

# Document Management, Automation & PDF Tools

## BUYERS GUIDE



# ABBYY FineReader 15 Review:

## Comprehensive PDF software and OCR technology for legal professionals to support e-filing, e-discovery, archiving, file conversion and more.

One techie-acronym that every lawyer knows is "PDF" which, of course, stands for Portable Document Format. Legal professionals use PDFs for scanning documents and sending letters. The entire e-filing industry is based around PDF files because they're a standard file format that can be easily archived for future reference. That means having capable PDF software is as important and critical as email and a word processor. ABBYY FineReader is an all-in-one tool for managing, annotating, editing, redacting and converting PDF files that earns it a credible place in any lawyer's technology toolset.

ABBYY [FineReader 15](#) for Windows enables legal professionals to create and convert documents to PDF, as well as convert PDF files to other file formats including Microsoft Word and Excel, rich text (RTF), Microsoft PowerPoint (PPTX) and open document text (ODT).

Legal professionals spend the majority of their time working with different types of PDF files with varying quality, depending on whether the PDF starts its life cycle as a digital or scanned document. Lawyers file court documents in PDF format and litigants use searchable PDF files to satisfy electronic discovery (e-discovery) requests.

PDF files are ideal for collaborating with colleagues and sharing documents with clients. The PDF/A standard, which has a restricted feature set, is an acceptable long-term file storage format commonly used by archivists, compliance officers and records managers.

FineReader 15 allows users to digitize paper documents and scan files with optical character recognition (OCR) technology and compare documents in different formats and multiple languages (See Box 1).

ABBYY's [FineReader 15](#) provides capable software for all PDF and OCR tasks, from simple to complex. FineReader supplies the tools to work with digital and paper documents and overcome the pains of working with PDFs such as highlighting, commenting, signing, Bates stamping, redacting text and comparing file versions.

The software works on Microsoft Windows (versions 7, 8, 8.1, 10) comes in two editions: Standard and Corporate. Legal pros should choose the Corporate version so they can compare documents in different file formats and automate digitization and conversion tasks.

### Box 1: Optical Character Recognition

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is a technology used to recognize printed or typed characters and then convert them to editable and searchable text. For example, humans can read a picture of a magazine article that was taken with a mobile phone but a computer cannot read the printed matter unless it first attempts to recognize the individual characters using OCR technology.

Computers are not as good at recognizing text from pictures as humans are so OCR is not 100% dependable. For example, a computer might interpret a lowercase "l" as the numeral one and that means a word containing that character will not be fully searchable on the computer. So, it makes sense to use a reliable OCR engine with dependable dictionary support to get the highest accuracy. That's why so many law firms, service providers and other companies turn to ABBYY.

# ABBYY®

ABBYY is a global leader in digital intelligence for the enterprise, developing a new class of AI technologies that provide the digital workforce with the skills to understand enterprise content and processes. FineReader is a comprehensive PDF tool for working with PDFs and scanned documents.

**Company Brand:** ABBYY

**Product Brand Names:**

- ABBYY FineReader 15 Standard & Corporate

"FineReader gives workers the tools they need to truly incorporate both digital and paper documents into a unified workflow and overcome the pain points of working with PDF files."—Slavena Hristova, Director of Product Marketing, ABBYY ([August 27 Press Release](#)).

**Recent Developments and Updates:**

- Full PDF preview is now available in Windows Explorer and Microsoft Outlook.
- Improved usability and accuracy of table and text extraction from PDF files.
- The underline formatting tool has been added for editing text in PDF files (in addition to bold and italics).
- Arabic OCR is twice as accurate and 20% faster.

