Why can’t you just edit an accessible PDF?

An accessible PDF carries a hidden structure built on top of the final text. This guide follows each production stage and shows what a correction goes through once that structure exists.

Part 1: Building and confirming the content

1 Text only, no layout Source text	Wording with no design applied. Nothing is built yet, so a change costs nothing.
2 Draft sent for review DTP1	The text goes into the layout as a draft PDF, without accessibility work, so the wording can be checked in context.
3 Corrections applied DTP2	Every wording issue found in the draft is fixed in the layout file, never in the PDF.
4 Wording confirmed final DTP3	The client confirms the text is final. Accessibility work starts only after this sign-off, or it has to be redone.

Change words here	Stages 2 and 3 are the cheapest moment for any correction: only the layout file changes, and nothing has to be rebuilt.

Part 2: Accessibility, the risk, and the fix

5 Accessibility structure built

Remediation

Tags, headings, reading order, alt text, tables, language and bookmarks are added, then checked against PDF/UA and WCAG, so assistive technology can use the file.

6 Editing the PDF breaks it

Warning

A text change in the finished PDF breaks the link between words and tags. Screen readers can read old or jumbled text, and the file can no longer be trusted to pass a check.

7 Back to the layout file

The correction goes into the layout file. Every step from the draft onwards is repeated for that language and checked again:

DTP1 draft → DTP2 corrections → DTP3 sign-off → Remediation → Checked again

In short

A text correction after remediation is not a quick edit. Even a single word goes back through the full production and accessibility steps for that language.

1. Approve the wording on the draft PDF, before remediation.
2. Collect all corrections for a language into one round.
3. Send corrections as tracked changes, not PDF comments.

Planning an accessible PDF project in several languages?

Send the files for a free assessment. Layout, remediation and the correction rounds are planned together from the start.

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