

Long-standing OEM partnership between RealObjects and K15t – PDFreactor® leverages Scroll PDF Exporter and enables professionally styled PDF exports directly from Atlassian Confluence

About K15t GmbH

K15t is a software company based in Stuttgart Germany, that specializes in developing solutions for Atlassian products, such as Jira and Confluence. As an Atlassian Platinum Marketplace Partner, K15t offers a range of apps and integrations that enhance the functionality of these tools. K15t helps teams to unleash the potential of their products and creates solutions to help them better educate and enable their customers. The [Scroll Apps for Confluence](#) help teams modernize how they author and manage content and documentation, while [Backbone Issue Sync for Jira](#) enables project collaboration across departmental and B2B boundaries. In addition, Orderly Databases for Confluence Cloud supports keeping content structured and consistent across Confluence.

[Scroll PDF Exporter](#) is one of the range of Scroll apps that are available for the popular content management system, [Atlassian Confluence](#). The app allows users to easily export Confluence content as PDF documents, providing full control over the styling and format of the generated export.

Starting Point

Confluence is heavily used for managing content, and sharing this wealth of knowledge in offline formats is often an important day-to-day requirement for Scroll PDF Exporter users. Therefore, creating PDF documents which are professionally styled, visually attractive, and with no need for post-export modifications remains a prerequisite to satisfy the needs of those distributing the exported content.

Since the creation of the initial [Scroll PDF Exporter](#) Atlassian Marketplace app for Confluence back in 2009, the app used an open source library to fulfill the requirement of being able to create professional styled exports from HTML obtained from Confluence. The app in its early form was adopted by many companies who needed to export their content with a specific look and feel, allowing them to retain their own corporate identity in generated exports. Ultimately, the app provided an array of customization possibilities, most of which were not natively available in Confluence. It ensured presentable offline exports in PDF file format could be achieved for a variety of use cases, including the export of product hardware manuals, technical software documentation and sales reports and forecasts.

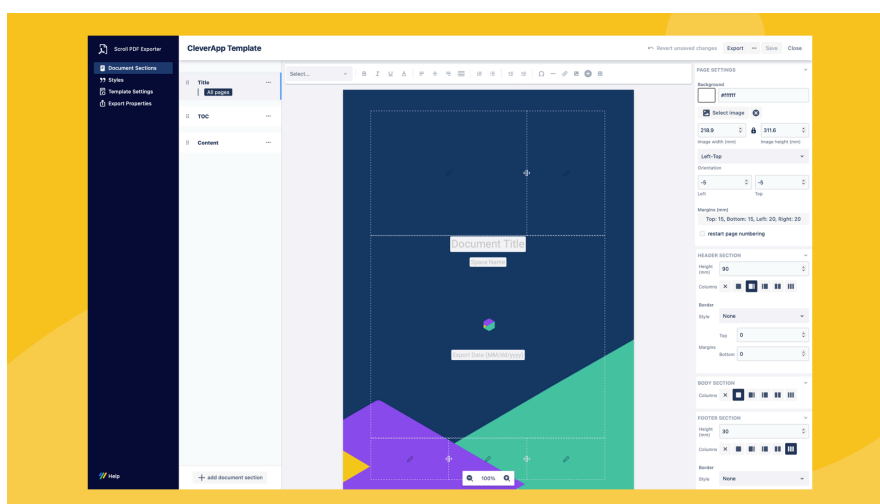
However, overtime, it became apparent that there were a number of drawbacks to using an open source library within Scroll PDF Exporter, most noticeably relating to a lack of continuous support and updates for the library, coupled with a number of missing features. This meant extracting content from Confluence into sharable PDF exports became more challenging to ensure correct pagination for complex documentation, and to also offer more sophisticated formatting and layouts. Therefore, in 2017, K15t made the switch to use RealObjects' PDFreactor® library within the Scroll PDF Exporter app.

The Solution

Since the start of K15t's partnership with RealObjects and the use of PDFReactor® within Scroll PDF Exporter, the app has been able to develop into a mainstay for generating PDF file format exports from Atlassian Confluence. The PDFReactor® library is a powerful tool for generating high-quality PDFs from HTML documents, and switching to this library opened up further feature possibilities that could be utilized in the app. This change has benefited both the users of the app in Confluence and also those at K15t who develop, maintain, and support the app.

The selection to use the PDFReactor® library came after evaluation of many other alternatives, but none of which could outperform the reliability and consistency for converting HTML documents into professionally styled PDF's. The decision to use the library was made much easier due to PDFReactor® providing advanced support for page layouting and CSS styling. Additionally it provides fine control over what kind of network and file access is allowed during a conversion which Scroll PDF Exporter has been able to capitalize on for enhanced security.

