

RTF, PDF, and HTML File format comparisons

	RTF (rich text format)	PDF (portable document format)	HTML (hypertext markup language)
Loading	Fast if text only	Slower but can download while continuing to use browser	Fast, unless the page has many graphics
Screen appearance	Can open in user's word processor	Does not adjust in reader's screen unless user saves file then opens file in Acrobat Reader (free download from Adobe website).	Adjusts to user's settings. No zoom.
Intended purpose	Printing	Viewing online or printing	Browsing/reading on screen
Where it opens	In word processor	Can open in Acrobat Reader (free download from Adobe website)	Within browser in Blackboard.
Formatting, fonts, spacing, pagination, special symbols, etc.	Generally preserved, with few exceptions	Preserved fully	Layout is not as easy as in a word processor, but HTML editors help
Printing	Better for printing	Best for printing	More difficult
Files	One file	One file or other sources can be linked to document	Can be multiple linked to documents and files
Graphics	Not usually included in document; however later versions of RTF support images and vector graphics.	Included within document	Not included with document, but can be linked in an HTML page.
Maintenance	Easy	Needs software to modify PDF document	Difficult
Platform	Cross platform	Cross platform	Cross platform
Universal or Proprietary	Universal	Proprietary. Require Adobe Acrobat to create PDF documents. Viewing is free with Acrobat Reader	Universal
Software required for viewing	Any word processor	Acrobat Reader	Browser
Annotations	Can annotate with word processor	Can annotate documents	Possible with add-in software
Authoring	Can create with any word processor	Can create with Adobe Acrobat, which is available at Chabot in Room 121.	Need software unless you can code HTML by hand. FrontPage and Dreamweaver available at Chabot in Room 121.
Student editing	Students can edit documents directly and easily in word processor	Students can copy and paste the text into a word processor, but cannot edit a PDF document	Students can copy and paste the text into a word processor or edit using HTML

RTF file format is the abbreviation for *Rich Text Format*. This format was created by Microsoft Corporation as a standard for exchanging documents among Windows applications. The first versions of the RTF language allowed the exchange of formatted text only; however newer versions added the support for images and vector graphics.

RTF is the format of choice for companies that are standardized on the use of Microsoft Word. RTF output is more accurate than HTML output, and all of the document can be contained in one file. RTF format, however, is less compact, portable, and versatile than the PDF format.