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Best practices for Microsoft Office files

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Microsoft Office formats (.doc for Word, .xls for Excel, and .ppt for PowerPoint) all receive Level 2/limited support in Deep Blue. Though widely used, Microsoft owns and controls the specifications for these formats and doesn't publish them, so some features like macros may not operate between versions regardless of our best efforts. We will monitor these and will attempt to transform them when significant risk to access is imminent but it's difficult to predict or control the consequences of any transformation or migration on a files functionality, structure, and sometimes even content.

You can export Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents into formats that we can provide our highest level of preservation support to, however, and the following recommendations can help you decide whether/when this is appropriate. **Note**: Special features built into a particular application—examples include macros in Word, formulas in Excel, and transition effects in PowerPoint—will almost certainly *not be present* in the final, exported version.

General recommendations

For Microsoft Word

- If formatting is not important, use the "Save As…" option and select "Text" or "Unicode Text (UTF-8)" to produce a **.txt** file.
- When formatting is important, use the "Print" option and print to a PDF (**.pdf**) document. See our **Best practices for producing high quality PDFs** document for more information on creating high quality PDFs.

For Microsoft Excel

- Export to a "Text (Tab delimited)" or Unicode Text (UTF-8) to produce a **.txt** file.
- The tab delimited format will preserve the row/column structure, but may not provide another user with enough information on what those rows and columns mean without adding additional descriptive information to the file. See our **Best practices for producing datasets** document for more information.

For Microsoft PowerPoint

- Use the "Save As…" option and select "TIFF (Tagged Image File Format)" to produce a **.tif** file.
- As an alternative, use the "Print" option and print to a PDF (**.pdf**) document. See our **Best practices for producing high quality PDFs** document for more information on creating high quality PDFs.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact us at deepblue@umich.edu and we will be happy to help you create PDFs for the ages.