FILEMAN
COST RECOVERY SERVICE

FACTSHEET: PDF/A

What is a PDF/A?

PDF/Archiving or PDF/A for short, is the ISO 19005 standard for archiving electronic documents, which *"provides a mechanism for representing electronic documents in a manner that preserves their static visual appearance over time, independent of the tools and systems used for creating, storing or rendering the files."*

How is it different to a PDF?

» PDF/A is classed as a higher standard of PDF which is completely self-contained and embeds all elements including images, text, font, colours etc. required for reproduction

» It is specific to archiving and does not allow audio, video or executable content, unlike a PDF

» A PDF/A will not allow encryption or external references, as there is no guarantee that the person opening that PDF/A in the future would have access to the encryption information, or those external references would still be there in the future

» The content within a PDF/A is fully searchable down to a metadata level

Why is this important to my firm?

As more firms move to paperless or "paper-lite" offices, there is an increasing number of documents being digitised. In order to ensure these documents remain unchanged and defensible, they need to be preserved in a format that ensures the document cannot be altered and will be reproduced in exactly the same way in years to come should it be called into question.

Key benefits of archiving in PDF/A

» PDF/A is seen as the global standard in long term preservation of electronic documents

» PDF/A format protects version ensuring content remains identical to original

» PDF/A prohibits unsuitable features for long term archiving, such as font linking and encryption

» PDF/A stores actual text and fonts for full searchability of content

» PDF/A can be opened with any viewing platform

For more information on why PDF/A should be part of your archiving policy, visit the PDF Association website: www.pdfa.org