COMMON WORD PROCESSOR FILE TYPES

Filetype	Filename extension	Compatible with (default in bold)	Description	Suitability for e-mail and sharing
MS Word (old)	.doc	**MS Word (pre 2007)** MS Word 2007 OpenOffice.org	Microsoft Word format (pre 2007). Probably the most common but not a true standard – several variants exist.	The recipient must have Microsoft word or another compatible word processor to be able to open it. Can carry viruses and is blocked by some e-mail systems.
OOXML	.docx	**MS Word 2007**	Latest Microsoft Word format but not yet well supported. Can be opened by some earlier versions of Word if a converter is installed.	Avoid unless you know the recipient can open them.
Oasis OpenDocument	.odt	**OpenOffice.org** (plus others)	Supported by several word processors but not Microsoft Word. International standard and well documented, so good for long term document storage.	Less suitable for e-mailing at present unless you know the recipient can handle them.
PDF	.pdf	OpenOffice.org (write only)	The Adobe “Acrobat” format. Readable on almost all computers. Basically a “write once” format – the saved file cannot normally be modified so a copy must be saved in another format if it must be edited later.	This is the **best choice for document distribution** unless the document must be edited (modified) by the recipient. It is not available in Microsoft Word without additional PDF writing software.
Rich Text	.rtf	Most word processors including MS Word and OpenOffice.org	A basic format which is supported by most word processors. Does not support all advanced formatting features but is adequate for most documents.	Usually the **best choice for distributing documents if they must be edited** or if you cannot save in PDF format.

WORD PROCESSOR FILE TYPE COMPATIBILITY TABLE

Application	**MS Word (old) .doc**	**MS Word 2007 .docx**	**Oasis OpenDocument .odt**	**PDF .pdf**	**Rich Text .rtf**
Microsoft Word (pre 2007)	✓	With additional converter[1]			✓
Microsoft Word 2007	✓	✓			✓
OpenOffice.org	✓		✓	Export[2]	✓
Adobe Reader				View only[3]	

[1] Some earlier versions of Microsoft Word can open .docx files if a converter is downloaded from Microsoft and installed.

[2] OpenOffice.org can export (save) documents in PDF format but cannot open them to make further changes. It's generally best to save as normal in OpenDocument format and then export another copy in PDF format for distribution.

[3] Adobe Reader will display PDF documents but not modify them. It and other PDF viewers are freely available and are installed on almost all computers.

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