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Office XP

Microsoft Office applications are utilized by millions of people each day. With this type of usage, the amount of problems that may be encountered is limitless. Countless errors are often the result of users being unaware of how to perform a specific task with Microsoft Office. This chapter focuses not on usage issues or problems that result from a lack of training, but instead concentrates on problems that go beyond what is expected of the typical user, such as how to recover corrupted Office files.

Instead of attempting the impossible and indexing every Office error, this chapter focuses on the tools at your disposal for diagnosing MS Office problems. After examining the many available tools, the chapter then turns to detailing the most common Office application problems, along with their related solutions.

Office Troubleshooting Tools

There are several troubleshooting tools available for Microsoft Office that often go unnoticed. When a user experiences an application failure or corruption in an Office file, your job is to get the user back to productivity as soon as possible. Many of these tools allow you to do just that.

While many of the tools in this section show you ways to repair Microsoft Office, don't forget about System Restore (see Chapter 5) as an option. With System Restore, you can roll back the user's XP system to an earlier point in time before the application corruption occurred.

Application Recovery

In pre-XP Office versions, a hung Office application meant that the user had to either terminate the program using Task Manager or reboot the computer. Either way, the

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possibility of corruption in the open Office document existed. Oftentimes, these files can be saved by Document Recovery, which is covered shortly. However, if you want a greater guarantee that a document will be recovered when an Office application stops responding, Application Recovery is the tool for you.

When an Office application stops responding, Application Recovery forces the hung application to fail and then restart. By Application Recovery initiating the failure, Office's Document Recovery feature can save a recovery version of the file, which will be available the next time the Office application starts.

When Office stops responding, follow these steps to recover documents opened in the failed application.

1. Click Start > All Programs > Microsoft Office Tools > Microsoft Office Application Recovery.
2. In the Microsoft Office Application Recovery dialog box, click the hung Office application to recover and then click the Recover Application button.
3. When recovery completes, the recovered documents are displayed in the Document Recovery task pane. From there, you can select the needed document and then save it.

Knowledge of this tool alone could save several Office documents. When Office stops responding, you often immediately either terminate the application using Task Manager or even go as far as rebooting the system. In any instance of a hung Office application, Application Recovery should be the first step taken in recovering a failed Office document. Using Task Manager or rebooting the system should always be your last resort.

Automatic Recovery

Beginning with Office 2000, the Office application was installed using Microsoft Software Installation (MSI) packages. One of the primary reasons for organizations deploying applications with the use of MSI files is that they can be programmed to have the ability to "self-heal." This means that if a user accidentally deleted a file needed by the application, or if a file was overwritten by an older version, the application could automatically repair itself.

Sometimes users that have used Office for years are suddenly surprised when prompted for the Office installation CD when they try to open Outlook. This is a typical example of an application file becoming corrupted, being recognized by the application, and automatically repaired.

The ability to self-heal in Office is known as Automatic Recovery. With this feature, if Office was installed from a network share, recovery will occur transparent to the user as long as the share is accessible. Otherwise, the installation CD will be needed to recover the damaged file. What Automatic Recovery means to you is fewer calls for support. Automatic Recovery will save you time even when dealing with home users who

have become adept at following instructions given to them by their computer. If the computer says, “Put in the Office installation CD,” the user more often than not will obey the command. The problem is fixed, and the user didn’t even realize that a problem ever existed!

Like any automatic tool, Automatic Recovery is not perfect. After all, that’s why airplanes have manual overrides. If a hydraulic system fails, a pilot can manually take control of the airplane by shutting down the automatic system. Sometimes Office application problems exist that are not automatically detected and corrected by Automatic Recovery. When this occurs, you can manually perform a “Detect and Repair,” which is your way to manually take control of Office troubleshooting when Automatic Recovery fails.

Detect and Repair

Detect and Repair is a tool that is found in the Help menu of every Office application. By default, Office automatically attempts to repair a damaged installation using Application Recovery. When Application Recovery does not do the job and you suspect a problem with a particular Office application, it can be corrected with Detect and Repair.

To start the Detect and Repair process, follow these steps.

1. Open any Office application.
2. Click the Help menu and then select Detect and Repair.

As shown in Figure 6-1, the Detect and Repair dialog box presents you with two repair options.

- Restore my shortcuts while repairing—The default option, it repairs Office and recovers user custom settings (shortcuts, recently accessed files, user name).
- Discard my customized settings and restore default settings—Custom user settings are discarded and replaced with default settings (requires you to reconfigure user’s Office settings after the repair completes, such as Outlook information).

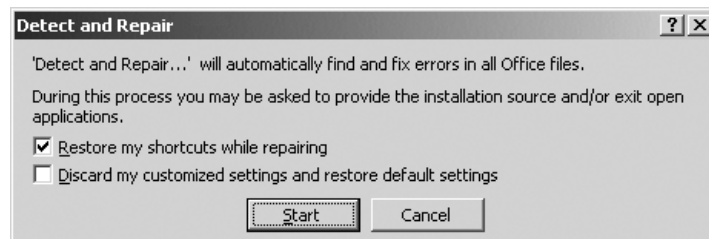


Figure 6-1. Repairing an Office installation with Detect and Repair

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Once you choose the repair option in the Detect and Repair dialog box, follow these steps to complete the repair process.

1. Click the Start button, and Office scans and replaces any corrupt or missing files as well as reverts Office-related Registry settings to the installation defaults.
2. If prompted, insert the Office installation CD or browse to the path of the Office installation files.
3. When the repair completes, click OK.

When Office is corrupted to the point that an application cannot be opened in order to perform Detect and Repair, you need to repair the installation using Office Setup. Use of this method is covered later in this chapter.

In order for Detect and Repair to successfully repair an Office application, all installed Office applications should be at the same version and service pack level; otherwise, the repair process may fail. For example, if you are running Word and PowerPoint XP but also have Outlook 2000 installed, you likely will not be able to repair the older Outlook version and if trouble is encountered, you should instead install Outlook XP.

Document Recovery

Document Recovery has been substantially improved with Office XP. In previous Office versions, a lost document resulting from a user's workstation locking up could quickly add up to an hour or longer of troubleshooting. With Office XP, the application itself does the troubleshooting for you. After a system crash, the next time you start the Office application, such as Word, your previous file versions that were saved by the application will appear in the Document Recovery task pane in the application window. Figure 6-2 shows Document Recovery displaying two versions of the Word file CorruptMe.doc. With Document Recovery, the user just selects the needed version of the file, and it opens. Once the file opens, the user can then save it, overwriting the file's original version, or save it with a new filename.

If any recovered files were not viewed by the user, the user is asked by Office how to treat the unexamined files when the Office application is closed or when the user clicks the Close button in the Document Recovery pane. When prompted, the user has the choice to view the files the next time the Office application is opened or to have the files removed. These options are shown in Figure 6-3.

