COMPUTING AND DIGITAL LITERACY

File Extensions and Formats

Difficulty level: Easy

Computing and Digital Literacy

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Overview of the concept

This is how you tell what kind of file you are opening. A document ends in pdf, a photo ends in jpg, and a spreadsheet ends in its own extension, and each one opens with the right app. Knowing the extension stops you from opening a file with the wrong program or sending someone a format they cannot open. It is a small detail that saves a lot of frustration.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q What kind of files are these: report.docx, photo.jpg, song.mp3?

SOLUTION

This is a name-the-kind question, and the one rule to remember is that the letters after the last dot tell you what kind of file it is.

report.docx ends in .docx, so it is a word processor document. photo.jpg ends in .jpg, so it is a picture. song.mp3 ends in .mp3, so it is a sound file.

Open each file with a program made for that kind: a word processor for the document, a picture viewer for the photo, a music player for the song.

EXAMPLE 2

Q You finished a report in .docx and your teacher can only open .pdf. What do you send, and what do you keep?

SOLUTION

Send the report as a .pdf. A .pdf keeps the layout exactly as you made it and opens on almost any device, even without a word processor.

Keep your original .docx as well, because a .pdf is hard to edit and the .docx is the copy you can change later.

Do not just rename report.docx to report.pdf. Renaming changes the name, not the file inside, and the computer will not be able to open it properly.

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Practice questions

1 What does the '.jpg' in 'photo.jpg' tell you?

- A It is a picture file
- B It is a sound file
- C It is a spreadsheet
- D It is a video file

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2 Which extension belongs to a spreadsheet?

- A .xlsx
- B .jpg
- C .mp3
- D .png

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3 Which extension belongs to a sound file?

A .mp3

B .docx

C .png

D .jpg

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4 What is the extension in 'essay.pdf'?

A .pdf

B .docx

C .jpg

D .mp3

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5 Why is .pdf a good format for sharing a finished report?

- **A** It keeps the layout and opens on almost any device
- **B** It is the only format a computer can open
- **C** It makes the file much smaller than any other format
- **D** It lets anyone edit the report easily

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6 What happens if you rename 'photo.jpg' to 'photo.txt'?

- **A** The photo becomes a text file inside
- **B** The computer tries to open it as text and shows garbage; renaming does not change the file inside
- **C** The photo is deleted
- **D** The photo opens as normal because the name does not matter

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7 Which format is best for a photo you want to print: .jpg or .mp3?

- **A** .jpg
- **B** .mp3

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8 **Name one video file extension.**

- **A** .mp4
- **B** .jpg
- **C** .mp3
- **D** .docx

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9 **You need to send a photo by email and keep the file small. Which is the better choice, .jpg or .png?**

- **A** .png, because it makes smaller files for photos
- **B** .jpg, because it makes smaller files for photos
- **C** .png, because it keeps every detail
- **D** .jpg, because it keeps every detail without losing quality

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10 **Your friend has no word processor. You send your report as .pdf and keep your .docx. Why keep the .docx?**

- **A** So you can still edit it later; a .pdf is hard to edit
- **B** So your friend can edit the .pdf easily
- **C** So the file takes up less space
- **D** So the report prints in colour

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ANSWER KEY

1. It is a picture file
2. .xlsx
3. .mp3
4. .pdf
5. It keeps the layout and opens on almost any device
6. The computer tries to open it as text and shows garbage; renaming does not change the file inside
7. .jpg
8. .mp4
9. .jpg, because it makes smaller files for photos
10. So you can still edit it later; a .pdf is hard to edit

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