# Pfeiffer Report

# Adobe Fonts: Creativity, Collaboration Efficiency and Licensing ROI

## About this research

This report presents the findings of a market-specific benchmarking and research project conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Adobe. The main aim of the research was **to document the efficiency and productivity gains linked to the use of Adobe Fonts**, compared to results obtained when relying on other font resources.

Benchmarks were executed using *Pfeiffer Consulting's Methodology for Productivity Benchmarking*, which has been fine-tuned over more than a decade, and measures the time experienced operators take to execute specific tasks. Please refer to the Methodology section on the last page of this document for more information.

## About Adobe Fonts

Adobe Fonts has become an essential part of the overall Creative Cloud value proposition, **making thousands of fonts available** to all Creative Cloud users, as well as to Photoshop subscribers, at no extra cost.

The most obvious benefit for creative professionals is of course to have direct access to a wide selection of typefaces from most major type foundries. However, **ease of use and tight integration with desktop and mobile apps are equally important**, and can have a considerable productivity impact on the creative workflow. The benchmarks for this research focused specifically on these aspects, measuring tasks such as document sharing, font discovery and acquisition, as well as font matching. In our benchmarks, **using Adobe Fonts was over five times more efficient** than other methods. (See chart below.)

## Executive Summary

▷ Adobe Fonts **makes thousands of typefaces available at no additional cost** to Creative Cloud users.

▷ Auto-activation of fonts in Photoshop, InDesign and XD **speeds up document sharing among Creative Cloud users significantly.**

▷ In benchmarks conducted for this research, **sharing documents with fonts using Adobe Fonts was up to over seven times faster** than other methods.

▷ Using **Adobe Fonts can increase team productivity significantly.**

▷ From a management perspective, **ROI from using Adobe Fonts can be significant** by reducing management, licensing and auditing costs for fonts considerably.

## Key Benchmark Results: Average of 9 Workflow Benchmarks

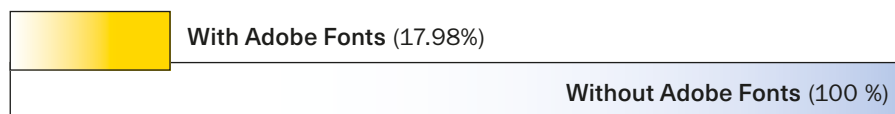| | |
|---|---|
| With Adobe Fonts (17.98%) | |
| | Without Adobe Fonts (100 %) |

Chart based on the average of 9 different sets of benchmarks.
A total of 157 individual benchmark measures were taken.
Reference value: Average time when working with other font resources. **Shorter is better.**

# Fonts in the Creative Workflow

## Fonts Are Essential

To say that fonts are a fundamental part of creative work amounts to overstating the obvious: For most creative professionals, **fonts are not only vital to get their job done**, they can also be a considerable **source of inspiration**. But fonts can also be complicated: finding the right typeface for a job can be time-consuming, and figuring out the licensing terms and costs can be a headache, especially when multiple deliverables for different media-types and output channels are involved. (See page 6 and 7 for a detailed analysis of font licensing.)

Adobe Fonts provides Creative Cloud users with a compelling solution: **access to thousands of typefaces that are available immediately** as soon as they are activated, and can be used for print, web, digital ads, e-books, video, and more.

## Key Aspects of the Creative Font Workflow

There are many different ways of working with fonts, yet one can outline three key creative needs which require different ways of dealing with them. The first one is the case of a **specific design requirement:** finding the right typeface for a given job, such as a headline font, that is

## Major Points

▷ Fonts are **a vital part** of most creative projects. By offering free access to thousands of typefaces, **Adobe Fonts provides creative professionals with a very significant creative resource.**

▷ Finding the right typeface in a specific situation can be difficult; **Adobe Fonts offers many different way for finding the right typeface** for a job, and for **matching available fonts** to a typeface that was serendipitously discovered.

▷ Integrating Adobe Fonts with mobile apps **makes working with Adobe Fonts much easier** than relying on other font resources.

