Date Stamp
Online Guide

Version 2.32
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Contents

About Date Stamp

Date Stamp is an Acrobat* and Adobe Reader plug-in which automatically places a date stamp on to a PDF document when it is printed. The stamp used can be configured to contain multi-line text in multiple locations on the page.

System Requirements

Date Stamp works with Acrobat* and Adobe Reader versions 3.0 and later.

* Adobe Acrobat is the name for the full product, formerly known as Adobe Acrobat Exchange.

Date Stamp Menu Items

Date Stamp adds several menu items to Acrobat:

Help > About Plug-ins > Date Stamp

Selecting this displays information about the version of Date Stamp that you are running.

Help > Plug-in Help > Date Stamp

Clicking on this menu item opens this guide. If the guide is not installed in the correct location this menu item will not appear.

Help > Plug-in Help > Register Date Stamp...

Clicking on this menu item will display the Register Date Stamp dialogue. (Once registered this menu item will not be available.)

Follow the steps to register, as explained on the dialogue. The basic steps are:

1. Obtain a serial number for Date Stamp by completing an order using the Order button. We will give you the

serial number when your order has been processed. You can then proceed:

2. Fill in your name, organisation and serial number. Click OK. The plug-in should now be registered correctly.

3. Re-start Acrobat for the changes to take effect.

Configuring Date Stamp

Date Stamp can be customised to a user's or an organisation's requirements by creating a *dstamp.ini* file. This file must be installed in the same directory as the Date Stamp plug-in, *dstamp.api*, which will be an Acrobat plug_ins directory.

If Date Stamp is installed with no *dstamp.ini* file it will revert to the behaviour as in version 1.0, which is to print the default date stamp in the bottom right-hand corner of the page. e.g.

Printed on: 19 September 2009 09:45:32

The Date Stamp Initialisation File

The Date Stamp initialisation file uses a normal Windows initialisation file format, with sections in square braces followed by key value pairs e.g.:

```
[options]
debug=1
key=string value
```

String values are unquoted and taken literally.

Specifying Stamps

There may be multiple *stamps* on each page, but at least one **must** include a date stamp. If a date stamp is not included in any of these then the default date stamp will be output in addition to the specified ones.

Each stamp is specified by its own section. This enables the setting of up to 10 stamps. These sections are called [stamp0] to [stamp9]. Two example date stamps are specified with:

```
[stamp0]
format=nw,ne
text=Not valid 24 hours after $date$ $time$

[stamp1]
format=s,se,r
text0=Company Confidential
text1=This document printed $date$
```

Within each section, text is specified by a text tag followed by the text to use (see above for example). There can be multiple lines of text to specify a multi-line stamp by use of the keys *text*0 for the first line, *text1* for the second line, and so on, up to *text9*.

All these lines are positioned on the page as a multi-line block using the formatting information, indicated by the key word *format*. *format* is followed by a start and (optional) end position, using eight compass points to represent corners and mid-points (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW), and O to represent the centre of the page (or **O**rigin). This determines where the text starts and the direction it is written.

If only one (start) point is specified Date Stamp works out a sensible end point from that location so that the stamp will remain within the printable area.

For formats where two locations are specified, as in 'format=NW,NE', the text runs from the first point towards the second. In this example it would run from the page's top left corner to the top right corner.

The alignment of the text within these start and end points can be specified with the extra parameters 'l' for left (default), 'r' for right, and 'c' for centred. e.g.

```
format=NW,NE,C
```

Variables

Stamps can contain variables that are replaced with values when the document is actually printed.

Variables are marked with '$' characters either side of them. Date Stamp has some built-in variables, and substitutes environment variables for others.

$$	Print just one '$'
$date$	Current date using the date format (see "Date and Time" on page 12)
$date+N$	N days in future from current date using the date format e.g. $date+28$ (see "Date and Time" on page 12)
$time$	Current time using the time format (see "Date and Time" on page 12)
$username$	User name of user printing document
$page$	Page number of page being printed within range (i.e. 1, 2, ..., *n*)
$pages$	Number of pages being printed (i.e. *n*)
VAR	Environment variable VAR
$hostname$	The name of the computer that the document is being printed from
$info:Field$	The specified document information

	field (e.g. $info:Title) is the document's title. The field name is case sensitive, and may specify a custom field.
$reginfo:key$	A Windows registry key, which must be fully specified. e.g.

