

Lancaster Senior Citizen Center

Computer Tip No. 11

Which programs to use and Free Viewers

There's nothing worse than getting a file from a friend and not having the right program to open it.

Usually you need to have the program in which it was created to open the file. Likewise you need to have an edition of the application that is the same version of the program or a newer version. Example, if I had version 3 of a program, I can open any thing that was created by version 1,2 or 3 but not version 4.

Here are 4 file extensions of the most common programs needed to open them.

.doc - MS Word

.xls - MS Excel worksheet

.pps - MS PowerPoint

.pdf - Adobe Acrobat

If you don't have those expensive programs, here are 4 addresses that you can go to and download readers or viewers. The addresses are long, so you may want to copy and paste the whole address into your browser.

.doc - Microsoft Word Viewer

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=0e56d944-38f6-4eb5-aca6-8bd280d5e6b1&DisplayLang=en>

.pps - PowerPoint Viewer

<http://microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=D1649C22-B51F-4910-93FC-4CF2832D3342&displaylang=en>

.xls - Excel Spreadsheet Viewer

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=c8378bf4-996c-4569-b547-75edbd03aaf0&DisplayLang=en>

.pdf - Acrobat Reader

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

So, next time you get an attached file in your email but don't have the program to open it, just save the attachment to your computer and grab a viewer.

There are also freeware/shareware programs for opening **.zip** files such as [WinZip](#). In addition, with Windows XP you can save any zipped file to your desktop or a folder and access the files without unzipping. Just click it like any other folder and drag items out to run them.

See other extensions on the next page

Here are some Common file extensions:

.ARC

ARC file, these are files compressed using the program ARC (archive)

.AVI

Audio Visual, these are Windows Video files

.BAT

BAT is a Batch File; scripts that run in DOS, and are usually designed to automate tasks.

.BMP

Bitmap, a type of graphics file used by PC-Paintbrush that comes with Windows and other programs. (AOL's Windows software can display these.)

.COM

These are small programs for DOS and they are usually utilities, but not always.

.DLL

Dynamic Link Library, these files give functionality to other programs. They usually need to be installed into the WINDOWS/SYSTEM directory. VBRUN300.DLL is a good example.

.DOC

Documents, this is the default file extension for Microsoft Word and some other programs. Most files with this extension will be Microsoft Word, but there are many that are plain text.

.DOT

Document Template, these files are templates for Microsoft Word.

.EXE

Executable, this is a DOS or Windows application. Most major programs end with this extension. It is also used for Windows self-extracting archives, which are programs that when run explode into several smaller programs.

.GIF

Graphics Interchange Format, this is a type of graphic image very common on online services and the internet.

.JPG

Joint Photographers Experts Group, a graphics format designed to take up as little space as possible while retaining as much quality as possible. .JPG's are smaller than .GIF's, but take longer to display.

.INI

Initialization file, these files are used by programs to set parameters and preferences. Normally, these files should not be tampered with.

.MID

Musical Instrument Digital Interface, MIDI files are songs for most sound cards and MIDI boards. There are different types, and not every .MID file will play on every sound card/midi board

.PIF

Program information File (do not open this type of file if it is sent to you)

.PCX

These are older graphics files, commonly used for clip art

.SCR

Screen Saver, these are Windows Screen Savers.

.SYS

System file, these are drivers used by DOS and Windows. Be sure to read the file description and any accompanying documents carefully.

.TIF

Tagged Image Format, these are bitmapped graphic images popular among desktop publishers.

.TTF

True Type Font, these are scalable fonts commonly used in Windows. You will need to install these from your Control Panel.

.TXT

Text files, these are usually just plain text that can be read by most programs, especially Notepad.

.WAV

Wave files, these are Windows sound files.

If you don't have a sound card, the Windows program SPEAK.EXE may allow you to hear them.

.WKS (WK1, WK3)

Worksheet files, these are Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet files.

Most popular spreadsheet programs can display these files.

.WP5

Word Perfect 5.0 file, these files can be read by Word Perfect and many other popular word processing programs.

.XLS

Excel spreadsheet file, these are spreadsheet files that can be read by Microsoft Excel and some other spreadsheet programs.

.ZIP

PKZIP archive, this is the most common format for compressed files.

(AOL's software will automatically decompress these files.)