

ORTHOPRACTICE RUBRIC

PDF DOCUMENTS: if you have always liked to make notes on your printed journals, you can still do it on digital publications. . . more easily and more efficiently

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As more and more publishers offer digital versions of their publications – usually at reduced prices – and the sales of digital tablets skyrocket it becomes increasingly clear that our access to information will eventually be based on digital sources not paper.

While the environmental benefits of this revolution, including the space gained by this new means of storing material digitally, not physically, are vast, will there be a price to pay, the loss of our ability to underline text and make comments on it? Until recently, the answer seemed to be, “yes.”

To digitize their articles most editors of professional journals are employing the *Portable Document Format (PDF)*, which can be read with *Acrobat Reader* that is available from *Adobe* at no charge. The original versions of this reader gave users a chance to read the text but provided them with no means of inscribing comments on it. The *Acrobat Reader* has now corrected this defect by allowing readers to make comments in

balloons along side the text and to underline any sections they wish to emphasize.

And it is also now possible to acquire a complete gamut of commentary tools without buying the full version of *Adobe® Xpro*. Readers need only download any one of the free electronic *PDF* readers available today, including *STDU Viewer*, *Foxit Reader*, *Free PDF Viewer*, *Perfect PDF Reader*, and the excellent *PDF-XChange Viewer*.

THE **PDF-XChange Viewer** is the most rapid acting and the lightest of the group and offers more functions than the others to help in visualizing and annotating *PDF* documents. This program originally created in English is now also available by *Tracker Software* in a French version, both functioning through *Windows*. Readers can find these programs on the usual *freeware* sites, and, when they do so, they should be sure not to click on the option *ASK* on the tools bar.

Faithful users of Apple's Mac computers can make comments on *PDF* documents by employing the services of *Apercu*, an Apple

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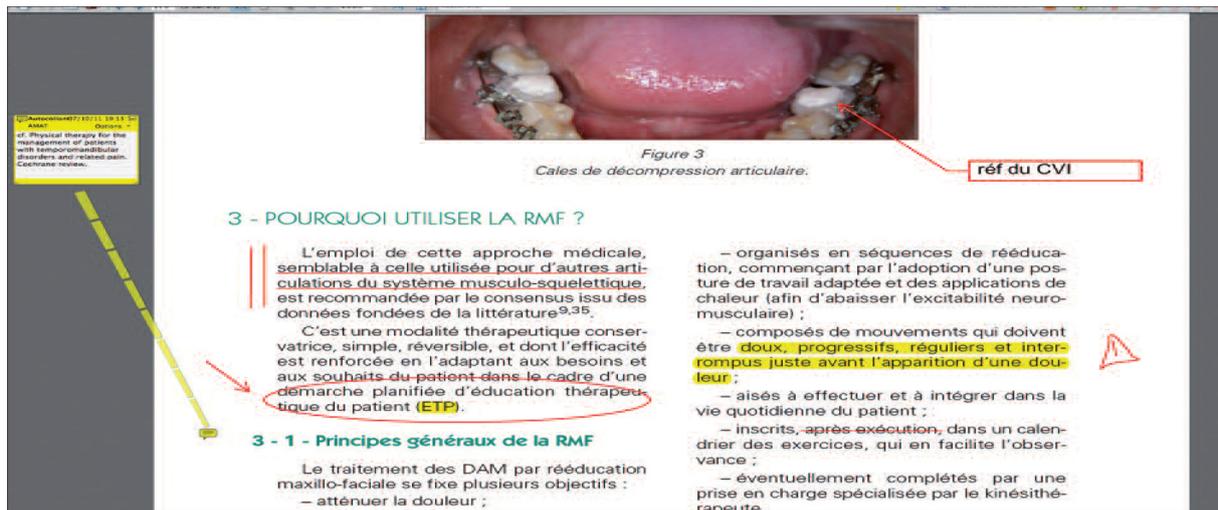


Figure 1

A few comments inserted in PDF document, opened with PDF-XChange Viewer.

program, less complete than the *PDF-XChange Viewer*, which is a component of *Mac OS X*.

The user's manual of the *PDF-XChange Viewer*⁽¹⁾ gives a detailed account of its applications and explains how users can adjust it to suit their individual needs.

Using this viewer users can, among other things (fig. 1):

- underline, cross out, or erase sections of text;
- insert comments on portions of the text;
- insert arrows, lines, circles, and other geometric figures;
- write freehand or sketch designs, etc.

Users will find that they can navigate smoothly through a document performing any of the applications we have described. There are many options for posting notes, formatting

tabs, zooming in or out, rotating, and preparing grids and rulers.

Also available are powerful text searching tools and the capacity to turn a page into an image.

It should also be noted that the development and continuing improvement of a multitude of digital tools makes it increasingly possible to integrate evidence based dentistry into our clinical practices. Ever since Vice-President Al Gore gave the world free access to Medline in 1997, this database has continued to expand its functions⁽²⁾.

For clinicians, our easy access to this fountain of information, PDF formats, and the application *PDF-XChange Viewer* constitute a golden opportunity to acquire and store the best and most recent data and to exploit this treasure house with facility in digital form.

(1) <http://www.docu-track.com/PDFManual.pdf>

(2) AMAT P. *Dentisterie fondée sur les faits : en omnipratique et en orthodontie*. Paris: Éditions CdP, in press.