Open and Repair

When Word or Excel files are opened, if Office detects corruption in the file, it automatically tries to repair the file. Sometimes corrupted files are not noticed by Office, and you may wish to manually initiate a document-level repair. While some files may be corrupted

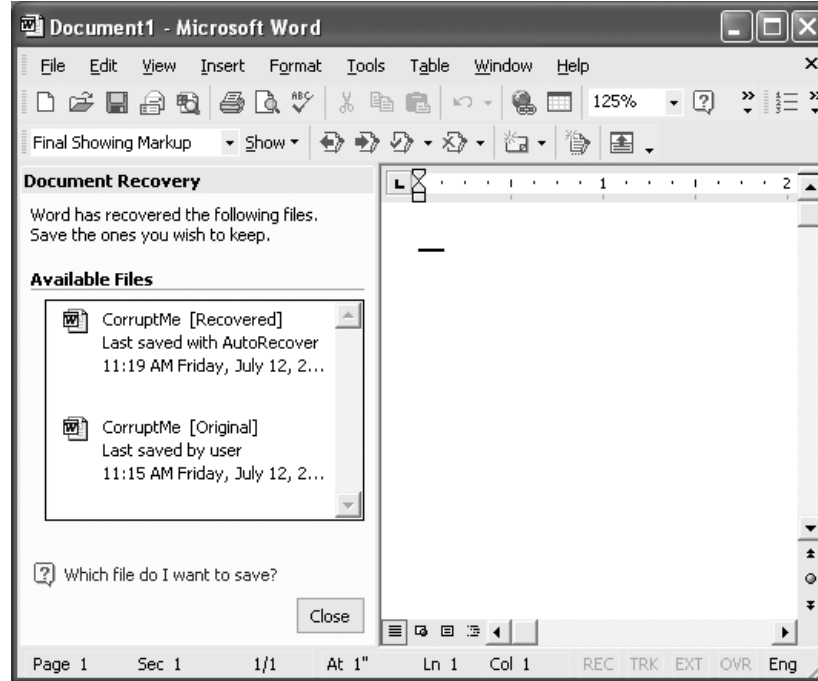


Figure 6-2. Recovering Word documents with Document Recovery

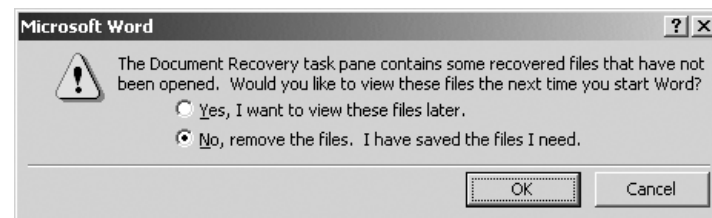


Figure 6-3. Document Recovery prompt

to a point where repair is not possible, for others, however, Open and Repair provides you with a way to recover valuable information.

To use the Open and Repair feature to repair a corrupted Word or Excel file, follow these steps.

1. Open the Office application (Word or Excel).
2. Click the File menu and then select Open.
3. Browse to and select the corrupted file, then click the Open drop-down menu (see Figure 6-4) and select Open and Repair.

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4. If a Word file is being repaired, it automatically opens in Word. If you are repairing an Excel file, select the Repair option in the Repair dialog box.

Once you select Repair, the document opens with at least some, if not all, of its original content intact.

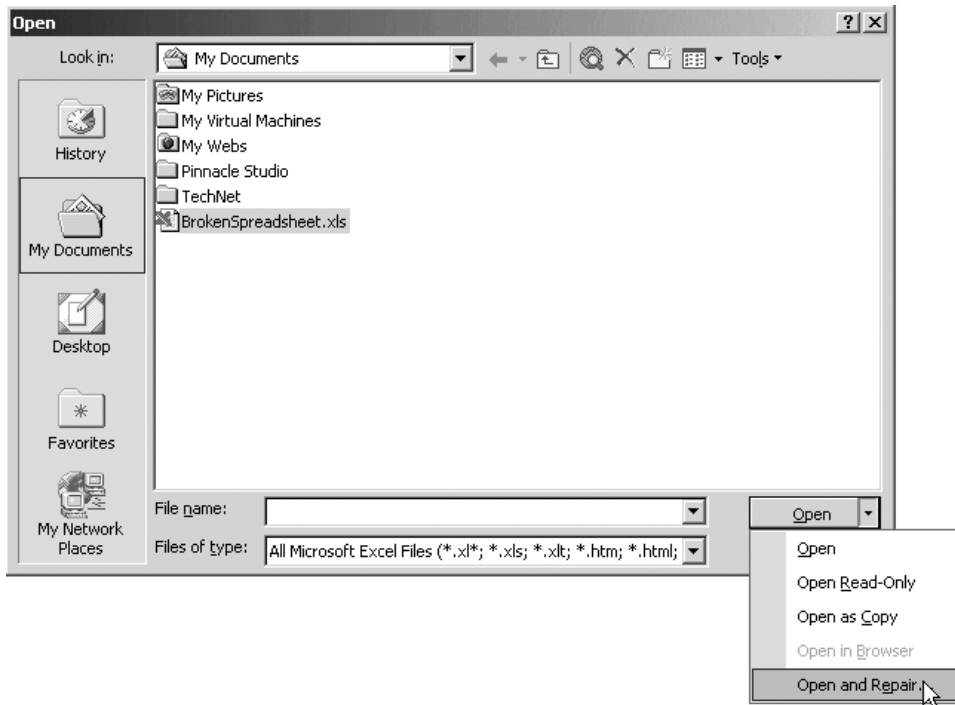


Figure 6-4. Selecting to Open and Repair an Excel spreadsheet

One other means of recovering data in a corrupted file is with the use of the `recover` command line utility. Since `recover` is not just limited to Office files, it is described in Chapter 7, Disk Subsystems.

Setup

When Office is inaccessible and the problem has not been corrected by Application Recovery, you can repair the Office installation with Setup. This section shows you the two primary ways to repair Office using Setup.

From Add/Remove Programs

This method is easy for any user to follow, since the user does not need to know the physical location of the Office Setup files. Of course, this assumes that the Setup files exist in the original location from where they were installed, whether on a network or CD.

To repair an Office installation from Add/Remove Programs, follow these steps.

1. From the Control Panel, double-click the Add/Remove Programs icon.
2. Select the Microsoft Office installation and then click the Change button.
3. Select the Repair Office option and click the Next button.
4. To repair the installation, select Detect and Repair. If you want to preserve user shortcuts, select the Restore my Start Menu Shortcuts checkbox and then click Install (see Figure 6-5).
5. Once the repair process completes, you will be prompted that Office Setup has repaired your installation. Click OK.
6. Click Close to close the Add/Remove Programs dialog box.

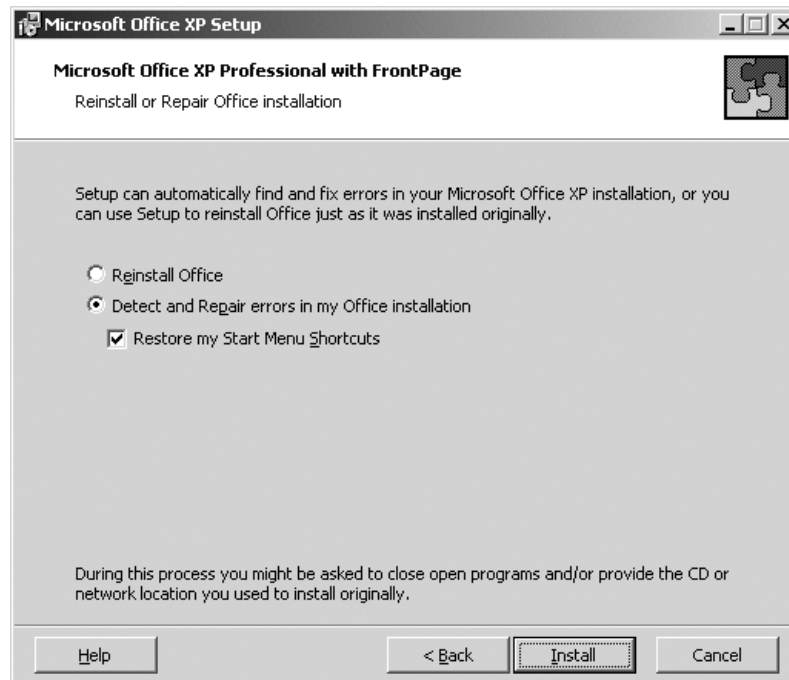


Figure 6-5. Repairing an Office installation with Office Setup

From the Setup CD or the Network

This repair method requires knowledge of the location of the Office Setup files, and for this method to work, you must know the location of both the Setup executable and the installation .msi file. There are several switches available for the Office `setup` command, but only one pertains to repairing an Office installation.

