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## 5.2 PDF and Alternate File Formats

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**POC for Changes:** Georgia.gov Interactive

**Synopsis:** Usability guidelines describing the appropriate use of PDF and alternate file formats on State of Georgia sites.

### 5.2.1 When to use a PDF or alternate format

Portable Document Formats (PDF), such as Adobe Acrobat files, should be used only as an alternate format to native web pages when there is a clear business need to use this format.

- Presentations (such as a PowerPoint presentation) may be saved as a PDF and posted as-is, so the viewer can get the full experience of the presentation.
- Press Releases should NOT be posted as a PDF. They should be posted in full as web page content to facilitate search and ease of access.
- Documentation and reports that must follow a formatting standard not supported by your website can be posted as a PDF files.
- Files larger than 5 megabytes should be sectioned into smaller files and labeled accordingly.
- Annual Reports, and other large reports that can also be displayed as web pages, may be posted online in both an online format and a single PDF document.

### 5.2.2 Guidelines for linking to PDF files

- DO provide a link to download the free Adobe Reader software at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> [1].
- DO also provide an HTML version of the document whenever feasible.
- When linking to a non-HTML document, DO include a text description of the file, including the name, file type, file size, and effective date.  
e.g.: [Fiscal Management Objectives](#) [2] (PDF) 1.2MB, effective 06/30/2009
- DO NOT provide documents that are only available in proprietary formats that require the user to purchase commercial software (for example, MS Word, MS PowerPoint). Many document types can be saved as a PDF for inclusion on a website.
  - In Microsoft Office 2007 and above, choose Save As > Adobe PDF
  - If you have Adobe Acrobat software, you will be able to convert any file to a PDF.
  - Many free PDF converters are available online.

\* If you must use a proprietary format, ensure that the intended audience is known to have ready access to the appropriate software or provide a link to download the software.