



# Words by Wes



## Academic, Technical, Nonfiction, and Business Editing

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### Turning Off Adobe Acrobat's AI Assistant

April 30, 2024 | [Tools](#) | [Adobe Acrobat](#), [LLMs](#)

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0:00 / 6:32

Adobe has added an “[AI Assistant](#)” to Acrobat, because of course it has. The tool uses generative AI to summarize PDFs and answer questions about them. According to [Adobe's FAQ](#), the assistant is based at least in part on OpenAI's technology.

Right now, Acrobat's AI Assistant is in beta and hasn't been fully rolled out. For example, it was enabled by default in my Acrobat Online account (which I rarely use), but it's not available in my desktop version of Acrobat Pro. It was also showing up in PDFs I opened using the Chrome Acrobat plug-in. The feature is available on the mobile apps if you have the beta version. I don't yet have instructions on turning it off in the mobile app.

I frequently deal with PDFs for clients. I treat these as confidential, so I don't want to feed those to Adobe's LLM, nor do I want it to process my own PDFs.

This morning, I opened a PDF in Chrome using the Acrobat plug-in, and an AI-generated summarization of the document showed up in the top-right corner of the display. I was surprised at that, because the last time I checked my account, the tool hadn't been rolled out to me and Acrobat's FAQ says the assistant won't process any documents until the user explicitly opts in once (on any document) — which I haven't done. That sent me down a minor rabbit hole to figure out how to turn the thing off.

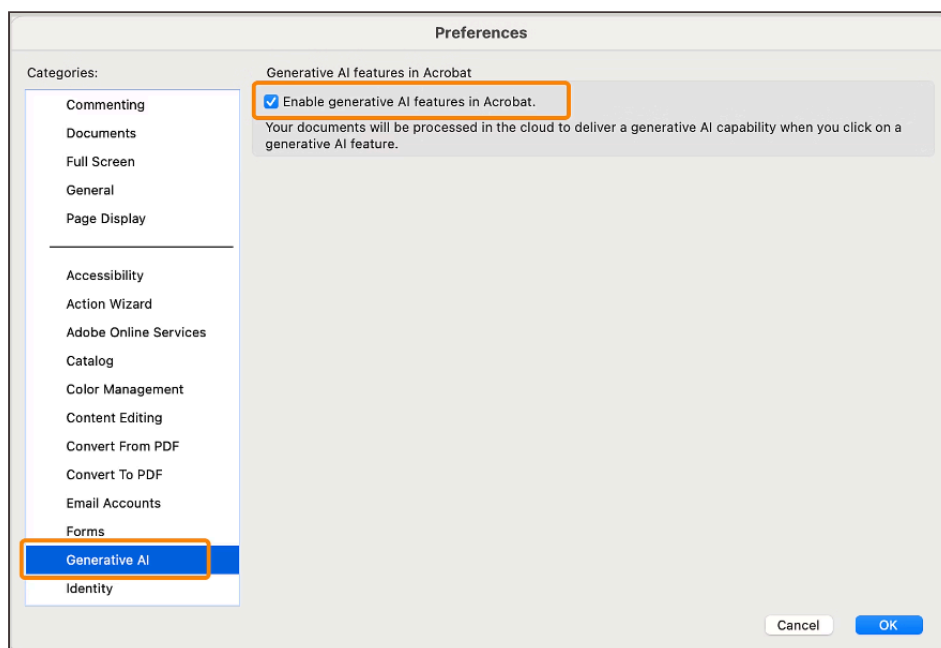
### Turning AI Assistant Off in Acrobat Pro or Reader

# Adobe's Instructions

Update: after someone mentioned on Bluesky that this didn't work for them, I dug a little deeper. I hadn't been able to try this at first as the feature wasn't in my desktop version. I was able to get AI Assistant enabled on my desktop today (see the section on Adobe's new UI below) and verified that Adobe's instructions below didn't work for me. See below for options that did work

As I said earlier, my copy of Acrobat Pro does not include the AI Assistant feature<sup>[1]</sup>. So these instructions and screenshot come from [Adobe's documentation](#) of the feature.