$reginfo:HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\.pdf\Content Type$

$filename$	Full name of file being printed e.g. *c:\usr\docs\report.pdf*
$filepath$	Directory path of file being printed e.g. *c:\usr\docs*
$filebasename$	File's name without path or extension e.g. *report*
$fileext$	File's extension e.g. *pdf*

Options

The **[options]** section specifies some global options and the date and time formats.

Debug. *debug* enables debugging of the plug-in when *debug=1*, and no debugging if *debug=0*. Setting this option before Acrobat is started will make Date Stamp re-read its initialisation file *every time* a document is printed. *This should thus only be set when a systems administrator is configuring Date Stamp. Debug should be set to zero (or not set) for general use.*

Additional information is available by adding up the following values to set the debug value:

1 Debugging on, re-read initialisation file at print time
2 Show font warnings
4 Show settings at start-up
8 Show file-name checking for include/exclude

e.g. To turn on debugging and show settings at start-up, set debug to $1 + 4 = 5$.

Date and Time. The key-value pairs *Date* and *Time* specify the formats to use when printing the *$date$* and *$time$* variables. If these are not specified a default format will be used. Months, days of the week and the am/pm indicator are language specific and will change according to the locale of the computer (e.g. French etc).

The date and time formats are specified using the following syntax, with any interspersed text and punctuation included in the output too. The case of the format determines the case of the output for text strings (e.g. *DDD=MON*, *Mmmm=September*, *mmm=may*), but is irrelevant for numeric strings.

Continued overleaf...

Date format

d	Date as number (e.g. 9, 12)
dd	Date as zero-filled number (e.g. 09, 12)
ddd	Day abbreviated (e.g. Mon)
dddd	Day in full (e.g. Monday)
m	Month as number (e.g. 9, 12)
mm	Month as zero-filled number (e.g. 09, 12)
mmm	Month abbreviated (e.g. Sep)
mmmm	Month in full (e.g. September)
yy	Year abbreviated (e.g. 98)
yyyy	Year in full (e.g. 1998)
ss	Date suffix (st, nd, rd, th)

Time format

h	Hour (e.g. 9, 12)
hh	Hour as zero-filled number (e.g. 09, 12)
m	Minute (e.g. 9, 12)
mm	Minute as zero-filled number (e.g. 09, 12)
s	Second (e.g. 9, 12)
ss	Second as zero-filled number (e.g. 09, 12)
ap	am/pm — specifies 12-hour clock

See next page for sample date and time formats.

Possible date and time formats and their results are as follows. Note the effect of upper and lower case text in the format for the text strings and how that affects the output.

```
date=Dddd dss Mmmm yyyy   Thursday 19th August 1999
date=Mmmm dd, YYYY        August 19, 1999
date=dd MMM Yy            05 DEC 99
date=yyyy/MM/dd           1999/08/19
time=hh:mm.ss             15:56.32
time=h:mm ap              9:06 am
```

Size. The size setting specifies the default size of the text in the stamps in points (72 points equals 1 inch). If no size is specified the default size is 8 point. e.g.

```
size=12
```

Individual stamps can override this setting in their own [stamp] section.

Font. The *font* setting specifies the default font to use for output to *non-PostScript* printers. If no font is specified this defaults to Arial on Windows systems. The user should check that the selected font exists on the system. e.g.

font=Arial

Individual stamps can override this setting in their own [stamp] section.