## Speeding Up the Creative Font Workflow

| | | Font Discovery | Font Acquisition and Use | Font Sharing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Specific Design Requirement** | Adobe Fonts | Search Adobe Fonts using multiple stylistic criteria and tags | Activate and use directly on computer and devices | Share with all Creative Cloud users |
| | Other | Search web. Most foundries offer only limited search options | Purchase, download and install on computer only | Purchase additional license if required and manually install fonts on each computer. |
| **Search for Inspiration** | Adobe Fonts | Browse Adobe Fonts using wide variety of tags and search criteria | Activate and use directly on computer and devices | Share with all Creative Cloud users |
| | Other | Search font resources on the web | Purchase, download and install on computer only | Purchase additional license if required and manually install fonts on each computer. |
| **Serendipitous Discovery** | Adobe Fonts | Use Capture app to immediately find and access matching font | Add to CC Libraries and use in most Creative Cloud applications | Share with all Creative Cloud users |
| | Other | Take picture of font, upload to font matching service to find match | Purchase, download and install on computer only | Purchase additional license if required and manually install fonts on each computer. |

cohesive with the client's corporate identity for instance. Another way of working with fonts is to look to them in **search of inspiration**. And finally, there is **serendipitous discovery**: a typeface one spots in the wild, on a poster in the street, a book cover, or some packaging one comes across. **To deal with these key situations efficiently, different approaches are required.**

## What Adobe Fonts Brings to the Creative Font Workflow

**Browsing fonts can be tedious.** Most type foundries only provide limited search options, such as "Serif", "Sans Serif", "Decorative", etc. **Adobe Fonts offers multiple interactive selection criteria**, such as character width, x-height, figure style, and more, which make it much faster to fine-tune a selection once one has chosen a specific character type. (See chart below.) Recently **Adobe Fonts has also has added font browsing by tags**, allowing users to search for style or mood characteristics, making it easier to browse the vast number of available typefaces without being slowed down by a simple category search.

Finally, there is serendipitous discovery, very common among creative professionals. Being able to match a typeface one has discovered to an available font has been possible for a while: **Photoshop has offered font matching for years**, and several websites offer similar services. The process, however, is time-consuming: first one has to take a picture of the font, transfer it to the computer, and in the case of a web-service, upload the picture to be recognized. (And, of course, acquire the corresponding font if necessary.)

**Adobe Fonts offers a much faster way of font matching**, using the Adobe Capture smartphone app: Using the camera or a photo , the app can **immediately match a found typeface to an available font**, and save it to the user's CC Library, where it is **available in real time** for creative projects. (Lest we forget: Adobe Capture can also use the smartphone camera for many other creative tasks, such as creating color schemes, patterns, shapes, and more.)

## Device Integration

Over time, the Creative Cloud ecosystem has evolved considerably beyond the core desktop applications such as Photoshop and Illustrator, providing **stand-alone mobile apps** such as Photoshop or Adobe Fresco on one side, and **powerful mobile companion apps** like Adobe Capture on the other.

An essential aspect of this composite creative workflow is **integration**, and the support for Adobe Fonts is a key aspect to make it work. A good example for this is Photoshop on iPad: Thanks to auto-activation of Adobe Fonts used in a Photoshop composition, creative professionals can now **move from desktop to iPad and back without having to worry about font availability.** That's a big deal.

Finally, the integration of Adobe Capture, makes it much easier **to transparently integrate serendipitous font-discovery into the creative workflow.**

## Adobe Fonts Creative Workflow Benchmarks: Key Results

### Font Discovery Benchmarks
Time-scale in seconds. All data are the average of 3 individual benchmarks
**Shorter is better.**



