EMILY CARR
INSTITUTE
ART • DESIGN • MEDIA

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES
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ITS

HOW TO

Creating a RTF Document

This document provides information on Rich Text Format (RTF) documents and how to creating RTF documents on both Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows operating systems.

What is Rich Text Format (RTF) ?

RTF is a document format which allows documents to retain their basic typographic formatting when transferred between different operating systems and over the Internet.

RTF may be thought of as a more sophisticated equivalent of the "plain text"/ASCII text/".txt" file format for universal document transmission. Plain text files were the "original way" to send and receive text documents by any user regardless of the word processor, version, or operating system used by either the sender or receiver. However, plain text files were not able to store "text markup" information such as the selection of font type/size, boldface, italics, underlining or paragraph justification. The need for a file format which allowed for the preservation of these "richer" text formatting features resulted in the creation of RTF.

Creating RTF files does not require the purchase of any additional software for your operating system. All popular operating systems include some basic word processing application which can save RTF files (e.g. Mac OS X has *TextEdit*, MS Windows has *WordPad*). These programs are very simple and do not include all the features of a commercial word processing application, but they do get the job done.

PDF vs. RTF: which to choose ?

While some applications such as Microsoft Word allow for the inclusion of graphic elements (image and line art) in RTF documents, these do not usually translate well when opened in another application supporting RTF.

If you are only concerned about the preservation of textual content and simple typographic layouts, then RTF is a good choice. If you require the preservation of a more complex page layouts when transferring your files (i.e. you want your document to look *exactly* the way it looks on the screen), consider using Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF).   For more information on PDF, refer to the ITS HOW-TO "*Creating PDF Documents*".

Creating RTF Files on Mac OS X

This section describes three ways to create RTF documents using Mac OS X. The first requires Microsoft Office or Microsoft Word to be installed on your machine. The second method is for those using AppleWorks instead (formerly ClarisWorks). The third describes the use of a simple but free word processing application installed with every Mac OS X called "TextEdit".

1) Saving to RTF from Microsoft Word

1. Select "Save As…" from the File Menu.
2. From the "Format" dropdown, select "Rich Text Format".
3. Ensure that the name of your document has an ".rtf" file extension. For example "Document1.rtf"
4. Click "**Save**"
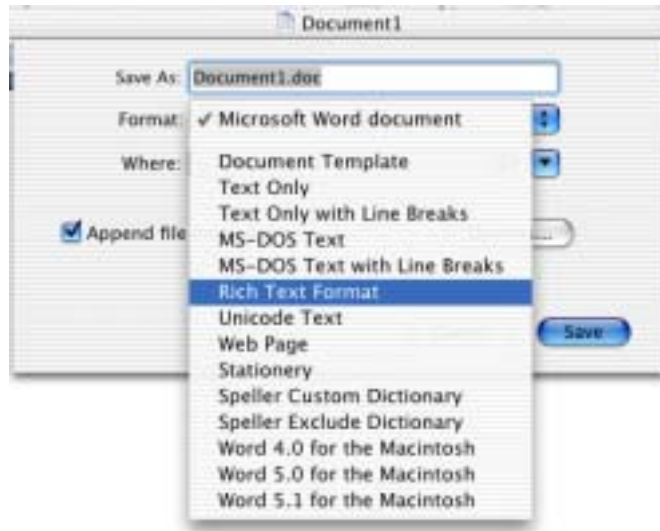
2) Saving to RTF from AppleWorks 6