Note that the following font weights and styles can also be applied to these non-PostScript fonts:

Weights: Light, Medium, Bold, Black

Styles: Italic, BoldItalic, StrikeOut, Underline

These are specified as follows:

font=fontname,style

e.g.

font=Arial,Italic

Multiple styles can be applied if required:

font=Arial,Bold,Underline

PSFont. The *psfont* setting specifies the default PostScript name of a font to use for output to *PostScript printers*. If no font is specified this defaults to Helvetica. *The user should check that the selected font exists on the destination printer. Date Stamp does not currently support download of non-PostScript fonts to PostScript printers.* e.g.

```
psfont=Times-Roman
```

Individual stamps can override this setting in their own [stamp] section.

Colour. The *colour* setting specifies the default RGB colour for the stamp as three comma-separated values in the range 0–255, with 0 representing no contribution, and 255 being maximum intensity. (The default is black.) e.g. green can be set as the colour by setting:

```
colour=0,255,0
```

Individual stamps can override this setting in their own [stamp] section.

Setting Network Time. On Windows, the time can be retrieved from another computer or workgroup on the network. To get the time from a specific computer use the computer's name:

```
windows_time_server=\\Merlin
```

To get the time from a particular Windows workgroup use:

```
windows_time_server=/WORKGROUP:MyGroup
```

Note: On Windows 95/98 the local computer's time will be synchronised with the specified server and then the local time will be used. The computer's time will be synchronised with the server each time a document is printed if this option is used.

If the date and time cannot be retrieved from the server the $date$ and $time$ variables will show "Date Unknown" and "Time Unknown" respectively. These error strings can be set with the following:

```
date_error=Date Unknown
time_error=Time Unknown
```

Overlay. The *overlay* setting makes the stamp appear over each page's contents rather than underneath as a watermark. The default is for the stamp to appear over the page's contents. To disable this feature use:

overlay=0

Clip. For PostScript output, Date Stamp can clip the page image so that the region where the stamp(s) are to be printed is left white. This only applies to stamps within the margins of the page. This option is useful for output to PostScript printers when overlay has been disabled (overlay=0) and the documents contain bitmap or other filled images which will print over the stamp. To enable this option use:

clip=1

Rotate. This setting will rotate stamps to match the page orientation, so that stamps on landscape pages appear as expected. To enable this option use:

rotate=1

Vars_in_Dirs. This setting will allow the use of variables within the include or exclude directories lists. To enable this option use:

```
vars_in_dirs=1
```

Variables are specified in exactly the same way as for stamps (see "Variables" on page 9).

Config_Dir. This setting enables a system administrator to specify an alternative location on the network for the real dstamp.ini. If this entry is found in the dstamp.ini within the plug_ins directory all other entries are ignored, and the dstamp.ini in the specified local or remote path will be opened and used instead.

For example:

```
config_dir=\\server\config\dstamp
```

will result in Date Stamp reading the following file:

```
\\server\config\dstamp\dstamp.ini
```

Using this option will therefore enable stamp settings to be changed in one location on the network, and not require updating dstamp.ini on individual computers.

Include and Exclude Directories

By default, Date Stamp will print stamps on every document printed from Acrobat. If you need to control the stamp printing you can specify directories (and URLs) to include or exclude from stamp printing. There are two sections which take lists of directories, either as full paths or paths relative to the directory containing the `dstamp.ini` file. A directory specified in these lists includes itself and *all* its sub-directories. e.g.

```
[IncludeDirs]
c:\reports
c:\usr\docs

[ExcludeDirs]
c:\reports\nostamps
```

Note that URLs can also be used in these sections for PDF files that are viewed with Acrobat via a browser. If you have problems getting this feature to work, try turning on the include/exclude messages (see "Debug" on page 11).

If you have turned on the Vars_in_Dirs option you can use variable names in the list. Variables are specified in the same way as for stamps — see "Variables" on page 9

for details. For example, you could include the Windows temporary directory:

```
[IncludeDirs]
$TEMP$
```

Stamp rules. If only include directories are specified, only files in those directories (and their sub-directories) are stamped.

If only exclude directories are specified, all files are stamped except for files in those directories (and their sub-directories).

If include and exclude directories are specified, only files in the include directories are stamped, unless they are in an exclude directory. e.g. In the above example, all files under *c:\reports* will be stamped, and all its sub-directories, except for *c:\reports\nostamps*.