The syntax for using `setup` to repair an Office installation is:

```
setup /f<options> <.msi file path>
```

The `.msi file path` parameter points to the installation's associated .msi file. For a default Office XP Professional installation, the file is named `ProPlus.msi`. Table 6-1 describes the options associated with the `/f` switch.

Table 6-1. `setup /f` Command Options

Option	Use
a	Causes all Office Setup files to be reinstalled, regardless of the checksum value or version.
c	Causes corrupted or missing Setup files to be reinstalled.
d	Causes missing files or files with a version other than the Setup version to be reinstalled.
e	Causes missing files or files with a version equal to or less than the Setup version to be reinstalled.
m	Causes all Office-related system Registry values to be rewritten.
o	Causes missing files or files with a version older than the Office Setup version to be reinstalled.
p	Causes missing files to be reinstalled.
s	Causes all shortcuts to be reinstalled, with existing shortcuts being overwritten.
u	Causes all user-specific Office Registry values to be overwritten.
v	Causes Office Setup to run from the Setup package specified (.msi file) and recache it as the local installation package.

There are two predominant methods for running `setup` with the `/f` switch, which are as follows:

- To repair an Office installation: `setup /focums ProPlus.msi`
- To reinstall Office: `setup /fecum ProPlus.msi`

Each of these examples assumes that the Office XP Professional Setup is used and that the installation .msi file resides in the same directory as the Setup executable. Now that you have seen the troubleshooting tools at your disposal, the remainder of this chapter focuses on specific Office troubleshooting scenarios.

Don't forget about booting the system into Safe Mode at startup as a viable troubleshooting test. If a document or presentation file does not open normally but opens when the system is booted into Safe Mode, check for faulty or outdated drivers on the system. If the document or presentation has sound integrated into it, a likely place to check is a nonexistent or improper driver for the sound card.

Troubleshooting Office Setup

Office Setup is generally very reliable, installing well both through local installations and from software installation packages via a group policy object (GPO). However, Setup is not perfect, and there are several errors that may contribute to its failure. As with troubleshooting other failures, start with the obvious first, eliminating what's right, and then move on to more granular troubleshooting.

Eliminating the Obvious

Table 6-2 lists some quick checks you can perform that allow you to quickly narrow your list of potential causes for the problem.

Table 6-2. Office Setup Failure Quick Checks

Problem	Solution
Setup running slow	If hard disk activity is indicated by the system's hard disk LED, Setup may just be running slower than you anticipate. The solution in this scenario is to apply patience to the problem.
Virus	Viruses can cause countless problems and certainly don't spare program installations. Verify that the system's antivirus software has the most current virus signatures and that a virus scan was run recently.
Dirty or damaged CD	If the CD drive's LED remains on, and Setup is not progressing, try removing, cleaning, and then reinserting the installation CD. If prompted that a file was not copied, click the Retry button.
User permissions	If the installation can be run by an Administrator but cannot be run when the user is logged on with his or her own account, then the user does not have adequate permissions to install the program.
Corrupt profile	Corrupt user profiles can cause a whole assortment of problems with Microsoft Office, and Setup is not excluded. To see if this is the problem, log off the user, and rename the user's profile folder (located by default in C:\Documents and Settings\ <username>). Then have the user log back on. The user will get the default system profile. If installation runs successfully, the profile was the problem. Once installation is complete, you can make the user very happy by copying the contents of his original Favorites and My Documents folders in his corrupted profile to his new profile.</username>

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If after each of these checks Setup still does not respond, first pat the user on the back and let him know that his system is in overall good shape, and then take a look at the Setup log files.

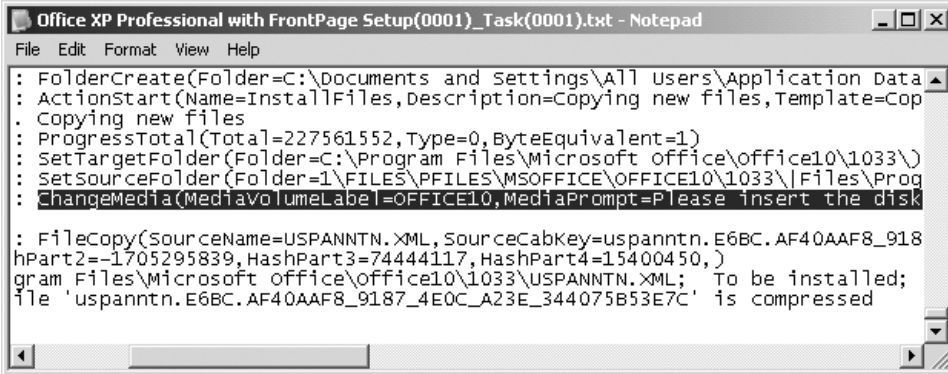
Using the Setup Log Files

At this point, you have found out quite a bit about what is running right on the system but have still not found the problem. The next ideal place to pinpoint the source of the problem is to look in the Setup log files. Often, they will lead you right to the encountered problem. When Setup is executed, three log files are generated:

- Setup.exe log—saved as “Office XP <Version> Setup(####).txt”
- Windows Installer Office Installation log—saved as “Office XP <Version> Setup(####)_Task(####).txt”
- Windows Installer System Files Update log—saved as “Office XP <Version> Setup(####)_Task(####).txt”

Normally, the System Files Update installation is not required, so it is likely that you will see only two pertinent log files. For example, for an Office XP Professional with FrontPage installation, these two log files would be created in the user’s Temp folder (Documents and Settings\<username>\Local Settings\Temp): “Office XP Professional with FrontPage Setup(0001).txt” and “Office XP Professional with FrontPage Setup(0001)_Task(0001).txt”.

The generic Setup log file normally does not contain much useful information, since it outlines the install options selected. When an installation problem is encountered, the Task logs are the best places to check. In Figure 6-6, an Office Installation Task log is



```

Office XP Professional with FrontPage Setup(0001)_Task(0001).txt - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
: FolderCreate(Folder=C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data
: ActionStart(Name=InstallFiles,Description=Copying new files,Template=Cop
. Copying new files
: ProgressTotal(Total=227561552,Type=0,ByteEquivalent=1)
: SetTargetFolder(Folder=C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office10\1033\
: SetSourceFolder(Folder=1\FILES\PFILES\MSOFFICE\OFFICE10\1033\|Files\Prog
: ChangeMedia(MediaVolumeLabel=OFFICE10,MediaPrompt=Please insert the disk
: FileCopy(SourceName=USPANNTN.XML,SourceCabKey=uspanntn.E6BC.AF40AAF8_918
hPart2=-1705295839,HashPart3=74444117,HashPart4=15400450,)
gram Files\Microsoft Office\Office10\1033\USPANNTN.XML; To be installed;
file 'uspanntn.E6BC.AF40AAF8_9187_4E0C_A23E_344075B53E7C' is compressed

```

Figure 6-6. Office Installation Windows Installer log

shown. This log file was examined after an Office installation failed while it was beginning to copy files. Note that the highlighted message indicates that the installation no longer believes that the Setup CD is in the CD-ROM drive. It was later determined that the CD-ROM drive had failed. The lesson learned here is that with the help of the Setup logs, you can quickly get pointed toward the direction of the actual problem.

