

ComparePDF for Windows

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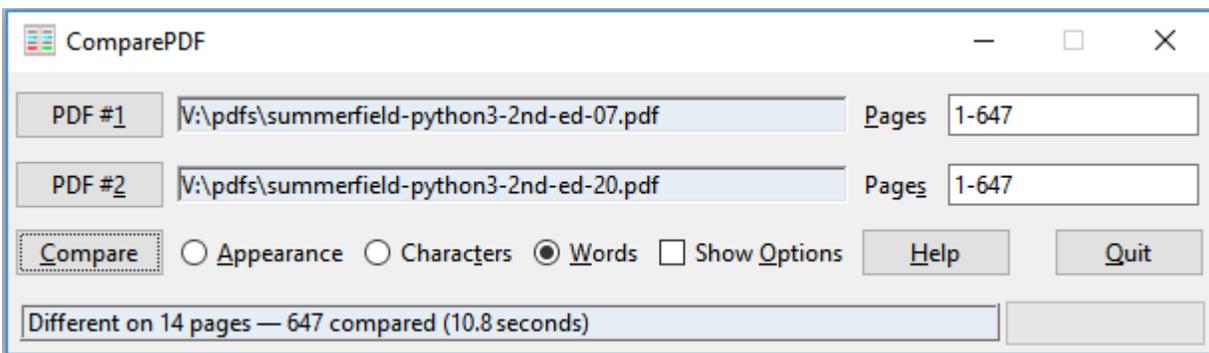
Abstract

ComparePDF is a GUI (Graphical User Interface) application for comparing two PDF files. Once the application has been installed and the license key registered, comparing PDFs is an easy three step process:

- (1) Click the PDF #1 button and choose the first PDF to compare;
- (2) Click the PDF #2 button and choose the second PDF to compare;
- (3) Click the Compare button.

If there are differences, a PDF report file will be created showing each pair of different pages side-by-side with the differences highlighted. This report will then be shown in your default PDF reader application.

Naturally, many specific aspects of the comparison can be customized, all of which are covered in this manual.



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Introduction

ComparePDF is a GUI (Graphical User Interface) application for comparing two PDF files. If differences are found, a PDF report is generated which shows each pair of different pages side-by-side with the differences highlighted. This report will then be shown in your default PDF reader application, as the [Screenshot of a PDF difference report](#) illustrates.*

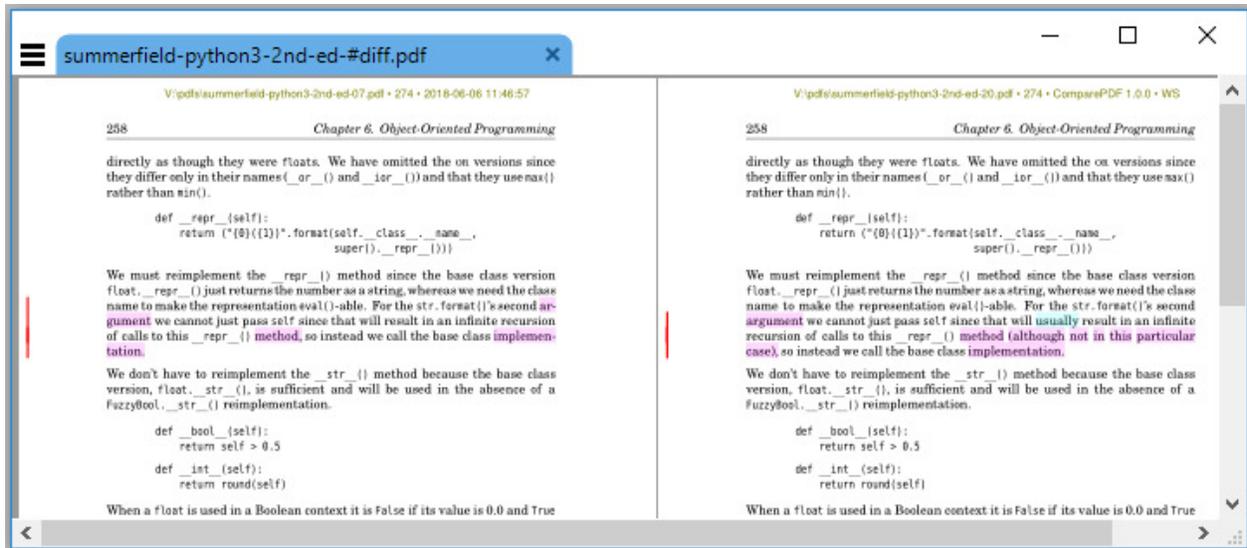


Figure 1. Screenshot of a PDF difference report

The default comparison mode is Words which compares the text of each corresponding pair of pages word-by-word, ignoring fonts, colors, and images. If differences are found they are highlighted (as the screenshot above shows), as if with a highlighter pen. Furthermore, a red vertical change bar is drawn in each margin parallel to any changes to make them easier to see.

ComparePDF has many use cases; here are some examples:

Authors and Publishers

If you produce PDFs for publication, a PDF comparison tool can show you the exact differences between, say, the first printing, and your proposed second printing. This way you can easily spot unintended changes to the pagination. Also, you can save time by checking only those pages that have changed, rather than having to review the whole publication all over again.

Journalists, Police, and Other Investigators

It is common to follow a paper trail of emails, memos, and so on, as part of an investigation. This trail will often include PDF documents. Using a PDF comparison tool will allow

* The screenshot is of a generated PDF difference report shown in the SumatraPDF reader on Windows 10. *ComparePDF* will use whatever PDF reader you have installed as your default.

you to observe the evolution of a document—perhaps revealing when critical changes were made.

Legal Professionals, Legislators, and Freelancers

When a contract, legislation, or other legal document is being drawn up, how can you be sure that the changes made are correct, and are only those agreed? By using a PDF comparison tool you can see exactly what has changed between the latest draft and any previous draft.

Managers

As reports and other documents are developed they go through many changes. If your organization's process uses PDFs, using a PDF comparison tool will show you how each new version differs from its predecessor. This saves you having to reread everything, and makes it much easier to see what changes you want to comment on or change.

Software Testers and Quality Assurance Engineers

Many business processes produce PDFs as an output. Using a PDF comparison tool makes it easy to verify that the PDFs are being produced correctly, or to spot exactly where any mistakes have occurred.

Comparing PDF files is not necessarily straightforward: for example, do you consider two PDFs the same if they have the same words in the same order—but laid out differently (e.g., due to slightly different margins or word-wrapping)? The *ComparePDF* program provides three comparison modes: Appearance, Characters, and Words. Appearance mode compares the appearance of each pair of pages and so detects differences in text, colors, fonts, layout, and graphics. The text modes (Characters and Words) are concerned only with the characters or words and their order. The text modes ignore line wrapping and margins. The program uses sensible defaults for ease of use, and also supports many options to support more sophisticated requirements.

The best way to see what *ComparePDF* can do—and whether it will be useful to you—is to make use of a free trial. Free trials use the full product, so you can try out every feature that interests you. The only limitation of free trials is that they have a 20 day time limit.

Installing

System Requirements

ComparePDF runs on 64-bit Windows.* For desktops and laptops, *ComparePDF* will run on Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 10; and for servers, on Windows Server 2008 or later. The machine must have an x86-compatible processor (i.e., most desktop and laptop computers).

