REX Paperworks

User Manual

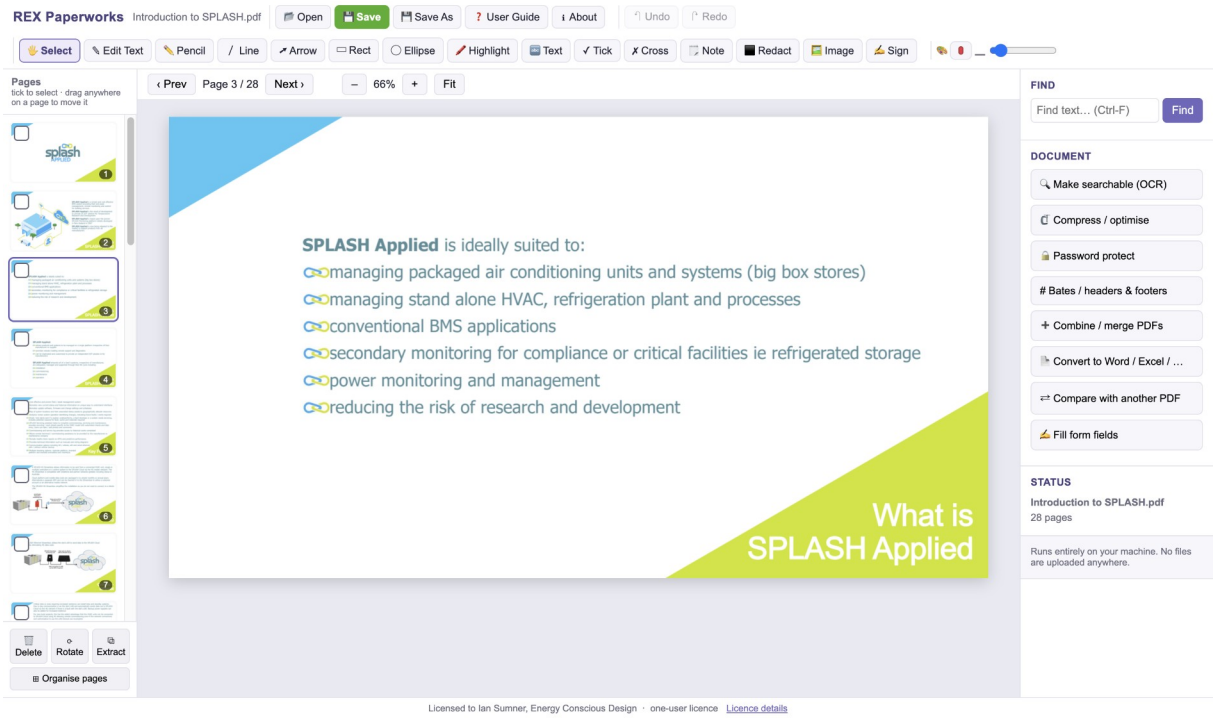
View, mark up, and convert PDFs — entirely on your own machine

Energy Conscious Design Limited

1. Introduction

REX Paperworks is a full-featured PDF viewer and editor that runs as a standalone desktop program on your own computer — but 100% locally. No document is ever uploaded anywhere; the local program on your machine does all the work and serves the interface to your browser window.

REX Paperworks opens in its own app-style window (no address bar), so it looks and feels like a normal desktop program.



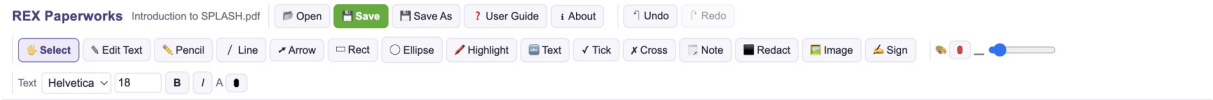
REX Paperworks with a document open: the toolbar and markup tools along the top, the Pages panel on the left, the page in the centre with its page and zoom bar, and the Find and Document tools on the right. The toolbar is light; the green Save button and the purple outline of the active tool are the only strong colours.

This edition of the manual (9 November 2026) matches the 9 November 2026 build: the Text tool places black text that stays selected so its font, size and colour can be changed at once; page moves scroll the list and can be typed as a position; Edit Text was repaired for several kinds of real document (see section 9). The sample document is the 28-page "Introduction to SPLASH" presentation. The build date is shown in the licence bar at the bottom of the window and in About.

2. The Window Layout

2.1 Toolbar

Across the top: Open, Save and Save As, then Undo and Redo, then every markup tool (Select, Edit Text, Pencil, Line, Arrow, Rectangle, Ellipse, Highlight, Text box, Tick, Cross, Note, Redact, Image and Sign), the colour swatch and line weight, and the controls that belong to the current tool: Fill and a fill colour for shapes, the note background colour, and font, size, Bold and Italic for text and notes. The one colour swatch colours everything: the outline of a shape, the letters of a text box, the text of a note (a note's border is a darker shade of its background). When a mark is selected with the Select tool, the same controls show that mark's settings and change it.



The toolbar: file buttons and Undo/Redo, the markup tools, colour and line weight, then the controls for the current tool or the selected mark - here the Text group (font, size, B, I, colour) for a selected text label.

Open, Save and Save As sit at the left of the toolbar, with the name of the open file shown beside them and in the window title. When more than one PDF is open, a row of tabs appears: click a tab to switch documents (each keeps its own page, markups and undo history) and click its × to close it.

2.2 Pages panel (left)

Thumbnails of every page in the open document. Tick pages to select them, then use Delete, Rotate or Extract at the bottom of the panel. To move a page, drag it anywhere on its picture (not only the tick box); a blue line shows where it will land. Organise pages opens a full-screen view with every page as a large tile, which is easier for long documents (see section 6). Previews appear progressively while a large file loads; the first page is shown straight away.



The Pages panel. Tick pages for Delete, Rotate and Extract; drag anywhere on a page to move it; Organise pages opens the tile view.

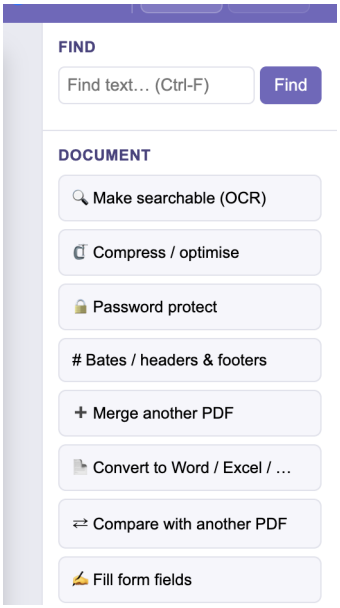
2.3 Viewer (centre)

The current page is rendered here at the chosen zoom level. The bar above it (Previous / Next page, zoom out, zoom in, Fit) always stays in view, however far you scroll or zoom; Page Up /

Page Down and the + and - keys do the same. All markup drawing happens directly on the page, and a hint on the bar tells you what the selected mark can do.

2.4 Document tools (right)

Find text across the document, and a set of whole-document actions: OCR, Compress, Password protect, Bates/headers & footers, Merge, Convert, Compare, and Fill form fields. A status panel shows the currently open file and page count.