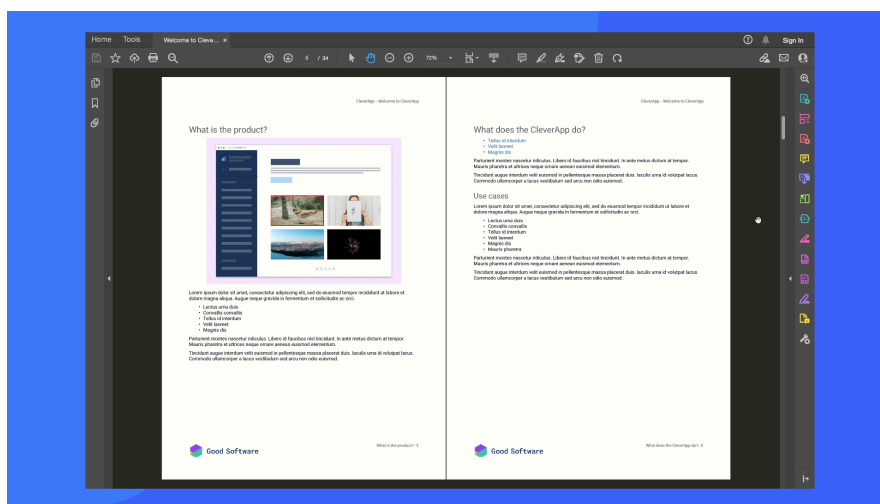
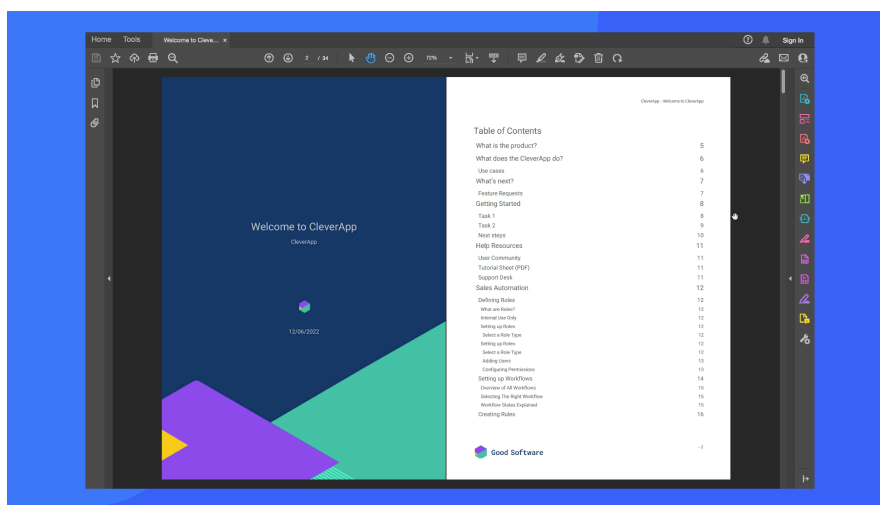
Following the switch to PDFReactor®, Scroll PDF Exporter introduced a visual template editor allowing users to easily create export templates, without coding knowledge, to define the formatting and layout for the sections in their exports. This change made it simpler for users to add and customize additional static sections in their exports such as including a title page, or an automatically generated table of contents. Additionally, the *'what you see is what you get'* (WYSIWYG) template editor is able to accurately display, via a live preview pane, how the users defined styles choices for text elements like headings and lists, will be exported in the final PDF output. Further template settings and export properties can also be defined. Then, following some transformations that are handled within the app itself, the styles taken from both Confluence and the export template are then applied into HTML and CSS formats which PDFReactor® uses for the PDF creation. PDFReactor® has proven to be a capable and valuable tool by being able to simply use HTML and CSS layouts to create professionally styled PDFs.



Scroll PDF Exporter Template Editor

For the growing Scroll PDF Exporter user base, scalability has become an important consideration and RealObjects' PDFreactor® library has ensured through the use of advanced features, such as segmentation mode, that the app can handle large memory intensive PDF exports. This means the app has been able to cater to many enterprise customers' needs for generating complex PDF documents from thousands of Confluence pages.

Additionally, Scroll PDF Exporter has further utilized the available features that the library offers to fulfill new use cases, providing benefit to more users. This includes providing the option to embed file attachments in the PDF so they are accessible offline. Also, Scroll PDF Exporter offers the option to control the compression for rendered image content so that export file size can be reduced. Furthermore, thanks to the PDFreactor® library, through the use of a setting it is possible that exports can conform to the ISO-standardized version, PDF/A, for the use in the electronic documentation archiving.



Export with Scroll PDF Exporter

“PDFreactor® has proven to be a valuable tool within our app, Scroll PDF Exporter. The feature set offered by the PDFreactor® library means we have been able to meet our users' needs to create great PDF documentation from Confluence. Integration of the library within our app has been straightforward. Furthermore, our communication with RealObjects regarding anything from licencing topics to support issues has always been dealt with competently.

Thomas Rough, Product Manager

Thanks to the [PDFreactor® Inspector](#), our developers can also easily analyze any inconsistencies in the PDF output, checking how the layout and formatting has been applied from the provided HTML. This helps to troubleshoot any user-related export issues. Furthermore, in the event that something goes wrong in the export and it relates to a library issue, the RealObjects support team have proven to be very responsive. They release bug fixes in a timely manner and issues keys for their bugs can be tracked in the PDFreactor® [change log](#) and release notes. Additionally, on many occasions RealObjects have also been able to offer suggestions and workarounds that can be applied directly in the Scroll PDF Exporter code base to help overcome any issues.

The key benefits of using the PDFreactor® library lie within its ability to accurately render complex layouts and designs, providing extensive customization options and offering a range of advanced options for scalability, export stability and security. Subsequently, export templates created in Scroll PDF Exporter can be applied to Confluence content ensuring that users have full control over the appearance of the PDF output. Overall, the combination of Scroll PDF Exporter and RealObjects PDFreactor® makes it easy for Atlassian Confluence users to export their pages as professionally styled PDF documents. Together they form a powerful and reliable tool for anyone looking to create high-quality PDFs from Atlassian Confluence.

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