

## [PC Club: Make Microsoft Works and Office play together](#)

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*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at [noccc.org](http://noccc.org). And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at [ocregister.com/link/pcclub](http://ocregister.com/link/pcclub), to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

**QUESTION:** I can't open .DOC documents on my new computer, whether on CDs or as attachments in e-mail. I get a message "unknown file type." I am running Microsoft Vista Home Premium and Microsoft Works, both of which have the latest updates. Is there some default which needs to be set? ~ Bruce

**QUESTION:** When I receive emails that have attachments included, I am unable to open some of them due to the fact that their file type is unrecognized. When I click on Open in that view, I get this message: "This file does not have a program associated with it for performing this action. - Refer to folder options in the Control Panel". ~ Paul and Jerry

**PC CLUB:** These three readers have a problem that is fairly common in that they cannot open files or attachments with certain file types. Before we discuss solutions, let's review several ways to open a file in Windows.

1. You can open an application such as Microsoft Works or Microsoft Word first and then use the File, Open command from the menu.



Image from Microsoft

2. Another way to open a file is to double-click it. In this case, the program that is associated with it will open and display the file contents assuming that the appropriate software has been installed on your system. For example, if you double-click an Excel file without having any software installed that can read this type of file such as Microsoft Office, you will get a message stating “Windows cannot open this file, etc.”
3. You can open a file that is attached to an email if your system recognizes the file type.

Let’s tackle Paul’s problem first: the inability to open .doc documents with Microsoft Works. I can’t tell which version of Works you have or if it included Microsoft Word 2002 as recent Works versions do. You can see if Word is installed by clicking Start, All Programs and looking at the entries there. If you do find Word, you can run the program and click File, Open and load any .doc document.

Also, according to Microsoft, (refer to their article at [support.microsoft.com/kb/884182](http://support.microsoft.com/kb/884182)) the Works word processor will open .doc files if you click in the “Files of Type” box and select the “doc” type. This will not work with .doc files created with Office 2007.

I recently installed Microsoft Works on a computer and it included Word 2002 and was immediately able to open .doc files. I notice from your question that you have all of the recent updates but you may want to re-install Works and look for the option to install Word. Microsoft has a great document at “Working together: [Microsoft Works and Microsoft Office](http://www.microsoft.com/products/works/more/worktogether.mspx)” (at [www.microsoft.com/products/works/more/worktogether.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/products/works/more/worktogether.mspx)) describing how the two programs function together.

Microsoft also states that you may not be able to open a .doc attachment directly but you should save it first and use the File, then Open method.

Now, regarding Paul and Jerry’s question, the information above applies to attachments as well. The error message that you are receiving indicates that the file type (its extension) is not recognized by your system. This means that you do not have the right software installed to open this file type. Here are the steps to follow to learn about the file type that you’re trying to open.

1. Turn on the option in Windows for viewing file extensions if it's not already on. See the instructions at <http://tinyurl.com/dzkbrt> , page 2.
2. Save the attachment to your hard drive and note the extension.
3. Look up the extension at [www.fileinfo.com](http://www.fileinfo.com). This will tell you what software can open that file.

Remember, not being able to open an attachment can be a good thing. You may be avoiding an infected file attachment and a subsequent virus attack ~Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his blog at [www.edwardns.com/blog](http://www.edwardns.com/blog).