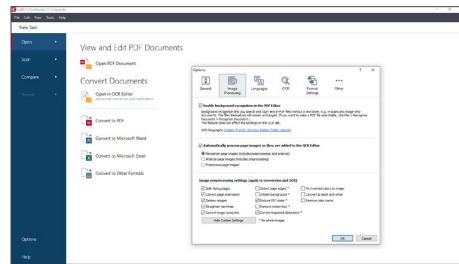
**“ FineReader 15 allows users to digitize paper documents and scan files with optical character recognition (OCR) technology and compare documents in different formats and multiple languages.”**

FineReader 15 for Windows was [released](#) in August 2019 with several new features and improvements:

- OCR speed and accuracy refinements
- Paragraph-level editing and layout adjustments in PDF
- Exporting document comparisons to Microsoft Word with differences that can be accepted or rejected in Track Changes
- More precise data conversion and analysis of tables

### Text Recognition and PDF Conversion

The start page in FineReader surfaces everyday tasks presented to users when working with PDFs. The left-side navigation displays tools to open and edit PDF files and convert PDFs to various document formats including Microsoft Word and Excel. Opening a non-PDF file in FineReader converts it to PDF. Other tabs focus on scanning documents to PDF and comparing documents with different formats. *See Figure 1 on page 5.*



The first thing to notice in FineReader 15 is how fast the software opens and reads PDF files while engaging text recognition in the background. Although it depends on the complexity of the document text, tables and images, PDFs from 60-100 pages in size will open immediately and background text recognition is completed in seconds and minutes.

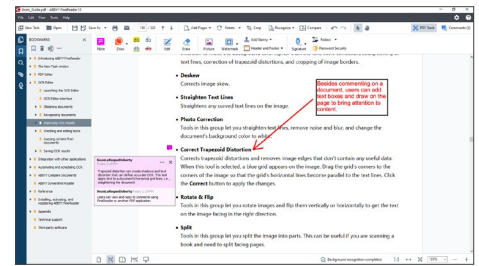
Once a PDF is opened, you can immediately start to review, edit and search the file. If necessary, you can open the PDF in the OCR Editor to use advanced conversion features to review and verify the text, draw areas in the document to focus the OCR engine, and train the software to recognize non-standard characters and fonts.

If you receive a “data dump” of non-searchable PDF files from a client or opposing counsel and need to convert them to searchable PDFs, FineReader can automate the task using their Hot Folder where you can customize a workflow to open files in the folder, OCR them, and save them to an output. Then, you can set up a schedule to run the job daily or weekly when you’re not using your computer.

If you find yourself repeatedly converting high volumes of files, consider using [ABBYY FineReader Server](#) which can automatically process documents from folders, scanners or emails.

### Opening and Editing PDFs

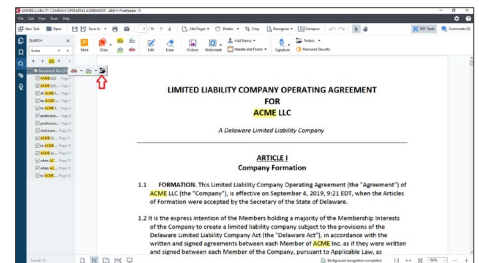
Users familiar with Microsoft Word will find the FineReader 15 user interface easy to use. Tools to navigate, edit, and add structure to PDFs circumnavigate an open document. *See Figure 2 on page 5.*



With FineReader's paragraph-level [editing](#), changing text and images in a PDF is almost as easy as editing a Microsoft Word document. Click the Edit tab and FineReader surfaces writing tools like those of Word at the top of the screen and partitions the page into paragraphs for editing. You can add or replace content and images within paragraph units and FineReader will expand or contract the section accordingly to close text and images together within the group.

### Redaction To Your Satisfaction

Users can apply FineReader's [redaction](#) features in single or collective transactions. Enter Redaction Mode, select the redaction color, and highlight content to redact it from the document. To redact in bulk, search for text or numbers, select them from the search results list and choose to redact the material from the record. *See Figure 3 on page 5.*



The search-and-redact workflow works like a one-two punch to redact personally identifiable information (PII) such as Social Security numbers, credit cards and telephone numbers.

Besides redacting content from the face (read: text layer) of PDFs, FineReader can

“Opening a non-PDF file in FineReader converts it to PDF. Tools are then available to edit the PDF and convert it to various document formats including Microsoft Word and Excel.”

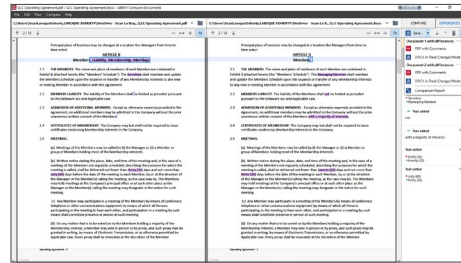
“You can use FineReader’s Compare feature by dragging-and-dropping two files from your computer onto the interface to show the exact differences between the two documents.”

remove document objects and metadata. Users can selectively remove comments and markup, bookmarks, attachments, metadata, and other personal information. Users can also remove hidden text and objects but the action converts the document to an image-only PDF.