### Font Acquisition Benchmarks
Time-scale in seconds. All data are the average of 3 individual benchmarks
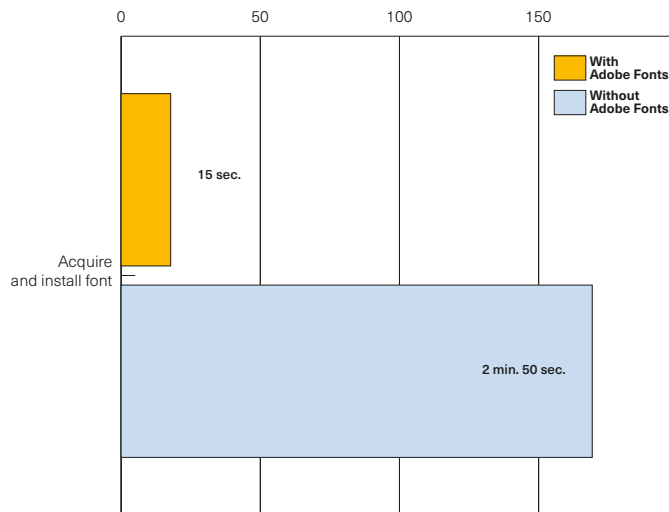**Shorter is better.**
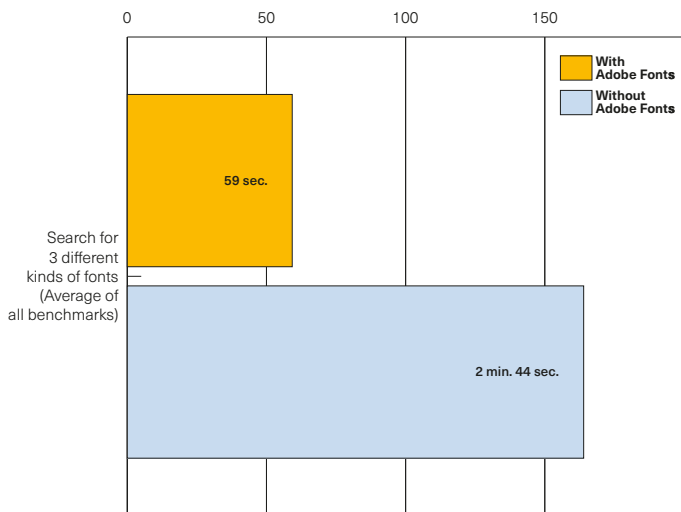


*Font discovery benchmarks measured the time to find three different kinds of typefaces on 3 different major font-resources, using the search capabilities presented by these sites. Adobe Fonts has an edge in these operations due to more sophisti-* *cated search parameters and tagged search. (Chart on the left.) The chart on the right compares the time necessary to acquire and make available a font once it has been identified. With Adobe Fonts, only font activation is required.*

# Auto-Activation and Font Sharing: The Impact of Adobe Fonts on Team Collaboration

## The Productivity of Font-Related Tasks

It is very common to underestimate the cumulative aspect of small productivity gains: saving a few seconds each time one executes an frequently repeated task **can amount to hours of time savings** over the course of a week or a month. This is particularly important in the creative industries, which usually have to **comply with stringent deadlines**. How speeding up working with fonts can increase productivity may not seem obvious at first blush, yet the benchmarks conducted for this research show that the opposite is true — especially in a team-work situation. (See table below.)

## Auto-Activation and Document Sharing

**Adobe Fonts speeds up some crucial aspects** in the creative font workflow, and has recently added a particularly important feature for creative teams: Auto-activation means that different users in a team can exchange files without having to worry if the other person has the right fonts installed for a project. As soon as a document is opened, typefaces from Adobe Fonts will be automatically activated if they are not already present on the computer. The feature is currently available

## Major Points

▷ Well beyond creative freedom, **Adobe Fonts can provide significant productivity gains in team workflows.**

▷ Sharing documents with fonts **is up to seven times faster using Adobe Fonts** than with other methods benchmarked.

▷ Cumulative **productivity gains linked to Adobe Fonts can easily reach hours** in a team-workflow situation.

## How Time Savings with Adobe Fonts Scale with Team-Size

| Operation | Size of team | Number of occurrences | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 5 | 10 | 20 |
| Document Sharing (Average of All Benchmarks) | 1 | **1 min. 38 sec.** | 8 min. 11 sec. | 16 min. 22 sec. | 32 min. 45 sec. |
| | 5 | 8 min. 11 sec. | 40 min. 56 sec. | 1 h. 21 min. 52 sec. | 2 h. 43 min. 44 sec. |
| | 10 | 16 min. 22 sec. | 1 h. 21 min. 52 sec. | 2 h. 43 min. 44 sec. | 5 h. 27 min. 28 sec. |
| Font Discovery and Font Matching (Average) | 1 | **2 min. 50 sec.** | 14 min. 10 sec. | 28 min. 20 sec. | 56 min. 40 sec. |
| | 5 | 14 min. 10 sec. | 1 h. 10 min. 50 sec. | 2 h. 21 min. 41 sec. | 4 h. 43 min. 22 sec. |
| | 10 | 28 min. 20 sec. | 2 h. 21 min. 41 sec. | 4 h. 43 min. 22 sec. | 9 h. 26 min. 44 sec. |

*Using Adobe Fonts and Creative Cloud synced folders instead of a server to share a project with its fonts saves the user 1 minute 38 seconds for a single operation. Font discovery provides even higher productivity gains. (See chart page 5.) As team size and the number of operations increase, time savings for these simple operations can easily reach hours.*

in Photoshop, InDesign and XD, and also works between the desktop and iPad version of Photoshop, allowing users to pass files between devices without having to worry about fonts. (In applications that do not yet support auto-activation, users can easily activate fonts manually.)

