



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**


**Office of the Chief  
Information Officer**

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TO: Agency Chief Information Officers

FROM: Charles R. Christopherson, Jr.  
Chief Financial and Information Officer 

SUBJECT: Workstation Migration to Office 2007

At USDA, several Agencies/Staff Offices have expressed an interest in migrating to the increased functionality of the Microsoft Office 2007 suite of products. Ultimately, this increased functionality will allow us to save valuable time, better organize our workload, manage the Department's information, stay connected, and collaborate better. In order to take advantage of these benefits, and to effectively and efficiently manage our workstation solutions, all new desktops are to be purchased with the Office 2007 application. In addition, all other workstations must be migrated by the end of March 2010. I am delegating the authority for the orderly migration to Office 2007 to the Agency Chief Information Officers (CIOs), effective March 31, 2008.

Since each Agency/Staff Office will be implementing Microsoft Office 2007 on different schedules, it is imperative that all Agencies and Staff Offices first implement Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack (translator) for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007 file formats to facilitate the exchange of documents between Microsoft Office releases. Agency CIOs need to ensure that this translator for Office 2007 files is downloaded onto all current workstations running previous Microsoft Office releases, thus allowing Office 2007 files to be read by applications in earlier Microsoft Office releases.

Without universal implementation of this compatibility pack, file sharing across different environments will likely be impacted. In addition, without universal implementation of the compatibility pack across the Department, users would need to be directed to consciously identify files as Office 2007 in their naming conventions (i.e., adding v7 to all file names). With Department-wide implementation of the Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack, the user need not be concerned with naming conventions for Microsoft Office applications.

The Microsoft Office web site provides general and technical information regarding compatibility of Office 2003 and Office 2007 files. A synopsis of this information has been provided as an attachment.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) will monitor Agency progress towards implementing the required compatibility pack at the monthly CIO Council meetings. If progress towards implementation of this compatibility

pack is not timely, OCIO will consider more stringent oversight of the implementation of Office 2007 across the Department.

Training for the Office 2007 applications is available on AgLearn at no cost to USDA employees. This training will allow our employees to better adapt to the new look and additional functionality of the new application.

We will be asking for updates on implementation of the compatibility pack from each Agency and Staff Office on a monthly basis until such time that the translator has been implemented across the entire Department. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Smith, Acting Deputy CIO, on (202) 690-3361.

Attachment

Are Office Professional 2007 files backward compatible?

Office Professional 2007 introduces the new Ecma Office XML Formats, which are compact, robust file formats that facilitate improved integration with external data sources and systems. These formats are compatible with Microsoft Office 2003, Office XP, and Office 2000 with the addition of a file format converter patch, available from [Microsoft Office Online](#) and [Microsoft Update](#).

**Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007 File Formats**

Microsoft has added the new Office Open XML Formats to the following 2007 Microsoft Office programs:

- Microsoft Office Excel 2007
- Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007
- Microsoft Office Word 2007

A compatibility pack is available to make sure you can open and save Office Open XML Formats in earlier versions of Microsoft Office. You can install the compatibility pack on a computer that is running Microsoft Office 2003 programs, Microsoft Office XP programs, or Microsoft Office 2000 programs. When you install the compatibility pack, you can open, edit, save, and create files in the robust Office Open XML Formats.

What is the software cost of moving to Office Professional 2007?

While our agreements with Microsoft are not uniform across all agencies, most of the Microsoft agreements allow the agencies to upgrade to Office 2007 at no cost.