Generating a PDF file from Xara X

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Although Xara X has no built-in support for outputting Adobe's Page Description Format (PDF) file type, if you have purchased and installed Adobe Acrobat 4 or 5 you can generate PDF files from almost any application, Xara X included.

The Adobe **Distiller** and **PDF Writer** applications are installed as part of the full Adobe Acrobat package (do not confuse the full Adobe Acrobat package for the 'free' Adobe Acrobat Reader which only allows you to view, not create, Acrobat files). Both **Distiller** and **PDF Writer** can be likened to printer drivers, although rather than sending the output to a printer, the output is sent to a file on your hard disk drive. Moreover, the PDF file format is very similar to a PostScript file and many of the issues that effect PostScript file generation are also applicable to PDF generation (especially embedding fonts).

There are many options that can be altered before generating a PDF file from Xara X. As PDF is essentially a vector file format (as is the .XAR file format), Acrobat has to interpret and then render the images that Xara X can create. 'Simple' objects are, of course, no problem; rectangles, circles, plain fill colours and even text. However, many of the more graphical effects available within Xara X (for example graduated fills, blends, transparency, bevels and shadows) are very difficult for third-party applications to render – after all they require the Xara graphics engine to do so within Xara X. As such, there may be a bit of trial-and-error of various settings when creating the PDF file format so that the output more closely approximates what you see within the Xara X display.

Before attempting to generate a PDF file, look closely at the image you are outputting. Does it contain many 'fancy' or non-standard fonts? The PDF file format has excellent support for fonts and font mapping (see Acrobat's Help file) but the font has to be present on the viewer's system if the Acrobat reader is to render it correctly. Whilst you can embed font files within a PDF file, there are licensing issues to consider and not all fonts allow themselves to be embedded. In such cases you may have to consider converting all text to outlines (graphical representations) so that the file can be read on any system. To do so, you can:

1. Convert the text to outlines with Xara X first (select the text, apply 'Arrange' – 'Convert to editable shapes'). If you convert your text to paths within Xara X, the text is no longer editable with the Text Tool. As such, it would be better to backup the Xara file before converting so that if you need to alter the text at a future date you can do so by editing the backup file.

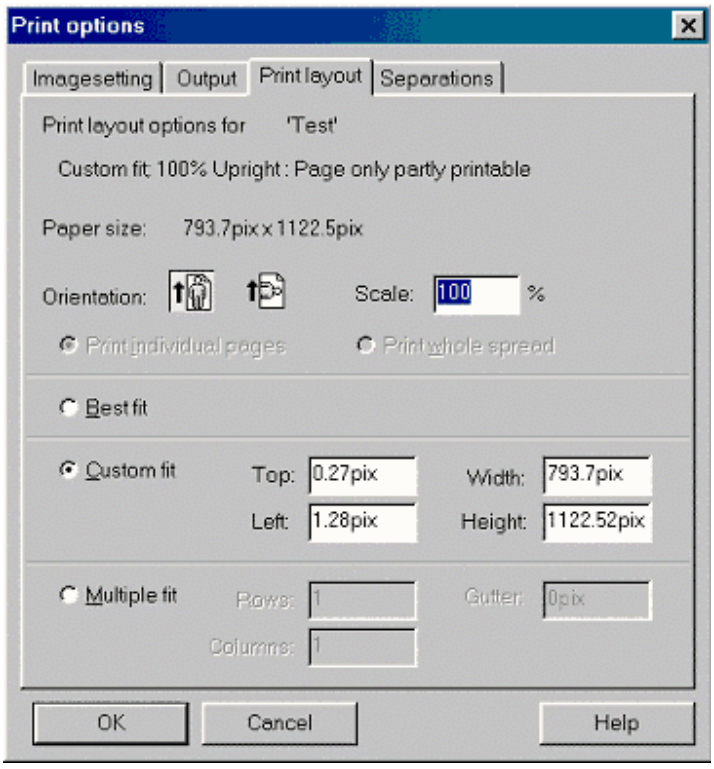
Or

2. Select the **Print all text as shapes** option within the **Print Options**, **Output** tab dialog (**File** -> **Print Options** –> **Output** tab).

Whilst the Adobe PDFWriter driver is the quickest at producing PDF files, the results are inferior compared to the output from Adobe Distiller. Graduated fills especially are 'banded'. As such, we recommend you use the Adobe Distiller printer driver:

1. Decide whether any text should be converted to outlines first (see above)
2. Switch ON **Show print borders** (**Window** menu). The red rectangle that appears represents the printable area of the Xara document, your image should appear within this boundary. If not:

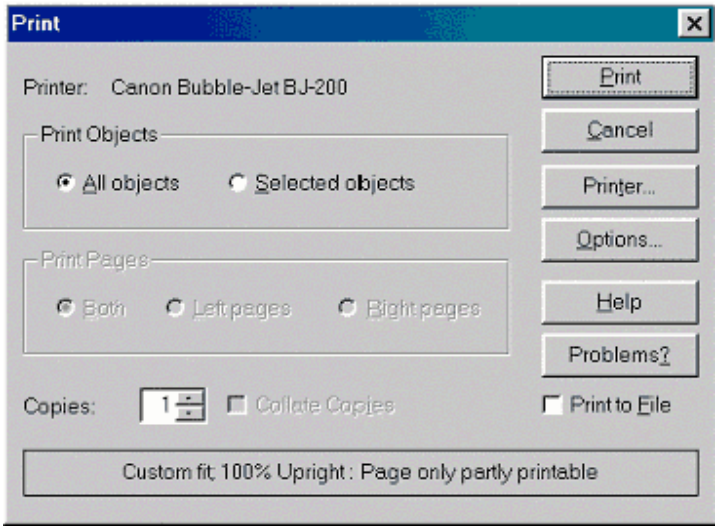
a. Choose 'File' – 'Print options'



