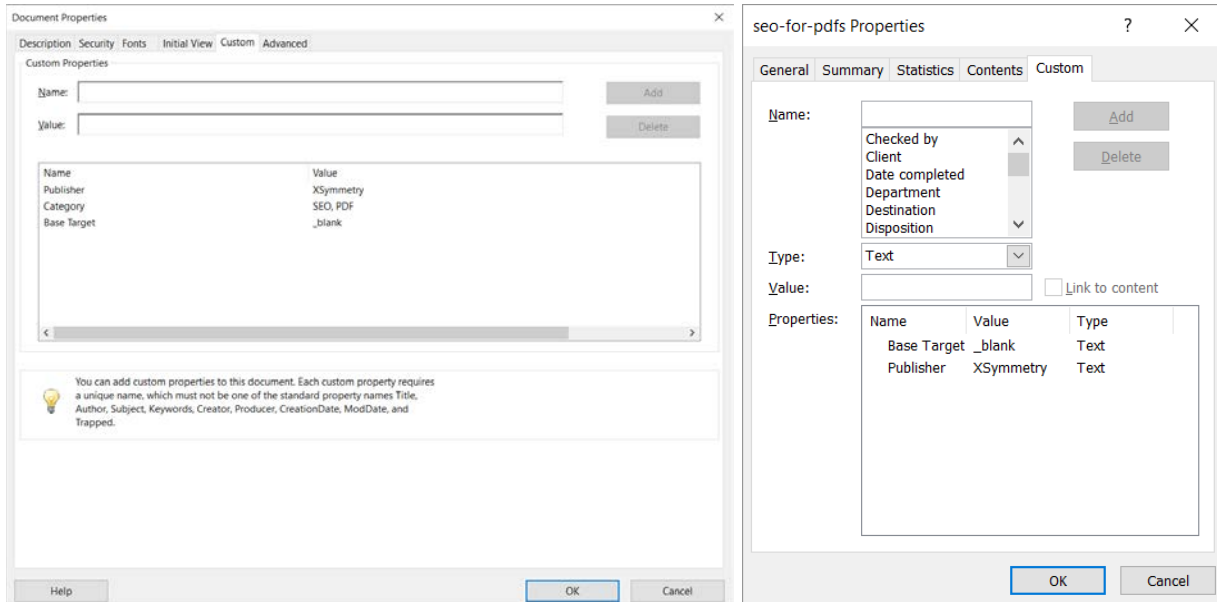
The “Initial View” when converting to PDF is set to “Page Only.” I always recommend that you select the “Bookmarks Panel and Page” as this will show a navigable menu structure for the user. That is if everything else described in this article has been addressed.

You **MUST** choose “Show: Document Title” for the “Initial View.” If you do not choose this option, the document “Show: File Name” will be used for display e.g. “seo-for-pdfs.pdf.” This also affects bookmark titles, browser tab titles, and titles shown in search.



## Acrobat > Document Properties > Custom

There are a multitude of Custom Properties that can be used, you can see a list of these when viewing Word > Advanced Properties > Custom. I usually keep it to a minimum and include Publisher and/or Company. I've added the Category Property of "SEO, PDF" for this article.



## Acrobat > Document Properties > Advanced

You'll want to at least set the "Language" in the Advanced tab of the Document Properties.

The image shows the 'Document Properties' dialog box with the 'Advanced' tab selected. The dialog is divided into three main sections: PDF Settings, Print Dialog Presets, and Reading Options. At the bottom, there are 'Help', 'OK', and 'Cancel' buttons.

**Document Properties** [Close]

Description | Security | Fonts | Initial View | Custom | **Advanced**

**PDF Settings**

Base URL:

Search Index:

Trapped: Yes ▾

**Print Dialog Presets**

Page Scaling: Default ▾

DuplexMode: Simplex ▾

Paper Source by Page Size:

Print Page Range:

Number of Copies: Default ▾

**Reading Options**

Binding: Left Edge ▾

Language: English ▾