Since PDF comparisons are computationally expensive, it is best to use a machine with a fast multicore processor, ideally with a processor speed of at least 2GHz that has at least two cores. *ComparePDF* will take advantage of all available cores, so in general will run twice as fast on

* If you require a PDF comparison program that runs on 32-bit windows, try *DiffPDF*: www.qtrac.eu/diffpdf.html.

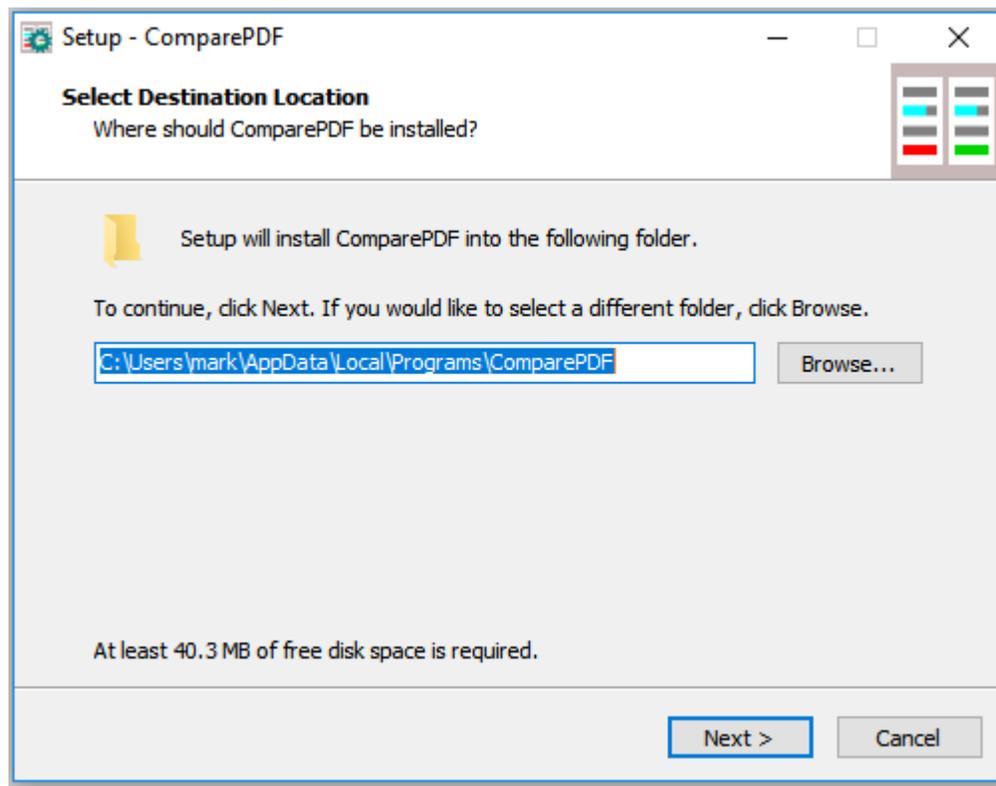


Figure 2. Screenshot of the Setup installer

a quad core machine than on a dual core machine with the same clock speed—and faster still on machines with more and faster cores.

ComparePDF makes use of the system’s default PDF reader, e.g., to show this manual, to show the license, and to show PDF difference. So, naturally, a PDF reader must be installed.*

Obtaining and Installing

The program is provided in a single setup file, e.g., *ComparePDF-1.0.0-setup.exe*. This file can be downloaded from www.qtrac.eu/comparepdf.html.

Once the setup file has been downloaded, run it to install *ComparePDF*. Once installed, the first time you run *ComparePDF* it will try to acquire a free trial license key over the internet and be ready for use immediately. (If this doesn’t work, see [How to Manually Register a Free Trial License Key](#).)

Note that the software is the same regardless of the license key. A license key restricts the period of use (20 days for a free trial, one year for an annual site license), or the computer the software can be used on (for free trials and full licenses), but does *not* restrict what the software can do: the full functionality is available regardless of the license key type.

* We prefer *SumatraPDF* www.sumatrapdfreader.org, but Acroread, Acrobat, Evince, or any other should work fine.

How to Manually Register a Free Trial License Key

This should not normally be needed—ComparePDF will automatically acquire a free license key the first time it is run.

If you or someone on your behalf has bought a site license, or if you wish to buy a site license, skip ahead to [How to Buy and Register a Site License Key](#).

If you have already downloaded and installed *ComparePDF* and run it at least once, you should already have a free trial license key. Check the Show Option checkbox, then click the About tab to see when the key expires. (See the [Screenshot of the About tab](#), p. 9.) In this case, skip ahead to [How to Buy and Register a Full License Key](#).

If the About tab shows that *ComparePDF* is unlicensed then you can try to acquire a free license key manually.

First, make sure that you have downloaded and installed *ComparePDF* (see the [Obtaining and Installing](#) section).

Make sure that the person logged in is the person who is to use *ComparePDF*.

Run *ComparePDF*. The first time you run *ComparePDF* it will try to acquire a free trial license key.

If this doesn't work (e.g., your security settings don't allow it to use the internet), then the steps to acquire a free license key are as follows. (See also, the [Screenshot of the Register tab](#), p. 7.)

1. Check the Show Options checkbox.
2. Click the Register tab.
3. Copy the Computer ID to the clipboard.
(Click it, press Ctrl+A to select it, then Ctrl+C to copy it.)
4. Visit <http://www.qtrac.eu/try?app=comparepdf> in your web browser.
5. Paste the Computer ID into the web page.
6. Click the web page's Issue Trial License Key button.
7. Copy the Key from the web page to the clipboard.
8. Paste the Key into *ComparePDF*'s License Key line editor.
9. Click the Register Key button.

Free trial license keys are valid for 20 days. Only one free trial is allowed per computer per major version. To use *ComparePDF* after the trial you will need to buy either a full or site license.

How to Buy and Register a Full License Key

If you or someone on your behalf has bought a site license, or if you wish to buy a site license, skip ahead to [How to Buy and Register a Site License Key](#).

