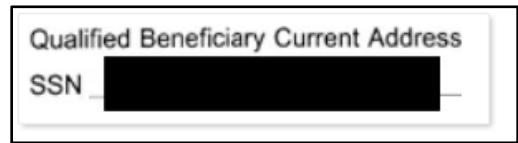


Redaction Methods for PDF Files

An [Appligent](#) White Paper

Redaction occurs when text or graphics are permanently eliminated from a printed or electronic document.



Redacting a paper document traditionally involves the use of knives or grease-pencils. Redacting an electronic document such as a PDF file requires software specifically designed for the task. Too often, inadequately trained or equipped users fail in performing the redactions they intend. The consequences range from the inadvertent release of sensitive information to legal liability, unwanted media exposure, or in the worst case, material harm to property or personnel.

This paper describes two redaction methods available for PDF files.

Redaction by Subtraction (Adobe Systems, Acrobat)

Version 8.x of Adobe Systems' Acrobat Pro includes a new redaction feature using a subtraction method. Subtraction attempts to selectively remove page-content from the original PDF file in place. Opaque rectangles are then placed over the areas to be redacted. The opaque areas block the user from verifying if information has been redacted correctly. When saved, unless additional steps are taken, the original document is overwritten.

Redaction by Addition (Appligent, Redax)

Version 4.5 of Appligent's Redax (a plugin for Adobe Acrobat) builds on the company's 10 years of experience developing redaction functionality for PDF files.

Redax uses an "additive" method to redact PDFs which strictly ensures that the redacted file is a new version of the original, not a replacement. First, Redax creates a new blank document. Then it copies information that is Not to be redacted from the original PDF to the new PDF. The only information retained in the redacted version is that specifically requested by the user - the content they elected Not to redact. Redax places a semi-transparent rectangle over the redacted area. The semi-transparent area may look black; but, if any information is left unredacted, it can easily be seen by the user. Redax is engineered to be fail-safe and contains additional tools to help verify correct redaction.

Comparison

Redaction with Adobe's Acrobat 8.x

- Alters the original document, no versioning without additional user action
- Redacted areas are opaque impeding redaction verification
- First released in November, 2006

Redaction with Appligent's Redax

- Generates a redacted version of the document, no possibility of damaging the original
- Transparent redacted areas facilitate redaction verification with a glance
- First released in December, 1997

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