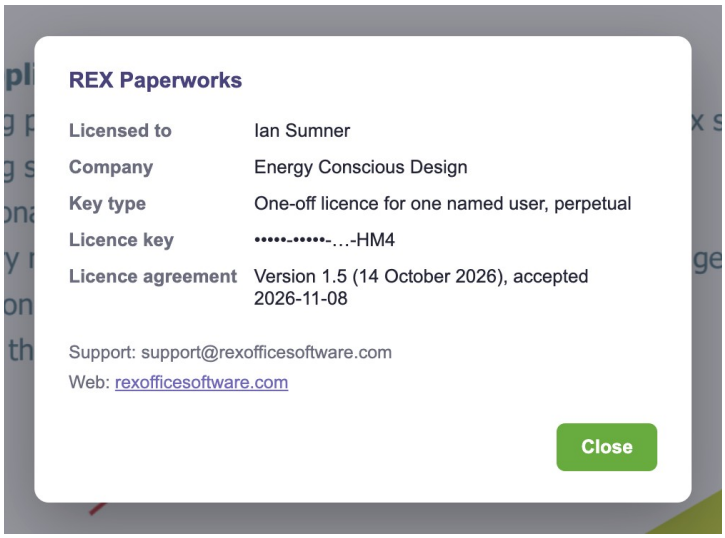


The Find box and the Document tools on the right of the window.

2.5 The licence bar and the About window (bottom of the window)

A slim bar at the very bottom of the window always shows who the program is licensed to, for example "Licensed to Jane Citizen, Example Ltd". Click About (the About button next to User Guide at the top of the window) to open the About window. It shows the licensed name, the company, the type of licence (one-off, one named user, perpetual), the licence key with all but its last group hidden, the version of the licence agreement you accepted and the date, and how to contact support.

The licence bar along the bottom of the window shows who the program is licensed to; "Licence details" opens the About window.

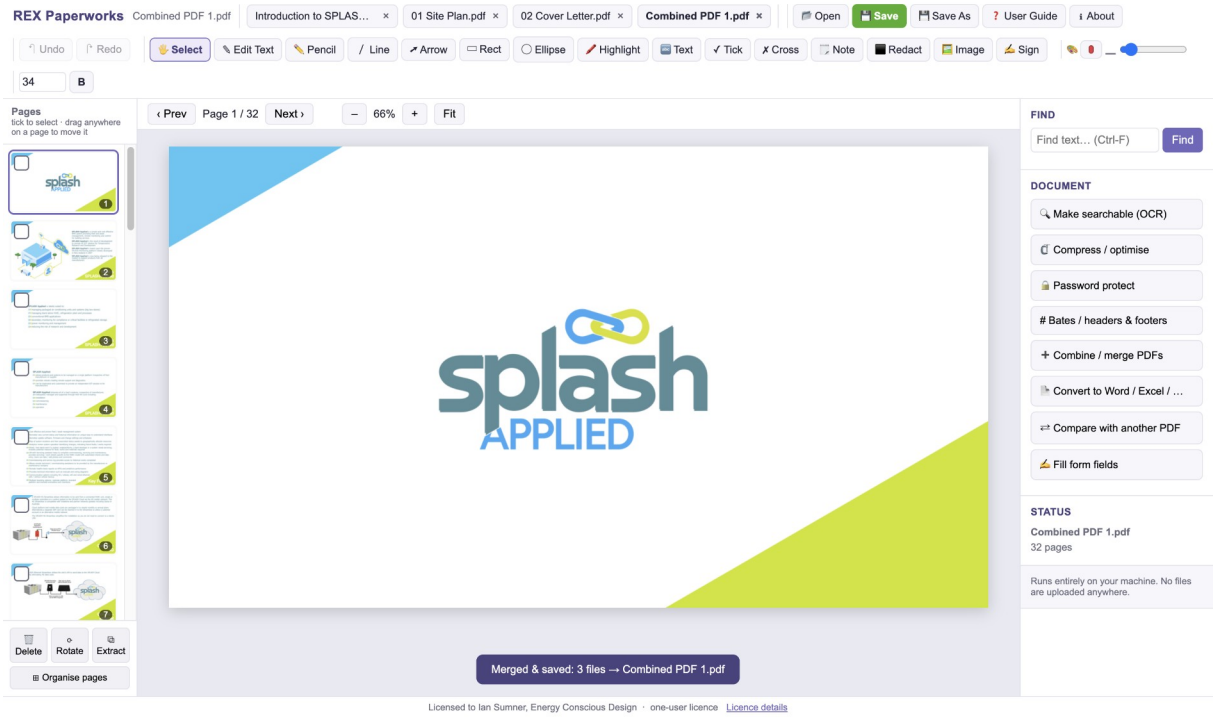


The About window (the About button on the toolbar): licensed name and company, the type of licence, the key (partly hidden), the agreement version you accepted and the support address.

3. Opening and Viewing a PDF

Click Open (or the big “Open a PDF” button in the centre when nothing is open yet) and choose a file. The page renders in the centre panel and thumbnails appear on the left:

While a file opens, the Status panel and the viewer say so and the first page appears as soon as it is ready; the page previews on the left fill in afterwards, eight at a time, with a progress ring in the Status panel. Very large scanned files (hundreds of pages, tens of megabytes) open in a second or two. Switching between open tabs is instant because each document keeps its previews. If a file cannot be opened, the reason stays in the Status panel.



Every PDF you open gets its own tab with its own page list; click a tab to switch to it, or its × to close it. The last tab here is the result of combining the three open documents into one file.

Use the Previous/Next buttons or click a thumbnail to move between pages, and the zoom controls (or Ctrl and the mouse wheel) to zoom in and out.

Zoom runs from 20% to 1200%; at high zoom the page is re-rendered sharply and you can scroll in both directions. While pages or OCR are loading, the status panel shows a circular progress ring that fills as the work completes.

4. Markup Tools

Select a tool from the toolbar, then click and drag on the page to draw. Colour, line weight, fill and font settings can be set before drawing, and changed afterwards by selecting the mark: whatever you change while a mark is selected applies to that mark.

