

# How to use PDFlib with PHP

## 1 Scope of this Document

This document tries to explain various possibilities for successfully deploying PDFlib as a PHP extension. The generic term PDFlib is used to designate one of the following distinct products:

- ▶ PDFlib Lite, the open-source subset of PDFlib
- ▶ The commercial PDFlib product
- ▶ PDFlib+PDI, a commercial superset of PDFlib which also contains the PDF Import Library (PDI)
- ▶ PDFlib Personalization Server (PPS), a superset of PDFlib+PDI with advanced block filling features for personalizing PDF documents.

The methods for deploying any of these products as a PHP extension are the same in all cases. However, only one product can be used at a time. Similarly, multiple versions of these products cannot be deployed at the same time. Note that the evaluation versions of commercial PDFlib products will be fully functional, but will display a demo stamp across all generated PDF pages unless a valid license key is applied.

This document applies to the following software versions:

- ▶ PDFlib 5 and 6, as well as all maintenance versions of each
- ▶ PHP 4.2.0 or above, and PHP 5 as well as all maintenance versions of each.

Where applicable, version-specific information is provided separately.

## 2 Classify your System – and yourself

### 2.1 Platforms where PHP reliably supports DSOs

Loadable PHP extension modules implemented as DSOs (dynamic shared objects, also called dynamic link library DLL) are the recommended method of using PDFlib with PHP. PHP supports dynamic loading of extensions from DSOs on the following platforms (only platforms supported by PDFlib GmbH are mentioned here; there may be more):

- ▶ Windows
- ▶ Linux on x86 and ia64
- ▶ Linux on PPC
- ▶ Linux on zSeries
- ▶ FreeBSD 4 and 5 on x86
- ▶ OpenBSD on x86
- ▶ Solaris 7/8/9 on Sparc

**Using commercial PDFlib packages with PHP on platforms with DSO support.** PDFlib GmbH makes available packages with precompiled binary PDFlib DSOs for several platforms and PHP versions. If such a package is available for your combination of platform and PHP proceed with Section 5, »Deploying the PDFlib DSO«.

If a PDFlib DSO is not available you need the appropriate precompiled PDFlib C library for your platform (available for all platforms supported by PDFlib GmbH), and must build a PDFlib DSO for PHP according to Section 6, »Building a DSO from a PDFlib C library«.

**Using PDFlib Lite with PHP on platforms with DSO support.** In order to use PDFlib Lite you need PDFlib source code, and must proceed according to Section 7, »Building PDFlib Lite from Source«. Once you've done this you must build a PDFlib DSO for PHP according to Section 6, »Building a DSO from a PDFlib C library«.

### 2.2 Platforms where PHP does not reliably support DSOs

In our experience PHP does not support dynamic loading of extensions on the following platforms:

- ▶ IBM AIX
- ▶ Mac OS X is somewhat special: although some kind of DSO support is available in PHP, we do not consider it as reliable and robust enough.

**Using commercial PDFlib packages with PHP on platforms without DSO support.** You need the appropriate precompiled PDFlib C library for your platform, and must rebuild PHP according to Section 8, »Building PHP with statically linked PDFlib«.

**Using PDFlib Lite with PHP on platforms without DSO support.** In order to use PDFlib Lite you need PDFlib Lite source code and must first build a PDFlib Lite C library according to Section 7, »Building PDFlib Lite from Source«. Next, you must rebuild PHP according to Section 8, »Building PHP with statically linked PDFlib«.

## 2.3 Other Platforms

There may be other platforms which are supported by PHP, but where we don't know about the status of DSO support. PDFlib GmbH does not support the use of PDFlib with PHP on any of these platforms.

You may be able to make PDFlib with PHP work on such a platform by rolling your own PHP binary. However, be warned that this requires high skills and motivation, and may nevertheless result in frustration instead of working software. After all, there are good reasons why we don't support certain combinations.

## 2.4 Required Skill Levels

Making PDFlib work with PHP requires various skill levels depending on your operating system platform. In the following we will classify tasks according to the following skill sets:

- ▶ A *PHP Web programmer* knows how to write code for PHP, but doesn't have experience with other languages or general system administration tasks. The PHP programmer usually has access to other people who are responsible for performing configuration tasks.
- ▶ A *sysadmin* feels comfortable working with PEAR and other command-line tools, happily edits *php.ini* and does not hesitate to restart the Web server (i.e. Apache or IIS) if required for installation or configuration purposes. Appropriate permissions (access rights) to do all this are also part of the *sysadmin* profile.
- ▶ A *C developer* has access to a C development environment (header files, compiler, linker, associated system libraries) and can work with configure scripts and Makefiles or corresponding IDE features.