When reading log files to find the source of a failure, don't read them like a story, starting at the top and working your way to the bottom. Since the logs are written chronologically, start at the bottom to read the most recent information and then work your way to the top. Information regarding the Setup failure is most likely going to be recorded at the end of the log file. If an error code is displayed when Setup terminated, you can find information related to the error by searching the log file for the error code. Events immediately before the code should contain useful information on the problem.

Access Errors and Solutions

When Access databases become corrupted, you have several methods to consider when attempting to recover their data. If the data is not very dynamic, the fastest approach is likely to restore the database from the most recent backup. On the other hand, if quite a bit of new data exists for the database, or if no recent backup exists, you have no alternative but to try to recover its data.

In your moment of misery, having to recover a damaged database under pressure, you can at least take satisfaction in the fact the Access is a very polite application, typically telling you the following before it crashes: "Microsoft Access has encountered a problem and needs to close. We are sorry for the inconvenience." To many, this is probably much more than a mere inconvenience, but at least Access is not laughing at you.

When an error is encountered, normally Access stops responding, and you may or may not receive an error message as a result. Regardless of the error you receive, you should first determine whether the problem is related to the Access application or to the database itself. The easiest way to do this is to restart Access and then open another database. If the problem is only associated with the single database, then you have a corrupted database to deal with, which requires a little more work. On the other hand, if the problem is happening with any database that is opened, consider it your lucky day, since all it means is that the Access installation is damaged. To repair a damaged Access installation, here are your alternatives.

- Open Access and use the Detect and Repair tool.
- Repair the Access installation by running Setup as was described earlier.
- Remove and then completely reinstall Office.

In addition to completing hanging the Access application, corrupted databases often exhibit the following behavior.

- Objects in the database cannot be accessed.
- Some records display *#Deleted*.

Most Access database corruption problems stem from its architecture. As a Microsoft Jet database, it does not use transaction logs, such as are used by enterprise-class databases such as SQL, Exchange, and Oracle.

The main reason for the lack of reliability stems from the fact that when logging is used, database writes can be temporarily stored in a transaction log file and later committed to the database during a period of less database activity. Without the transaction log, having multiple clients read and write data to and from the same database can lead to data corruption. For local databases that are only accessed by a single client, nonlogged databases have proven to be very reliable and thus still are used today for databases such as the DHCP and WINS databases on Windows servers.

If you lost your spot while reading this page, it is probably because the last paragraph put you to sleep. Let's not spend any more time discussing transaction logging and get to troubleshooting. When dealing with recovering a corrupted database, here are your alternatives to fix it.

- Use the Compact and Repair tool.
- Manually repair the corrupted portion of the database.

The next two sections address these recovery techniques.

Before attempting any recovery method, always make a backup copy of a corrupted database. This way, if one repair method fails, you still have another version of the original database to work with.

Using the Compact and Repair Tool

The quickest means to fix corruption in any Jet database is to compact it, and this rule is no exception with Access databases. When dealing with a corrupted database, you must first verify that it no longer has an .ldb file associated with it.

Consider the .ldb file to be the “hall monitor” for the database. For example, if a user named Juan was currently accessing the “water fountain” record, and another user attempted to write to the same record, Access would check the .ldb file and see that it is Juan's turn, and would politely tell the other user to wait a moment.

With the .ldb issue in mind, here is the general procedure for compacting a database.

1. Make a backup copy of the database.
2. Use Windows Explorer to locate the database file, and delete the associated .ldb version of the file, if it exists.
3. Open Access to compact and repair the database.

For example, if you had an Access database named FixMe.mdb, its .ldb partner would be named FixMe.ldb. Before compacting the database, you would delete FixMe.ldb.

With the preliminary steps out of the way, you can now get to the specifics of using Compact and Repair. To use this utility, follow these steps:

1. Open Access.
2. Click the Tools menu, select Database Utilities, and then click Compact and Repair Database.
3. In the Database to Compact From window, browse to and select the corrupted database file. Then click the Compact button.
4. In the Compact Database Into window, enter a new name for the compacted database and click Save.
5. Try to open the compacted database in Access. If the database corruption is no longer present, rename the compact file to the original database name.

Compact and Repair is generally the most reliable means to eliminate database corruption. If this tool was not successful, avoid playing the lottery today, and instead attempt one of the methods described next.

Manually Repairing a Database

At this point, you are at your last resort in dealing with the corrupted database. This section assumes that the database can at least be opened in Access and that a portion of the database is accessible. If not, your other option is to restore from the most recent backup version of the database file.

The manual repair process differs with the type of problem that needs to be fixed. In this section, you will see how to manually repair these three areas of database corruption:

- Problems running reports
- Problems with macros or modules
- Problems with a database table

Steps to resolve each of these three problem types are listed in the next three sections.

Problems Running Reports

If the problem is associated with a particular report or with one of its controls, the easiest resolution is to take these steps.

1. Delete the report.
2. Restore an earlier version of the database to an alternate location.
3. In Access, open the corrupted database.
4. Click the File menu, select Get External Data, and then click Import.
5. In the Import dialog box, locate and select the restored good database, and then click the Import button.
6. Click the Reports tab in the Import Objects dialog box. Then click the Options button.
7. Select a report and then choose the options needed to ensure that all aspects of the imported report apply to the corrupted database (selecting all options for a particular report is the safest).
8. When finished selecting the report import options (see Figure 6-7), click OK.
9. You should now see the report listed in the corrupted database.
10. Save the database as a new version. If the report functions properly, you have succeeded.

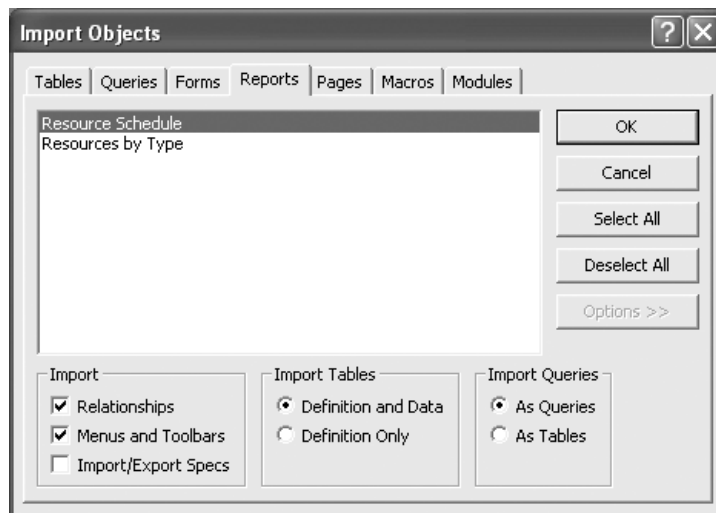


Figure 6-7. Selecting report import options

At this point, your database should be back to normal. If not, as a final alternative, you could start from scratch and re-create the corrupted report.

Problems with Macros or Modules

When the problem is with a macro or module associated with the database, you again have the option of deleting the corrupted macro and importing an earlier version of it from a restored version of the database. These are the steps to perform this process.

1. Delete the macro.
2. Restore an earlier version of the database to an alternate location.
3. In Access, open the corrupted database.
4. Click the File menu, select Get External Data, and then click Import.
5. In the Import dialog box, locate and select the restored good database, and then click the Import button.
6. Click the Macros tab in the Import Objects dialog box. Then click the Options button.
7. Select a macro and then choose the options needed to ensure that all aspects of the imported macro apply to the corrupted database (selecting all options for a particular report is the safest).
8. When finished selecting the macro import options, click OK.
9. You should now see the macro listed in the corrupted database.
10. Save the corrupted database as a new version. If the macro runs normally, your work is finished.