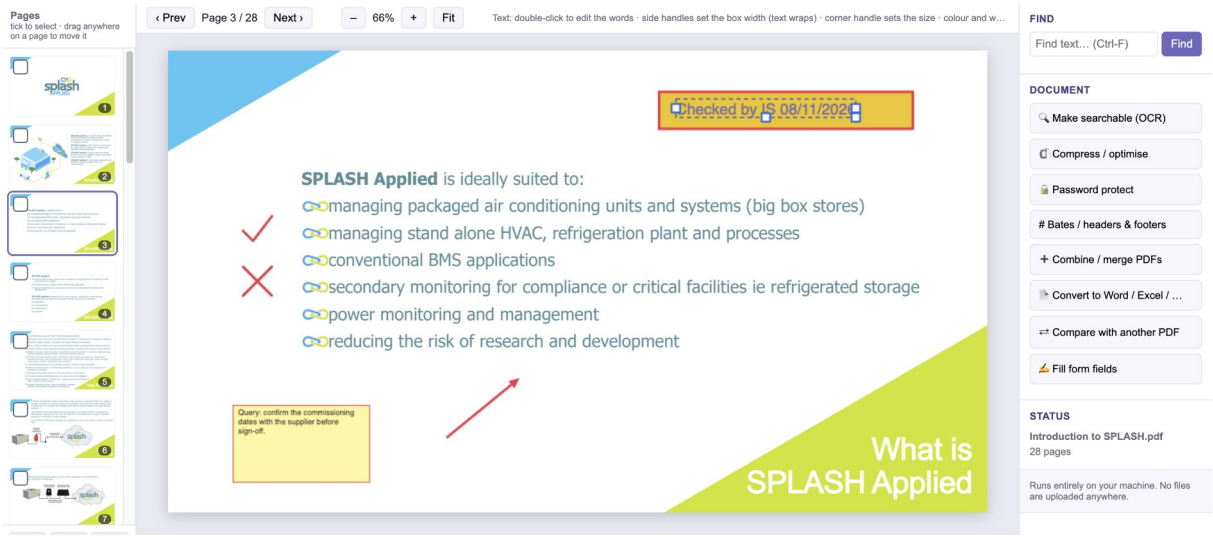
- Select — the default tool. Click a mark to select it: a dashed box appears with handles. Drag the mark to move it, drag a corner or side handle to resize it, drag the end of a line or arrow to move that end, and press Delete to remove it. Double-click a text box or note to change its words. Drag on an empty part of the page to select several marks at once; the arrow keys nudge the selection (Shift for bigger steps); Ctrl+C / Ctrl+V duplicate it.
- Edit Text — editing of existing text in a digital (non-scanned) PDF. Paragraphs, lines and words are outlined; a click opens the whole paragraph for editing (choose Line or Word in the toolbar for smaller edits). The new text keeps the original font size, colour and width, is fitted into the same lines where it can, and never covers other text; the cover behind it takes the colour of the page or panel the text sits on. Table rows and differently coloured panels are kept apart. Best on digital PDFs; scanned pages need OCR first and are edited as pictures.
- Pencil — freehand drawing.
- Line / Arrow — straight lines, with or without an arrowhead. Arrowheads are filled and pointed whatever the line weight.
- Rectangle / Ellipse — shapes with an outline colour, an optional fill and a separate fill colour (the second swatch, which appears for these tools).
- Highlight — a translucent highlighter stroke.
- Text — a text box. Click where the text should start and type it (or paste text copied in any program with Ctrl+V while the pointer is over the page). The colour swatch, font, size, Bold and Italic apply before placing it or while it is selected - the new text stays selected; drag it to move, the side handles set the wrapping width, the corner handle the size; double-click it, or click it with the Edit Text tool, to change the words.
- Tick / Cross — quick approval or rejection marks, placed centred on the point you click. The size field sets their size, the line weight their thickness, and B makes them bold.
- Note — a sticky note on the page: click where it goes and type. The colour swatch sets its text colour, the note swatch its background (the border follows), the size box its text size and B makes it bold; drag the handles to resize, double-click to change the words.
- Redact — permanently blacks out the selected area. Everything under the box is removed, not just hidden: the text, the pixels of any picture or scan, drawn shapes, and any comment, link or form field that touches the box. In the Find panel, Redact all matches puts a box over every occurrence of the search text on every page, and saving also removes that text from bookmarks, document properties and comments.
- Sign — place a signature image onto the page.

Undo and Redo (next to the file buttons) step backward and forward through markup changes, including moves, resizes and style changes.

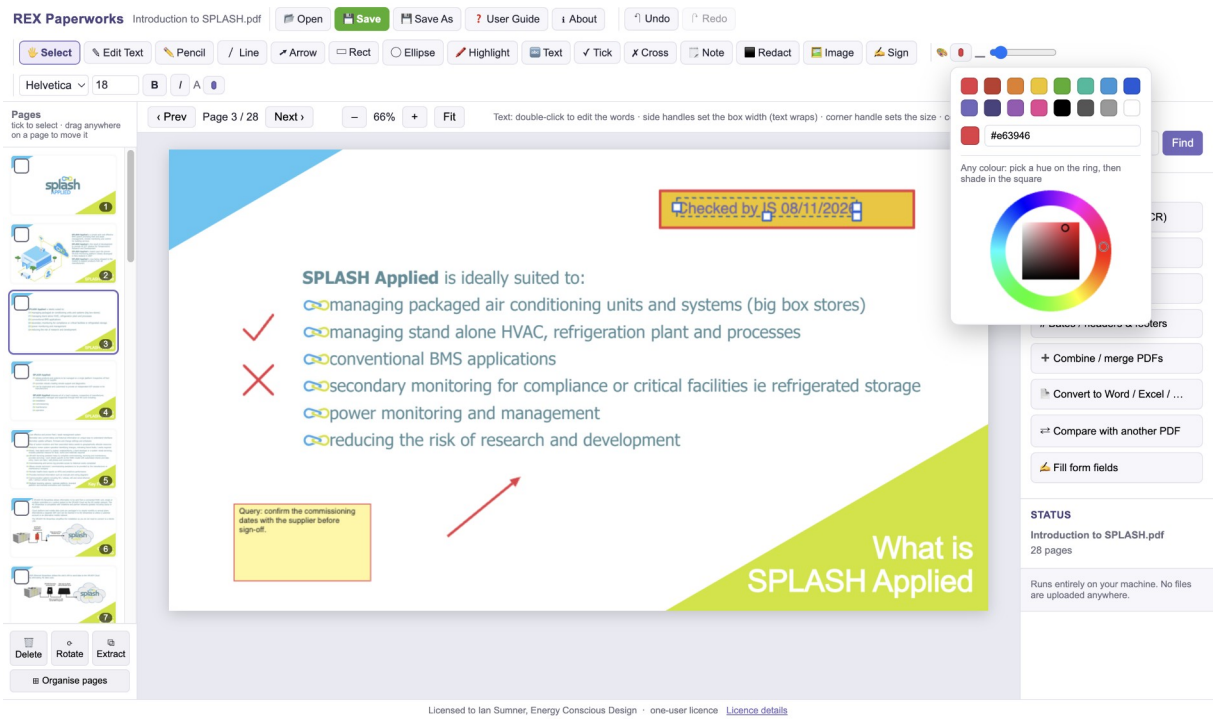
Colours: the swatch buttons open a palette with sixteen quick colours, a box for a hex value, and a colour wheel. Pick a hue on the ring, then the shade in the square, for any colour at all. The fill swatch has a 'Same as outline colour' option.

Your marks stay yours: nothing you draw is flattened into the page while you work. Save or Save As writes the marks into the file, and when that file is opened again in REX Paperworks every tick, text, arrow, shape, note and picture comes back live, ready to be moved, changed or deleted. Any other PDF viewer sees ordinary page content. The two exceptions are deliberate: Redact and Edit Text change the page itself and cannot be undone after saving, and marks on a page you rotate are made part of the page.

Selecting and copying. With the Select tool, click a mark, Shift-click to add others, or drag a rectangle around several; the colour, size and Bold controls then apply to all of them, the arrow keys nudge them, Delete removes them. Ctrl+C copies the selected marks and Ctrl+V pastes copies as often as you like, each a little further down and right; Ctrl+X cuts, Ctrl+A selects every mark on the page. Text copied in another program pastes as a new text box where the pointer is. A right-click on the page gives Edit the words, Copy, Cut, Paste here, Duplicate, Delete, Bring to front and Send to back; on an empty spot it offers Paste here, Select all marks, Add text here and Add note here. The mouse wheel at the end of a page turns to the next page, and at the top back to the previous one.



Markup in use: a text label selected with the Select tool (side, bottom and corner handles), a tick and a cross, a sticky note. The font, size and colour controls show the selected text's settings.



The colour palette: quick swatches, a hex box and the colour wheel.

Select tool in detail: click a mark to select it (a dashed outline and its handles appear), drag it to move, drag a handle to resize, double-click text or a note to edit the words, and press Delete to remove it. Lines and arrows are selected by clicking on the line itself, pencil strokes by clicking on the stroke.

