

Tech Tips - From the Basics

Most of us learn to use our computers and telephones by "just doing it" or by watching colleagues. Few of us take the time to attend formal, structured training sessions. Because of this, we sometimes learn how to do things in round-about ways and miss some of the basic, useful tools available to us. These "Back to Basics" tips are designed to fill in some of the gaps we have noticed, based on questions to the HelpDesk.

Sending email attachments

Email offers limited formatting opportunities when working in the client version of Outlook ("client" means the software is loaded on your PC or Mac; it is the full fledged version of Outlook available to you when working at your on-campus office). Outlook offers almost no formatting features when working on the web-based version (this is what most people use from home or when off campus; there is no software loaded on your PC or Mac for this version). Because of this, if you have any document beyond a simple paragraph, it is to your advantage to create it as, for example, a Word, Excel or PowerPoint document and then attach it to a short email message. The simple steps:

1. Create the document that you want to send. Use as complex formatting as you desire in Word or Excel, etc. Save the document. TIP: proofreading on the screen is difficult- print a copy and proofread before sending.
2. Create a mail message - just include the addressees, and a subject line, such as "meeting notes attached".
3. Desktop Outlook client: attaching the file
 - In the desktop client: if you see a "PAPERCLIP" icon on your toolbar at the top, click on it. If not, click on the INSERT menu item (top of screen) and choose FILE.
 - You will see a directory window pop up. Navigate through your directory to find the correct file. Click on your chosen FILENAME and then click on the INSERT button.
 - The file is now attached to your email (depending on the version of Outlook you will see an icon in the body of the email or the file name in a window under the subject line).
4. Web Outlook version: attaching the file
 - Click on the ATTACHMENTS tab at the top of the message.
 - Click BROWSE and navigate to find the file you want. Click once on the filename, then click OPEN. This closes the directory window - now click on ADD ATTACHMENT NOW (and wait until the file name appears in the box under "File Name").
 - If you are working from home using a modem, patience is an essential component when trying to send large files. We do not advise trying to send megabit-sized files via a modem.
 - "Downsizing" files- if you are using a modem (or sending to the many people who use modems) and want to keep file size small, delete as many graphics as

possible - i.e. delete any logos or background images; do not use "Stationary"; if you are sending an Excel spreadsheet that has 5 worksheets in it - but only one has the actual results - just copy the results sheet into a new smaller worksheet and send that file. Avoid PowerPoint templates with photos; keep any images on slides to a minimum and keep them small, at lower resolution.

5. Click SEND
6. You can attach multiple documents to the same email message by repeating the process (steps 3 or 4).
7. Read the attachments by (in the PC world) double clicking on them.
8. Save the attachments by:
 - Desktop client: Clicking FILE ' SAVE ATTACHMENTS, then navigating to the directory of choice and clicking SAVE. Or, you can open each file and then use FILE'SAVE AS to put it into the directory of your choice.
 - Web Outlook: Click each file, then choose SAVE from the dialogue window. Navigate to the directory where you want it, then click SAVE.
9. CAVEATS:
 - The email recipient must have the same program as the sender in order to open an attachment (i.e. if the attachment was created in Visio and the recipient does not have Visio installed on his/her machine, the attachment cannot be opened. So- be sure of your audience. Many of the less common software products do allow you to save files in different formats, including commonly used ones.
 - Microsoft Access97 and earlier versions are forward but not backward compatible. If you send an Access97 file to someone who has Access2000, they can open the file - it will prompt for "do you want to convert?" - and then convert to Access2000 format. An Access2000 file cannot be opened as an Access97 file.
 - PowerPoint effects (animations, etc.) and more advanced Word or Excel features from newer versions may not be supported in older versions - the files will open but some features simply will not be there. It pays to check in advance if you have an important presentation or document! Email a friend with the older version and ask him/her to review the document.
 - When you open a "text" document, it may have no or few line breaks- the text scrolls off the screen. In this case, just SAVE AS a Word document and Word will typically reformat the text.