

What's In A Name

This chapter centers around the two Windows resident word processors, NOTEPAD and WordPad.

Do you know that a file name has three parts? It is composed of a name, a period and an extension. This is why a period should never be used as part of the name. The period is used by Windows to separate the name from the extension.

Windows has “REGISTERED” the application’s extensions. When you double-click on a file, Windows inspects the file extension and opens the proper application.

If a file type (or extension) is not registered, windows will prompt you to select an application to use to open the file by displaying a menu with the option ‘Open with’.

During the process of installing an application, the install process will inform, or register with windows, the file extensions which are to be associated with that application.

If you are curious, Open My Computer. Click on the View menu and select [‘Folder options...’ in Win 98][Options... in Win 95]. Select the ‘File Types’ tab. Click on a registered file type and Windows will display the extensions associated with that application.

Look through the list and file and find ‘WordPad Document’. Hint: Since this list is rather long use a quick search method. Type the letter ‘W’. This will bring you down the list to the first item starting with the letter ‘W’. Scroll a little further down to find ‘WordPad Document’.

In the ‘File type details’ frame you will see that WRI is the registered extension and that WRI documents will be opened with WORDPAD.

Next search for ‘Text Document’.

Here you will find that 3 extensions are associated or registered to NOTEPAD, (TXT, DIC and EXC). Cancel out of this screen and close My Computer.

Let’s create a NOTEPAD document using the RUN dialog box.
Start | Run | Notepad

NOTEPAD is a very easy to use, limited feature word processor. NOTEPAD is the only editor you should use if you are editing Windows or MSDOS system files. It is also useful for creating HTML documents for the Internet.

When NOTEPAD opens, type “Things to do today:” in the document window.

Now that we have worked so hard to create this manuscript, we need to save it for posterity.

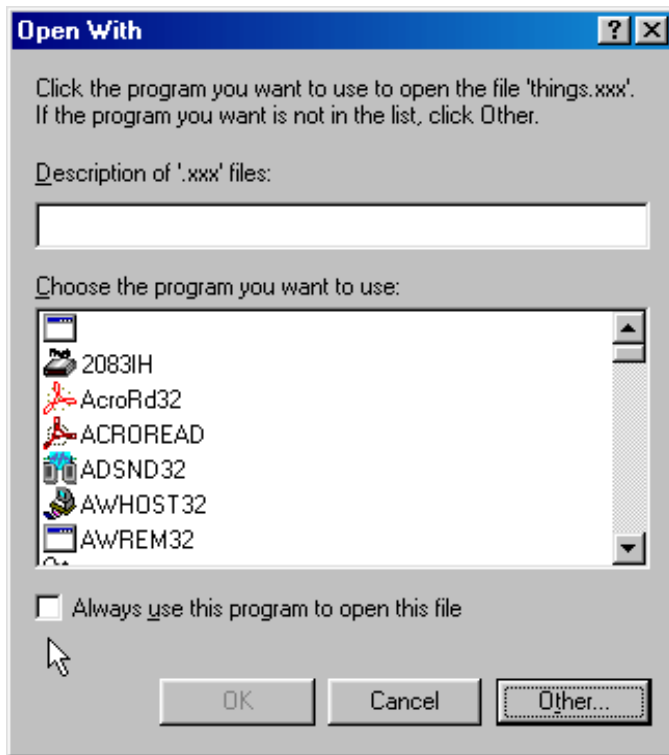
Save the file named THINGS. Save it in the A:\1 folder. (Review Org 8 if you have forgotten how to save a file.) It will be saved by default with a .TXT extension by the NOTEPAD application. Other applications use different extensions.

Close NOTEPAD.

Open My Computer and locate the A: drive. Open folder '1'. Double-click on THINGS.TXT

This will open notepad and display our document. Close NOTEPAD again.

Let's hope I know what I'm doing as I show you the effect of changing file extensions. Improperly changing extensions can make the document very hard to retrieve.



Right-click on THINGS.TXT. The resulting menu has an option 'Open'. Don't click on it, just remember that it was there. Clicking OPEN would have the same effect as Double-clicking the file's name.

Right-click on THINGS.TXT and select the *Rename* option. Change the name to THINGS.XXX.

Right-click on the file and note that OPEN has changed to OPEN WITH.

This is because Windows doesn't have a registered file extension of .XXX.

Select the OPEN WITH option and you will open a dialog box to select an application to open the file.

Note the check box in the corner "ALWAYS OPEN WITH." Be sure this box is not checked. The purpose of this screen is to allow the user to select a program to open an unregistered file type.

Be careful in this area. Improper registering can cause applications to become unstable. Take the safe route out and click Cancel to Close this screen.

Right-click and change the extension back to .TXT (Rename)

Double-click on THINGS.TXT to reopen the file. Select the 'Save As' option from the File menu.

Change the 'Save as type:' to *.* and change the name to THINGS.WRI
Close NOTEPAD

Return to A:\1 using the taskbar button.

Verify the name. Change to THINGS.WRI if necessary. You should now have two "THINGS" files.

Double-click on THINGS.WRI and the file will open in WordPad.

WordPad is the second word processor which comes with Windows. It is fancier and has several text formatting features.

After opening WordPad, you can get help on using the application by clicking on HELP in the menu bar. Select the CONTENTS tab. Read the various help articles. Most applications have HELP.

WordPad can also be opened using the RUN dialog box
or - Start | Programs | Accessories | WordPad



Save again, this time change the 'Save file type:' to Word 6.0 and remove the .WRI extension from the file's name. If you have WordPerfect, you could change the extension to .WPD.

Close WordPad. Verify the name change

Double-click the newly created file.

Double-click THINGS.DOC and the file opens in WORD or THINGS.WPD opens WordPerfect.

This demo has given us a little insight of the effects that can happen when you change extension types. Double-clicking on a file name bypassed the need to use the OPEN dialog box. The OPEN dialog box allows us to enter an application and then search for a saved document. Let's use the Open dialog box and see a couple of new problems which file extensions can cause.

When applications are designed, the programmer has the option to add '*filters*' to dialog box options. One of these filters allows the selection of files containing only specified file extensions.

Start Notepad using the RUN command. Start | Run | Notepad

Open a file using the File | Open method. Note that the default file name is *.TXT and default 'Files of type:' is 'Text Document'. These options have '*filtered*' the files listed. Although we have several document files on our floppy, only the files which are intended to be opened by NOTEPAD and contain a .TXT extension are shown.

We can make the other files visible by changing the filter criteria. Change the 'Files of type:' option to All Files (*.*). Now all files are visible. Do you see the other files? If not, it is probably because you are looking in the wrong place. Where does the 'Look in:' text box indicate that you are looking? If it doesn't indicate the 3½ Floppy A:, you are looking in the wrong place. Change the *Look in:* drop down box to selecting the floppy and folder 1.

It's time to learn a few more things about screens and the objects they contain. Look in:, File name:, and Files of type: are label objects and are used to inform the user. In this case they inform the user as to the purpose of the text box. Clicking on labels won't cause anything to happen. You must click on their associated text box to make changes.

The Save As and Open dialog boxes are very similar. Although their purpose changes, the most obvious screen change is the labels.

Programmers also can limit the formats in which a file can be saved. Open NOTEPAD, WordPad and your full featured word processor and look at the various choices presented in the 'Save as type:' option.