

Seminary Electronic Document Standards

Purpose: This document is intended to provide a set of shared understandings about how electronic files are saved and shared within the seminary community. All seminary-owned computers will be able to read and write these formats. Seminary faculty, staff, and students are expected to use these guidelines to insure that their documents can be read by others with as little difficulty as possible.

What follows are the primary document types, the seminaries' standard document formats for each, and some notes about the strengths and weaknesses of each format. If you would like more details about any of the information given here, please contact Seminary Computing Services – we will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Document types

Text documents

.DOC (Microsoft Word document)

Good for storage and for sharing editable text documents with others.

Limitations: Differences in program versions, installed fonts, and default printers can cause printed output to vary.

.RTF (Rich Text Format)

Preserves formatting reasonably well, and is still editable. Good for sharing documents with users of older or less popular word processors

Limitations: Cannot handle some complex formatting.

Spreadsheets

.XLS (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet)

Good for storage and for sharing editable spreadsheets with others.

Limitations: Differences in program versions, installed fonts, and default printers can cause printed output to vary.

Presentations

.PPT (Microsoft PowerPoint presentation)

Good for storage and for sharing editable presentations with others.

Limitations: Differences in program versions can affect the rendering of special effects and transitions.

The PDF option

.PDF (Portable Document Format) documents are designed to provide a way to share documents that look as you intended without having to worry about variations in printer settings, fonts, or programs the recipient is using to view them. PDFs can accommodate Text Documents, Spreadsheets, Presentations, or any other normally “printable” output. The downside of using PDFs is that they are (by design) not easily editable. Think of PDFs as “electronic print”. A PDF is like a printed page in that the recipient will see it exactly as you sent it. A PDF is also like a printed page in that you can't really make visually consistent changes to the printed document - you must edit the electronic original and re-create the 'printed' version. If you have questions about creating PDF documents, please contact SCS.