If importing the macro from a backup version of the database failed, or if a backup is not available, then also consider performing one of these actions.

- Create a new macro, and then copy the contents of the corrupted macro to the new one.
- Re-create a new macro from scratch.

Of course, re-creating anything from scratch is never the answer anyone is looking for, but it may be the only answer. Even if importing fails, remember that as long as some backup version exists for the original macro, then you have at the very least a baseline for creating the new macro.

Problems with a Database Table

If a particular database table is not acting as it should, or database corruption resulted from the creation of a new table, you may be able to repair the individual table to restore

the database to working order. This is the general procedure for repairing a database containing a corrupted table.

1. Open the database in Access and export the corrupted table to an ASCII (delimited text) file.
2. Delete any relationships associated with the table.
3. Delete the table.
4. Save the database, and then save a copy of the database to an alternate location (backup).
5. Compact and repair the database.
6. Re-create the table as well as any relationships that it had.
7. Open the exported table in Notepad.
8. Remove any out-of-place data from the file, and then resave the file. Note the data that had to be removed, since you will have to manually reenter it later.
9. Import the data from the text file to the new table.
10. Reenter any records that were removed from the exported text file.
11. Save the database.

With this approach, you have systematically removed the corrupt table and replaced it with a new version. Exporting and then reimporting the table's data allowed you to remove the table corruption without losing any of its data.

Excel Errors and Solutions

As with Access databases, Excel spreadsheets sometimes fall victim to data corruption. In addition to recovering from corruption, Excel-related troubleshooting often revolves around locating the source of an errant calculation. This section addresses two common Excel troubleshooting and fault resolution methods:

- Repairing corrupted spreadsheets
- Isolating and correcting formula errors

Repairing Corrupted Spreadsheets

When a user cannot open a spreadsheet, there are three paths that you can take to resolve the problem.

- Restore from backup.
- Repair the spreadsheet.
- Export the contents of the spreadsheet, and then manually re-create it.

Damaged spreadsheets can be repaired using the Excel Open and Repair feature. When you cannot access a spreadsheet, this should be your first course of action in the repair process. To repair the spreadsheet, you need to use the Office Open and Repair feature that was documented earlier in this chapter. With Excel, Open and Repair offers more options than when used in Word, allowing you the choice of repairing a damaged spreadsheet or extracting the data from the spreadsheet. When using Open and Repair, always try the Repair option first. If that option fails, then try to extract the data from the spreadsheet.

To repair a damaged spreadsheet, follow these steps:

1. Open Excel.
2. Click the File menu and then select Open.
3. Browse to and select the corrupted file, then click the Open drop-down menu, and select Open and Repair.
4. When prompted, click the Repair button (see Figure 6-8).

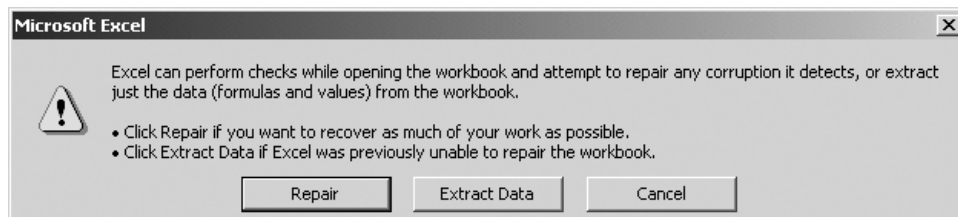


Figure 6-8. Excel Open and Repair options

The repaired spreadsheet should now open in Excel. If it did not open, your final choice is to try to extract the data from the spreadsheet. To do this, follow these steps.

1. Open Excel.
2. Click the File menu and then select Open.
3. Browse to and select the corrupted file, then click the Open drop-down menu, and select Open and Repair.
4. When prompted, click the Extract Data button.

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5. You now have two choices (see Figure 6-9), which are to either convert irrecoverable formulas to values or recover as many formulas as possible. If the formulas contained in the spreadsheet are of the most importance, select Recover Formulas; otherwise, select Convert to Values.
6. Excel should now open with some data recovered from the spreadsheet. At this time you will also be prompted with a hyperlink to the repair log file, as shown in Figure 6-10. Click the hyperlink to view the log file, and then close the Repair dialog box.

Unfortunately, when extracting data, you are only left with a plain spreadsheet containing the extracted data. Any graphics or formatting that was used in the original spreadsheet is lost.

Now that you have seen the ways to recover from corruption in Excel spreadsheets, next you will see how to overcome errors when using and manipulating formulas.

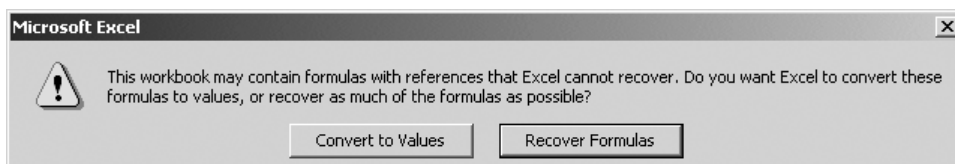


Figure 6-9. Open and Repair Extract Data options

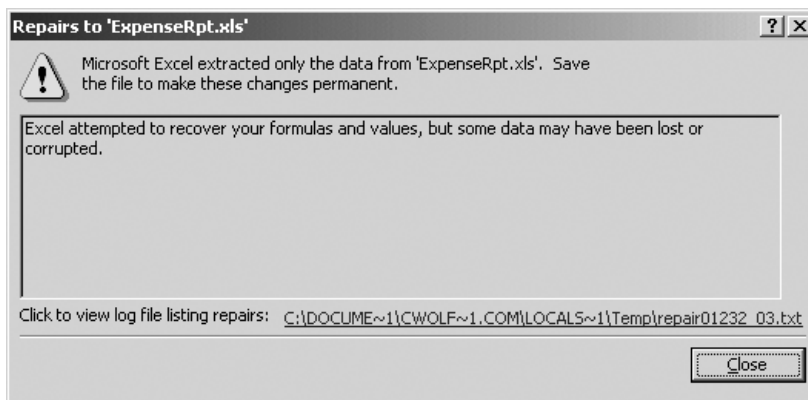


Figure 6-10. Repair log prompt

Isolating and Resolving Formula Errors

There are several available auditing tools that allow you to diagnose the cause of a problematic formula. Invalid formulas are generally easy to spot, since an error code is displayed in the formula's cell. The common Excel error codes are described in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3. Excel Cell Error Codes

Error	Related Problem(s)
#####	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Column is not wide enough. Time or date has a negative value.
#DIV/0!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number is divided by zero. Formula references a blank cell.
#N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value referenced by the formula is not available. Data is missing. Argument in an array formula is used that does not have the same amount of rows and columns as the range that contains the array formula.
#NAME?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text used in the formula is unrecognized. Name is misspelled. Another sheet is referenced that is not in quotes. Colon in a range reference is missing. Function that is part of the Analysis Toolpak (add-in) is used without the add-in loaded.
#NULL!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrect range operator is used. Ranges specified in a range operator do not intersect.
#NUM!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invalid numeric values are used in a formula or function.
#REF!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formula or function references an invalid cell. Cell referenced by other formulas was deleted. Link exists to a system or program that is not available.
#VALUE!	Incorrect argument or operand used (number expected, letter provided).