It may help to classify yourself according to these types of developers. The remainder of this document describes tasks which require at least sysadmin or C developer skills. PHP developers without additional knowledge or assistance will not be able to perform the required steps without assistance.

## 3 Testing your Installation

After you installed the PDFlib extension for PHP using any of the methods discussed in this document you may want to test your installation in order to see whether everything works as expected.

**The PHP info page.** You can test the success of your PDFlib installation and configuration with the following mini PHP script:

```
<?phpinfo()?>
```

If you don't find a PDF section check your log files to find the reason. If the output created by `phpinfo()` contains the line *PDFlib GmbH Binary Version* you are using a precompiled PDFlib DSO provided by PDFlib GmbH. If you see a line *PDFlib GmbH Version* you are using your own PDFlib DSO or custom PHP with a statically linked PDFlib. The version number of the PECL module which has been used to build the PDFlib extension will also be shown.

*Note* If the output of `phpinfo()` shows only »PDFlib Version« you are using an old PDFlib extension wrapper from a PHP 4 distribution. This combination is not supported.

**The PDFlib examples.** The PDFlib distribution packages include with two flavours of examples which you can use to test your installation. In the *php-43x* directory you will find the old-style examples using the functional API. These examples can be used for PHP 4 and PHP5.

In the *php-50x* directory you can find the new object-oriented examples. These will work only with PHP 5 or above. To use the examples proceed as follows:

- ▶ Copy some files to your *htdocs* directory:

```
$ cp bind/php/php-<version>/*.php ../htdocs
$ cp bind/data/* ../htdocs/data
```

- ▶ point your browser to the URLs of the examples
- ▶ enjoy the generated PDFs

## 4 PDFlib in Hosting Environments

**You are running a site at a web hosting provider.** In this case there are various considerations (we can ignore the case where a PDFlib extension for PHP is already installed since there's nothing more to do):

- ▶ Some providers do not allow custom PHP extensions; in this case you are out of luck.
- ▶ With some providers you can maintain your own copy of *php.ini*, while others don't allow this. If you can't edit *php.ini* and this file contains *enable\_dl=Off* you are out of luck.

**You are a web hosting provider.** As a provider you should be aware of the following:

- ▶ Although PDFlib Lite source code is freely available, and many Linux and PHP distributions contain PDFlib Lite, the PDFlib Lite license does not cover free use of PDFlib Lite on a Web hoster's systems.
- ▶ You can install commercial PDFlib DSOs even without obtaining a license. In this situation you can install one of the precompiled PDFlib DSOs supplied by PDFlib GmbH without a license key (i.e. a demo stamp will be created). Those among your customers who wish to commercially use it can obtain a commercial license to disable the demo stamp. In other words, you can offer PDFlib without the need for obtaining a license for all of your servers. The recommended method is to install the PDFlib DSO in some globally accessible directory, and set the *extension=* line in *php.ini* appropriately.
- ▶ Alternatively, if (like an increasing number of providers) you believe in PDFlib availability as a competitive advantage, you can obtain a site license which covers all your servers and customers. Individual users will no longer be required to obtain a license on their own in this case. Please contact PDFlib GmbH if you are interested in more details.

## 5 Deploying the PDFlib DSO

Requirements:

- ▶ skill level: sysadmin
- ▶ the PDFlib DSO (either precompiled from a binary package provided by PDFlib GmbH, or built on your own)
- ▶ working PHP binary

This section applies to the prebuilt DSOs distributed by PDFlib GmbH, as well as to DSOs which you have built yourself.

### 5.1 Installing the PDFlib DSO on Windows

The PDFlib DSOs for Windows (actually DLLs) have been tested with the binary PHP distribution which is available from <http://www.php.net>. You will find PDFlib DSOs for various versions of PHP on Windows in the following location of the uncompressed package:

```
bind/php/php-<version>/libpdf_php.dll
```

For the PHP installation process please follow the documentation of your PHP distribution, and copy the PDFlib DSO to the directory which is specified in the *extension\_dir* line in *php.ini*.