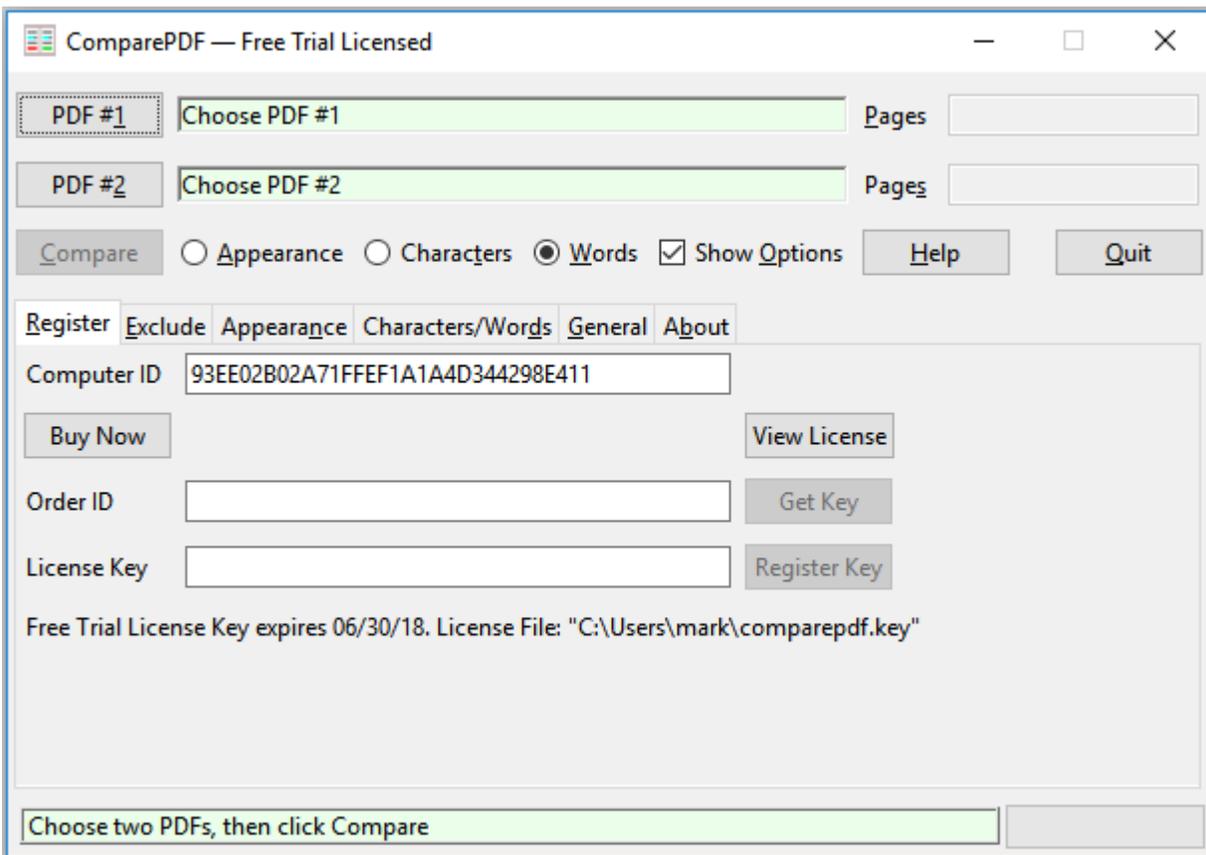


Figure 3. Screenshot of the Register tab

The first step is to make the purchase. For this visit www.qtrac.eu/buy?app=comparepdf in your web browser. You can visit the link directly from this manual. Alternatively, run *ComparePDF*, check the Show Options checkbox, click the Register tab, then click the Buy Now button. (See the [Screenshot of the Register tab](#).)

Your web browser should be opened (or a new tab added if the browser is already running), at the link shown—and then immediately redirected to the MyCommerce purchase page. However, if *ComparePDF* isn't able to open the link, copy the link to the clipboard, then paste it into your browser's location line editor, then press Enter to visit the page.

Once you visit the link, it will immediately redirect you to the secure MyCommerce purchase page which shows the price tiers. Tiered price discounts are applied if you buy at least 10 license keys (for the same product) in a single order.

Once the purchase is complete the confirmation page will show a “get key” link with your Order ID. This link and Order ID will also be emailed to you.

The link or Order ID can be used to acquire as many license keys as licenses that were purchased. Below are the steps to take on any given computer.

First, make sure that you have downloaded and installed *ComparePDF* (see the [Obtaining and Installing](#) section).

Make sure that the person logged in is the person who is to use *ComparePDF*.

Run *ComparePDF* if it isn't already running. Check the Show Options checkbox, then click the Register tab. Copy the Order ID from the payment confirmation page or from the email and paste it into the Order ID line editor. (The Order ID will look *similar* to this: 1234567890.13.) Then click the Get Key button.

This will open your web browser at the "get key" page with the Order ID and Computer ID correctly filled in.

Click the Get License Key button. This will change the page to show the full license key. Copy the key from the web page and paste it into *ComparePDF*'s License Key line editor. Then click the Register Key button.

Note that every free trial and full license key is tied to a particular computer and will not work on any other computer. If you want a license key that isn't tied to any specific computer, see [How to Buy and Register a Site License Key](#).

How to Buy and Register a Site License Key

To buy an annual site license that can be used on up to 1000 computers and is not tied to any particular computer, visit www.qtrac.eu/sitelicense.html.

Once a site license purchase has been completed the confirmation page will show the site license key; and the key will also be emailed to the purchaser.

To register a site license key, the key must be saved in a plain text file. For example, copy the license key from the confirmation page or from the email, then run Notepad and paste in the key. Then click File→Save As. Save the key into *ComparePDF*'s folder in a file called `qtrac.key`; be sure to set the Save as type to All Files (*.*) and the Encoding to UTF-8.

The site license key and the paragraph of instructions above can be distributed within the organisation to everyone who is to use *ComparePDF*.

Note that everyone to whom the key or `qtrac.key` file is distributed must be made aware of the license terms and in particular that the key (or any file containing it such as `qtrac.key`) must *never* be given or sold to any third-party, and must never be made publically available in any way (e.g., in print, on social media, or the Internet).

How to View the License

The program comes with two licenses, one that governs free trial and full license keys, and another that governs site licenses. If you have registered a license key you can view the license as follows. Check the Show Options checkbox, click the About tab, then click the View License button. This will show the license in your PDF reader. (See the [Screenshot of the About tab](#), p. 9.)

How to Upgrade

To upgrade *ComparePDF*, download the latest version's setup file from www.qtrac.eu/comparepdf.html. Then run the setup file and the new version will be installed in place of the old version. Your license key (or the site license key) and your configuration will be left intact.