Sometimes, the source of an error is very obvious. For example, a column may be too small to represent a numerical value, or you may quickly spot a typographical error in a formula. Other times, however, finding the source of an error may be a bit more challenging. When you are stumped as to the source of an error, Excel provides the following tools to assist you:

- *Trace Precedents*—Shows formulas referenced by the selected formula
- *Trace Dependents*—Shows formulas that require the output of the selected formula

- *Trace Error*—Allows you to step through cell relationships to find the source of an error
- *Evaluate Formula*—Shows the progress of the outcome of a formula as it is calculated, allowing you to see the point in a formula where the error begins (like step-by-step confirmation at startup)

Each of these troubleshooting tools can be accessed by clicking the Tools menu and then selecting Formula Auditing and the desired tool. Each of these tools allows you to visually detect the source of a formula problem, letting you quickly get to its source.

Outlook Errors and Solutions

Once configured properly, Outlook is generally maintenance free. During the initial configuration or after a reinstallation, Outlook problems are most frequently reported. Unlike other Office applications, many external factors—such as network configuration, mail server configuration, and security configuration—can all contribute to the inability of a user to access his or her mailbox. In this section, you will see how to check for a correct Outlook configuration and how to diagnose a problem when one is encountered.

Testing Outlook Configuration

Outlook e-mail configuration can be tested during the initial mailbox setup (the first time Outlook is run) or from within Outlook. You can test the mail configuration during setup by clicking the Test Account Settings button in the E-mail Accounts dialog box (see Figure 6-11). You will then see the test results in the Test Account Settings dialog box, as shown in Figure 6-12. If all tests pass, you will see a green check next to each test. Failed tests are marked by a red X, and their related error messages are displayed under the Errors tab.

For accounts that are already created, you can access the mail account test from within Outlook. To do this, follow these steps.

1. From Outlook, click the Tools menu and select E-mail Accounts.
2. Select View or Change Existing E-mail Accounts and click Next.
3. Select the mail account to test, and click the Change button.
4. Now click the Test Account Settings button.
5. If all tests pass, close the E-mail Accounts dialog box; otherwise, resolve the configuration problem and then click the Test Account Settings button to verify that the configuration change resolved the problem.

The account settings test tells you that there is a problem but does not offer any advice on resolving it. If you're familiar with the typical department meeting environment,

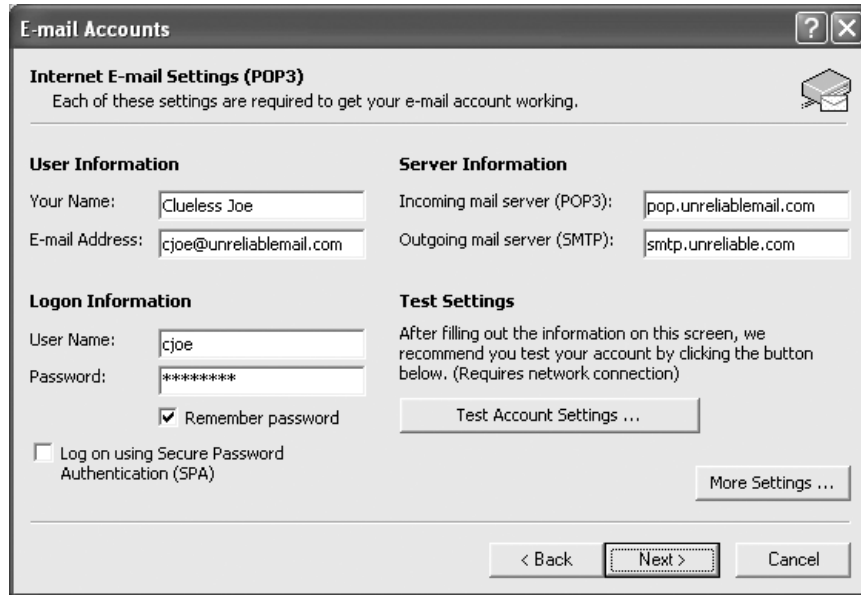


Figure 6-11. Testing e-mail account settings

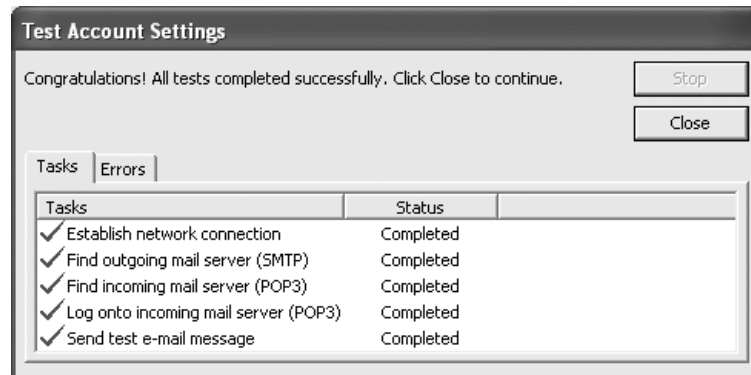


Figure 6-12. E-mail account test results

this is not much different from the average employee issuing a complaint but providing no alternative. If you don't get upset with your coworkers for acting this way, then don't get mad at Outlook either! At least it's telling you something.

Now that you know a problem exists, you need to identify it in order to correct it. Table 6-4 lists components to check based on the test that failed.

Table 6-4. Typical Problems for Failed Mail Setup Tests

Failed Test	Possible Problem(s)
Establish network connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCP/IP is not installed or is improperly configured. • An Internet connection is not present. • TCP/IP is not listed first in the network binding order.
Find outgoing mail server	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wrong server name was provided. • A name resolution problem exists (DNS, WINS, Hosts, LMHosts).
Find incoming mail server	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wrong server name was provided. • A name resolution problem exists (DNS, WINS, Hosts, LMHosts).
Log on to incoming mail server	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wrong account was provided or does not exist. • The wrong password was used. • The account was entered wrong (you may need to use the entire SMTP address: user@domain.com).
Send test e-mail message	<p>The mail server requires user authentication to send the message, and user credentials were not provided. Provide credentials for the outgoing server by following these steps.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the E-mail Accounts dialog box, click the More Settings button. 2. Click the Outgoing Server tab in the Internet E-mail Settings dialog box. 3. Check the My Outgoing Server Requires Authentication box, and then elect to use the same settings as the incoming server or manually enter the account information.

As you can see, several different failures can interrupt mail service. Always remember to start from the top and work to the bottom. So, if both the “Find outgoing...” and “Find incoming mail server” tests fail, verify that name resolution is working by pinging the POP and SMTP (or Exchange) servers by fully qualified domain name. If the ping fails, then try to ping by IP address. If pinging by IP address fails, then you have a network connectivity or TCP/IP configuration (subnet) problem. If the IP address ping passed, then the problem is with the name resolution used. Name resolution can be fixed by verifying that the user has the proper name servers listed in her system’s TCP/IP properties. After correcting any DNS issue, remember to run `ipconfig /flushdns` on the user’s system to clear the contents of its DNS resolver cache; otherwise, the problem will persist.

Some mail servers may be configured to ignore the Outlook test message, so if all other tests pass and the "Send test e-mail message" test fails, there may be nothing wrong with the mail configuration. Save the configuration, and then send a message from the account to itself. If the mail is sent and received, the account is set up properly.

PowerPoint Errors and Solutions

Corrupted PowerPoint presentations are the most common problem encountered by users running PowerPoint. When corruption is encountered, the user is presented with one of the following symptoms or error messages:

- "Part of the file is missing"
- "PowerPoint cannot open the type of file represented by ..."
- "This is not a PowerPoint presentation"

These errors all point directly to the PowerPoint presentation being accessed by the user, but some error messages may not be as obvious, including:

- General Protection Fault
- Illegal instruction
- Invalid page fault
- Low system resources
- Out of memory

As you can see, many PowerPoint presentation errors may be masked as other errors, which is again why the user interview is so important. If the problem occurred when a presentation file was being opened, you can try to duplicate the error by having the user open the same and subsequently different presentation files. If the errors are only displayed when a particular file is opened, then you can assume that the cause of the error is file corruption. When this occurs, the easiest solution is often to restore the file from a known good backup. If a backup does not exist, or if the backup version is corrupted as well, then you will have a little more work to do.

