**Understanding the PDF/A Format**

Roy knows that in Word he can save a file to PDF format. He recently was informed at a Federal Court that he had to save his documents in "PDF-a" format. Roy hasn't heard of the "PDF-a" format prior to this encounter, so he wonders if Word can save documents in "PDF-a" format and how the format is different from the regular PDF format.

Most everyone is familiar with the standard PDF file format. The PDF-a format (sometimes noted as PDF-A or, more commonly, as PDF/A) is a variation that is optimized for long-term storage of the documents. Essentially, the format has everything embedded in it, rather than allowing internal links to external information. In addition, some objects aren't even allowed in a PDF/A document at all. They cannot contain the following:

* Audio or video content
* JavaScript or executable files (or links to external executable files)
* Encryption of any type
* Embedded files, such as other PDF files
* Transparent objects (graphics) and layers

The purpose to these limitations is to make sure that the PDF/A file contains everything within itself that is necessary to fully display the file contents at any future date, regardless of how the technology may change. Further information about the PDF/A standard can be found in a variety of places, including Wikipedia:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDF/A>

The definitive place for information on PDF/A can be found at the PDF/A Competence Center:

<http://www.pdfa.org/>

By default, Word saves documents in regular PDF format. If you want to force Word to save in PDF/A format, you can follow these steps:

1. Press **F12** to display the Save As dialog box.
2. Click on the down arrow next to the Save As Type drop-down list and choose PDF as your file type.
3. Click on the Options button. Word displays the Options dialog box.
4. Make sure the ISO 19005-1 compliant (PDF/A) check box is selected.
5. Click OK to close the Options dialog box.
6. Enter a name for the PDF/A file in the File Name box.
7. Click Save.