Limitations

Text Alignment

The format specifiers used with individual stamps allow the text alignment to be set (left, centre and right). However, in this release the alignment does not work in all cases.

For output to PostScript printers all positioning and alignment works as expected. For output to non-PostScript printers output works as expected for horizontal text, but is generally left aligned only for vertical or angled text. This limitation may be removed in a future release.

Change History

Release 2.0

Major upgrade for the 32-bit Windows platforms from Date Stamp 1.0 which was only available for 16-bit Windows (Windows 3.x).

Release 2.1

Options. Can now set default stamp RGB colour. Added facility to set the computer's network time on Windows.

Stamps. Can override default settings of font, psfont, size and colour, as specified in the options, for each stamp.

Variables. Added new variables: hostname (computer's network name), info (PDF document information field), reginfo (Windows registry information), filename, filepath, filebasename and fileext.

Include and exclude directories. Added new feature to control which PDFs will be stamped according to the file's location.

PostScript Output. Fixed problem where large or rotated text sometimes appeared on the page in addition to the specified stamps.

Fonts are re-encoded to the platform encoding (WinAnsi on Windows, ISO Latin 1 on Unix) so that accented and other special characters appear correctly.

Added the ability to overlay stamps over each page's contents rather than to apply as a watermark.

Some optimisations to the PostScript output also made to reduce the output file size.

Web browser support. Added additional code so that the file name or URL can be accessed via the new variables (see above), and so that the include/exclude directories can work in a browser.

Release 2.14

Non-PostScript Output. Fixed the problem with stamps not appearing when printing PDFs containing scanned images, or when printing as image.

Overlay option. Changed the default value for the

overlay option from 0 to 1, so that stamps are by default on top of the original page, so not hidden by images.

Fonts. Added the option of specifying weights and styles for non-PostScript fonts.

Release 2.15

Overlay option. Fixed problem with the option overlay=0 causing stamps to appear as an overlay instead of as a watermark.

Release 2.16

Upgrade to work with Acrobat 7. Fixed problem with angled text for non-PostScript printing.

Release 2.17

Internet Explorer Cache. Enhanced the Include and Exclude Directories options to work with the Internet Explorer browser cached files. i.e. If a URL is put into either of those sections, a locally cached file opened in Acrobat within IE will be treated as if opened from the original URL, not as a local file.

Release 2.19

Rotate option. Added the rotate option to handle stamps on landscape pages better.

Release 2.2

Upgrade to work with Acrobat and Reader X (10).

Printing with shrink to fit. Fixed problem with stamps at the top and bottom of the page not appearing when shrink to fit is on during printing.

Release 2.21

Printing landscape pages. Fixed problem with top and bottom margin stamps on landscape pages appearing too far down or up the page respectively.

Rotate option. The rotate option previously only worked for PostScript output. This now works for non-PostScript printers.

Vars_in_dirs option. Added this option to enable variables to be expanded within the include or exclude directories lists.

Release 2.3

Acrobat Reader DC. Enhanced to work seamlessly with Acrobat Reader DC.

Release 2.31

Config_dir option. Added this option to enable system administrators to reference a dstamp.ini on a network path rather than in the plug_ins directory.

Release 2.32

Protected Mode. Added an additional location for Date Stamp to check if protected mode is on when Adobe Reader DC is installed using the Enterprise Toolkit to lock down features. The location used is:

```
HKLM\SOFTWARE\WOW6432Node\Policies\Adobe\
AcrobatReader\DC\FeatureLockdown\
bProtectedMode
```

Credits

Design	David Evans & Peter Sutton
Development	Peter Sutton & David Evans
Quality Assurance	David Evans

Further Information

Date Stamp is an Adobe Reader plug-in from Merlin Open Systems. For information about our other products and services please contact us as shown below, or visit our Web site:

Merlin Open Systems
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Full contact details are available on our web site.

E-mail: info@merlin-os.co.uk
WWW: www.merlin-os.co.uk