First, you need to determine the cause of the problem before weighing other solutions. To arrive at the cause, ask the user each of the following questions, until you get a "Yes" answer.

- Did the problem occur during or after the time something was added to the presentation?
- Does the problem occur when a specific file is opened?
- Does the problem occur when any file is opened?

When the Problem Resulted from a Modification to the Presentation

The type of problem may be the result of the user attempting to copy and paste a new page or object into the presentation. If the problem only exists when accessing a particular slide, you have several choices.

- Delete and then manually re-create the slide.
- Copy all slides in the presentation, and paste them into a new presentation.
- Copy portions of the corrupted slide to a new slide, and then delete the corrupted slide.

Regardless of which action you take to resolve the corruption problem, you should also consider saving the presentation file as a new version, just in case the existing version is on the brink of corruption. When an entire presentation file becomes corrupted, the corrective action involved in resolving the problem is much more detailed than corruption in a single slide and is discussed next.

When the Problem Resulted from a Specific File Being Opened

Problems associated with a single file are easily identified, since you can quickly open a different file with the PowerPoint application to verify the limitation of the problem. As long as all other files open without incident, you are only concerned with repairing a single file, as opposed to correcting a corrupt PowerPoint installation.

There are several ways to go about extracting useful data from a corrupt presentation file, each of which is described in the next three sections. If none of these solutions can save the corrupted presentation, then your last alternative is to restore an earlier version of the presentation from the most recent backup.

Open Presentation Version in Temp Folder

AutoRecover versions are saved in the Temp folder located with the user's profile. By default, the Temp folder resides in the Documents and Settings\<Username>\Local Settings directory. Presentation files saved in this folder begin with the characters PPT followed by four numbers and have the .tmp extension.

The easiest way to locate these files on a user's XP system is to follow these steps.

1. Click Start and then select Search.
2. Select All Files and Folders.
3. Now click More Advanced Options and select the Search Hidden Files and Folders checkbox.
4. In the All or Part of the File Name field, enter PPT* .tmp as the search criteria, select to look in the C drive, and then click the Search button.

5. All autosaved PowerPoint files should now appear in the right pane of the Search Results window. Click the Date Modified column to sort the files by date, which should make it easier for you to spot the needed file.
6. Once you locate a file, click its name once, and then click it again. You should now be able to rename the file. Rename the file anything you want, but make sure to change its extension to .ppt.
7. Double-click the file to attempt to open it.

Even after you locate the autosaved file, there are no guarantees that PowerPoint can even open it. If the file opens and its data is intact, your work is finished. Otherwise, you can either throw in the towel here and restore from backup or attempt one of the next two methods shown in this section to recover data from the original file.

Extract Corrupted Slides

Another method for recovering data from a corrupted PowerPoint presentation file is to open a new blank presentation and attempt to extract the slides from the corrupted presentation file. This can be done by performing these steps.

1. Open PowerPoint, click the Insert menu, and then select Slides from Files.
2. In the Slide Finder dialog box, click the Browse button and locate the corrupted file. Then click Open in the Browse window.
3. You should now see the presentation file displayed in the File field and its slides displayed in the Select Slides portion of the window. If no slides are displayed, this method will not work for you, and you should move on to the third method, described in the next section.
4. Click the Select All button to import all slides, or use the Ctrl key and your mouse to select the slides that you would like to import. If work on the last slide is the suspected cause of the corruption, then select all slides but the last. When finished selecting the slides to import, check the Keep Source Formatting checkbox, and then click the Insert button (see Figure 6-13).
5. With the slides imported into the new presentation, you can now delete the first slide (which should be blank) and then save the new presentation.

With your extraction operation complete, you can now exhale, especially if you were working without a safety net and had no available backup to fall back on.

Apply Corrupted Presentation as a Template

If both the first two methods failed, your last hope is to recover the slide master. If the corrupted presentation was the only file that used an original important master slide

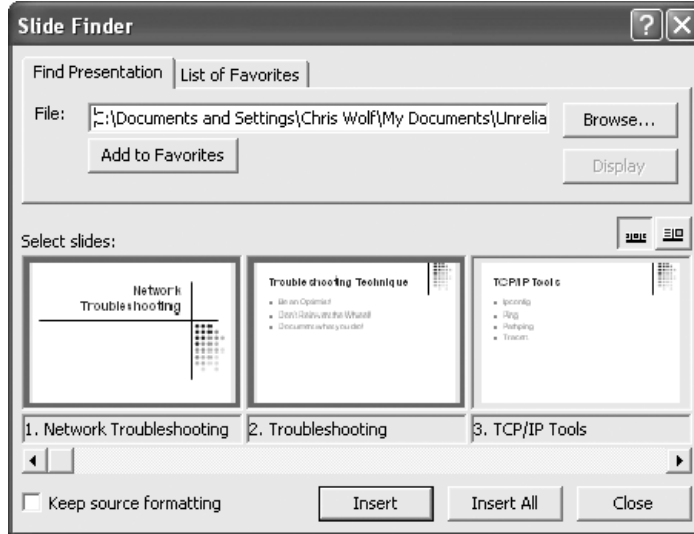


Figure 6-13. Importing slides using the Slide Finder dialog box

template, then you can use this method to attempt to recover the master. To do this, follow these steps.

1. Open PowerPoint, click the Format menu, and then select Slide Design.
2. You should now see the Slide Design window displayed on the right side of the PowerPoint window. At the bottom of the Slide Design window, click Browse.
3. Browse to and select the corrupted presentation file and then click Apply.
4. The slide master from the corrupted presentation replaces the slide master for the new presentation.

If you could not recover any portion of the corrupted file, then your last choice is to turn to your trusty backup and restore the last backed-up version of the file, or you can kindly instruct the user to start all over, declaring the corrupted presentation file deceased and alerting the user that it will be given a proper burial.

When the Problem Resulted from Any File Being Opened

If you cannot open any PowerPoint files, then pump your fist in victory because this is the easiest PowerPoint problem to correct. After all, the worst scenario that you are faced with when no files can open in PowerPoint is to reinstall Office from scratch.

When the PowerPoint installation is damaged, you can manually initiate a Detect and Repair process to correct the problem, or you can rerun Setup to repair the application. Regardless of how you perform the repair or reinstallation, the user's Office application will be restored and no presentation data will be lost.

Word Errors and Solutions

Word is arguably the most powerful and certainly the most diverse Office application. Due to its diversity, however, it is also the most problematic. This is not because of poor design or even a lack of reliability but because of the fact that so many other Office components can be integrated into it, including spreadsheets, graphics, and voice. Some compare the architecture of Word to how newer expensive cars are built. When you buy a new car with "power everything," you are buying a lot more items that have the potential to break. The same can be said of Word, with the only difference being that your "options" were already chosen for you.

This portion of the chapter is divided into two sections:

- Resolving Problems with the Support.dot Troubleshooting Template
- General Word Troubleshooting

Due to the frequent necessity for support personnel to troubleshoot Word problems, Microsoft created a troubleshooting template for it. This first part of this section shows you how to install and use the template. Following the template section, you will then see how to approach and resolve the most common Word problems.