From the Edit menu, open Preferences and look for a section titled Generative AI. If it's present, there will be an check box where you can turn the assistant off. Uncheck that box and select OK.

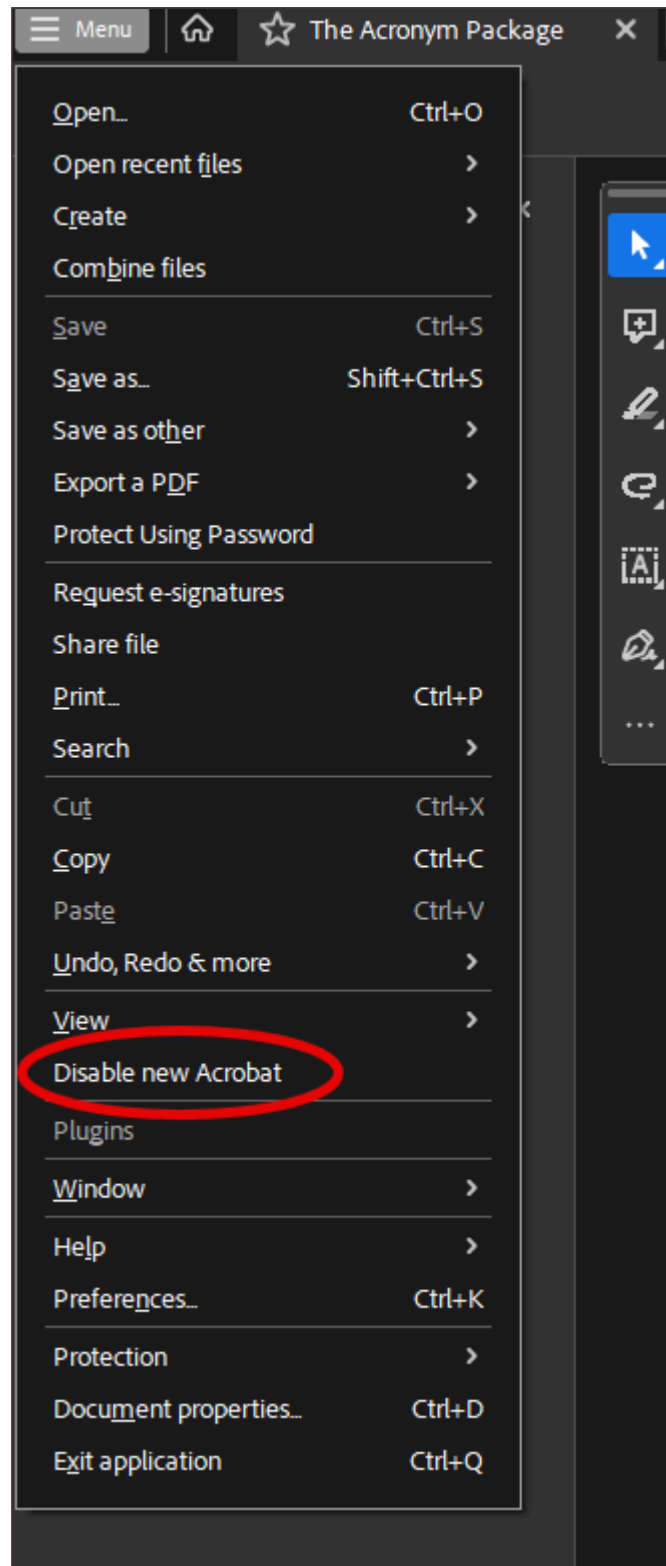


## Turning off Acrobat's New UI Disables AI Assistant

On Acrobat desktop, the generative AI functions are only available in their new UI. Like many editors, this completely broke my workflow so I've had it disabled. That's why I didn't have the AI Assistant in my desktop. I turned the new UI back on this morning and the AI button showed up. Using Adobe's instructions to disable it through the preferences did nothing.