Short of redacting documents to share them, FineReader can password-protect documents and apply 128-bit or 256-bit AES encryption. Document security settings can restrict access with a document open password and restrict printing and editing with a permission password.

### Document Comparison

From the start page, click “Compare” and FineReader’s Compare feature fills the screen. Select or drag-and-drop two files available to the computer onto the interface to compare the exact differences between the two versions of the documents. Alternatively, while editing a PDF, click the Compare button at the top of the screen. FineReader inserts the current PDF into the Compare tool. Then, select or drag-and-drop a second file to compare. See *Figure 4 on next page*.



Users can compare the two documents in FineReader by navigating the right panel and clicking the tile explaining a difference. In the alternative, you can export the

comparison to Microsoft Word and handle the differences in “Track Changes” to approve or deny the differences.

ABBYY sells individual licenses of [FineReader 15](#) for Windows at \$199 for Standard (upgrade for \$129) and \$299 for Corporate (upgrade for \$199). Volume licenses and discounts are available from [resellers](#). A free 30-day trial is available online.

### Who is ABBYY?

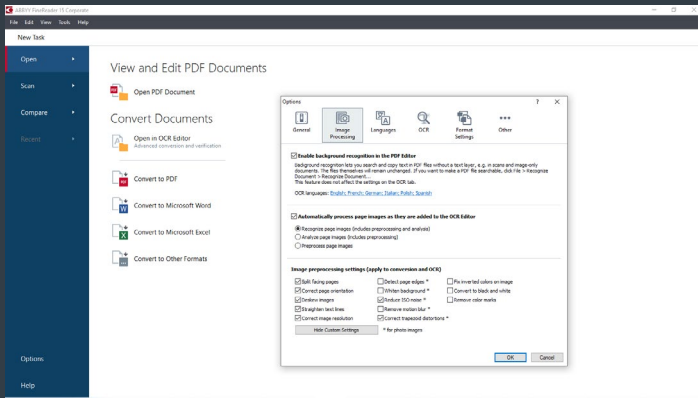
ABBYY was founded in 1989 by Chairman of the Board, David Yang, while he studied at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. Today, the company has a global footprint and operates in more than 200 countries where more than 50 million people use ABBYY products. The North American office is in Milpitas, California.

### Why Should You Purchase ABBYY FineReader 15:

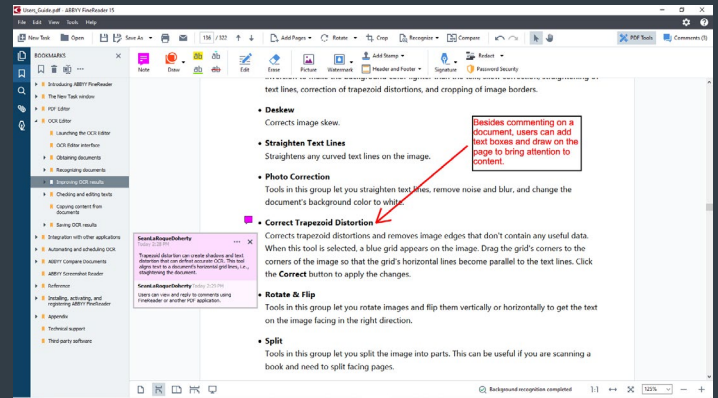
- Easy to use interface for engaging a large order of PDF tasks.
- Low cost to expertly work with the legal industry’s most ubiquitous document format for collaboration, filing court papers and managing electronic discovery.
- Ability to [compare](#) PDF and Microsoft Word files side by side and report and resolve the differences in Word’s Track Changes so you never miss a small change or modification.
- Easily [edit](#) PDF content and document layouts in paragraph units.

