

Flatten Your Digital Annotations!

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Why Flattening PDFs is Important?

Digital annotations are no longer a thing of the future, but understanding how to use them effectively may still provide a learning curve for the AEC market. AEC firms can spin up a pdf from Autodesk products, they can add digital stamps or mark-ups in things like Bluebeam or Adobe Pro, but not too often are we taking that extra step of flattening the pdf. PDF files can contain two types of information graphics or annotations. Graphics files like images, text, etc. are considered static. Stamps, digital mark-ups, sticky notes are all considered annotations that are typically associated with a graphic.

Annotations contain some interactive features and can be very useful in certain situations, but in scenarios like submittal processing or change order request it is imperative to flatten the pdf and turn your annotations static on the document. Without flattening annotated pdfs there is no insurance that all annotations will be visible to participants on their work-stations or mobile devices. In instances where you are using an app to access marked up information after the fact, it is almost a certainty that annotations will not appear if the file has not been flattened before sharing. This can create considerable issues when trying to create a digital work-flow for COR (change order requests) or submittals during a project.

Certain programs like BlueBeam provide you with the option to flatten annotations within their program so that the additional layer that you have created is visible to all project participants regardless of the device or pc being used to review the information. If you are doing your annotations in Adobe, I am providing you with a link to a plug-in that not only allows you to flatten your annotations but it also allows you to get mark-up specific as to what you would like to flatten. This way you can have both interactive and static annotations, but more importantly insure that your comments are visible on any mobile device, app, or workstation for any user.

Click here to read about and/or download the free Adobe plug-in:

Alternatively, Adobe provides this "action" below that can be installed as a plugin to your version of Acrobat that will flatten all of your annotations.

http://blogs.adobe.com/acrolaw/files/2011/02/Flatten_doc.pdf