You can tell if you have the new UI enabled in Acrobat (at least on Windows) by looking at the top left of the window. If it shows a hamburger menu (as in the screenshot below) rather than the traditional File, Edit, View options, you have the new UI. You can disable it by opening that menu and selecting "Disable new Acrobat", which will prompt you to restart Acrobat. You may also get a survey asking why you went back to the old layout.

On Macs, the "Disable new Acrobat" option can be found on the View menu.



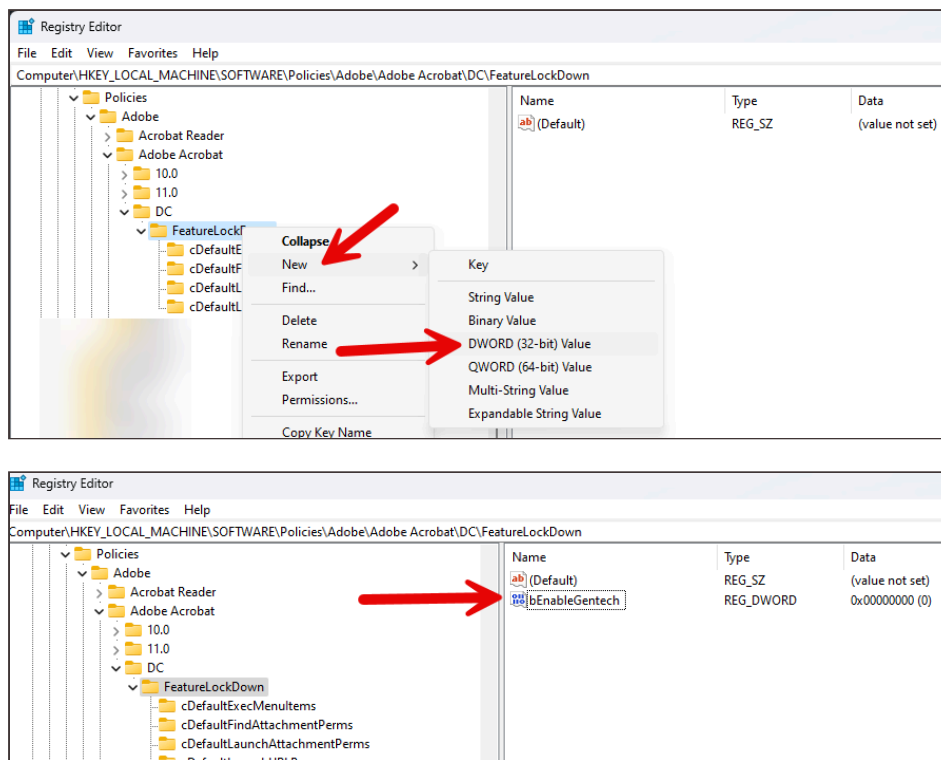
## Turning AI Assistant Off in Windows Registry

If you want to keep Acrobat's new look, you can turn off AI Assistant through Window's registry. This instructions come from a [post](#) in r/sysadmin. I tried it this morning, and it worked.

From the Windows start menu, open regedit. Navigate the tree on the left side to get to this path:

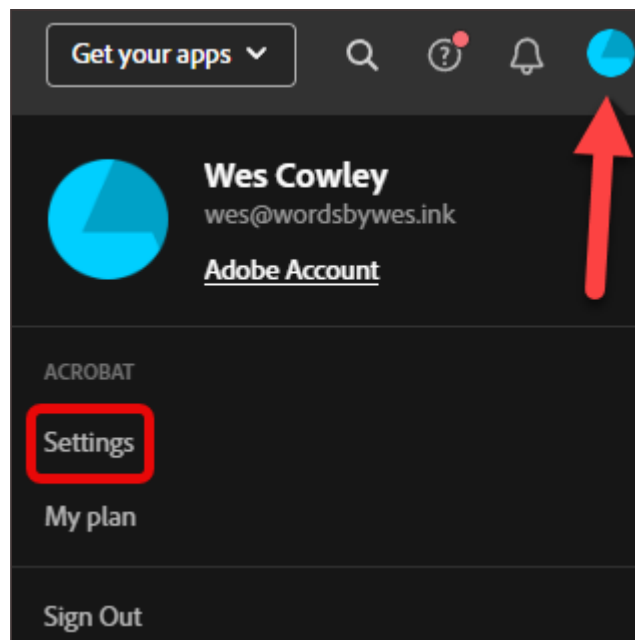
Computer\HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Policies\Adobe\Adobe Acrobat\DC\FeatureLockDown

Right click on FeatureLockDown and create a new DWORD key called bEnableGentech. The value will default to 0. That disables the AI Assistant. Restart Acrobat if it's open.



