

PDF HACKS™

100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools



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HACK
#86

Use Perl to Create PDF

Create or modify PDF with a Perl script.

Many web sites use Perl for creating dynamic content. You can also use Perl to [script Acrobat on your local machine](#) [Hack #95]. Given the great number of packages that extend Perl, it is no surprise that packages exist for creating and manipulating PDF. Let's take a look.

Install Perl and the PDF::API2 Package on Windows

“[Script Acrobat Using Perl on Windows](#)” [Hack #95] explains how to install Perl on Windows. After installing Perl, use the Perl Package Manager to easily install the PDF::API2 package.

Launch the Programmer's Package Manager (PPM, formerly called Perl Package Manager) by selecting Start → Programs → ActiveState ActivePerl 5.8 → Perl Package Manager. A command prompt will open with its `ppm>` prompt awaiting your command. Type `help` to see a list of commands. Type `search pdf` to see a list of available packages. To install PDF::API2, enter `install pdf-api2`. The Package Manager will fetch the package from the Internet and install it on your machine. The entire session looks something like this:

```

PPM - Programmer's Package Manager version 3.1.
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Entering interactive shell. Using Term::ReadLine::Stub as readline library.

Type 'help' to get started.

ppm> install pdf-api2
=====
Install 'pdf-api2' version 0.3r77 in ActivePerl 5.8.3.809.
=====
Transferring data: 74162/1028845 bytes.

...

Installing C:\Perl\site\lib\PDF\API2\CoreFont\verdanaitalic.pm
Installing C:\Perl\site\lib\PDF\API2\CoreFont\webdings.pm
Installing C:\Perl\site\lib\PDF\API2\CoreFont\wingdings.pm
Installing C:\Perl\site\lib\PDF\API2\CoreFont\zapfdingbats.pm
Installing C:\Perl\site\lib\PDF\API2\Chart\Pie.pm
Successfully installed pdf-api2 version 0.3r77 in ActivePerl 5.8.3.809.
ppm> quit

```

The PDF::API2 package is used widely to create and manipulate PDF. You can download documentation and examples from <http://pdfapi2.sourceforge.net/dl/>.

Hello World in Perl

This Perl script creates a PDF named *HelloWorld.pdf*, adds a page, and then adds text to that page. It gives you an idea of how easily you can create PDF. Figure 6-16 shows the PDF document created by this script.

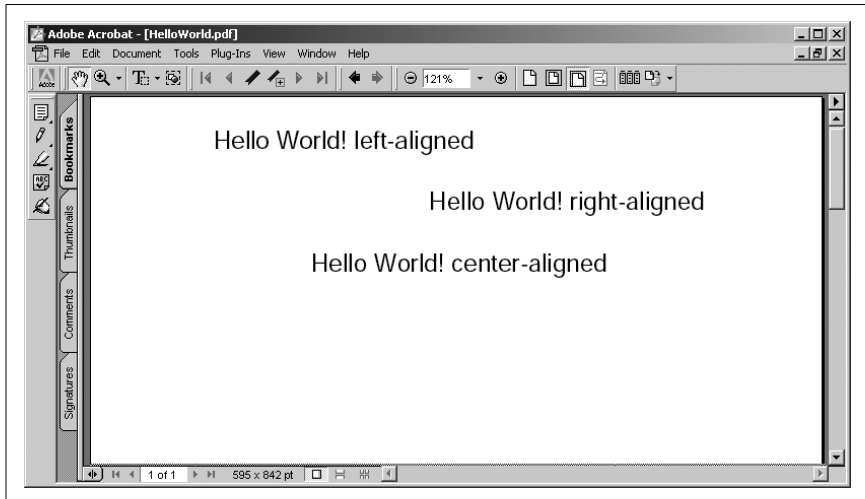


Figure 6-16. Creating PDF content using Perl

```
#!/usr/bin/perl
# HelloWorld.pl; adapted from 0x_test-pl

use PDF::API2;

my $pdf = PDF::API2->new(-file => "HelloWorld.pdf");
$pdf->mediabox(595,842);
my $page = $pdf->page;
my $fnt = $pdf->corefont('Arial',-encoding => 'latin1');
my $txt = $page->hybrid;
$txt->textstart;
$txt->font($fnt, 20);
$txt->translate(100,800);
$txt->text("Hello World! left-aligned");
$txt->translate(500,750);
$txt->text_right("Hello World! right-aligned");
$txt->translate(300,700);
$txt->text_center("Hello World! center-aligned");
$txt->textend;
$pdf->save;
$pdf->end();
```

Discover Perl Packages with CPAN

CPAN (<http://www.cpan.org>) is the Comprehensive Perl Archive Network, where you will find “All Things Perl.” Visit <http://search.cpan.org> to dis-

cover several other PDF packages. Drill down to find details, documentation, and downloads. For example, PDF::Extract (<http://search.cpan.org/~nsharrock/>) creates a new PDF from the pages of a larger, input PDF.