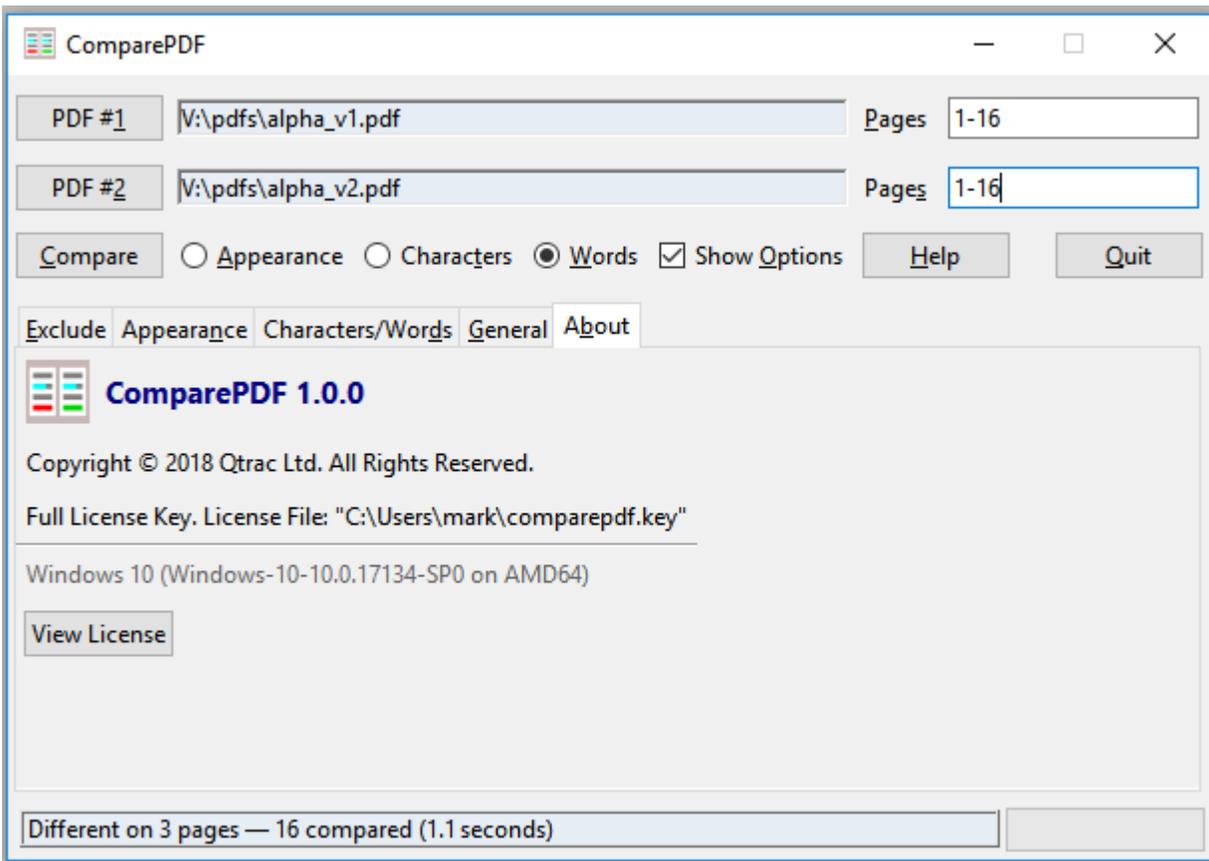


Figure 4. Screenshot of the About tab

A full license key entitles you to use any minor or patch release of the major version you purchased. For example, if you bought a full license for version 1, you can use *any* 1.x.y version (1.1.0, 1.2.3, etc.) that is or becomes available.

A site license key entitles you to use *any* version of *ComparePDF*, as well as *comparepdfcmd*, *DiffPDF* 5.8.3 or later, and *diffpdfc* 5.8.3 or later, within the license's one year lifetime.

How to Get Support

It is worth reading this manual once through to become familiar with what *ComparePDF* can do. If this manual doesn't answer your question, then we'll happily try to answer.

If you believe you have found a bug, first check which version you are using. Check the Show Options checkbox, then click the About tab. Then visit *ComparePDF*'s web site, www.qtrac.eu/comparepdf.html, to see if there is a newer version. If a new version is available, upgrade to it (see [How to Upgrade](#)), and then see if you still have the bug. If the problem persists, contact us and we will try to help.

Note that changes between versions are listed at www.qtrac.eu/comparepdf-changes.html.

Email support is provided on a “best efforts” basis with no formal time limit, so long as Qtrac Ltd. is trading. The support email address is support@qtrac.eu — be sure to tell us what operating system you are using (e.g., “Windows 10”) and especially which version of *ComparePDF* you are using. If you have a full or site license, please also give us the purchase’s Order ID.

How to Uninstall

To uninstall *ComparePDF*, go to the Windows Control Panel, click *ComparePDF*, then click Uninstall.

How to Use *ComparePDF*

Comparing two PDFs is a simple three step process:

- (1) Click the **PDF #1** button and choose the first PDF to compare;
- (2) Click the **PDF #2** button and choose the second PDF to compare;
- (3) Click the **Compare** button.

If there are differences, a PDF report file will be created showing each pair of different pages side-by-side with the differences highlighted. This report will then be shown in your default PDF reader application.

If you want to cancel a comparison that’s in progress, click the **Cancel** button. (The Compare button changes into a Cancel button during comparisons.) Canceling may take a few seconds—or even up to a few minutes when comparing PDFs that contain thousands of pages.

This manual can be opened by clicking the **Help** button.

You can quit *ComparePDF* by clicking the **Quit** button or the × close button. If a comparison is running when you quit, *ComparePDF* will cancel the comparison, which as noted may take a short time to complete.

By default, *ComparePDF* will compare PDFs using Words mode (or the last mode that you chose). This will produce the best results in a wide range of situations. If you want to compare text written in a CJK—Chinese, Japanese, Korean—language, it is best to use Characters mode. And if you want to compare colors, fonts, diagrams, images, or text layout, you should use Appearance mode. See the [How to Compare PDFs \(Comparison Mode\)](#) section, the [How to Customize Appearance Comparisons \(Appearance tab\)](#) section, and the [How to Customize Text Comparisons \(Characters/Words tab\)](#) section.

If your PDFs have different numbers of pages or inserted or deleted pages, you can use page ranges to specify those pages from each PDF that correspond to each other. See the [How to Compare Specific Pages \(Pages line editors\)](#) section.

The default text comparison algorithm should produce good results in most cases. However, it is possible to tweak the comparison algorithm—or use an alternative algorithm. See the [How to Customize Text Comparisons \(Characters/Words tab\)](#) section.

Sometimes it is useful to exclude part of a PDF when comparing. For example, a header or footer might contain a timestamp which you want to ignore. This can be done by setting an exclusion margin or rectangle. See the [How to Exclude Areas When Comparing \(Exclude tab\)](#) section.

How to Use the Spinboxes



Figure 5. Screenshot of a Spinbox

ComparePDF uses its own custom spinboxes rather than the standard ones.

Some spinboxes (such as the one shown above) include units (e.g., “pt” for points or “px” for pixels), but you never have to enter these yourself. One way to change the value is to click the number and edit it like text. In addition, spinboxes support the following mouse and keyboard actions. Note that the key presses described only work when the text cursor is inside the number (i.e., click the number—or Tab to it, then use the key presses below to change it).

Mouse Click	Result
▲	Increase by 1 (if below the maximum)
Shift+▲	Increase by 10 (or set to the maximum if less than 10 below maximum)
▼	Decrease by 1 (if above the minimum)
Shift+▼	Decrease by 10 (or set to the minimum if less than 10 above minimum)
Key Press	Result
↑	Increase by 1 (if below the maximum)
PageUp	Increase by 10 (or set to the maximum if less than 10 below maximum)
End	Set to the maximum
↓	Decrease by 1 (if above the minimum)
PageDown	Decrease by 10 (or set to the minimum if less than 10 above minimum)
Home	Set to the minimum

Configuration

ComparePDF uses sensible defaults so in many cases, no specific configuration is required beyond choosing the two PDF files to compare. However, if you do need to exercise more control over comparisons, *ComparePDF* provides plenty of options for doing so, as described in the subsections that follow.

The PDF files to compare, the comparison mode radio buttons, and the pages line editors are always visible. However, to see and use all the other options, you must check the **Show Options** checkbox to show the tabs in which the various options appear.

How to Compare PDFs (Comparison Mode)

The comparison mode tells *ComparePDF* how to compare the PDF files. It is specified by checking one of the Appearance, Characters, or Words radio buttons.

Words comparison mode is best for comparing documents' texts—this mode is also the fastest.*

Characters comparison mode is usually best for comparing documents written in CJK—Chinese, Japanese, Korean—languages.

Both words and characters modes (the “text” modes) only consider text: they ignore images, fonts, and layout (apart from the order of the characters or words). For complete comparisons—of text (including fonts and layout), and of images—use Appearance mode. Text mode comparisons are affected by the comparison algorithm and some other options; see the [How to Customize Text Comparisons \(Characters/Words tab\)](#) section for details.

