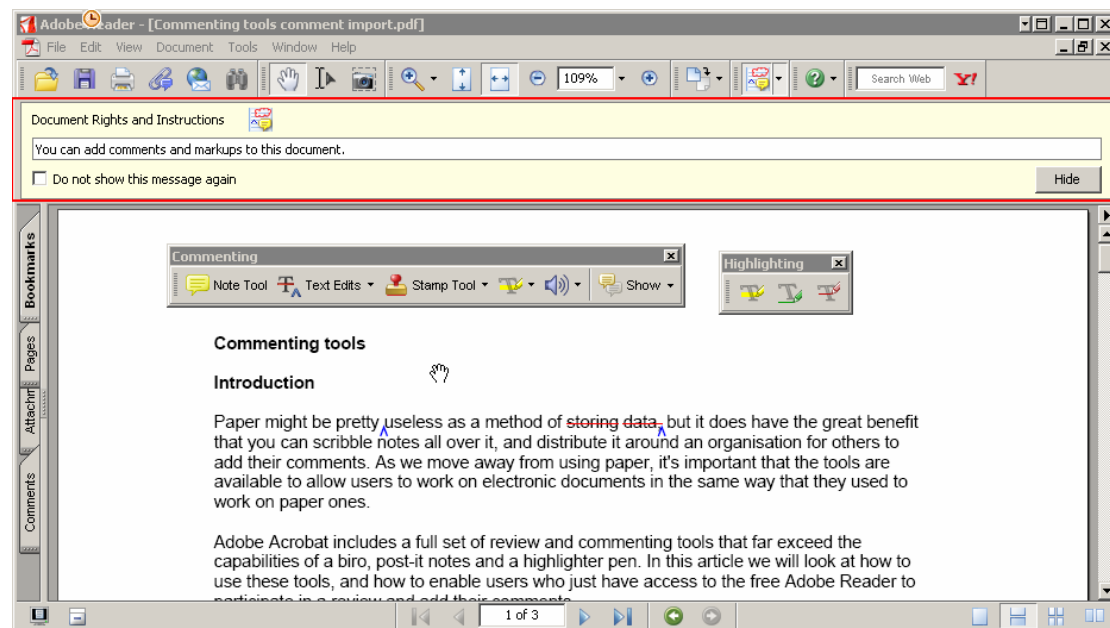# Commenting tools

1.   Introduction

Paper might be pretty useless as a method of storing data, but it does have the great benefit that you can scribble notes all over it, and distribute it around an organisation for others to add their comments. As we move away from using paper, it's important that the tools are available to allow users to work on electronic documents in the same way that they used to work on paper ones.

Adobe Acrobat includes a full set of review and commenting tools that far exceed the capabilities of a biro, post-it notes and a highlighter pen. In this article we will look at how to use the commenting tools but we will leave details of the full review process to another time.

To start with, we will look at how to enable users who just have access to the free Adobe Reader to use the commenting tools. A user with access to Acrobat Professional can use the 'Enable for Commenting and Analysis in Adobe Reader…' option on the Comments menu to change the properties of the current PDF document to allow Adobe Readers to add comments to that document. In the screen below, we can see such a document opened in Adobe Reader. A message beneath the toolbar area shows that 'You can add comments and markups to this document', and the Commenting and Highlighting toolbars are visible. If you don't have access to Acrobat Professional, we have included a commenting-enabled PDF file for you to practise on here.

2.   Range of commenting tools

Let's first of all look at the range of commenting tools available. As well as the ability to indicate text edits, documents can be annotated with notes and with virtual rubber 'stamps'. There is also a set of 'drawing markup tools that includes call-outs, text boxes and lines and shapes. It is also possible to attach separate files as 'comments' and to record and include audio comments.

In addition to the process of annotating the document, it is important to be able to manage the annotations, particularly where several different people are involved in the review process. Acrobat allows you to choose which comments to display by several criteria: type of comment, comment author and status. A 'Comments List' pane can also be displayed and this includes a toolbar containing the tools necessary to manage the comments.