## Turning AI Assistant Off in Acrobat Online

Acrobat Online lets you work with PDFs that you've uploaded to Adobe's cloud storage, which I don't use. When I opened Acrobat Online today for the first time in forever, I found that the generative AI feature was enabled. To turn it off, click on your profile icon in the top right corner and click settings. On the Settings dialog, there is a section labelled "Generative AI" with a checkbox to enable those features. It's checked by default. Uncheck it, and save the dialog.



**Settings**

User locale: English: US

Auto-suggestions: ☒ Suggest words or phrases when filling out forms based on the information you have entered  
[Clear suggestions](#)

Notifications: ☒ Enable notifications  
[Manage email notifications](#)

Office in Acrobat: ☐ Use Office for the web to view Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel files in Acrobat online

E-signing settings

**Request e-signatures**

☒ Use the latest version of Request e-signatures  
*The updated experience is only applicable to new agreements. Existing drafts in progress cannot be opened in the latest version of Request e-signatures*  
*Some features are temporarily unavailable*

☒ Disable form field detection

Manage your signing preferences, including signatures, notifications, and more  
[Edit settings](#)

**Generative AI** ☐ Enable generative AI features in Acrobat  
Your document will be processed in the cloud to deliver a generative AI capability when you click on a generative AI feature.

Appearance: Light

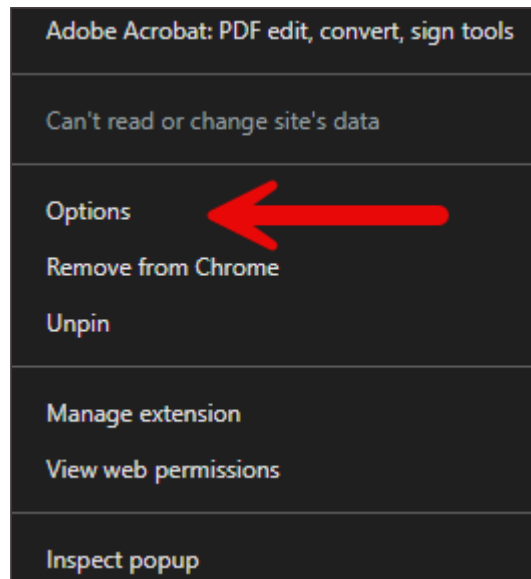
[Cancel](#) [Save](#)

## Turning AI Assistant Off in Acrobat's Chrome Plug-in ... or not

Adobe's Acrobat plug-in for Chrome has the option to tell the browser to open PDFs using the plug-in. This is where I first found the AI Assistant showing up, but I could not find a way to turn it in the plug-in. There's no "Generative AI" option in the plug-in settings. Turning AI Assistant off in my online account didn't work for the plug-in. What I wound up doing was disabling the option to have Chrome use the Acrobat plug-in for PDFs.

Right-click on the plug-in icon and choose options. On the options page that opens, turn off the "Open PDFs in Acrobat" radio button and click

“Save preferences”. Once you do that, Chrome will handle PDFs itself. As a bonus, it’s easier to grab the PDF’s URL this way.



## Adobe Acrobat Preferences

### Auto-open converted PDFs in Acrobat



Automatically open the converted PDF in Acrobat once webpage to PDF conversion has completed.

### Open PDFs in Acrobat



Make Acrobat the default PDF viewer in your browser to use commenting, fill and sign, and more PDF tools.