### 5.2 Installing the PDFlib DSO on Unix

The PDFlib DSOs for various Unix platforms are available for different versions of PHP. You will find PDFlib DSOs in the following location of the uncompressed package:

```
bind/php/php-<version>libpdf_php.so (adjust the shared library suffix if necessary)
```

Copy the PDFlib DSO to the directory which is specified in the *extension\_dir* line in *php.ini*.

### 5.3 Using the PDFlib DSO

**Loading the PDFlib DSO in *php.ini*.** If you decide to load PDFlib every time PHP starts, insert one line in *php.ini*

```
extension=libpdf_php.dll (on Windows)
```

or

```
extension=libpdf_php.so (on Unix; adjust the shared library suffix if necessary)
```

and restart your Web server so that the changes are recognized.

**Loading the PDFlib DSO explicitly in your PHP script.** Without the *extension* line in *php.ini* you must include the following line in your PHP scripts:

```
dl("libpdf_php.dll"); (on Windows)
```

or

```
dl("libpdf_php.so");    (on Unix; adjust the shared library suffix if necessary)
```

In this case your *php.ini* must contain the following lines:

```
safe_mode=Off  
enable_dl=On
```

The line *extension\_dir* is not relevant in this case. Note that for security reasons this method is no longer recommended; many Web hosters do not allow it.

## 5.4 Common Problems with PDFlib DSOs

**Older version of PDFlib built into the PHP binary.** PDFlib support must not already have been compiled into your PHP version. If your PHP already includes PDFlib support (this is the case for versions of PHP distributed with some Linux distributions) but you need a newer PDFlib version you must first obtain a PHP binary without builtin PDFlib support (either by locating the appropriate binary, or rebuilding it yourself. This works similar to Section 8, »Building PHP with statically linked PDFlib«, but you must rebuild PHP with the following *configure* option:

```
-with-pdf-lib=no
```

*Note* Maintainers of Linux and PHP distributions should include PDFlib support for PHP as DSO because this facilitates updates.

**Binary characteristics of PHP and PDFlib DSO must match.** Several properties of your PHP binary must match those of the PDFlib DSO. These properties are determined when building PHP, and cannot be changed afterwards. The precompiled DSOs for PDFlib have been built as follows:

- ▶ non-debug version
- ▶ for supported PHP versions see *bind/php/php-<version>*
- ▶ thread-safe (mostly relevant for Windows)

If you see an error message similar to the following when trying to load the PDFlib DSO, your PHP build number does not match that of the PDFlib module:

```
Warning: pdf: Unable to initialize module  
Module compiled with debug=0, thread-safety=0 module API=20020429  
PHP compiled with debug=0, thread-safety=1 module API=20020429
```

All of these options must match.

## 6 Building a DSO from a PDFlib C library

Requirements:

- ▶ Skill level: sysadmin
- ▶ a precompiled PDFlib C library (either precompiled from a binary package provided by PDFlib GmbH, or built on your own from PDFlib Lite source code)
- ▶ PECL package for PDFlib
- ▶ PEAR (if available; highly recommended)

### 6.1 Building the PDFlib DSO with PEAR

The simplest way to build a PDFlib extension for PHP is to use the PECL module for PDFlib, and build it with the *pear* command provided by PHP. PEAR (PHP Extension and Application Repository) and PECL (a repository for PHP Extensions) are part of the PHP project. The *pear* tool is included with PHP 4.3.0 and above, but can also be installed for older versions. If you don't have *pear* installed with your PHP installation, or it does not work properly for some reason you should try to get the latest version of *pear*.

To build and install the PDFlib extension you have to call

```
$ pear install pdflib
```

and supply the path where PDFlib is installed at the following prompt:

```
path to pdflib installation? : $HOME/pdflib-6.0.x/bind/c
```

This will create a PDFlib module called *pdf.so* (or similar, depending on platform). After building the extension you should check your *php.ini* to make sure that the extension was added properly, and restart Apache to activate the new module.

#### Other issues with PECL/PEAR and PDFlib.

- ▶ Trying to build the PECL package with GD support may fail, since PHP does not yet support building PECL packages which use GD. Until this PHP issue is resolved you have to copy the GD header files manually to */usr/include/php* (or wherever the PHP header files are located in your installation).

### 6.2 Building the PDFlib DSO without PEAR

Although it is possible to build a PDFlib DSO without PEAR, this method is not supported, and not described here.