Text and Note tools open a small in-app dialog for the text (Enter to confirm, Esc to cancel). Notes have two colour pickers: the outline colour is the main colour swatch and the fill colour is the 📝 swatch that appears when the Note tool is active; both are kept in the saved PDF.

Image and Sign tools ask for a picture file, place it at its natural proportions, and show it immediately; it is selected on placement so you can resize it straight away, and you can write text over it with the Text tool.

Redact and Edit Text really remove the original text from the file (not just cover it), even a single word in the middle of a line, so redacted words cannot be recovered by copy-and-paste or search. Redact goes further: the picture under the box is blackened inside the picture itself (so the original cannot be recovered by extracting the image), drawn shapes inside the box are deleted and anything drawn partly inside is clipped out, comments and form fields touching the box are deleted, and vertical text and fonts without width tables are handled glyph by glyph. With Redact all matches the words are also removed from bookmarks, document properties and comments. Redaction boxes are live marks until you save: move or delete them with the Select tool, or Undo.

5. Document Tools

5.1 Make searchable (OCR)

Runs Optical Character Recognition over scanned pages so their text becomes selectable and findable, without changing how the page looks: the scan itself is not re-drawn or re-compressed, so its quality and the file size stay as they were, and bookmarks, links and form fields survive. Pages that already contain real text are left untouched. A page scanned sideways or upside down is read the right way up, and a scanned sheet that carries a typed stamp or a few typed notes is read as well, without doubling the typed words. The engine is built in: Windows uses the free Tesseract engine shipped inside the program, and the Mac uses the text recognition built into macOS 10.15 and later, so there is nothing to install on either. Tables are read with their rules painted out of the picture first, so cell borders are not read as letters; drawing sheets (A3 and larger) are also read for dimension text standing on its side, which is placed turned the same way so Find and selection land on it.

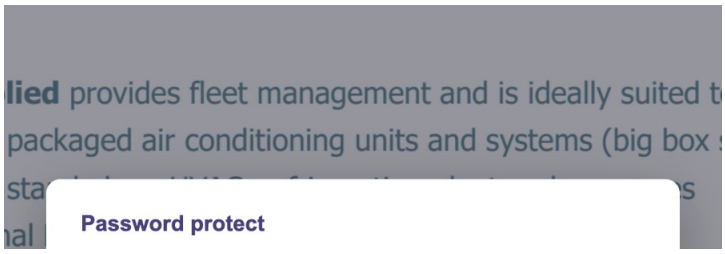
When it finishes, the Status panel says how many scanned pages were read, how many were read turned the right way up and how many already had text. If the engine cannot start, or a page fails, a message window explains what happened and what to do; the Status panel keeps the message. (Only a Mac older than macOS 10.15 lacks the built-in recognition; there the free Tesseract engine can be installed instead.)

5.2 Compress / optimise

Reduces file size, useful before emailing a large scanned document.

5.3 Password protect

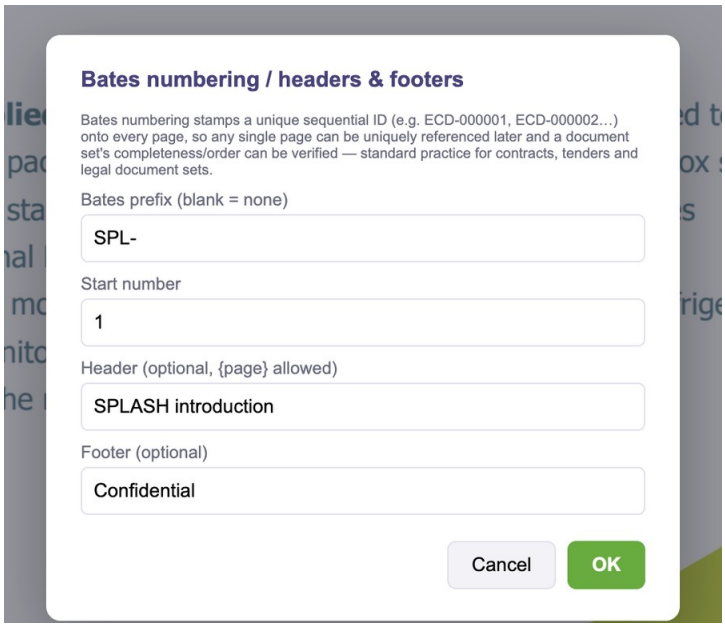
Encrypts the PDF with a password of your choice.



Password protect asks for the password, then for a place to save the protected copy.

5.4 Bates / headers & footers

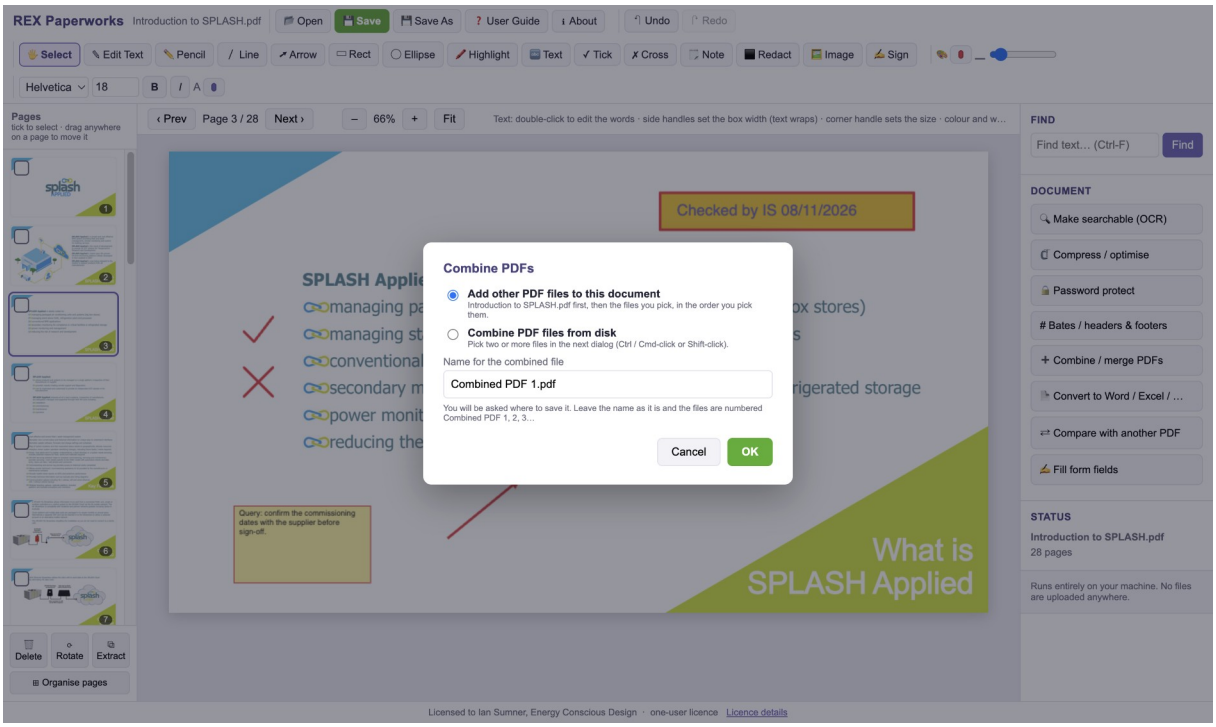
Stamps sequential Bates numbering, or a custom header/footer, across some or all pages — commonly used for legal and consenting document sets.



Bates numbering and headers and footers: a prefix, a start number and optional header and footer text.

