

How to convert a text file to PDF format on Linux

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Question: I want to convert a plain text file into a PDF document. Is there an easy way to convert a text file to a PDF file from the command line on Linux?

When you have a bunch of text documents to maintain, there are advantages in converting them into PDF format. For example, PDF is good for printing because PDF documents have pre-defined layout. Besides, with PDF format, there is less risk that the documents are accidentally modified.

To convert a text file to PDF format, you can follow two-step procedures.

Prerequisites

First, you need to install two prerequisite packages.

On Debian, Ubuntu or Linux Mint:

```
$ sudo apt-get install enscript ghostscript
```

On Fedora, CentOS/RHEL:

```
$ sudo yum install enscript ghostscript
```

On Arch Linux:

```
$ sudo pacman -S enscript ghostscript
```

Convert a Text File to PDF Format

Once all prerequisites are installed, follow these two steps to generate a PDF file from a text file.

First, convert a text file to Postscript format by using `enscript` command-line tool.

```
$ enscript -p output.ps input.txt
```

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Finally convert the generated postscript file to a PDF file.

```
$ ps2pdf output.ps output.pdf
```