# 7 Building PDFlib Lite from Source

Requirements:

- ▶ Skill level: C developer
- ▶ PDFlib Lite source code

On Unix systems (for Windows see *readme-source-windows.txt* in the PDFlib Lite distribution) unpack the PDFlib Lite source code, change to the created directory, and issue the following commands:

```
$ ./configure
$ make
$ make install
```

This will create a PDFlib Lite C library. For more details see *readme-source-unix.txt* in the PDFlib Lite distribution.

The last step in the sequence above will install the library and include files to some local directory. By default these files will be installed to some system directory, which means that `sysadmin` permissions are required. However, you can also install to some private (non-privileged) directory by using the `--prefix` option in the initial call to the *configure* script, e.g.

```
$ ./configure --prefix=$HOME
```

Note that the installation will automatically create *libs* and *include* subdirectories under the specified prefix.

# 8 Building PHP with statically linked PDFlib

Requirements:

- ▶ Skill level: C developer, preferably with experience in building large software systems, plus sysadmin
- ▶ PDFlib C library (either built from PDFlib Lite source code, or obtained as a precompiled commercial PDFlib C library)
- ▶ PHP source code
- ▶ PECL package for PDFlib

If DSOs don't work in your situation you must rebuild PHP from source code in order to include PDFlib support. This step must be done within the PHP build process. Below you will find an overview on how to achieve this, but you'll have to refer the PHP documentation for more details.

**Building PHP.** Unpack PHP, configure and build it to your needs. We recommend to initially try this without PDFlib support in order to get accustomed with the process.

**Prepare the PDFlib C library.** For the commercial PDFlib product: unpack the PDFlib C library and note the full path to the *bind/c* directory in this package.

For PDFlib Lite: build the PDFlib Lite C library according to Section 7, »Building PDFlib Lite from Source«.

**Prepare the PECL Package.** Create an *ext/pdf* directory in your PHP source tree. Unpack the PECL package for PDFlib, and move the content of this package (including *pdf.c*, *php\_pdf.h* and others) to the *ext/pdf* directory of your PHP source tree.

**Put everything together.** Change to the PHP source directory and follow these steps:

```
# rebuild the PHP configure script:
$ ./buildconf --force

# configure and build PHP with PDFlib support:
$ ./configure --with-pdflib=<pdflib source directory>/bind/c <other-php-options>
....
Thank you for using PHP.
config.status: creating php5.spec
config.status: creating main/build-defs.h
config.status: creating scripts/phpize
config.status: creating scripts/php-config
config.status: creating sapi/cli/php.1
config.status: creating main/php_config.h
config.status: executing default commands

$ make
....
Build complete.
(It is safe to ignore warnings about tempnam and tmpnam).

# install it as root
$ sudo make install

# probably you have to configure your Web server to load the new php module
```

```
# restart apache (i.e. sudo apachectl restart)
```

### Notes for Mac OS X.

- ▶ On Mac OS X *pear install* will fail if no *libtoolize* is available. Either install it from the Apple Developer Tools CD, or try to change *libtoolize* to *glibtoolize* in the *phpize* script on your system.
- ▶ If the *configure* script fails on Mac OS X you must set the *LDFLAGS* environment variable appropriately. Use the as following commands in the C shell (*tcsh* or *csh*):

```
$ setenv LDFLAGS "-framework Carbon"
```

In the Bourne shell use the following commands:

```
$ LDFLAGS='-framework Carbon'
```

```
$ export LDFLAGS
```

## 9 Resources

- ▶ Latest version of this document:  
<http://www.pdflib.com/support/faq.html>
- ▶ Precompiled PDFlib binary packages with DSOs for PHP:  
<http://www.pdflib.com/products/pdflib/download/index.html>
- ▶ PDFlib Lite source code:  
<http://www.pdflib.com/products/pdflib/download-source.html>
- ▶ The PDFlib mailing list:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pdflib>
- ▶ PDFlib support for commercial licensees:  
[support@pdflib.com](mailto:support@pdflib.com)
- ▶ General information on installing PHP:  
<http://www.php.net/install>
- ▶ PECL package for PDFlib:  
<http://pecl.php.net/package/pdflib>
- ▶ PEAR:  
<http://pear.php.net>
- ▶ PEAR and PECL support:  
<http://pear.php.net/support.php> and <http://pecl.php.net/support.php>
- ▶ Instructions on getting the latest version of PEAR:  
<http://pear.php.net/manual/en/installation.getting.php>
- ▶ PHP source code:  
<http://www.php.net/downloads.php>
- ▶ Comprehensive list of PHP-related links:  
<http://www.php.net/links.php>