



Resume File Formats

What is the correct file format for your resume? There are three options:

Microsoft Word is the industry standard for documents. Not WordPerfect, not Acrobat. Why? Because of MS Word's market penetration into the business world. **So your resume should be done in Word.** Which version? Although there are some forward compatibility problems with old versions of Word, save it in the current format of your copy of Word. And make sure you use Word to save the document, not some other program saving in Word format (since it does not always translate correctly, especially with bulleting and formatting). If you don't have a copy of Word, use it at a computer lab, Career Planning & Placement Center, or on someone's machine with a registered copy. This Word document is your baseline resume that you should use for all updates and revisions. The next two should be saved from this document.

Do not use the Word resume template –or any other resume template you encounter on the Internet.

Text - after you have developed your resume in Word, do a "Save As..." in "Text Only with Line Breaks" format (or "Text Only" if that is the only text option available). The reason for saving it with the line breaks is that it will automatically put hard carriage returns in at no more than 80 characters per line. There are two advantages and a disadvantage in doing this. The advantages are that it will keep your resume from running off the right side of the screen when being viewed without word wrap and it will avoid any truncation of information (often after 1000 characters in a paragraph. Uncommon, but it does happen with some systems). The disadvantage is that some systems automatically word wrap at under 80 characters (72 is the most common), so the hard carriage returns can often leave one or two words on a single line. But the advantage (being able to read the entire resume) outweighs the disadvantage (formatting perfectly), since this resume will be used primarily for input into resume databases and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). After you have done your "Save As..." you will still need to modify the resume in text format. Use a text editor (such as Notepad) to view the resume. Most notably, any indents will move text over 8 characters instead of the pre-defined indent you may have set for Word. Also proofread for any unusual characters or symbols that may not have converted properly. Lastly, **left justify everything** to the left side of the document. It doesn't have to be pretty, just readable.

HTML - if you want to take your resume one step further by posting it on the Web (NOT for resume database posting, but placing **on a Web page of your own**), you can do a "Save As..." with "Web Page" selected. Again, the formatting will not necessarily translate exactly from Word to the Web, so you may have to change some of the HTML to properly format (or at least end up with a close fit). This file format is optional and only needed if you plan to place it on the Web directly (more on the reason for doing this in the next newsletter).

So when and where do you use these three different versions?

The **Word version** is used for printing, for sending as an attachment and for uploading as an attached document on job sites.

The **Text version** is typically used for Internet resume databases and for any input that would find its way into a client Applicant Tracking System (ATS).

The **HTML version** is only used for posting to your own Web page.

This handout is a modified version of "The Correct Resume File Format" by Brian Krueger