### Opening local PDFs in Acrobat

Enable

Grant Acrobat extension access to your local file URLs to open all your PDFs in Acrobat in Chrome.

### Dark mode settings

Use system setting

Switch between dark and light theme

### Save file location

Ask me every time

Set a location to save your files

### User Locale

English: US

### Send usage data



To improve product features, this extension sends Adobe information about how you use it. [About Adobe Acrobat](#)

### Webpage to PDF conversion setting

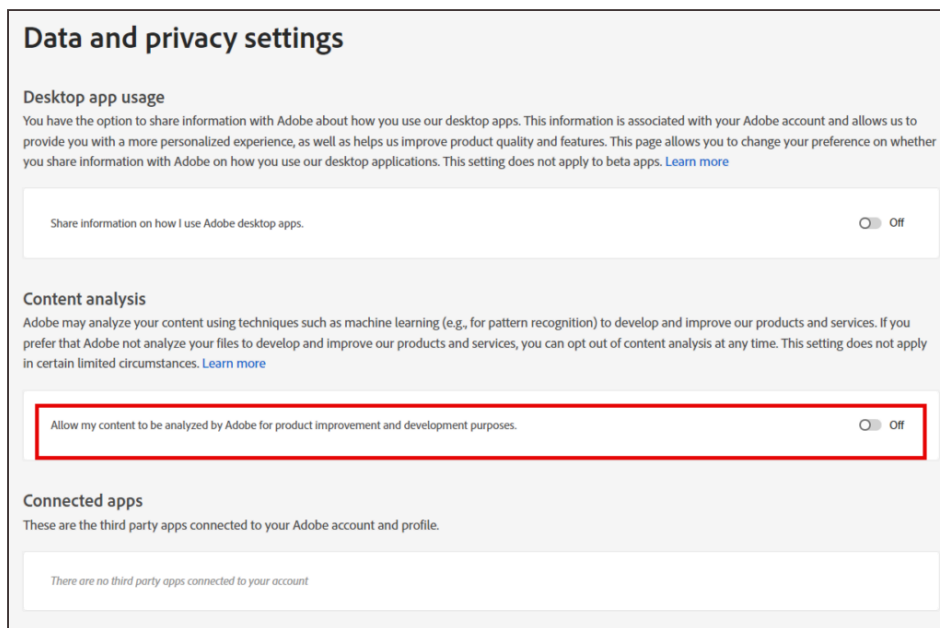
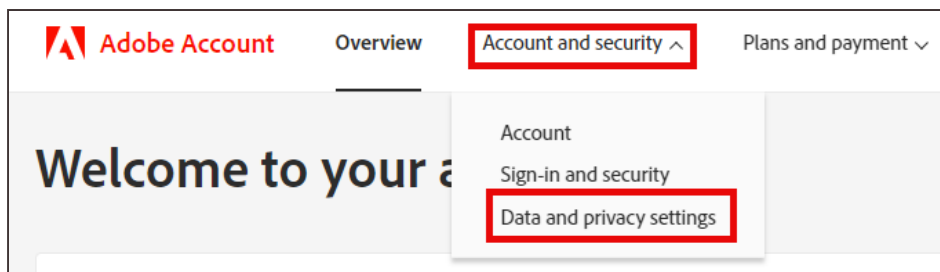
Edit

When saving web pages as PDFs, you can set the margins, fonts and other layout details

## Turning off Adobe's Content Analysis

While you're at it, you may also want to opt out of Adobe's content analysis, which they say uses machine learning to analyze documents you've stored in their cloud. To opt-out of this, go to your Adobe account online, open the "Data and privacy settings" page, and turn off the "Allow my content to be analyzed by Adobe..." option.