1. Select "**Save As…**" from the File Menu.
2. From the "File Format" dropdown, select "**RTF**".
3. Ensure that the name of your document has an ".rtf" file extension. For example "Document1.rtf"
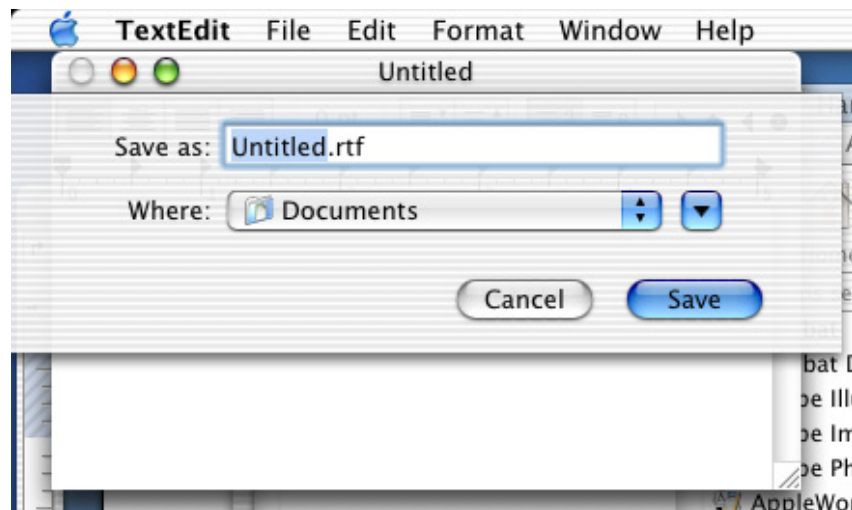4. Click "**Save**"
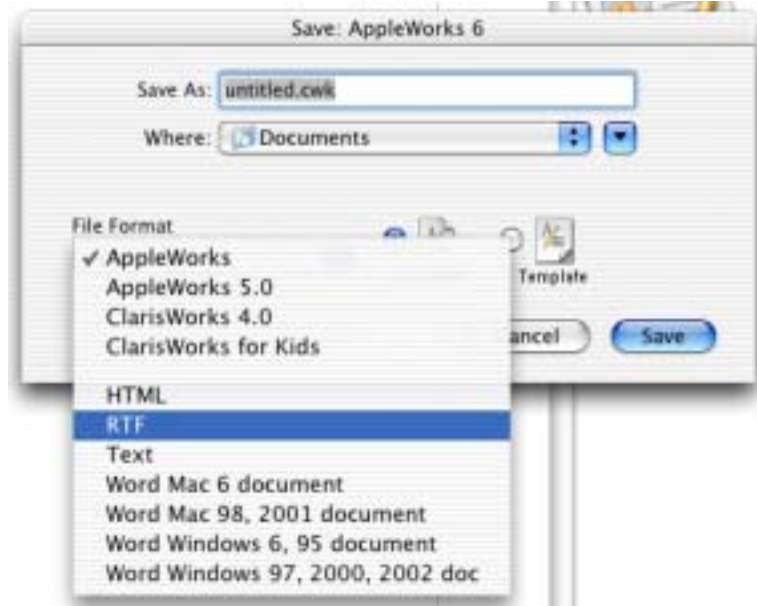
3) Saving to RTF from TextEdit

1. Select "**Save**" or "**Save As…**" from the File Menu.
2. TextEdit will automatically select Rich Text Format (.rtf) as the file type for your document.
3. Click "**Save"**

Creating RTF Files on Microsoft Windows

This section describes two ways to create RTF documents using Microsoft Windows. The first requires Microsoft Office or Microsoft Word to be installed on your machine. The second describes the use of a simple but free word
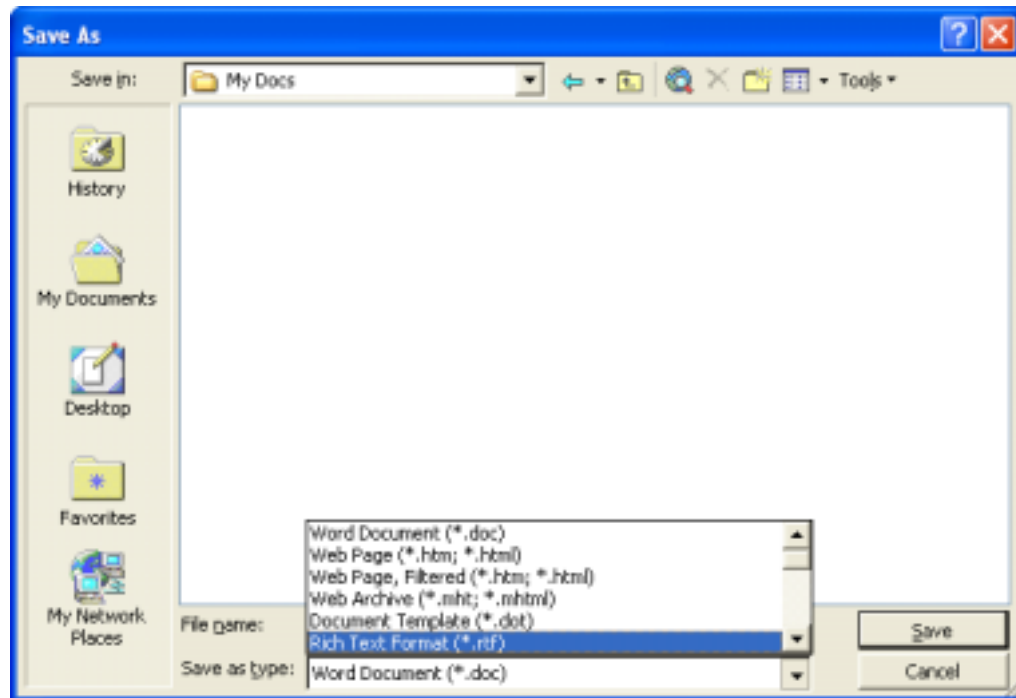
processing application installed with every version of Windows called "Word Pad".

