FileOpen Client FAQ

What is FileOpen Systems?

FileOpen Systems is a software development company based in New York. Our website is here. We are a partner of Adobe Systems, who describe us here.

What does the FileOpen software do?

FileOpen Systems has developed a set of software tools which encrypt and control the opening of PDF files. We license these tools to publishers and other information producers, who use them to manage the distribution of their documents. In short, the FileOpen software performs Digital Rights Management (DRM) for PDF files.

What does the FileOpen software not do?

FileOpen Systems develops software for publishers; we don't derive any revenue from advertising or the sale of information of any type, especially not information about users of our software. More information on our privacy stance is available here.

What, exactly, is the FileOpen client software?

The client package consists of an Acrobat/Adobe Reader plug-in, FileOpen.api, and an optional companion plug-in, fowp[3or4]bkd.api. The former must be installed to open encrypted documents. The latter, which restricts the taking of screenshots, is optional though some publishers may refuse to grant permission to open files if this plug-in is not installed.

Where does the FileOpen software get installed?

Adobe Acrobat loads plug-ins at application startup from a pre-defined directory, so the FileOpen.api plug-in has to be copied to that directory. By default, on Windows, the directory is:

C:\ProgramFiles\Adobe\Acrobat/Reader<version>\plug_ins

Locations on Macintosh and Linux may be obtained by searching for "FileOpen".

How does the FileOpen software get installed?

FileOpen Systems provides installer programs that detect the location of the installed copy of Acrobat and copy the plug-in(s) to that location. We provide these installers to our customers, who are free to distribute them to end users. We also maintain an installer on our website to which publishers may refer their users; that installer is [here](#).

What does the Web-based installer do?

The installer on FileOpen's website attempts to provide a simple and seamless install via the browser. However, it works differently for different operating systems and browsers. The default automatic installer uses a Java "conveyor" to download and execute the installer. Users of IE with security settings that allow signed ActiveX controls to be loaded – the default setting – may see an ActiveX installer. The Java and ActiveX programs are only for convenience and the end result is the same regardless of whether the plug-in is installed via the web, by a downloaded copy of the installer, or manually.

What privileges are required for the install?

Typically, Windows users must have PowerUser (or Adminstrator) privileges to run the installer, though all that is really required is write-permission to the Acrobat plug-ins folder.

What if I don't want to run the installer?

The operation of the plug-in is identical whether it is placed into the Acrobat plug_ins folder location by the installer or via a manual operation. If you don't want to run the .exe or Java or ActiveX installer, you can get the plug-in from [here](#) and copy it to the location given above.

Do you provide an installer for MSI/Tivoli/Marimba/SMS?

An .msi installer is available from the manual download page, along with instructions for signing that install for SMS delivery.

Once installed, when does the plug-in load?

FileOpen.api is loaded by Acrobat or Adobe Reader at application startup, i.e. when you load Acrobat/Reader, it loads the plug-in. However, the plugin is invoked only when a document calls for it (i.e. if you do not attempt to open any encrypted content, the FileOpen.api is inactive). In short, the plug-in does nothing unless a document encrypted by a publisher using the system is open.

Once installed, what does the plug-in actually do?

When a user attempts to open a document encrypted by a publisher using FileOpen's software, the client reads information from the encrypted document and performs the following steps:

1. Obtains information about the document being opened and the publisher's authentication requirements, from the document. Depending on those publisher requirements, the plug-in then retrieves one or more of the following authentication tokens from the local machine context.
a.   A cookie from the user's login to the publisher's server.
b.   A username and password from a dialog presented to the user
c.   A MachineID from the local context

2. Makes a request over http/https to the publisher's server, passing the document identifier, authentication token, and some data about the context in which the document is being opened.

3. Retrieves a response from the publisher's server either granting or denying the user permission to open the document.

4. Manages the use of that document according to the instructions given by the publisher's server.

What Operating Systems are supported?

The FileOpen Client will work on Windows 98 or later, Macintosh OSX and Linux. The ActiveX installer requires Windows 98 or later.

How can I remove the FileOpen software?

There are instructions on how to remove the software here.

Where can I get more information on installing/removing the FileOpen software?

Please contact the publisher of the document in question or support@fileopen.com