Looks Can Be Deceiving

There is more than meets the eye with some Word files

We frequently receive requests to translate PDF files, and sometimes to either "format in PDF" or "use PDF formatting." If nothing else is available, we can certainly translate the text in a PDF file and format to create its look and feel, but there are better options.
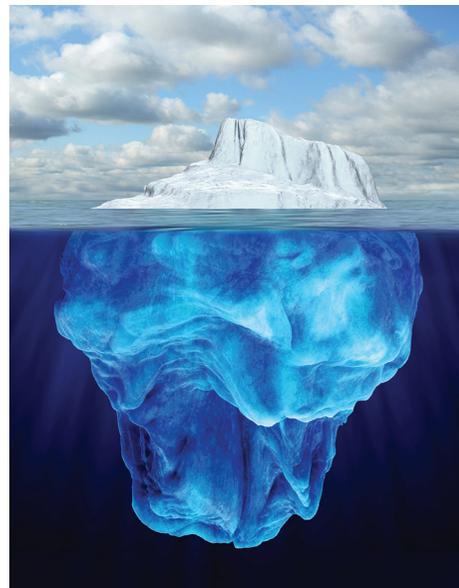
Documents are almost never created in PDF format, but rather saved as or exported to that format. Open any PDF and navigate to "File," then "Properties," then "Description" to discover which application was used to create the file, such as Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign. These "native files" are by far the best files to send Inline for translation and formatting.

During the past two years, we have noticed an increasing number of Word files with unusual formatting. Almost all of these files are PDF documents converted to Word. Not only do Adobe Acrobat and various third party tools, such as Nuance Power PDF and Nitro Pro covert PDF files to a Word format, they give the impression that the converted files are as good as the original.

Unfortunately, they are not!

While converted Word files may *look* like the original Word files in print or on screen, beneath the surface lurk unnecessary section breaks, text boxes, tables within tables, odd paragraph formatting, unusual line spacing, inconsistent margins, and rogue indents. These "hidden" obstacles can easily be revealed by clicking on the "show/hide" button [¶] on Word's standard tool bar on the HOME tab. When left hidden, the mishmash of strange formatting makes translation and reformatting much more difficult.

Bottom line: Send us the native (original) files and you will get a faster turnaround and often lower costs as well. It's just that simple!

*Full versions of Adobe Acrobat now give the impression that a PDF file is fully editable. It is possible to edit text in a PDF file, but the text editor is very primitive. Even limited use of this text editor quickly creates complications, such as the need to resize text boxes, or relocate graphic elements, or the inability to perform a foreign language spell check.