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Subject: File Format Conversion Test Results

To: Mike Funston

Attached are the results of the recent file format conversion tests we conducted. In summary, the tests confirmed some pre-test thoughts we had that pointed to Rich Text Format (RTF) as the preferred Interagency Document Exchange Format (IDEX). Our recommendations are based on a basic document that has few features (described further in the attached results). We found that complex publishing is best done in Portable Document Format (PDF), which can be easily read using the Acrobat PDF Reader distributed on the IBM platform. This reader is also readily available from Adobe Corporation on the internet.

Several other issues surfaced during this test that may cause some concern. First is the definition of a clean conversion. When conducting these tests we used two types of test documents (simple and complex). We discovered that most documents would convert regardless of format, but the degree of quality of conversion was a problem. To quantify this, we established a rating system for the quality of conversion. Another issue perhaps of more concern is with the use of RTF format. We found that using RTF format with every software product does not guarantee a clean conversion. MS Word 97 is one of the software packages we experienced this problem with.

We appreciate the opportunity to have worked on this issue and hope this information (while not totally conclusive) will assist the user community with inter/intra software package document exchange.

/s/ Jon C. Skeels

JON C. SKEELS
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cc: Mike Barrowcliff
Bill Rush



Document Conversion Test

This document identifies test results and recommendations for converting files between Applix 4.3 and other commonly used PC-based software products. Topics include:

- Basic assumptions
- Test documents
- Conversion ratings
- Applix 615 server results
- ApplixPC results
- Test notes
- Recommendations
- Sample conversion procedure.

Basic assumptions

All conversions were performed using Microsoft Windows 97 version 4.0 operating environment on an IBM Personal Computer 300PL.

PC-based software products used to create the test documents include:

- MS Word 97
- Corel WordPerfect Suite 8
- Lotus Word Pro 97
- ApplixPC, version 4.3
- The last 615 server TIB installed was TIB 9807, dated February 10, 1998.

Test documents

Two documents were developed for the conversion tests:

- Simple document
- Complex document.

Simple document

A simple document includes the following formatting:

- Two pages in length, no formatted page breaks
- Font is Palatino, 12 point, with some italic text.
- No tables, borders, shading
- No graphics
- Page margins: Top and bottom, 1 inch; Left and right, 1.25 inch
- No headers, footers, or page numbering.

Complex document

A complex document includes the following formatting:

- Two pages in length, one formatted page break
- Fonts include Palatino, 12 point and Avant Garde, bold, 14 point
- Bullets, numbered lists, and tabs
- Tables and table borders, no shading
- No graphics
- Page margins: Top and bottom, 1 inch; Left and right, 1.25 inch
- Formatted headers, footers, page numbering, and date.

Documents were saved using a variety of file formats, as outlined in the sections “Applix 615 server results” and “ApplixPC results.”

Conversion ratings

Conversion tests were rated from 1 (excellent) to 5 (Do not use).

Rating	Description
1 – Excellent	Very little or no reformatting required. Text, tables, and page formatting are intact.
2 – Good	Some reformatting required. Text, tables, and page formatting are intact
3 – Fair	Some reformatting required. Tables and page formatting need work.
4 – Poor	Major reformatting required
5 – Do not use	Software cannot convert the file, extremely poor conversion

Applix 615 server results

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using RTF Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Word 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using ASCII Paragraphs Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	3 - Fair
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	3 - Fair
Word 97	2 - Good	2 - Good

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using ASCII Lines Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	2 – Good	4 - Poor
WordPro 97	3 - Fair	3 - Fair
Corel 8	3 - Fair	3 - Fair
Word 97	3 - Fair	3 - Fair

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using ASCII Layout Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 – Excellent	4 - Poor
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	3 - Fair
Word 97	2 - Good	3 - Fair

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using DCA Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	2 – Good	3 - Fair
WordPro 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Corel 8	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Word 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using HTML Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	2 – Good
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Word 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent

From Applix 4.3 on 615 server using Applix Word Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
WordPro 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Corel 8	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Word 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using RTF Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Word 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using ASCII Paragraphs Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	2 - Good	4 - Poor
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	3 - Fair
Word 97	2 - Good	3 - Fair

ApplixPC results

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using ASCII Lines Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	4 - Poor	4 - Poor
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	3 - Fair
Corel 8	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Word 97	3 - Fair	3 - Fair

