

PDFs, The City's Public Website & You!

When it comes to putting City documents on the public facing website, we can never be too careful about making sure our documents will be easily accessible by everyone who seeks them. As technology keeps charging forwards, it's also hard to stay on top of "current best practices". In an effort to keep as many of us up to speed on the critical basics, here is an important, timely & quick note about PDFs.

Two crucial & specific things are necessary if we (City Employees) put PDFs onto our City's website (<http://srcity.org> & <http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us>):

#1 - Make sure that the PDF includes TEXT. Frequently, a PDF can be created from a scanned image (on a copier) or from an art or word-processing program (for a flyer, for example). Before you put the PDF online, you MUST be certain the document's text is legible. This is a requirement of all of us, in order to maintain a fully compliant & accessible website by everyone. You can test this by opening a PDF and trying to drag your mouse over text to "copy" it. If you cannot copy the text, it is not legible as text (to a blind person's screen reader, as an example).

#2 - Do not use hyperlinks in public PDF documents. PDFs, as many of you know, are a proprietary document format. PDFs are great because they cannot be easily modified (among other reasons). However, this *feature* also creates a "future proofing" problem for us. If the path to a resource (a staff report for example) changes on the website, *there is no way for us to easily get back into the PDF to fix the hyperlink* at some future point. The best way to avoid this problem is to NOT put hyperlinks into public PDFs such as Agendas, Minutes, Flyers, Reports, Maps, etc... Use a web-page instead! Only web-pages are 100% ADA compliant AND future proof!