### Try Out ABBYY FineReader Corporate for Yourself!

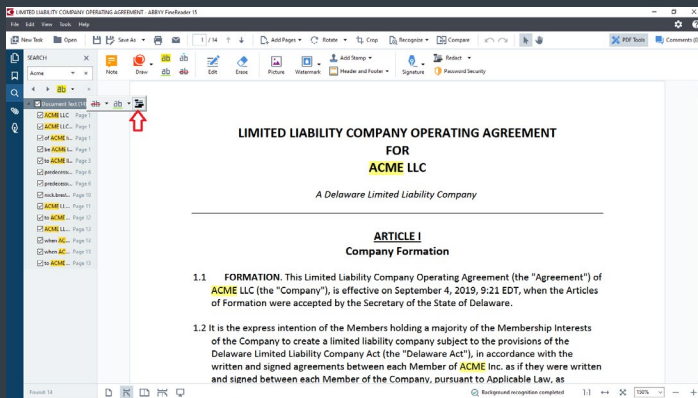
[Read about](#) how other law firms are using ABBYY FineReader and why it’s an essential tool for their practice. You can download a trial version of FineReader 15 [here](#).



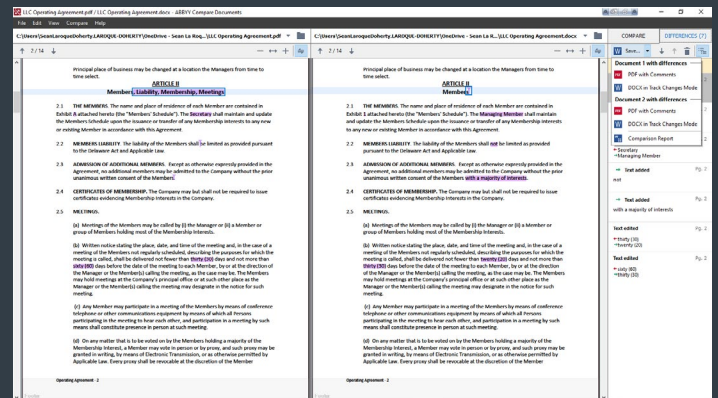
**Figure 1:** When FineReader 15 opens on the desktop, users can access all PDF tasks: open, edit, and convert PDFs to various formats, scan documents to PDF and other formats, and compare documents. Click Options in the lower-left corner of the window to open program settings to configure OCR, set default languages from almost 200 supported languages and image processing which is shown above.



**Figure 2:** Editing and navigation features circumnavigate an open PDF in the FineReader UI. Features range from commenting and drawing on the material to adding watermarks, Bates stamps, headers and footers. Intuitive icons and plain language advertise the available feature set. The panel on the left displays options to add and remove structure to a document including pages, bookmarks, attachments and signatures.



**Figure 3:** Search a PDF for text or number strings to redact them in bulk. From the search result list in the left panel, verify the possible redactions by clicking on them and viewing the highlighted text (hits) in context. Then select all or some of the results from the hit list and click redact to remove them from the PDF.



**Figure 4:** The Compare function in FineReader 15 compares two documents of the same or different formats such as a PDF and a Word file. Here, FineReader compares a PDF document to the original content in Word. The differences are redlined in the document viewer and detailed in the panel to the right.

## Thank you for reading, let's keep in touch!

We appreciate the time you spent learning more about the eDiscovery options available to your law firm. New products, feature updates and announcements happen throughout the year. So, to help you stay informed we have expanded the eDiscovery Buyers Guide to include additional online resources. Follow us on the channels below for more free education, and special offers!



Subscribe to our YouTube Channel  
[\*\*eDiscovery Buyers Guide\*\*](#)



Follow us on Twitter:  
[\*\*@eDiscoveryBuyer\*\*](#)



Like us on Facebook  
[\*\*eDiscoveryBuyersGuide\*\*](#)



Follow us on LinkedIn  
[\*\*LTMG LinkedIn\*\*](#)





The eDiscovery Buyers Guide is supported by vendor sponsorships. The products and services selected for the guide are done at the author's discretion. Reviews are also written to reflect the opinion of the author. Each product or service must first be selected for the guide, then incited for inclusion before sponsorship is requested. Additionally, emerging technology who do not have funding to pay for sponsorship are included based on the level of value they offer to law firms. All sponsorship proceeds go towards the costs associated with the production and distribution of the guide.

[legaltechpublishing.com](http://legaltechpublishing.com)