

If you have an older version of Microsoft Office (Office 2003, Office XP, Office 2000), or just an individual component of one of those packages (eg Word or Excel), then you may have difficulty reading documents created by newer versions (Office 2007 and Office 2010). To put the boot on the other foot, you may have emailed a document of the newer type as an attachment, only to have the recipient tell you that they can not read it.

That is because the structure of the documents changed with the 2007 version.

File Extensions

Depending on how your installation of Windows is set up, you may or may not see the “file extension” of each file when you view a list of files in Windows Explorer. The file extension is the part of the file name that comes after the full stop. The file extension tells Windows what type of file it is and Windows maintains a list of which program is used with each file type (in Windows jargon, each file type is “associated” with a specific program).

In Office 2003 and before, Word files had a file extension of .doc (eg “Letter to Father Christmas.doc”). Excel spreadsheets were .xls files (eg “Scalextric Costs.xls”) and PowerPoint files were .ppt files (eg “Pitch to Father Christmas For A Scalextric Set.ppt”).

From Office 2007, Word files have become .docx, Excel files are .xlsx, and PowerPoint files are .pptx. These file types are not compatible with earlier versions of the programs.

Compatibility

If you have one of the newer versions of Office then you have no problem in opening, viewing and editing files created in an earlier version. However, if you have an earlier version you can not open files created in a later version.

Solutions

Save As

If you have a later version, and are preparing a document for opening on an earlier version, then the simplest solution is to create a version of the document that is in the format of the earlier version. To do this, open or create the document and then use the “save as” command instead of the normal “save” command.

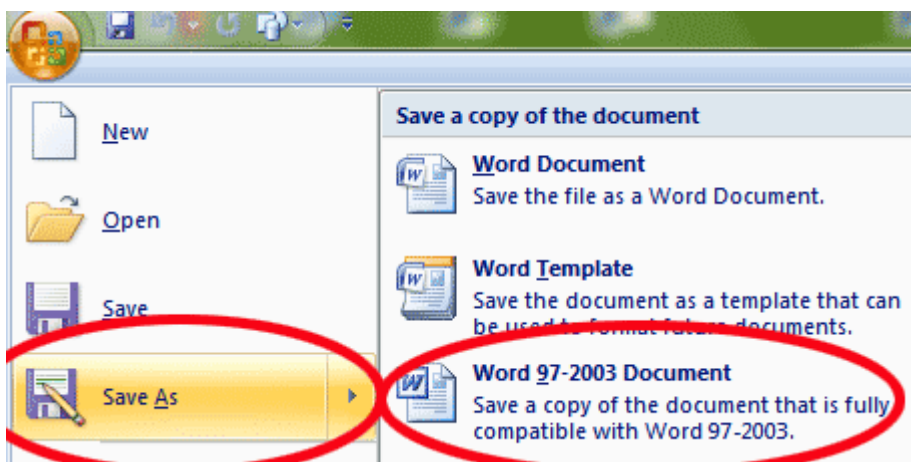
Normally, the different ways of saving a file are as follows:

- Use the shortcut key combination of Ctrl s (hitting the “s” key while simultaneously holding the Control key down).

- Click on the little blue icon of the floppy disc that is probably visible on the top line of the screen.
- Click on the “Office” button and then click on the “save” command.



Each of these methods will save the file in the newer format. What you need to do instead is to click on the “Office” button, then take the “save as” option, and then take the “..97-2003 document” sub-option (as illustrated). The recipient of your file *Office* will then be able to use it as if it had been created in the earlier version of the *Button* program.



Note:

I'm having to give up my previous practice of always quoting hyperlinks in full as some of them are just too long. If you are viewing this as a post on the blog then, depending on your internet browser, you can probably see the full version of the link if you hover your mouse over the link and then look towards the bottom of the browser window. If you are viewing the newsletter version, then hovering your mouse over the link should show you the full address of the link.

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