**Font sharing can be a real productivity bottleneck:** While some programs, such as Illustrator and InDesign allow packaging fonts, it still means the user has to manually install the fonts in some cases. And other programs, such as Photoshop, can not yet package fonts with projects, so users need to list and collect used fonts manually when they transfer a project.

The **productivity benefits of these features are in any case significant**, as the benchmarks for this research show: Sharing Illustrator and InDesign documents using Adobe Fonts and synchronized Creative Cloud folders was **almost 3 times faster** than packaging files and fonts and sharing them using a server on a fast Ethernet network. Sharing Photoshop documents with their fonts was **over seven times faster** using this method.

More importantly, in a team-workflow situation, the **cumulated productivity gains over time can easily amount to hours of saved time** for the team. (See table on previous page.)

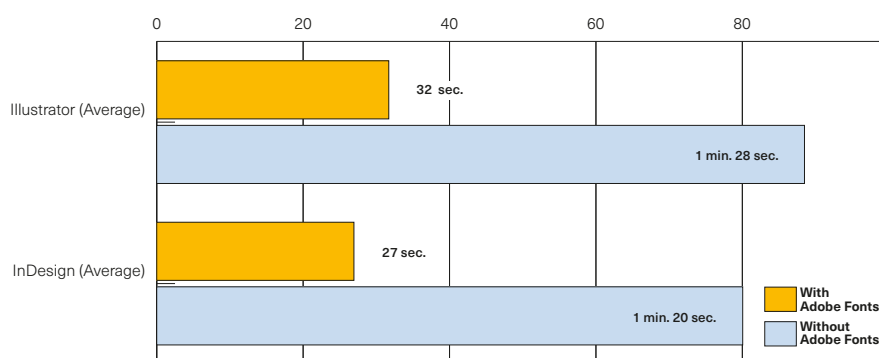# Creative Collaboration with Adobe Fonts: Key Benchmark Results

**Document Sharing Benchmarks (Illustrator and InDesign):** These benchmarks compared using Adobe Fonts and Creative Cloud synced and shared folders with the time necessary to package Illustrator and InDesign files, copy them to a local server, retrieve them and, if necessary, install the unavailable fonts before opening the document. InDesign has the edge in these benchmarks because it has auto-activation. **Using Adobe Fonts was almost three times faster** in these benchmarks.

**Document Sharing Benchmark: InDesign/Illustrator (Average of All Benchmarks)**
Time-scale in seconds. All data are the average of 3 individual benchmarks
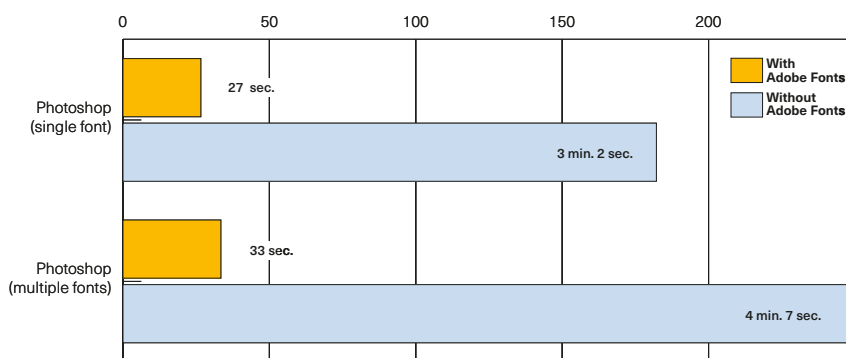Shorter is better.



- Illustrator (Average): 32 sec. (With Adobe Fonts); 1 min. 28 sec. (Without Adobe Fonts)
- InDesign (Average): 27 sec. (With Adobe Fonts); 1 min. 20 sec. (Without Adobe Fonts)

**Document Sharing Benchmarks (Photoshop):** Sharing fonts for a Photoshop project is particularly time-consuming since the program does not support packaging a project, which means that users have to manually list fonts contained in a document, and retrieve and share them manually. Using Adobe Fonts, on the other hand, unavailable fonts are automatically activated when a document is opened. In our benchmarks, **Adobe Fonts provided an over 7x productivity advantage** in these operations.