1) Saving to RTF from Microsoft Word

The images below were taken from Windows XP. If you are using another version of a Microsoft operating system, the screens may look a bit different, but the steps should be the same.

5. Select "Save As…" from the File Menu.
6. From the "Save as type:" dropdown, select "**Rich Text Format (.rtf)**".
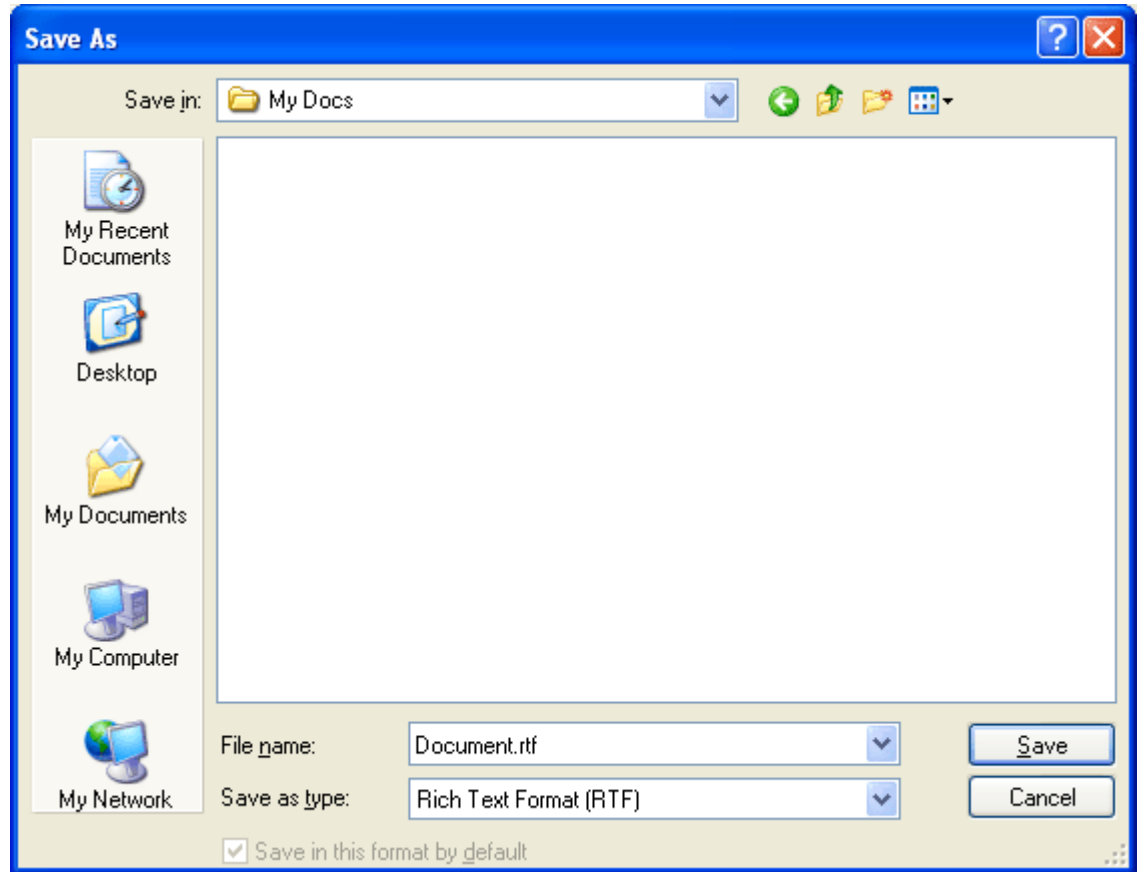7. Click "**Save**"

2) Saving to RTF from Word Pad

Word Pad is a very simple word processor which comes free with every version of Windows. It can be found under the "Accessories" sub menu in your programs folder/menu. The images below were taken from Windows XP. If you are using another version of a Microsoft operating system, the screens may look a bit different, but the steps should be the same.

4. Select "**Save**" or "**Save As…**" from the File Menu.
5. WordPad will automatically select Rich Text Format (.rtf) as the file type for your document.
6. Click "**Save"**

Save As

Save in: My Docs

My Recent Documents

Desktop

My Documents

My Computer

My Network

File name: Document.rtf

Save as type: Rich Text Format (RTF)

Save

Cancel

Save in this format by default

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