

## Making sure your PDF is machine-readable

### What can happen?

When some PDFs are created, they can end up as image-based PDFs even if there is text in the file. Essentially, the text becomes a picture. Usually, this happens when you scan the pages of a book, but sometimes it can happen to other types of PDFs too (depending on how they were created).

### Why is it an issue?

This can cause a problem if you are submitting a file to Turnitin. Turnitin needs to be able to search a text document to be able to compare it to the work other people have produced. Turnitin won't be able to check for similarities if it cannot search the text in the file. It will stop you submitting your work.

### How to tell:

- Usually if Turnitin stops you submitting your file, an error message will come up. This will say **Your submission must contain 20 words or more.**
- Another way to tell is that you cannot highlight specific pieces of text in the document and copy and paste that text somewhere else.

### What can you do?

To make your file searchable or machine-readable you must apply **Optical Character Recognition (OCR)**. OCR is the process that converts an image of text into machine-readable text format.

**Please note:** This process may alter your file so please make sure you make a copy of your file before using Scan and OCR.

## Using Adobe Acrobat Pro

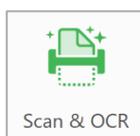
It is relatively easy to try to convert your PDF in Adobe Acrobat pro. If you have a Creative Cloud licence should be able to access this.

Please note, depending how you made your file, results can vary. For example, sometimes Adobe can struggle to interpret the text. Please make a copy before you start.

### Instructions:

**1:** Open your PDF in Adobe acrobat pro

**2:** Look for the option **Scan and OCR** and select it. You might find it in the tool bar on the right-hand side of your screen. Otherwise, you will be able to find it in the **Tools** area.



**3:** In the **Scan and OCR** tool bar, locate the **Recognise Text** menu, and then select the **In this File** option. There are three options in the settings for OCR. Choose **searchable image** or **searchable image exact**.



**4:** Check the settings are correct. Then click the **Recognise Text** button.



**5:** Save your file OCR-ed file.

### If you don't have access to Adobe:

- If you don't have access to Adobe Acrobat, you can try [www.pdf2go.com](http://www.pdf2go.com). This website confirms they don't store your PDFs and your file will be deleted after 24hours. There is also an option to delete them as soon as you have finished converting your file.
- **Adding a cover sheet to your document:** If it's not possible to do any of the above and you need to submit your work, you can add a cover sheet to your document, containing the minimum of 20 words. e.g. your full name, title of the submission and reason for submitting a file in this way.  
However, it is important to confirm if your course team will accept a submission that cannot be checked for plagiarism as this may have consequences for your grade.