Appearance comparisons work by in effect taking a “photograph” of each pair of pages being compared, and then comparing these images pixel by pixel. By default, even a single pixel difference is considered significant. However, it is possible to compare less strictly. See the [How to Customize Appearance Comparisons \(Appearance tab\)](#) section for details.

Note that *all* comparisons are affected by margin and rectangle exclusions (see the [How to Exclude Areas When Comparing \(Exclude tab\)](#) section), and by the pages to be compared (see the [How to Compare Specific Pages \(Pages line editors\)](#) section).

How to Compare Specific Pages (Pages line editors)

By default, *ComparePDF* compares all the pages in the first PDF with their corresponding pages in the second PDF.

For example, if you compare two PDF files, by default *ComparePDF* will compare both their page 1's with each other, both their pages 2's, both their page 3's, and so on.

In the case of PDF files that have different numbers of pages, or where you only want to compare particular pages, you can specify exactly which pages *ComparePDF* should compare by entering one or more comma-separated page numbers or page ranges. (See, for example, [Screenshot of Pages line editors](#).)

A page range is a starting page number followed by a hyphen followed by an ending page number, e.g., 1-5 or 22-37. For example, if PDF #1's Pages is set to 1-6,8,11,12, and if PDF #2's Pages is set to 3-7,9-12, *ComparePDF* will compare the pages as follows:

* In tests *ComparePDF*'s words mode comparisons were 2× – 4× faster than *DiffPDF* or *diffpdfc*. Furthermore, *ComparePDF* makes better use of processor cores, and uses less memory.

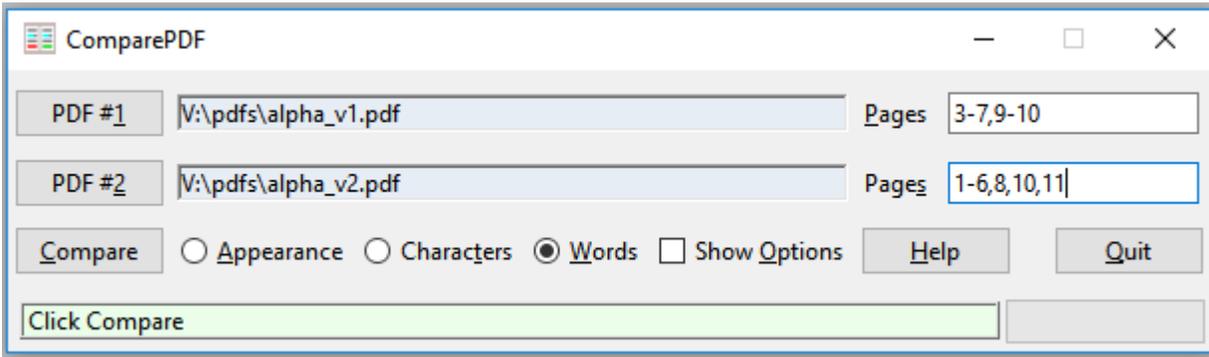


Figure 6. Screenshot of Pages line editors

PDF #1 Pages	1-6,8,11,12	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	11	12
		↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
PDF #2 Pages	3-7,9-12	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12

How to Register a Full License Key (Register tab)

This tab is used for buying a license, acquiring a license key using the purchase’s Order ID and the Computer ID, and registering the license key. Its use is explained earlier in [How to Buy and Register a Full License Key](#). See also the [Screenshot of the Register tab](#), p. 7. Note that this tab is only visible if *ComparePDF* is using a free trial license key.

How to Exclude Areas When Comparing (Exclude tab)

It is sometimes useful to exclude areas from consideration when doing comparisons. One common example is to exclude a header or footer that contains a timestamp.

Margin exclusions are the easiest to use. When you set a margin exclusion, everything from the margin to its nearest edge is ignored during the comparison—except for characters or words which cross a margin when doing a text mode comparison. (See the [Schematic of Margin Exclusions](#).)