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using ASCII Layout Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	5 - Do Not Use	5 - Do Not Use
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	3 - Fair
Corel 8	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Word 97	2 - Good	3 - Fair

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using DCA Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	2 - Good	3 - Fair
WordPro 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Corel 8	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Word 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using HTML Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	2 - Good	2 - Good
WordPro 97	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Word 97	1 - Excellent	2 - Good

From Applix 4.3 on PC server using Applix Word Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (615)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
WordPro 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Corel 8	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use
Word 97	5 – Do Not Use	5 – Do Not Use

From WordPro 97 using RTF Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Applix 4.3 (615)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Word 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent

From WordPro 97 using Text

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Applix 4.3 (615)	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Corel 8	2 - Good	4 - Poor
Word 97	3 - Fair	3 - Fair

From WordPro 97 using DCA/RFT Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	3 - Fair	4 - Poor
Applix 4.3 (615)	4 - Poor	4 - Poor
Corel 8	5 - Do Not Use	5 - Do Not Use
Word 97	5 - Do Not Use	5 - Do Not Use

From WordPro 97 using HTML Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Applix 4.3 (615)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Word 97	2 - Good	2 - Good

From Word Pad using Word for Windows 6.0

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Applix 4.3 (615)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Word 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent

From Word Pad using RTF

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Applix 4.3 (615)	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Corel 8	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent
Word 97	1 - Excellent	1 - Excellent

From Word Pad using Text

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	2 - Good	2 - Good
Applix 4.3 (615)	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Corel 8	2 - Good	3 - Fair

Word 97	2 - Good	3 - Fair
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From Word Pad using Text/DOS Format

Software Product	Simple Document	Complex Document
Applix 4.3 (PC)	1 - Excellent	2 - Good
Applix 4.3 (615)	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Corel 8	2 - Good	3 - Fair
Word 97	2 - Good	3 - Fair

Test notes

- The latest release of Applix v. 4.3 for the 615 server has greatly improved the ability to convert documents from RTF and HTML file formats.
- For best results when converting from PC-based software products to Applix 615 server software, convert and save the file using ApplixPC *first*, then open that saved Applix Words document using the Applix 615 server version.
- Headers, footers, page numbering, and date do not readily convert between Applix (615 or PC) and other software products. These items must be recreated within the destination software product after conversion of the document.

Recommendations

Best file formats to use

- Based on the test results, the following file formats offer the best document conversion between Applix (615 or PC) and other software products:
 - Rich Text Format (RTF)
 - HTML
 - ASCII Paragraphs Format.
- Avoid using DCA (DCA/RFT) to import a document into Applix (615 or PC).

Best fonts to use

- Use fonts that are generally available for all PC-based software products. This will ensure better uniformity when converting documents between software products. These include:
 - Arial
 - Avant Garde
 - Courier
 - Palatino
 - Times Roman.

Due to the extensive choice of fonts available for PC-based software products, there are many other fonts not listed here that may successfully carry through to the converted document.

Sample conversion procedure for MS Word 97

This section explains how to convert your documents from MS Word 97 to Applix Words using the file format Rich Text Format (RTF).

To convert an MS Word 97 document to Applix 615 server

This part of the procedure explains how to convert your MS Word document to Rich Text Format (RTF).

From your personal computer and Windows 95:

- 1 Start MS Word 97.
- 2 Open the desired MS Word 97 document.
- 3 On the **File** menu, click **Save as**.
- 4 In the **Save as type** dialog box, select **Rich Text Format**, then click **Save**.

*Note: Since you are saving this document using the file extension “.rtf” you do not need to enter a new name in the **File name** dialog box.*

- 5 On the **File** menu, click **Close**.
- 6 Quit MS Word 97.

Step 7 through step 10 explain how to import your Rich Format Text document into ApplixPC.

- 7 Double-click the **Applixware** program icon.
- 8 Click the **Words** icon.
- 9 On the **File** menu, click **Import**, then select the desired RTF document.

10 On the **File** menu, click **Save**, then type the name of your new Words document in the **File** dialog box.

Note: To access your new document from Applix 615, you must save it in a folder that is accessed by your 615 server. For example, a pathname for your new Words document might be similar to the pathname shown below:

K:\fs\fsfiles\unit\spf\documents\newdoc.aw

You have now successfully converted your MS Word 97 document to ApplixPC! If desired, you can exit ApplixPC and Windows 97, then log on to the 615 server and open your new document in Applix Words.