5.5 Combine PDFs (merge files)

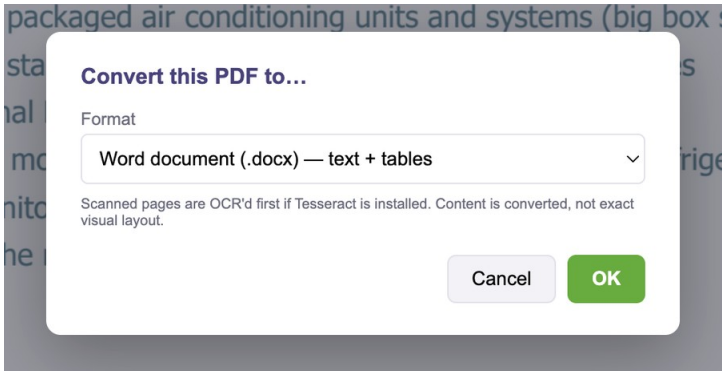
Click Combine / merge PDFs. The dialog offers three ways to build one file: add other PDF files to the open document (the open document first, then the files you pick, in the order you pick them); combine the open documents in tab order; or combine PDF files from disk. The name box is filled in with Combined PDF 1, 2, 3 and so on (the next free number in the open document's folder); change it if you like, then choose where to save. The combined file opens in its own tab, ready to reorder, delete pages or rename with Save As. The marks on the open document are included. Hold Ctrl (Windows) or Cmd (Mac), or Shift, to pick several files in the file dialog.



The Combine PDFs dialog: add files to the open document, combine the open tabs, or combine files from disk; the file is named Combined PDF 1, 2, 3… unless you type a name.

5.6 Convert to Word / Excel / …

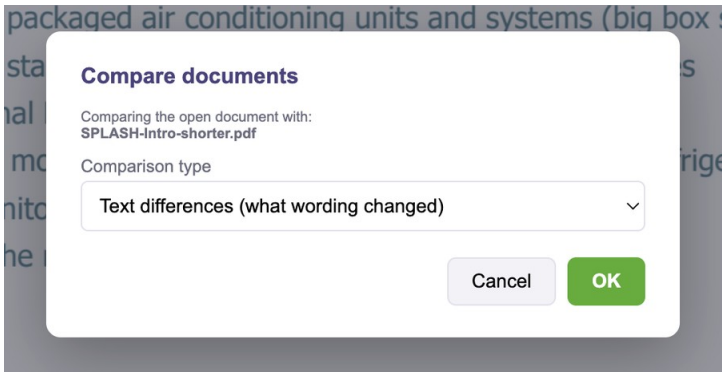
Converts the current document to Word, Excel, plain text, or a set of images. Table detection is used for the Excel conversion where possible.



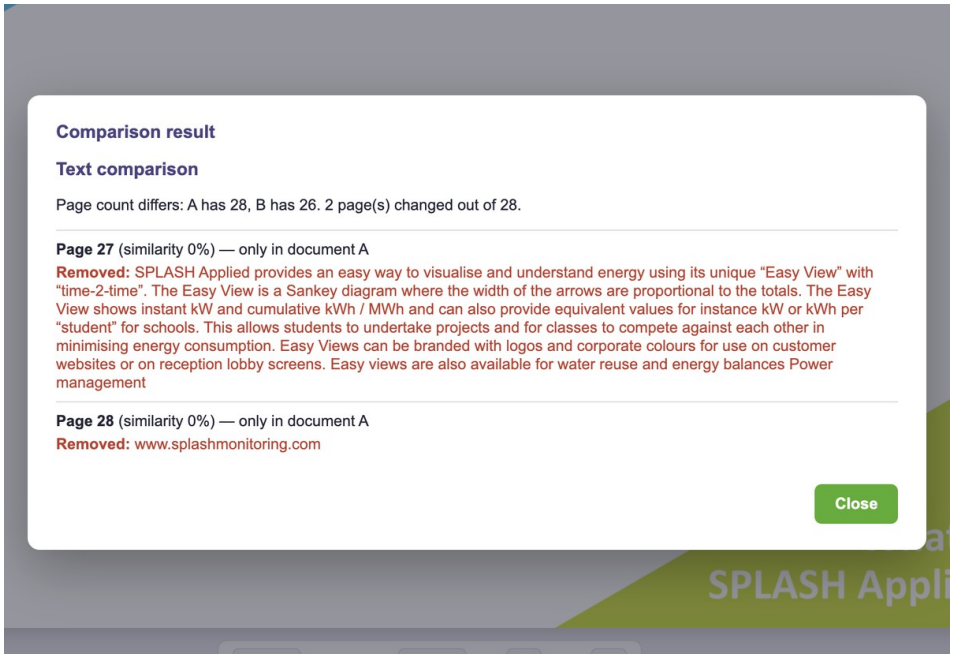
Convert offers Word, Excel, plain text or one image per page.

5.7 Compare with another PDF

Shows a text and visual difference between the current document and another PDF — useful for checking what changed between two revisions of a drawing or document.



Choose the other PDF, then the kind of comparison: text differences or visual differences.



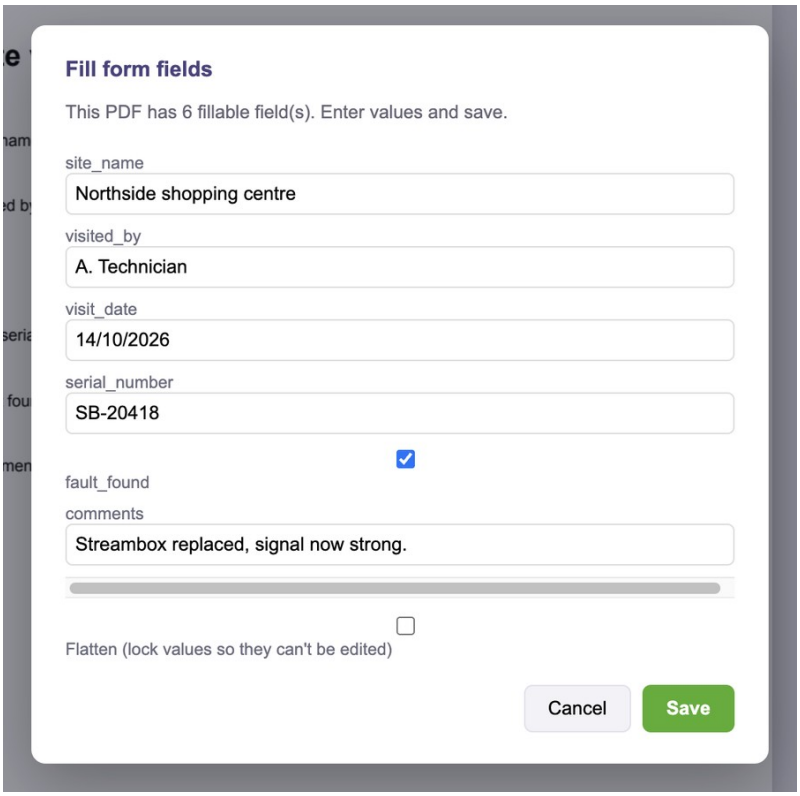
A text comparison: the page count differs and the pages that exist in only one of the two documents are listed with what was added or removed.

5.8 Fill form fields

Reads any interactive form fields in the PDF, lets you fill them in, and can flatten the result so the values become permanent, non-editable page content.

Many forms are not fillable at all: their boxes and lines are drawn on the page (or the form is a scan), so there is nothing for a PDF program to fill. REX Paperworks tells you so; fill such a form in with the Tick, Cross and Text tools instead. Forms whose fields are stored only on the pages, without the usual field list, are recognised too.