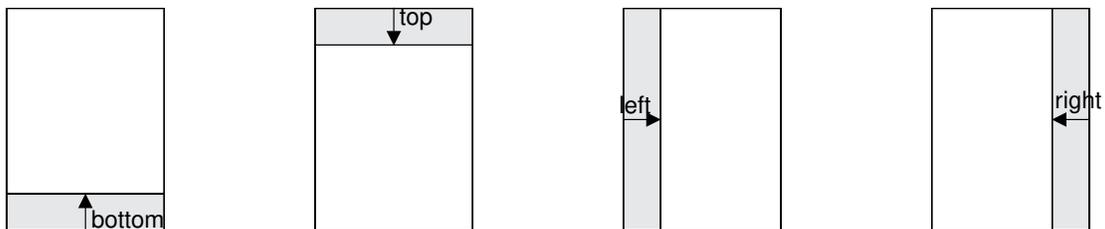


Figure 7. Schematic of Margin Exclusions

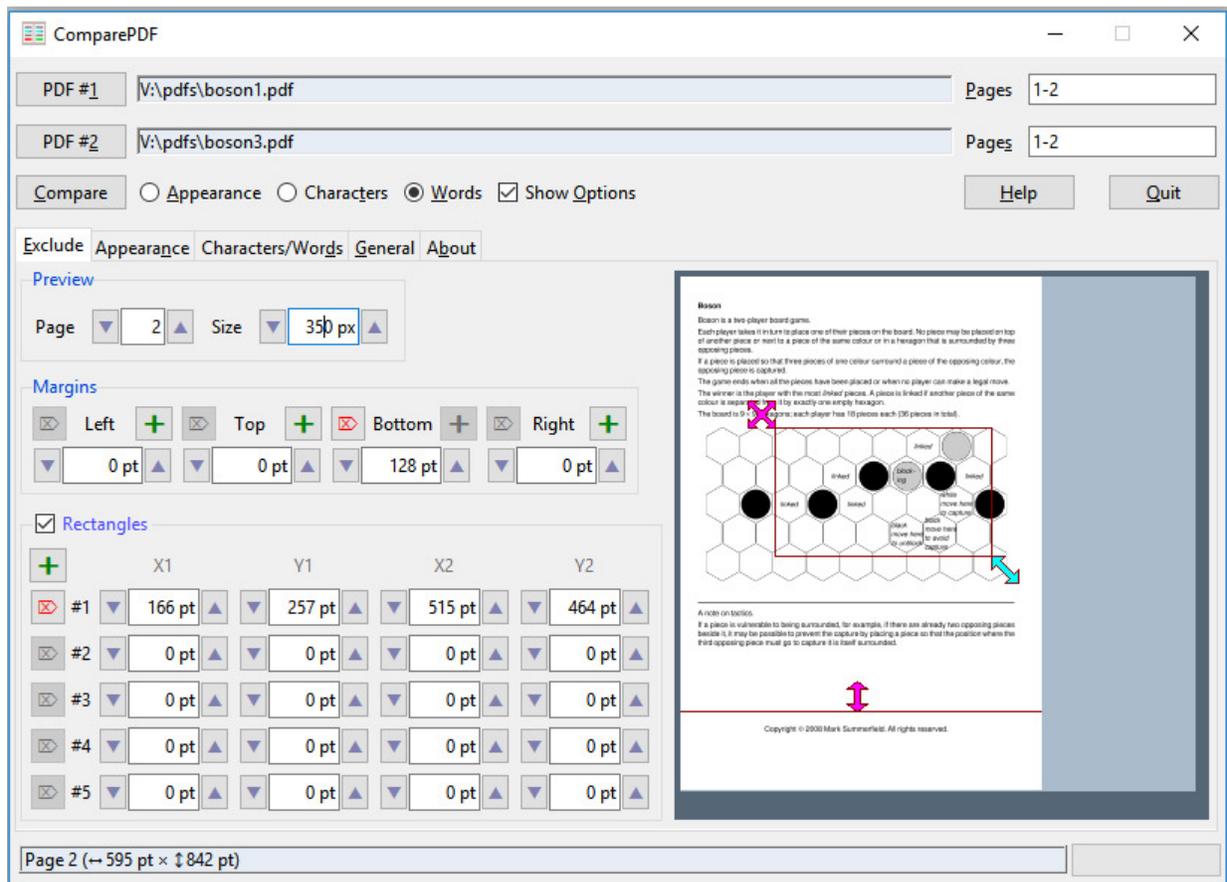


Figure 8. Screenshot of Exclude tab

To create a margin exclusion, click the **+** button to the right of the margin you want to set. This will create a default margin about one inch (72 points) from the edge. You can then either drag the margin into position using the magenta two-headed movement arrow in the preview pane, or use the margin's spinbox for more precise control. (See [How to Use the Spinboxes](#), p. 11.)

You can set one, two, three, or all four margins at the same time—or none at all, which is the default. To delete a margin, either click its delete button **X** or set its length to 0.

It is also possible to exclude up to five arbitrary rectangles. To do this, first check the Rectangles checkbox. Then, click the **+** below the checkbox to create a new default rectangle somewhere in the middle of the page. Then, in the preview pane, you can drag the rectangle into position using the magenta four-headed movement arrow, and adjust the rectangle's size using the cyan diagonal two-headed resizing arrow. Alternatively, you can set the rectangle's coordinates directly using the spinboxes. (See [How to Use the Spinboxes](#), p. 11.)

You can set one, two, three, four, or all five rectangles at the same time—or none at all, which is the default. To delete a rectangle, either click its delete button **X** or set all its coordinates to 0.

How to Customize Appearance Comparisons (Appearance tab)

By default, appearance mode comparisons compare each pair of pages exactly, pixel for pixel. This is done by in effect “photographing” each page, then dividing each page into squares, then comparing the pixels in each square from one page with the corresponding square in the other page.

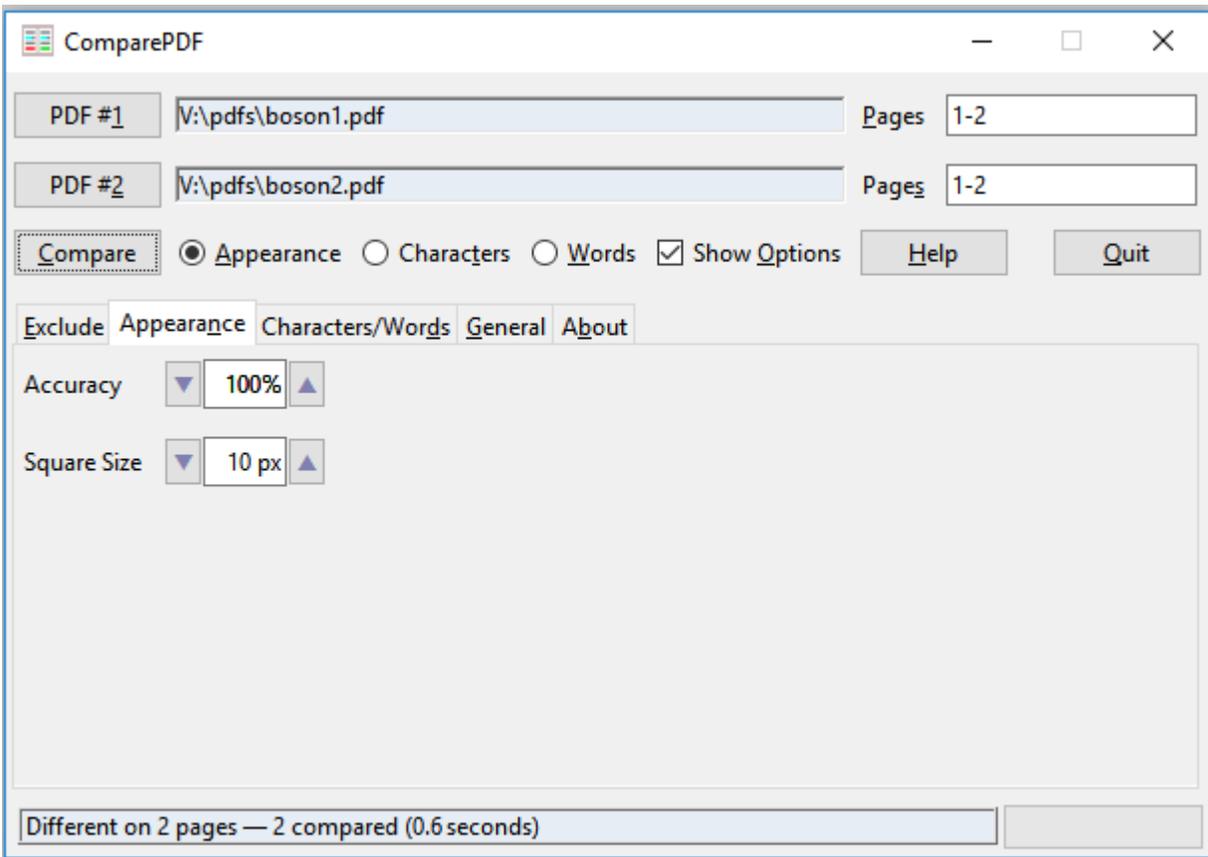


Figure 9. Screenshot of Appearance tab

Appearance comparisons can be influenced by changing one or two options on the appearance tab; see [Screenshot of Appearance tab](#).

In some situations it is helpful to accept small differences (often ones that humans wouldn’t even notice). This can be achieved by lowering the accuracy. For example, reducing the accuracy to 98% means that every pair of squares that are compared can be up to 2% different and still be considered “the same”.

The **Accuracy** spinbox tells *ComparePDF* how accurate appearance mode comparisons should be; it is ignored for text mode comparisons.

The default is 100% which means that each pair of pages that are compared are only considered the same if they match pixel for pixel. The minimum accuracy is 80%, and the maximum, 100%.

It is also possible to change the square size used for appearance mode comparisons using the **Square Size** spinbox. The default—and recommended setting—is 10 px (10 pixels). This means that squares of size 10 × 10 (100 pixels) are compared. You can reduce the square size to as small as 4 px or as big as 144 px.

For example, if Accuracy is 95% and Square Size is 10 px, two pages will be considered the same so long as at least 95 pixels in every 100 (i.e., in every 10 × 10 square) are the same.

How to Customize Text Comparisons (Characters/Words tab)

Characters and Words mode comparisons (“text” mode comparisons) can be influenced by changing several options; see [Screenshot of Characters/Words tab, p. 16](#). Each option is explained below.