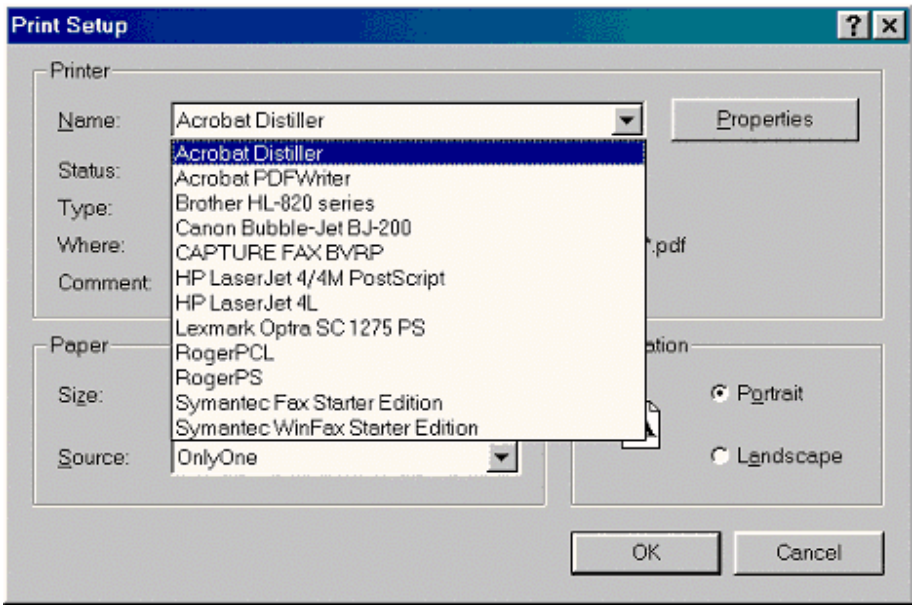
b. In the **Orientation** area, choose the appropriate orientation (upright/portrait or Landscape/sideways), or choose **Best fit** (note that the latter can effect the scaling of the output file).
c. Click on OK.

Note: make sure the Adobe Distiller printer driver is configured to use the same page size and orientation as your Xara X file.

3. Choose **File** –> **Print**



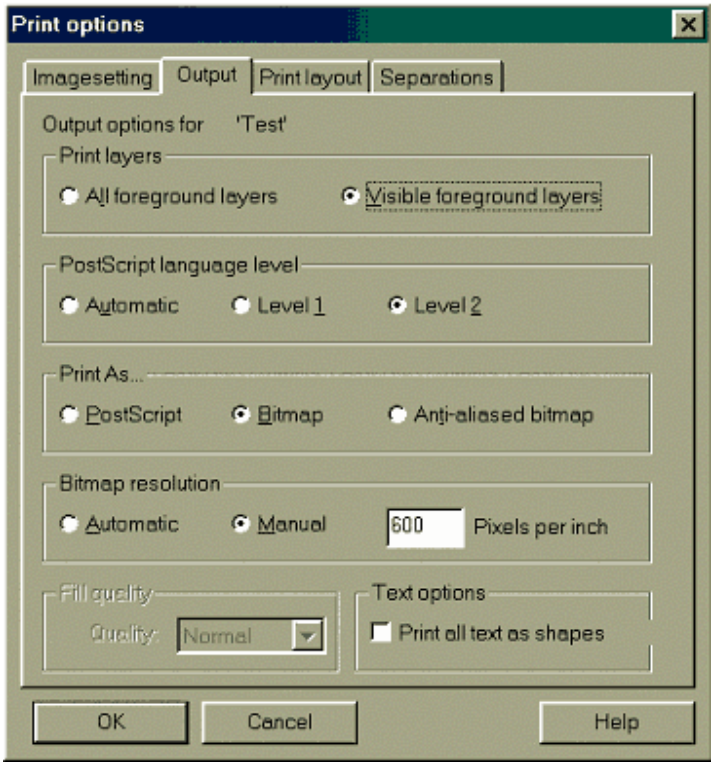
4. It is unlikely that Adobe Distiller will be your default printer driver, so click on the **Printer...** button (NOT **Print**!) and choose **Adobe Distiller** from the list of printers (**Name** field).



Note that the default path that Distiller writes PDF files to is C:\Program Files\Adobe\Acrobat 4.0\PDF Output*.PDF. Installations may vary.
5. Click on **OK** to return you to the Print dialog.
6. Click on **Print** to start the PDF file creation process.

Note that creating PDF files can take a long time and substantial free drive space. We would not recommend attempting to create a PDF file unless you have at least 200Mb of free drive space on C:\.

As mentioned earlier, there are many graphical effects that Xara X can achieve which other vector rendering engines find problematic. If the output from Distiller is poor in certain areas (transparency effects and bevels for example), you can generate the PDF file using the **Bitmap** or **Anti-Aliased Bitmap** print options that Xara X offers:



1. Follow the above print procedure to the end of step 5 above
2. Click on **Options** within the print dialog
3. Choose the **Output** tab
4. In the **PostScript language level** area choose **Level 2**
5. In the **Print as** areas, choose **Bitmap** or **Anti-aliased bitmap** options (try both as the preferred output is very much a personal preference)
6. Click on **Manual** within the **Transparency resolution** area
   Enter Adobe Distiller's configured resolution in the **Pixels per inch** field (this is usually 600dpi, so enter 600)
7. Click on **OK**
8. Click on **Print**

The resultant PDF file will be much larger that one generated with the **Print as... PostScript** option selected, but should be almost identical to the image quality you see within the Xara X window.

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