

Macintosh Learning Center--- *Shell Weinberg*

Third Floor, Southeast corner

Laguna Woods Village Community Center

Laguna Woods Town Centre

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday

Why can't I open an email attachment???

...probably the most frequently asked question in our Learning Center. And, just so you will not feel too badly about such a problem, you should understand that it can happen to any email user, a newbie or a seasoned pro.

The difficulty is generally related to the **originating software**. That would be the program in the computer that created the digital file in the first place, and the **format** the file was saved in. If **your computer** does not **also** have the same program, and/or the **format translator** software, installed on your HD there could be a problem opening the **attached file** that came with the email message.

Doesn't make any difference if it is text or a graphic. Still requires compatible software at both ends to open.

An example might be... a person using **computer A** (a PC) created a text document using Microsoft Word software. This person then drafted an email, attached the file to that email, then sent it to **computer B**.

Computer B happened to be a Mac, and generally a Mac does not have Microsoft applications installed (*although many are written for Mac use and can be bought and installed*). So, the receiving person reads the email message and then clicks on the attachment icon to open it... and it **will not open**. This particular icon will probably have **.doc** in the title, a clue telling you the document was created using Microsoft Word.

So, if you have Word in your computer it will open. If not, it will not open. Tell the sender to save the Word document in RTF format (RichText) and then other word processing programs should be able to open it.

However, there is also another option available if you use **AppleWorks v 6.2.9**. Having dragged the attachment icon to your Desktop, activate AppleWorks, go to **File** menu, select **Open**, should show **Desktop** as location, then drop **File Format** list and select the **appropriate application**, then single click on the attachment icon to highlight it, click on **Open**.

This should open your eyes to the versatility of using AppleWorks to translate other attachments as well.

When creating documents using **AppleWorks**, you will find that you can actually save a word document in the Microsoft Word format, to send to a PC user friend. When saving a file, and the file **dialog** appears, drop the **File Format** menu to see the list. Use the same instructions if you are saving a graphic file.

If using **iPhoto**, open the program and go to the photo you want to attach to your email. Click once (to select) the photo you want to email, then click the **Email** button. If using an earlier version of iPhoto that does not have an Email button, simply drag the photo to the Desktop. It has now been **automatically** converted to a **JPEG** format that can be attached to the email message you are preparing to send.

Depending on the file, you might actually see the image inline within the message. If not viewed in the message itself, the receiver can usually just double-click on the icon to open it. Or, drag it to the Desktop first, and then open it.

As for opening **PDF** attachments, using OS X you can use the **Preview** application or **Adobe Acrobat Reader**, a free software program that can be easily downloaded to install on your HD. It efficiently opens all **PDF** documents, apparently without regard to the originating computer platform. Computer users everywhere are using the software making its usage almost universal. Because of this, it seems that most image digital files are now saved in the PDF format... which allows attachments to be sent and received, and opened, without problems.

Still, as a considerate email sender, I recommend you heed the following advice from Robin Williams, "**Mac OS X Book**" (*in our Learning Center Library*)...

*"When you attach a file to an email message, don't make the recipient guess what kind of file it is or what program might open it. Include a description of the attachment and the file type, or what program is needed to open it. Say something like, '**Barbara, the attached file is a photo that I saved as a .tif in Photoshop 7 on a Mac.**' Dealing with attachments can be confusing, and any helpful information is usually appreciated."*