**Document Sharing Benchmark: Photoshop (Average of All Benchmarks)**
Time-scale in seconds. All data are the average of 3 individual benchmarks
Shorter is better.



- Photoshop (single font): 27 sec. (With Adobe Fonts); 3 min. 2 sec. (Without Adobe Fonts)
- Photoshop (multiple fonts): 33 sec. (With Adobe Fonts); 4 min. 7 sec. (Without Adobe Fonts)
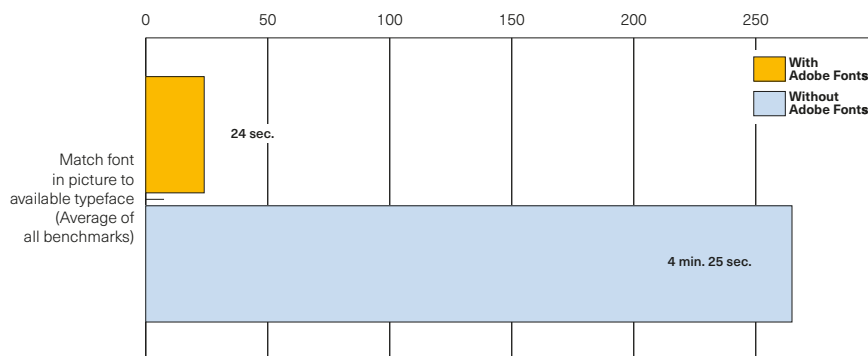
**Font Matching Benchmarks:** These benchmarks compared the time using three different on-line resources to find a font "discovered in the wild" to using Adobe Capture and Photoshop's built-in Find Font feature to match a picture of a typeface to an available font. While the basic underlying mechanisms are the same, **using Adobe Fonts provides an over 10x productivity advantage** over other solutions.

**Font Matching Benchmarks**
Time-scale in seconds. All data are the average of 3 individual benchmarks
Shorter is better.



- Match font in picture to available typeface (Average of all benchmarks): 24 sec. (With Adobe Fonts); 4 min. 25 sec. (Without Adobe Fonts)

# The ROI of Adobe Fonts: Tackling the Cost and Intricacies of Font Licensing

**The Complexities of Font Licensing**

To say that font licensing is complex is an understatement. Things are relatively easy in a simple print-based design workflow — desktop licenses of fonts allow users to generate print-ready PDF files; font licenses are usually perpetual; and there is no limit to the number of documents that can be produced), but that's where simplicity stops.

In fact, **every other license type for fonts has its own rules and contingencies,** which (to make matters more complicated) can differ from one font vendor to the next: Licenses for web fonts, for instance, are based on the **number of page-views**; digital ads are billed by the **number of ad-impressions**, e-books often require a license for **each individual title** published. In addition, some foundries have **specialty licenses**, for instance for producing embroidery based on a typeface.

As for **server licenses** (for instance, to use a font for user-generated content on a website), their cost is **based on the number of CPU cores** of the server, and usually payable as an **annual subscription**. (For details on the individual cost of license types, see table on the next page.)

**Major Points**

▷ Font licensing is **extremely complex and costly**, requiring different licenses for each specific use of a font.

▷ Adobe Fonts provides access to thousands of fonts **at no additional cost for Creative Cloud subscribers** to use for most font applications.

▷ Beyond providing creative professionals the freedom to work with thousands of typefaces, **Adobe Fonts can provide enterprises significant ROI** in terms of team productivity, font licensing fees and management overhead.

## The Intricacies of Font Licensing

|  | **Without** Adobe Fonts | **With** Adobe Fonts |
|---|---|---|
| **Desktop Applications** | Basic license usually allows 1-5 users | All Creative Cloud users |
| | Cost increases with number of users | |
| **Document Sharing** | Only within limits of desktop license | All Creative Cloud users |
| **Web** | Usually requires subscription | Included |
| | Cost may increase depending on traffic | |
| **Digital Ad** | Usually requires separate license of the font | Included |
| | Cost may increase depending on traffic | |
| **eBook** | Usually requires separate license of the font | Included |
| | May require individual license per title | |
| **App** | Specific app license required | Specific app license required |
| **Broadcast** | May require separate license of the font | Included |

Apart from offering Creative Cloud subscribers a vast selection of fonts at no additional cost, **Adobe Fonts significantly simplifies the complex situation of font licensing from a management perspective**. There is the question of cost, of course, which can add up significantly; in addition, given the intricacies of different licensing schemes, **planning and procurement for font licenses can be an additional burden**. Finally, since Adobe Fonts is part of the Creative Cloud subscription, it also **alleviates the problem of font audits** for larger companies.