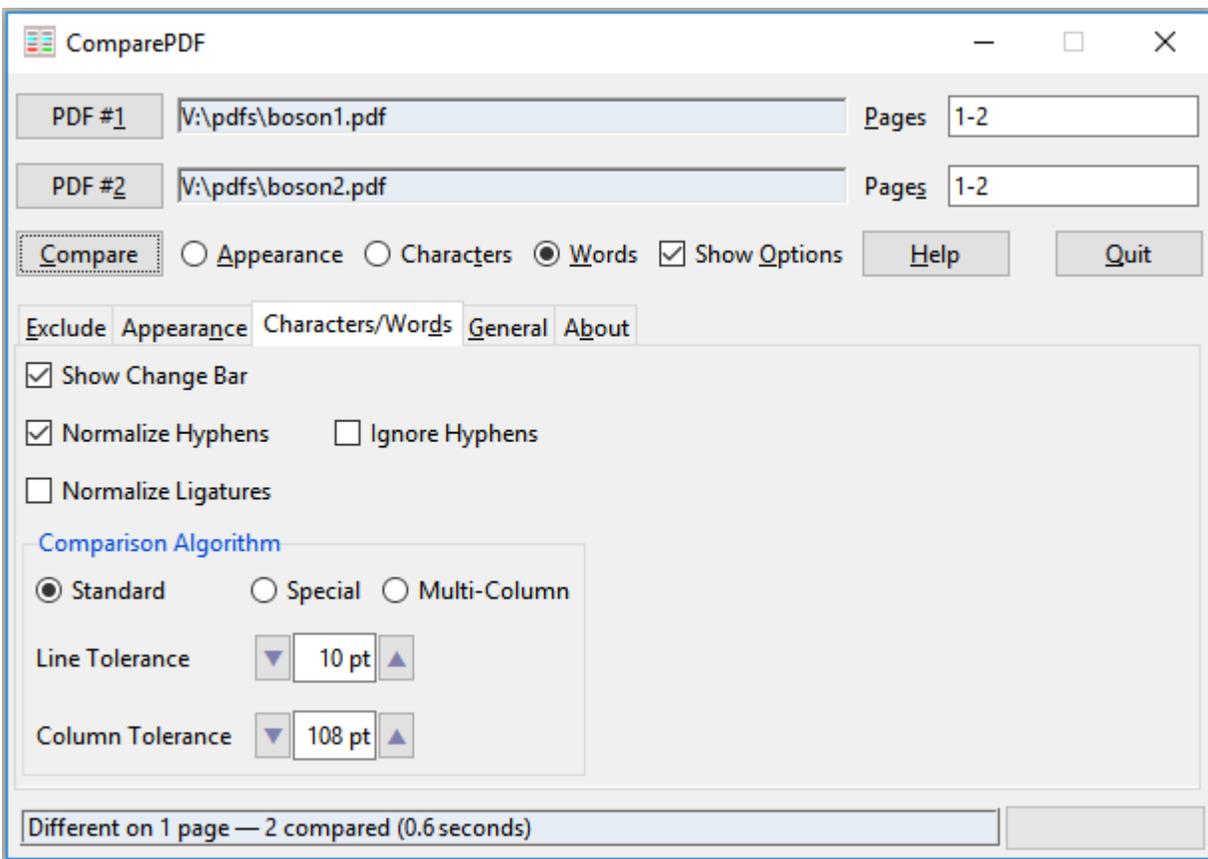


Figure 10. Screenshot of Characters/Words tab

If the **Show Change Bar** checkbox is checked, a red vertical line will be drawn in the left margin parallel to any changes detected. It is checked by default.

The **Normalize Hyphens** checkbox is checked by default, and this is the recommended setting.

When the Normalize Hyphens checkbox is checked, *ComparePDF* will normalize hyphens and a few other characters. This means that all kinds of hyphens (i.e., all hyphens in the Unicode “punctuation dash” character category, such as plain hyphens, minus signs, non-breaking hyphens, and en-dashes and em-dashes) are treated as if they were the same. In addition to normalizing hyphens, non-standard double quotes (Unicode code points U+0093 and U+0094 that are used in some PDF files) are considered to be identical to U+201C (“) and U+201D (”) for the purposes of comparison.*

The **Ignore Hyphens** checkbox is *unchecked* by default. This means that hyphens are treated like regular characters. If this checkbox is checked, hyphens will be ignored. This means that, for example, *one–two* is treated as *onetwo*. This works even if *two* is on the next line. If you check this checkbox, it is recommended that you also check the Normalize Hyphens checkbox.

The **Normalize Ligatures** checkbox is *unchecked* by default. This means that a ligature is considered to be different from its spelled out form, for example, **fi** ≠ **fi**, and **fl** ≠ **fl**. If you want ligatures and their spelled out forms to be considered the same during comparisons, you can check the Normalize Ligatures checkbox.

ComparePDF provides three different text comparison algorithms. The default is the **Standard** algorithm which gives good results in almost every case. For multicolumn PDFs using the **Multi-Column** algorithm may produce better results. And in rare cases the **Special** algorithm may be best.

All three algorithms can be tuned using the Line Tolerance spinbox, and the Multi-Column algorithm can further be tuned using the Column Tolerance spinbox.

To do sensible text comparisons *ComparePDF* needs to work out where the lines of text are on each page. This can be tricky when the lines are very close together. The **Line Tolerance** spinbox can be used to fine-tune how *ComparePDF* works out the lines. The default is 10 pt, but for PDFs that have lines very close together a setting of 9 pt or even 8 pt might produce better results.

When the Multi-Column algorithm is used, how *ComparePDF* works out which column any piece of text belongs to is influenced by the **Column Tolerance** spinbox. Its default value is 108 pt. Values you might want to experiment with are 72 pt, 36 pt, 144 pt, and 176 pt.

How to Customize Report Names and Other Options (General tab)

The General tab provides options to controlling how report names are generated (or asked for), and some other options; see [Screenshot of General tab](#), p. 18.

If a comparison does *not* detect any differences, the status line will say so, and no report will be generated. However, if a comparison does detect differences it will write a PDF difference

* Note that *ComparePDF* always normalizes whitespace, that is, any kind of whitespace (space, non-breaking space, etc.), is treated as a space (i.e., as a word separator).