Ticking Flatten locks the filled values so they cannot be edited in other PDF viewers.



Fill form fields lists every field in the PDF; tick Flatten to lock the values.

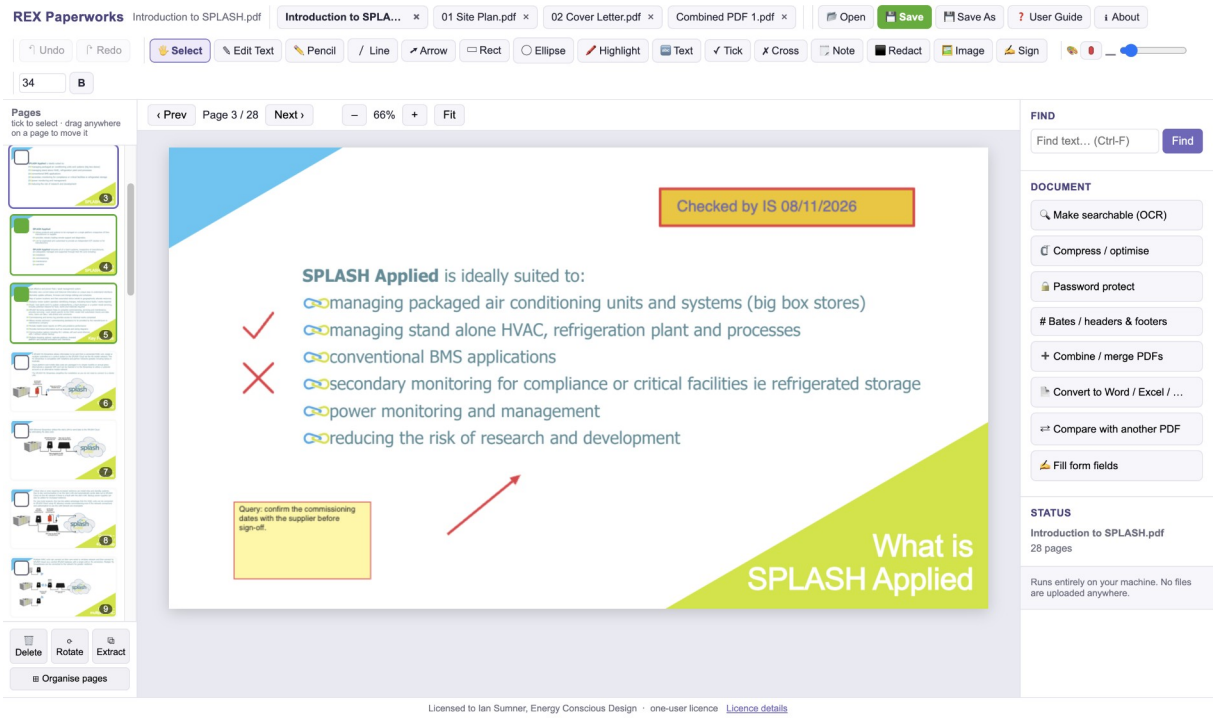
6. Managing Pages

In the Pages panel on the left, tick one or more thumbnails then use:

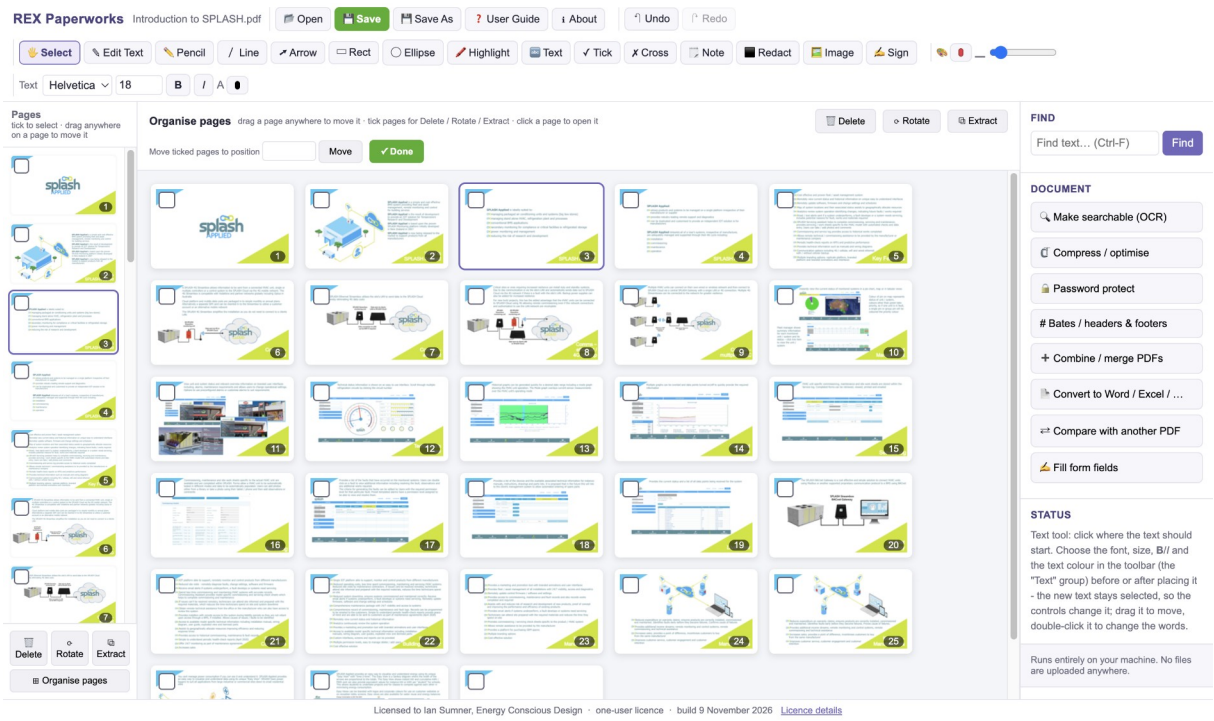
- Delete — removes the ticked pages from the document.
- Rotate — rotates the ticked pages 90°.
- Extract — saves the ticked pages out as a new, separate PDF.

Pages can also be dragged into a new order directly in the thumbnail list: press on any part of a page's picture and drag. While you drag, the list scrolls by itself when you hold the page near its top or bottom edge (the mouse wheel scrolls it too), so a page can be moved to any place in a long document. For long documents click Organise pages: every page becomes a large tile in the centre of the window, where you can drag pages about (the grid scrolls the same way), tick them for Delete, Rotate or Extract, click one to open it, or tick pages and type the page number they should move to in the "Move ticked pages to position" box. Done returns to the page view.