### Considering the ROI of Adobe Fonts

In other words, from an enterprise perspective, **Adobe Fonts provides tangible return on investment far beyond the empowerment of creative teams.**

**Workgroup productivity can be a direct benefit of using Adobe Fonts** (see previous section), helping creative teams meeting deadlines more easily. (This **also applies to outside contributors and free-lancers**: as long as they have a Creative Cloud subscription they can access the same fonts as in-house creative teams.)

From a business management perspective, finally, the integrated font solution also means **less work for investment planning, less overhead in procuring and managing the required licenses** for different projects and deliverables - and it **eliminates the need for font audits**.

## Font Licensing: Figuring Out the Cost

Only few enterprises will need all the different font licensing types we have listed below. **But even for simpler scenarios, the cost of font licensing can easily reach thousands of dollars:** For a company with 5-10 desktop users, which also needs to produce a corporate website as well as digital ads, the cost for a 12-font set, including two display fonts, four headline styles and six text styles, **would range from $2,000 to $4,000**, depending on the type of font, the number of page views and digital ad impressions — and increase over time as page views and ad impressions go up.

## Average Cost of Different Font Licensing Options From Traditional Font Vendors

| | Single font Cost of individual licensing options | | 12-font set Cost of individual licensing options | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Desktop applications** (Number of users) | 1-5 | $35 | 1-5 | $276 |
| | 25 | $147 | 25 | $1,262 |
| | 50 | $217 | 50 | $1,701 |
| **Web** (Pageviews) | 250,000 | $35 | 250,000 | $798 |
| | 2,500,000 | $140 | 2,500,000 | $2,764 |
| | 25,000,000 | $1,050 | 25,000,000 | $12,413 |
| **Digital ad** (Number of impressions) | 1,000,000 | $35 | 1,000,000 | $260 |
| | 4,000,000 | $70 | 4,000,000 | $520 |
| | 11,000,000 | $175 | 11,000,000 | $1,299 |
| **eBook** (Number of publications) | 1 | $70 | 1 | $701 |
| | 5 | $350 | 5 | $2,972 |
| | 10 | $700 | 10 | $7,006 |
| **App** (Number of apps) | 1 | $595 | 1 | $3,395 |
| | 3 | $1,505 | 3 | $5,252 |
| | 6 | $2,240 | 6 | $8,166 |
| **Server** (Number of CPU cores, cost per year) | 1 CPU core | $350 | 1 CPU core | $3,503 |
| | 4 CPU cores | $1,400 | 4 CPU cores | $14,011 |
| | 8 CPU cores | $2,800 | 8 CPU cores | $28,022 |

*Font licensing is complex and costly. This table presents the **average licensing costs** for different options, based on the figures presented by **the on-line stores of three major font vendors**. While these figures do not reflect possible sales negotiations that would naturally take place for comprehensive font licensing deals, **the data underscores the complexity and the considerable number of variables and use cases** that need to be factored in.*

# Methodology

**This benchmark project was commissioned by Adobe and independently executed by Pfeiffer Consulting.**

All the productivity measures presented in this document are based on real-world workflow examples, designed and executed by professionals with many years of experience with the programs and workflows involved.

## How we measure productivity

The basic approach is simple: in order to assess productivity gains that a program or solution may (or may not) bring, we start by analyzing the minimum number of steps necessary to achieve a given result in each of the applications or workflows that have to be compared.

Once this list of actions has been clearly established, we start to execute the operation or workflow in each solution, with the help of seasoned professionals who have long-standing experience in the field and with the solutions that are tested.

Every set of steps is executed three times, the average of the three measures is used.

## About Pfeiffer Consulting

Pfeiffer Consulting is an independent technology research and benchmarking operation focused on the needs of publishing, digital content production, and new media professionals.

For more information, please contact **research@pfeifferreport.com**

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