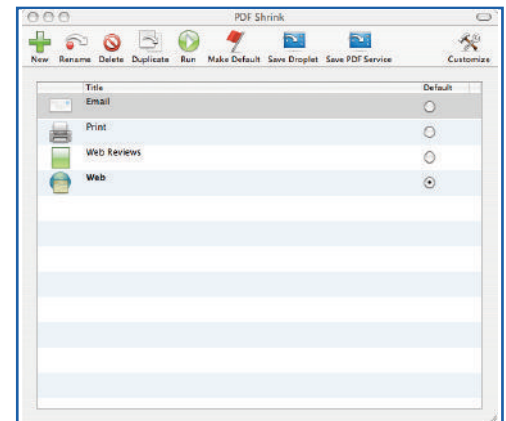


## Extra views



Screenshot 1: The main window that you are presented with when you first launch PDF Shrink 4.

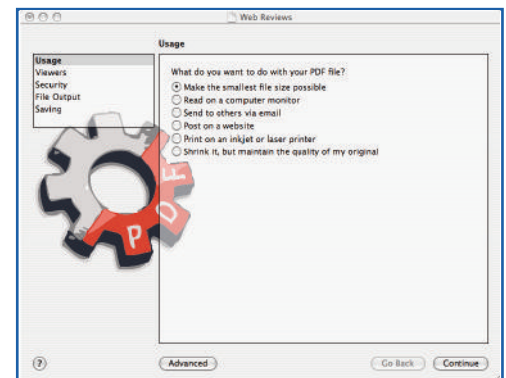
For someone who spends most of his time evaluating products and writing reviews, it is always nice to have a passion for what I am reviewing, that is what makes my job a pleasure to do. Having been involved in graphic design and the publishing industry for many years, it made me very happy to find Apago's PDF Shrink (version 4) universal binary software.

Apago are by no means a new company, they were founded in 1991. The North Atlanta based company offer a wide range of software solutions, mainly based around PDF workflow and manipulation, with a few other bits thrown in for good measure.

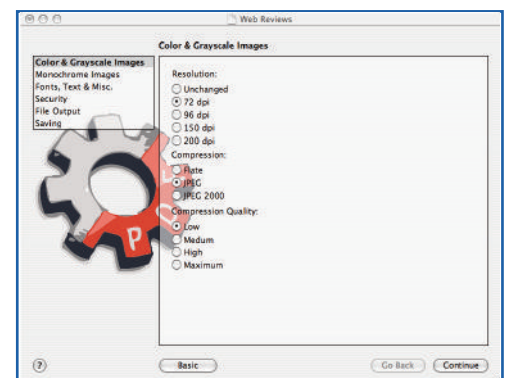
PDF Shrink is probably the most appropriate software I could look at, as the past few months I have been producing the downloadable (and printable) version of the reviews that appear on Geekanoids. With so many reviews going onto the website, size is very important, without compromising on quality. Toward the end of this review, instead of the regular download, you will find two options, one created in my normal workflow with Quark Xpress, the second was optimised with PDF Shrink.

So to kick off, let us take a look at how PDF Shrink presents itself to the user on first launch. The main window (screenshot 1) has a row of icons across the top, these are mainly used for creating various PDF settings. They are all pretty self explanatory, so I will not insult you with the obvious. Of interest are the 'New', 'Save Droplet' and 'Save PDF Service' buttons.

'New' allows you to create a preset PDF workflow, where you can specify the settings in one of two modes. 'Basic' shown in screenshot 2 allows you to make the settings by clicking options that appear in plain English, this is a great idea and allows most non-tech users to be up and running in no time. You can choose how the resulting PDF file is going to be used, which viewer will likely be used to read the PDF,



Screenshot 2: Setting up a PDF workflow using the plain english options shown in the 'Basic' mode.



Screenshot 3: The 'Advanced' mode gives you options that you may well be more familiar with and a lot more control.

security settings (password protection etc), how the file will be saved (you can even add a suffix to the resulting filenames), the last option is saving, where you can assign an icon and description to the workflow you are creating.

Clicking the 'Advanced' button toward the bottom of this window (see screenshot 3) allows you to make the same sort of settings, but with options that would make more sense to the more advanced user. So for example, instead of choosing how the PDF is going to be used (to post on a website for example), you would choose the resolution, type of compression and amount of compression.

Once you have made all the settings you require, the name and icon for the workflow appears in the main window, ready to use. If you look back at screenshot 1, you will see settings for Email, Print, Web Reviews and Web. All of these are preset into PDF Shrink when you first launch it, with the exception of 'Web Reviews' which I created to test how the procedure worked.

With just this main window you are ready to go, by simply dragging a PDF file onto one of the settings, the file is processed and then saved to you destination.

To make things even easier, two extra buttons at the top of the main window that I mentioned earlier 'Save Droplet' and 'Save PDF Service' come into play. If you highlight one of your workflows (for example Web) it a small script is created, represented by an icon (called a droplet). This could be left on your desktop or dragged into the dock. To entice PDF Shrink into action, you simple drag your PDF file onto the droplet icon. You can create as many of these as you want, all with custom settings. 'Save PDF Service' is slightly different in that it creates a contextual menu item to access the workflow. So you can control click on a PDF file, scroll to 'open with' and then select your workflow that you just created and PDF Shrink does its' work again.

One minor gripe is the 'Queue' window. This appears whenever PDF Shrink is set to process some files. There is an 'Active' tab that shows you a progress report of how things are going and lists any PDF files you have queued. The 'Completed' tab, shows you a list of processed files, which workflow you used and by how much (shown as a percentage) the files have been shrunk. My problem is that when the window pops up, it remains at the front of the action, even when everything is finished. I would like it to disappear, or at least have the option of turning it off altogether. However, if you do not have PDF Shrink running and you drop a PDF file onto a Droplet, then when the file has finished processing, the application quits and all windows are closed. So this is only a small thing, which does not detract at all on how superb PDF Shrink really is.

So, would I recommend PDF Shrink? Well, for an application that I will find myself using every day, I would have to say yes. For an application that is a 'universal' offering for just \$35, I would shout yes. If you produce PDF files where file size is important, then I would say that you should head on over and get PDF Shrink today, you will not regret it.

Now for results, well you can see from the results panel on the right that PDF Shrink performed very well indeed. Below are some links that will take you to downloads of two versions of this review, so you can compare the results for yourself.

Quark PDF version of the review:

[http://www.wikidesign.co.uk/GeekanoidsReviews/PDFShrink\\_4\\_review.pdf](http://www.wikidesign.co.uk/GeekanoidsReviews/PDFShrink_4_review.pdf)

PDF Shrink version of the review:

[http://www.wikidesign.co.uk/GeekanoidsReviews/PDFShrink\\_4\\_review\\_WEBREVIEW.pdf](http://www.wikidesign.co.uk/GeekanoidsReviews/PDFShrink_4_review_WEBREVIEW.pdf)

## Results from PDF Shrink

- *Settings used in Quark Xpress were to create a CMYK PDF file, 150dpi, low JPEG compression, all fonts embedded.*

*Result of previous review: 896k*

*Result of this review: 628k*

- *Settings used in PDF Shrink were to create a CMYK PDF file, 150dpi for images, low JPEG compression, 200dpi mono images, all fonts left embedded except the 14 base fonts.*

*Result of previous review: 252k*

*Result of this review\*: 36k*

*\*with medium JPEG compression.*

## info panel

**product** pdf shrink 4

**price** \$35

**supplier** Apago Inc.

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**web** [www.apagoinc.com](http://www.apagoinc.com)

**rating** ★★★★★