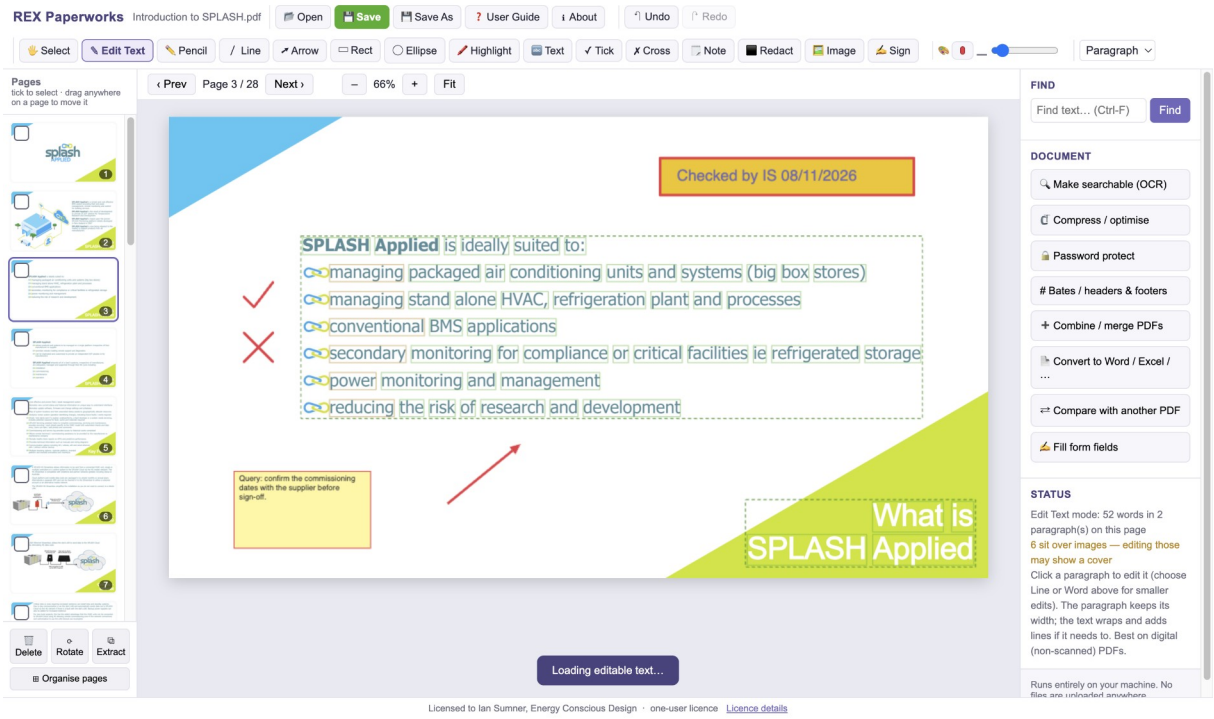
Tick several pages and drag any ticked page to move them together; a blue line shows where they will land. Delete, Rotate and Extract act on the ticked pages.



Pages 4 and 5 ticked in the Pages panel, ready to be moved by dragging, rotated, extracted or deleted.



The Organise pages view: every page as a tile; drag to reorder (the grid scrolls while you drag near its edge), tick for Delete / Rotate / Extract, type a position to move the ticked pages there, Done to return.

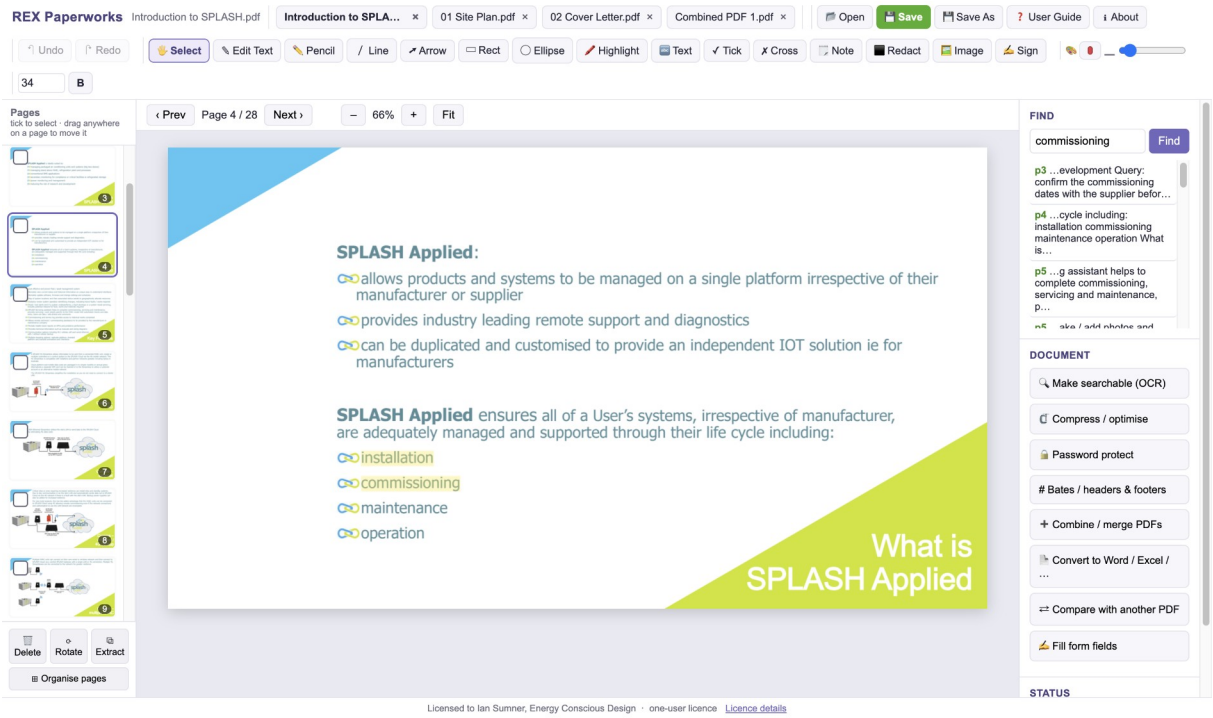


Edit Text mode: paragraphs and words are outlined; a click edits the whole paragraph, or choose Line or Word in the toolbar.

7. Finding Text

Type into the Find box on the right (or press Ctrl-F) and click Find. Matches are listed below the search box — click a result to jump straight to that page.

Every word of a match is highlighted in yellow on the page — on whichever page you navigate to from the results list. Searching for something that is not found clears the previous highlights.



Find lists the matches with a snippet and the page number; click one to go to that page, where every match is highlighted.

8. Installing and activating

8.1 Windows

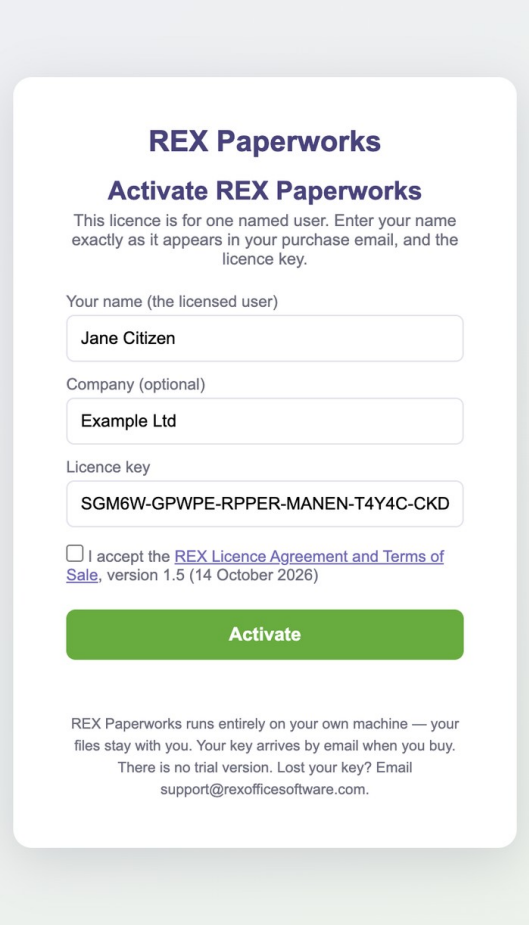
Download REX-Paperworks-Setup.exe from rexofficesoftware.com/downloads.html and double-click it. If Windows shows "Windows protected your PC", click More info, then Run anyway. The installer is per-user (no administrator rights), adds a Start-menu entry and a desktop shortcut, and an Uninstall entry under Windows Settings. The portable zip works too: Extract All, then double-click REX Paperworks.exe. OCR (Make searchable) and the PDF engines are bundled; nothing else to install.

