



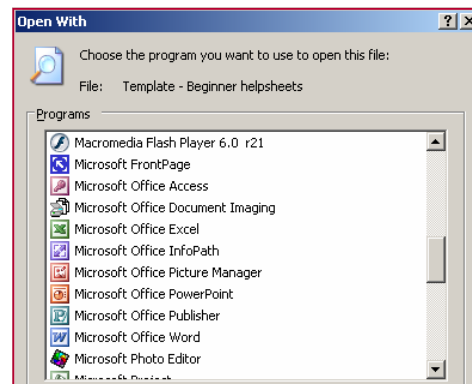
Beginners: Recognising Different File Types

Intro to File Types

Any item that is stored on the PC's drives and folders is called a **File**. For example, whenever you launch a programme you are opening a file; e.g. if you launch the MS Word application you are actually opening the winword.exe file. Every document you create with the MS Word programme is also a file.

There are hundreds of different file formats.

- Each file type is characterised by its own **file extension**. A file extension is a dot (.) followed by three or four characters which appears after the file name.
- Whenever you save a document the application you used to create it will automatically add its **file extension** after the file name.
- The file extension is used by the operating system to identify the programme to be used to open that particular type of file.
- Each application can only understand its own particular types of files, associated with particular file extensions. For example a word processing application capable of dealing with extensions of the text document types (like .doc, .txt, and .rtf) would not be able to open an MS Excel spreadsheet file (.xls) as they effectively do not 'speak the same language'. When renaming a file you should therefore always ensure that the correct file extension is retained.
- If the file extension is removed from a file, the operating system will not know which programme that file should be associated with. When you try to open it you will be asked to choose an application to be used.



Common File Types

You should be able to recognise common file types. The list below is not extensive and is shown only as a guide.

Many different programmes can perform similar tasks; icons will vary depending on the specific application associated with that file extension.

Ext	Icon(s)	Type of File	Appropriate Application
.txt		Plain Text	Notepad, Wordpad, MS Word
.rtf		Rich Text Format	Wordpad, MS Word.
.doc		Microsoft Word	MS Word
.wps		Word Processor	MS Works Word Processor
.htm .html		Web Page	Internet Explorer, Notepad, Alleycode, Dreamweaver
.php		Web page	MS Internet Explorer, Alleycode, Dreamweaver
.jpg		Image	Any image editors, including MS PhotoEditor, MS paint, Serif Photoplus 6, HP Image Editor, Photoshop Elements, Picasa
.bmp		Graphic/image	
.gif		Graphic/image	
.zip		Compressed	7-Zip, WinZip, Zip Genius
.pdf		Portable Document Format	Adobe Acrobat Reader
.exe		Executable	Runs a programme.
.tmp		Temporary	No associated programme.