

Office 2010 - Compatibility Guide

The Microsoft Office 2010 system supports a robust XML file format that simplifies the exchange of data between Office applications. The new Open XML file format is incorporated for Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. This guide explains what users of Office 2003 and earlier Office versions need to do in order to work with files created in these new formats, and cases where this is not possible. This guide also explains the option of changing the default file format to Office 2003 standards if desired.

List of new formats

The new file formats associated with each of the principle Microsoft Office 2010 programs are listed below.

Application	File Extension	File Type
Word	.docx	document
Excel	.xlsx	spreadsheet
PowerPoint	.pptx	presentation
Access	.accdb	database

New format advantages & disadvantages

Microsoft has introduced the new Open XML formats for Word, Excel and PowerPoint for the following reasons:

1. File sizes are smaller as they are already compressed; hence there is no need to zip files prior to attaching them to email messages.
2. They are safer because they cannot contain workable macro coding.
3. They are more easily recoverable.
4. Transparency and improved information security means that documents can be shared confidentially. Personally identifiable information such as user names and file paths can be easily identified and removed.
5. They maintain compatibility where users of Office 2000, XP and 2003 can open, edit and save documents in one of the new XML formats.

The downside, however is that you need to install the [Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack](#) as found on the Microsoft website. **NOTE: Please install all High-Priority updates from [Microsoft Update](#) before downloading the Compatibility Pack.**

Similarly, Office Access 2010 uses a different database format from older versions of Access. A database file in the new Access 2010 format cannot be opened in or linked with earlier versions of Access. Microsoft discusses the advantages of the new .accdb format over the older .mdb format in an [article](#).

Converting new formats into older ones

If your computer is unable to open a file produced on another computer, check whether the document has a file extension in one of the [new formats listed above](#). If a Word, Excel or PowerPoint file uses one of the new file extensions, the advice below should help you convert the file to one that your version of Office can read and work with.

Staff working on LSE computers using Office 2003:

Contact the [IT Service Desk](#) to arrange installation of the Compatibility Pack.

Staff and Students working on their own computers:

You can download a free [Compatibility Pack](#). Please note, however, that:

- The compatibility pack is designed for use with Office XP (also known as Office 2002) and Office 2003. Conversion tools have not been developed for users of Office 2000 or earlier versions.
- Microsoft strongly advises users to install all High-Priority updates from [Microsoft Update](#) before downloading the Compatibility Pack.

Students working on LSE computers:

The Compatibility Pack will be installed on taught student computers.

The Compatibility Pack offered by Microsoft, discussed above, does not address Access compatibility. If a database is in the new Access file format, you can convert the .accdb file format to .mdb file, as used in Access versions prior to 2007. However you can only make such a conversion if the .accdb file does not contain any features that require the .accdb file format to run. The following lists factors that prevent conversion to an earlier file format:

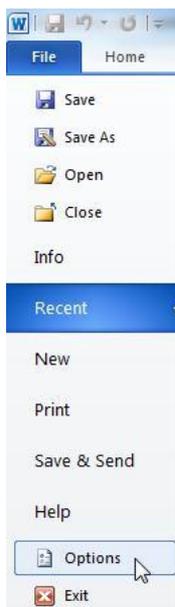
- Use of new data types, field properties and objects not supported by earlier versions of Access. This includes data macros, attachment data type, multivalued look up fields and history-tracking memo fields
- Links to external files that are not supported by earlier versions of Access. This includes tables in other .accdb files and Excel 2007 and 2010 worksheets (.xlsx)
- Database encryption. If you add a password to an Access 2007 or Access 2010 database via encryption, you must remove this before conversion as the new password-protection method is not compatible with earlier formats.

Avoiding compatibility problems if you have office 2010 on your own computer

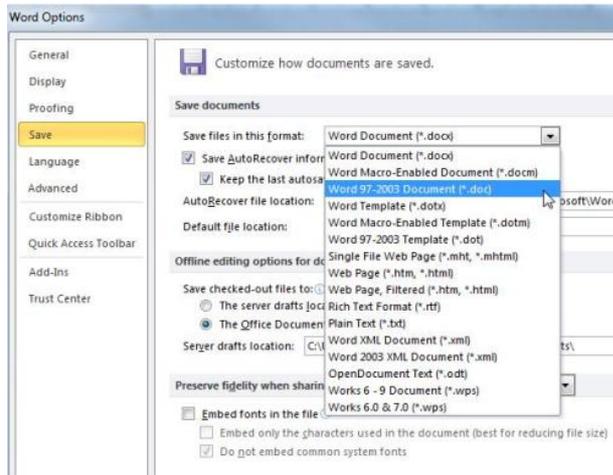
Although the new formats have distinct advantages, the fact that most users currently are unable to read them means you may prefer to continue using the old formats. This can be done on a file by file basis from **File | Save As | Save as type**, or you can follow the steps below to change the default format used when saving all files in each application.

To configure Word 2010, Excel 2010 and PowerPoint 2010 to use the old formats:

1. In Word 2010, click **File | Options**. A *Word Options* window will pop up



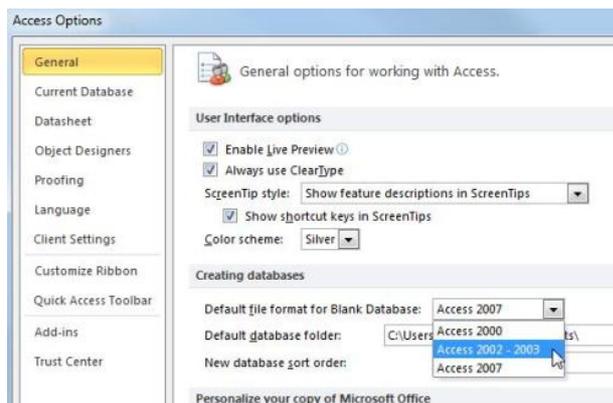
2. From the panel on the left, select **Save**. Under the **Save documents** heading, open the drop down list in **Save Files in This Format** and select **Word 97-2003 (*.doc)**. Finally click on the **OK** button. *The Word Options window will close*



3. Follow the same steps in Excel 2010 and PowerPoint 2010

4. In Access 2010, click **Home | Options**. *The Access options window will pop up*

5. From the left panel, select **General**. In the **Creating databases** section, open the **Default File Format** drop down list and select the option required. Finally, click the **OK** button. *The Access Options window will close*



The steps above will ensure that files created in these programs automatically are saved with the earlier file extensions (.doc, .xls, .ppt, .mbd). You will still be able to read and work with files sent in the new formats and, should you want to save specific files in this way, all you need do is change the file format from **File | Save As | Save type as**. You also can change the default format back to the new standard at any time by going through the same steps above and selecting the appropriate option.