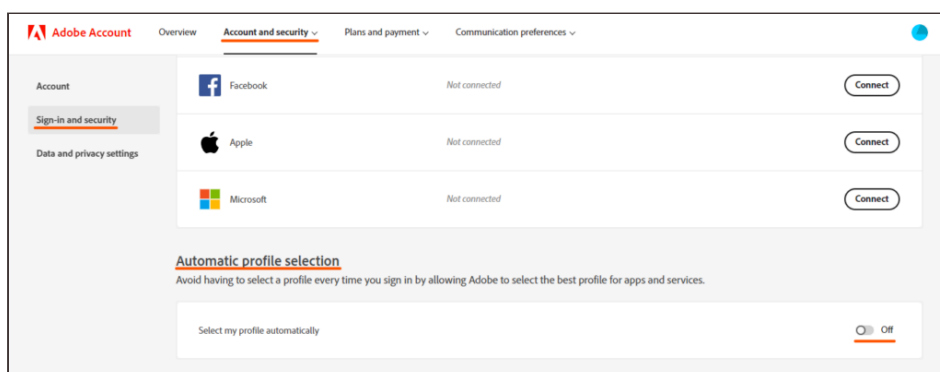




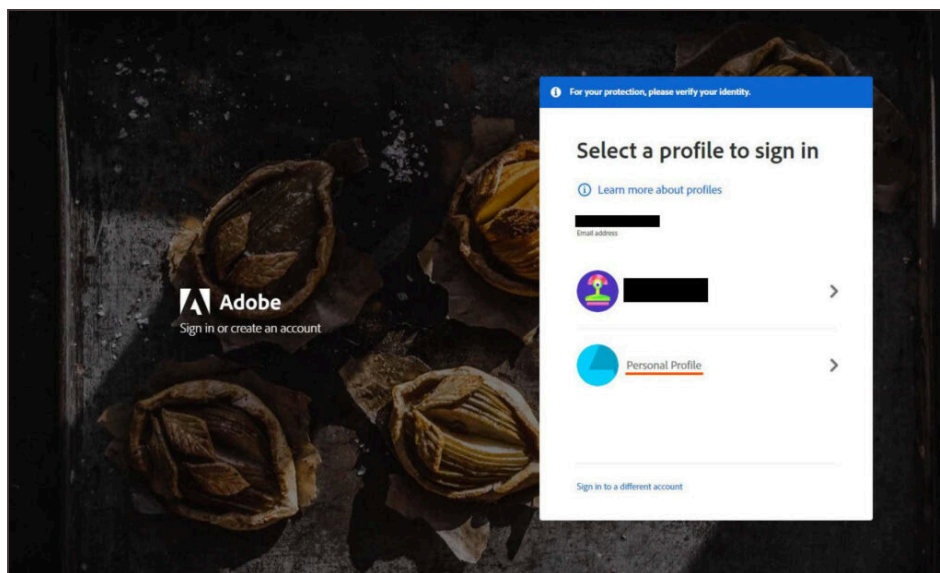
What if I don't see the content analysis option?

Thanks to reader Sean Schumacher, who pointed out that company and school accounts do not have the “Allow my content to be analyzed by Adobe...” option. After talking with Adobe, Sean provided the following workaround and screenshots.

First, on the “Account and security” tab, go to “Sign-in and security”. Look for “Automatic profile selection”, and turn off “Select my profile automatically.”



Then, sign out of the Adobe website, and on the profile selection dialog, choose “Personal Profile”.



Once you've signed in with your personal profile, you can go back to the Data and privacy settings, described above, and turn off the content analysis option. According to Adobe, this will also turn it off for your Work/School Profile.

Once you've done this, you can log out and back in with your Work Profile and turn the "Automatic profile selection" back on.

## Wrapping up

Those are the places I've found to turn off Acrobat's new AI features. Did I miss any? Let me know in the comments below or [drop me a note](#).

## Updates

2024-05-01: I updated the article to include alternate ways of disabling the AI Assistant in the desktop version, at least on Windows. It turns out that Adobe's documented option doesn't work for some people. I also corrected a statement that the tool was not in the mobile apps. It's apparently in the beta version, which I don't have.

2024-05-02: I added how to find the "Disable new Acrobat" option on Macs.

2024-06-20: I added a workaround for turning off content analysis for people using work and school accounts.

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1. It turns out this is because I had the new UI disabled. See the section on Acrobat's new UI for details on that. ↩

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