

# Nitro PDF Reader out to blow away Adobe

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A woman works online at an office in Beijing on February 2010. Nitro PDF Software on Tuesday released a free reader built to break rival Adobe System's grip on the world's top digital document format.

Nitro PDF Software on Tuesday released a free reader built to break rival Adobe System's grip on the world's top digital document format.

Nitro not only lets people read paperwork scanned in Portable Document Format ([PDF](#)) but lets it be annotated, filled-in, or otherwise altered and then saved as files.

Adobe's widely used free reader lets people see and print digitized documents but not tinker with them, a restriction that can foil efforts such as filling in emailed or online PDF forms.

Adobe sells premium versions of PDF software that allow for document

creation.

"Adobe hasn't adapted the product to how people have evolved in working with PDF files," said Lonn Lorenz, who worked at Adobe for a decade before becoming Nitro chief product officer in 2009.

"The fact that Adobe hasn't done it just doesn't make sense. We hear from people that they have no love for Adobe Reader; we want people to have a lot of love for Nitro Reader."

Nitro PDF Reader was available for download online at [nitroreader.com](http://nitroreader.com).

Nitro touted its reader as more secure than Adobe software at a time when booby-trapping PDF files have been branded a prime method of attack by hackers.

Symantec recently reported that the number of PDF files tainted with [malicious code](#) skyrocketed in 2009 to represent 49 percent of Web-based attacks, topping the category.

"One of the big things about Adobe Reader is how vulnerable it is," Lorenz said.

Security built into Nitro includes letting users block access to selected websites, lock files with passwords, and turn off Java Script technology exploited by hackers to execute attacks.

Nitro Reader also lets people scan signatures into computers and add them to PDF documents.

"The whole point is to enable users to get the work done and move on," Lorenz said. "This stuff is a no-brainer but no one else has done it."

Nitro sells professional PDF software that competes with Adobe, but the reader released on Tuesday is the first free offering to let people do more than simply read and print such files.

"We saw a big hole in the market," said Nitro senior vice president of sales and marketing Gina O'Reilly. "There was nobody else offering free, powerful, no-strings-attached tools for PDF functionality."

Nitro is betting that if it wins fans for its free Reader, a percentage will upgrade to a professional version that the 10-year-old San Francisco firm sells for 99 dollars.

"No one has offered functionality to work with PDF without a catch; until now," O'Reilly said. "Adobe Reader is one of those things people just have to put up with. That is something we want to turn on its head."

The assault on Adobe Reader comes as the California firm's Flash video software has been shunned by iPhone, iPad, and iPod maker Apple.

A public feud between the companies has included Apple chief executive Steve Jobs listing what he sees as Flash flaws.

"It does give me a bit of a smile," Lorenz said of taking on Adobe on the PDF front. "But we just wanted a PDF reader that people want to use, it just works. The fact that [Adobe](#) hasn't done it just doesn't make sense to users."

Nitro Reader for English debuts worldwide Tuesday, with versions tailored for other languages coming "hot on its heels," according to the firm.

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