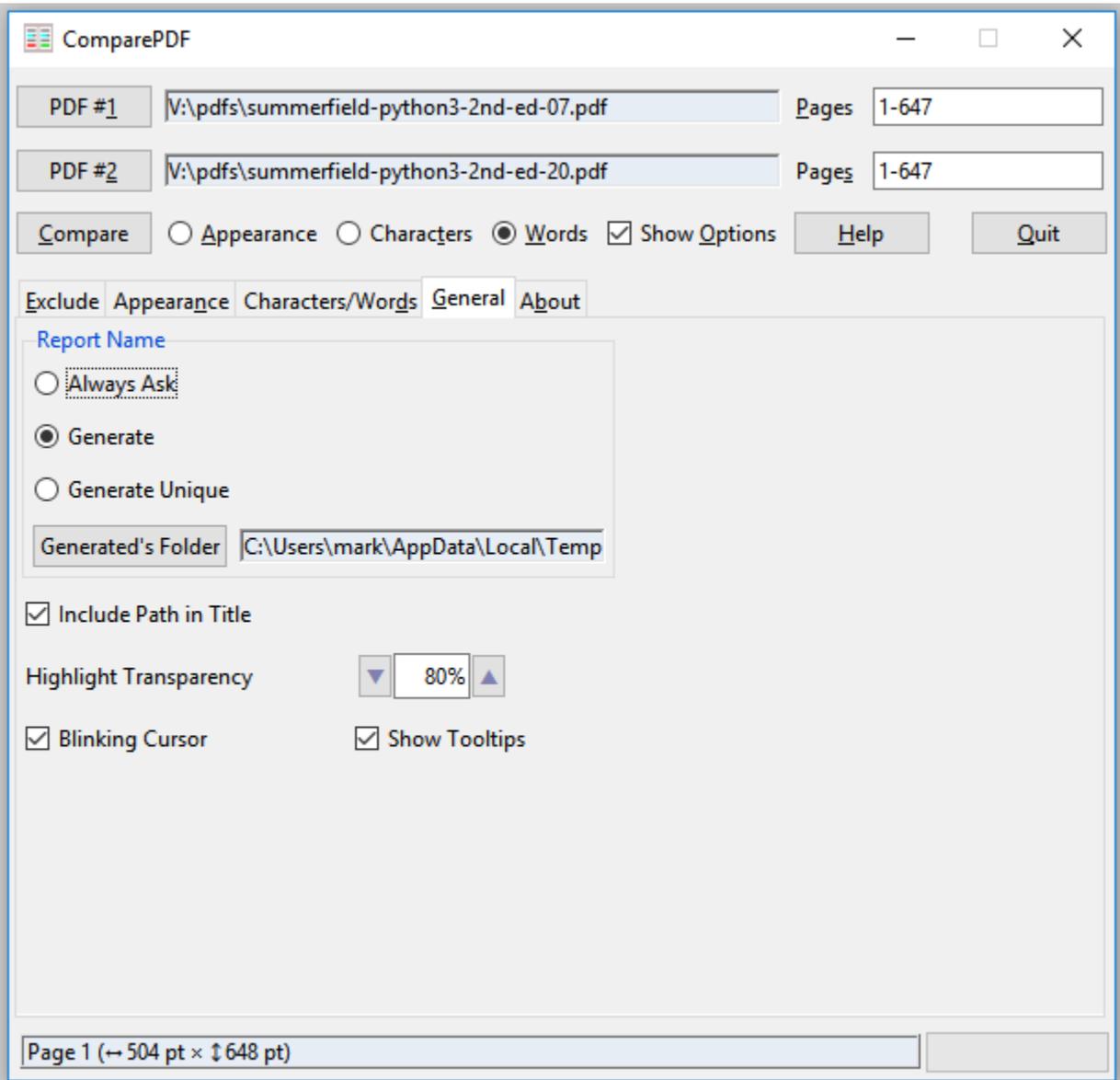


Figure 11. Screenshot of General tab

report containing each pair of pages that differ side-by-side and with the differences highlighted.

By default, the PDF report's name will be automatically generated, and it will be written into your temporary folder. Naturally, you can change these defaults.

If you check the **Always Ask** radio button, every time you click Compare, *ComparePDF* will pop up a file save as dialog for you to choose a report name and folder to save the report into (if one is produced). This gives you complete control but may prove inconvenient if you do lots of comparisons.

If you check the **Generate** radio button, every time a PDF difference report is created its name will be automatically generated and it will be saved into the Generated's Folder. This is the recommended report name option.

If you do two or more comparisons of the same two PDFs (e.g., changing various comparison options to see the effects), the *same* report filename will be used each time, so as to avoid producing lots of different PDF difference reports. If you decide you want to permanently keep a PDF difference report, simply use the PDF reader's "Save As" or "Save Copy As" option to save it (and possibly rename it) in the folder you want.

If you check the **Generate Unique** radio button, every time a PDF difference report is created its name will be automatically generated and it will be saved into the Generated's Folder. However, unlike the Generate option, if you do two or more comparisons of the same two PDFs, a unique report filename will be used each time. This can result in a lot of PDF report files being created.

By default, generated PDF difference reports are saved in your local temporary folder. However, if you click the **Generated's Folder** button, it will pop up a folder chooser dialog, and you can change the folder (e.g., to a folder you use specifically to save PDF difference reports).

By default, PDF reports include the full path of the compared PDFs in their titles. However, if you *uncheck* the **Include Path in Title** checkbox, only the filenames will appear in their titles, without their paths. 1.1.7

The **Highlight Transparency** spinbox is used to set the balance between how visible the highlighting is vs. how easy it is to see the differences. This is because differences are indicated by highlighting them as if you'd drawn over them with a highlighter pen. This makes the differences stand out and at the same time allows the highlighted text or graphics to show through. The default is 80% transparent, but if you prefer stronger highlighting, while still being able to see the differences, you might prefer a lower setting, say, 70%. 1.1.4

Uncheck the **Blinking Cursor** checkbox if you can't work with blinking cursors (e.g., in the line editors, pages editors, and spinboxes). Note that checking or unchecking this checkbox has no immediate effect: you must quit *ComparePDF* and restart it for this option to apply.

All *ComparePDF*'s buttons, line editors, pages editors, spinboxes, and checkboxes have tooltips which appear if you hover the mouse for more than a second over them. If you don't want them, uncheck the **Show Tooltips** checkbox.

The About tab

This tab shows the copyright notice. It shows the type of license in use and where the license key is. And it shows which version of Windows is in use. Click the **View License** button to see the license in your PDF reader. (See the [Screenshot of the About tab](#), p. 9.)

Troubleshooting

Invalid Key Code Error

When a full license key is acquired, it is tied to the computer's Computer ID. The Computer ID depends on the computer's Motherboard and CPU, as reported by Windows.

If—within two years of purchase—the computer it was acquired for is scrapped or replaced or has its Motherboard or CPU changed (or how these are reported is changed by a Windows upgrade), normally the license key can be transferred to another computer. Contact support@qtrac.eu with the original Order ID if a transfer is required. Only one transfer is allowed per license key.

If a license key is acquired as one class of user (e.g., Administrator), and then used by another class of user (e.g., User), even though they are on the *same* machine, the acquired license key may not be visible to *ComparePDF* and so result in an “Invalid key code” error. If this is the case, copy the comparepdf.key file to the user's home folder.

False Positives

In some circumstances, *ComparePDF* will report differences that are not visible to the human eye. In some cases these are genuine differences (for example, two different kinds of hyphens that look the same), and in some cases these are false positives.

By default *ComparePDF* normalizes hyphens (i.e., treats all the different hyphen kinds as the same), but does not normalize ligatures (although it will if you tell it to). To control these, see [How to Customize Text Comparisons \(Characters/Words tab\)](#), p. 16.

False positives are usually caused by very narrow inter-line spacing, or by text which mixes Latin text (e.g., English) with non-Latin text (e.g., Japanese), and in some cases by tables. In many cases these false positives can be eliminated—or minimized—by reducing the line tolerance. For example, try reducing the Line Tolerance from the default of 10 pt to 9 pt or 8 pt, or try the Special algorithm with these line tolerances (see [How to Customize Text Comparisons \(Characters/Words tab\)](#), p. 16).