8.2 Mac

Download the macOS zip, double-click it to unzip, and drag REX Paperworks.app into Applications. The apps are signed but not yet notarised with Apple, so the first start is refused with "Apple could not verify … is free of malware". On macOS 15 and later: close that message, open System Settings > Privacy & Security, scroll down to Security, click Open Anyway next to REX Paperworks, confirm with your password, then Open; it opens normally from then on. On older macOS: right-click the app, choose Open, then Open again. In Terminal the same is: xattr -dr com.apple.quarantine "/Applications/REX Paperworks.app". The Mac version uses the system's native Open and Save As panels and keeps its working files in Library, Application Support, REX Paperworks in your home folder. OCR uses the text recognition built into macOS; nothing else needs installing.

8.3 Licence, activation and support

Before you activate, tick "I accept the REX Licence Agreement and Terms of Sale" on the activation window (the link opens the agreement in your browser). The Windows installer also shows the agreement and asks you to accept it. The version accepted and the date are recorded with your licence.



The activation window: it asks for your name, an optional company and the licence key, and for your acceptance of the licence agreement.

- **The licence.** A licence is issued to one named user. The key carries your name, not a computer, so you can use the program on the computers you use yourself, but nobody else may use it: each person needs their own licence. The key is checked offline; nothing is sent anywhere. REX Paperworks has no free trial.
- Your key is emailed to you at once when you buy. The first time the program runs, the activation window asks for your name (exactly as it appears in that email; capitals and spaces do not matter), your company (optional, shown on screen only) and the key. Tick that you accept the licence agreement and click Activate. Afterwards the program shows "Licensed to <your name>, <your company>" in a slim bar at the bottom of its window, and the About window (the About button next to User Guide at the top of the window) shows the same details. Keep the purchase email: you need the same name and key to reinstall.
- **A new computer or a new user.** To use the program on a new computer of your own, install it there and enter the same name and key; nothing needs approval. If you change your name, or the licence must pass to another person in your business (for example when an employee leaves), email support@rexofficesoftware.com and we will tell you what we can

do or issue a key for the new user. If the program says "Key does not match this user name", type your name exactly as it appears in the key email.

- **Support.** support@rexofficesoftware.com, included, subject to the fair-use policy at rexofficesoftware.com/support.html. Say which product, what you did, what you expected and what happened.

8.4 Updating

Install the new version over the old one. Your licence is kept; the program folder holds nothing of yours.

9. What changed in this edition

- Runs on macOS (Apple silicon) as well as Windows 10/11, with native file dialogs on the Mac.
- 9 November 2026: Edit Text repaired on real documents - files that leave a drawing transform open (Chrome "Save as PDF", CAD plots, some report generators) made the new text land scaled, mirrored or off the page; the cover is now the colour behind the text (banners, table cells) instead of white; fonts that declare nonsense line metrics (seen in Word/Adobe exports of Cambria) put the edit a whole line too low; table rows separated by a rule, and words on differently coloured panels, are no longer edited as one paragraph.
- Text tool: text is black by default; after placing it the text stays selected, so the Text group's font, size, B/I and colour change it at once; clicking an existing text box with the Text tool selects it; Arial, Tahoma, Verdana, Georgia and Calibri are used on a Mac as well as on Windows.
- Pages: the thumbnail list and the Organise grid scroll by themselves while a page is dragged near their edge (the wheel works too), a drop onto a gap goes to the nearest page, and the Organise view has a "Move ticked pages to position" box.
- The licence bar and About show the program's build date.
- This edition of the manual is dated 9 November 2026.
- 7 November 2026: marks stay editable after saving and reopening (ticks, text, arrows, shapes, notes and pictures come back live); handles on every mark (sides, corners, line ends; text boxes get a width and the text wraps); the colour and font controls change the selected mark; double-click edits text; ticks and crosses are centred on the click, can be bold and follow the line weight; arrowheads are pointed.
- Colour wheel and hex box in every colour palette; a separate fill colour for rectangles and ellipses; the palette no longer overflows its box.
- Pages: drag anywhere on a thumbnail to move it; the full-screen Organise pages view; the page and zoom bar stays in view; Fit button; Page Up / Page Down and +/- keys.
- Combine PDFs dialog: add files to the open document, combine the open tabs, or combine files from disk, named Combined PDF 1, 2, 3… unless you choose a name.

- Edit Text works on paragraphs and lines as well as words, keeps the paragraph width and wraps; a fill-in line of underscores is explained.
- Opening shows its progress; the first page appears at once and previews load progressively; very large scanned files open in seconds; switching tabs is instant.
- Forms without real fields are explained (drawn boxes or scans); OCR problems are reported in a message window that stays until you close it; the toolbar is lighter.
- Make searchable (OCR) reworked (9 November 2026, build C): the scan is kept exactly as it is and an invisible text layer is added over it (no loss of quality, no bigger file, bookmarks and links kept); built in on the Mac through the text recognition in macOS, so nothing to install; sideways and upside-down scans are read the right way up; scanned sheets with a typed stamp are read too; the Status panel reports what was read. Checked on scans made from 19 real documents and on real scanned forms (tests/results/ocr/OCR_REPORT.md).
- Redact reworked (10 November 2026, build D): the picture under a redaction is blackened inside the picture, drawn shapes are deleted, comments, links and form fields touching the box go, fonts without width tables and vertical text are handled glyph by glyph, and Redact all matches (Find panel) redacts every occurrence of a word or phrase on every page, including in bookmarks, document properties and comments. OCR: table rules are painted out before reading (dense tables from 84 % to 96 % of words), drawing sheets are read for vertical dimension text, and the Windows engine reads large pages in tiles and drawing sheets in its sparse-text mode as well.
- Text boxes and notes reworked (11 November 2026, build E): the one colour swatch colours text boxes and the text of notes (before placing or while selected); notes have their own text colour, background, size and bold, and their border no longer takes the chosen colour; note handles work over page text; Shift-click and drag-select several marks; Ctrl+C/V without a selection and repeated; text from other programs pastes as a text box; a right-click menu; the Edit Text tool edits your own text boxes; the mouse wheel turns pages.
- Fixes from the September review: arrow heads point the right way, Save As keeps working on the saved file, annotations no longer disappear after Find or Save, and pages render identically on both platforms.
- Licensing (14 October 2026): REX Paperworks is licensed to one named user and the key is no longer tied to a computer. The activation window asks for your name, an optional company and the key; the program shows "Licensed to" your name (and company) in a bar at the bottom of its window and in a new About window; there is still no free trial. Keys made for one computer on 13 October 2026 are replaced free on request.
- Screenshots (13 October 2026): the manual now shows the window, the pages panel, markup, find, merge, Bates numbering, password, convert, compare, form filling and the activation window, taken from the program itself.
- 12 October 2026: Merge now lets you pick several PDFs at once and opens the combined file in its own tab, so you can reorder, delete and rename it straight away (section 5.5). Tested

on the Mac and Windows with 20 PDFs: tabs, page moves, deletes, rotates, extract, combine three files, drawing, pictures, signatures, marks and Bates stamps.