Resolving Problems with the Support.dot Troubleshooting Template

Sometimes problems can be quickly spotted and resolved, while others are more complex. To aid in solving Word problems, Microsoft has included several macros in the Support.dot template. There are three macros included with the template, which are described in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5. Troubleshooting Template Macros

Macro	Use
AutoCorrect Backup	Allows you to back up the AutoCorrect list on one system and then use the macro on another system to restore it.
Registry Options	Provides an easy means to modify Word Registry settings.
Troubleshoot Utility	Provides a means to troubleshoot and repair Word startup problems.

If you performed a complete installation of Microsoft Word, the template is already installed on the user's system. If not, you need to manually install the template.

Installing the Troubleshooting Template

Since the template is not installed by default, odds are that you will have to manually install it on most systems. For mass deployment, the best choice is to deploy the Office update using a group policy. Regardless of how you deploy the template, the method for installing it on a user's system or test system is still the same.

To install the troubleshooting template, follow these steps.

1. Close Microsoft Word and all Office applications.
2. From the Control Panel, double-click the Add/Remove Programs icon.
3. Select the Microsoft Office installation and then click the Change button.
4. Select Add or Remove Features and click Next.
5. In the Features to Install field, expand the Microsoft Word for Windows object and then expand the Wizards and Templates object.
6. Now select the More Templates and Macros icon and select Run All from My Computer.
7. Finally, click the Update button to revise the Microsoft Word installation.

Once the template is installed, you can put it to use.

Using the Troubleshooting Template

To use the troubleshooting template, you must first open Word in Safe Mode. To do this, click Start > Run, type `winword.exe /a`, and press Enter. Once Word has started, follow these steps to open the template.

1. Click the File menu and select Open.
2. In the Open dialog box, click the Files of Type field and select Document Templates.
3. Now click the Look In field and browse to the following folder: <Office installation drive>\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office 10\Macros.
4. You should now see the Support.dot template file. Click the file and then click Open.
5. If you receive a security warning, click the "Always trust macros from this source" checkbox and then click Enable Macros.

Once the template has opened, you are ready to troubleshoot.

Using the Troubleshoot Utility

The Troubleshoot Utility is used to solve Word startup problems. This macro accomplishes this by allowing you to revert particular files and startup settings to their default

values. One of the problems with restoring settings to their default values is that any custom configuration data set up by the user is lost. With this template, only damaged data is lost. For example, if you thought that the default startup template, Normal.dot, was the source of the problem, you could test your theory by replacing this file with the default. If your repair did not help, then you could restore the previous version of the template, taking the Word installation right back to the point where it was when you first started troubleshooting.

With this utility, you can systematically replace Word startup files one at a time until you find which one is bad. At the end, only the problem files will be replaced and all others will be in their user-specific configuration. If you're still a little confused about how and when to use this tool, you must first understand the files that are loaded when Word starts, which are

1. Data Registry key
2. Normal.dot global template
3. Add-ins and templates
4. COM add-ins
5. Options Registry key

If any of these components are corrupted, Word is not likely to start. When you run `winword.exe /a`, none of these files are loaded. If Word starts with the `/a` switch but doesn't start without it, then the problem is definitely in one of the five configuration files, and you should resolve the problem by running the Troubleshoot Utility. If Word still does not start with the `/a` switch, then you should repair the Word installation using Detect and Repair or by running Office Setup.

Determining the startup file that is the cause of the corruption requires a systematic approach. The easiest way to find the problem is to disable one startup file at a time until the problem does not return. To incorporate this process to find a faulty startup file, follow these steps.

1. As was described earlier in this section, start Word in Safe Mode (`winword.exe /a`) and open the Support.dot template.
2. In the Support.dot template, click the Troubleshoot Utility button.
3. As shown in Figure 6-14, select Data Registry Key in the Select an Item field and then click Delete.
4. When prompted about the location of the backup Registry key, click OK.
5. Click Close to exit the Troubleshoot Utility.
6. Close Word.
7. Start Word normally

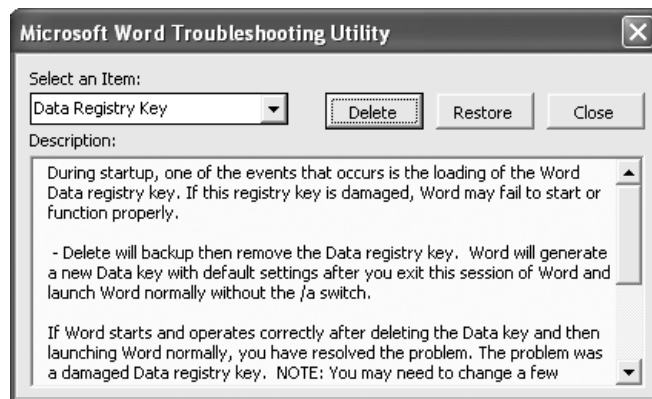


Figure 6-14. Using the Troubleshoot Utility to repair Word

If Word starts normally, the problem is fixed. If not, you need to restore the old Registry settings and then check to see if the Normal.dot template is causing the problem. This involves performing the following steps.

1. Close Word.
2. Run `winword.exe /a` to start Word in Safe Mode. Then open the Support.dot template.
3. In the Support.dot template, click the Troubleshoot Utility button.
4. Select Data Registry Key in the Select an Item field and click the Restore button.
5. When prompted that the Registry key restoration was successful, click OK.
6. Now select Normal.dot Global Template in the Select an Item field and click Rename. When prompted with the new name for the template, click OK.
7. Click Close to exit the Troubleshoot Utility.
8. Close Word.
9. Start Word normally.

If Word starts normally, your work is now finished; if not, you now know that the Normal.dot template file is fine, and it's on to check number 3.

1. Close Word.
2. Run `winword.exe /a` to start Word in Safe Mode. Then open the Support.dot template.
3. In the Support.dot template, click the Troubleshoot Utility button.

4. Select Normal.dot Global Template in the Select an Item field and click the Restore button.
5. When prompted that the backup template was copied over the default template, click OK.
6. Now select Word Startup Folder Add-ins in the Select an Item field and click Rename. When prompted with the new name for the Add-ins, click OK.
7. Click Close to exit the Troubleshoot Utility.
8. Close Word.

Start Word normally. If Word does not start, you can conclude that the Add-ins were not corrupt and can proceed to the fourth check.

1. Close Word.
2. Run `winword.exe /a` to start Word in Safe Mode. Then open the Support.dot template.
3. In the Support.dot template, click the Troubleshoot Utility button.
4. Select Word Startup Folder Add-ins in the Select an Item field and click the Restore button.
5. When prompted that the Add-ins were restored successfully, click OK.
6. Now select COM Add-ins Registry Key in the Select an Item field and click Delete. When prompted that the Registry key has been deleted, click OK.
7. Click Close to exit the Troubleshoot Utility.
8. Close Word.

Again you need to attempt to start Word normally. If Word does not start, and you are sure that it would initially start with the `/a` switch, then there is only one other potential problem. To rid yourself of this problem, follow these steps.

1. Close Word.
2. Run `winword.exe /a` to start Word in Safe Mode. Then open the Support.dot template.
3. In the Support.dot template, click the Troubleshoot Utility button.
4. Select COM Add-ins Registry Key in the Select an Item field and click the Restore button.
5. When prompted that the Registry key restoration was successful, click OK.
6. Now select Options Registry Key in the Select an Item field and click Delete. When prompted that the Registry key has been deleted, click OK.

7. Click Close to exit the Troubleshoot Utility.
8. Close Word.

For the last time, start Word normally. You should see that at this point Word starts without incident. As you have witnessed, not only is this tool terrific in isolating and fixing a Word problem, but it also employs a systematic “textbook” approach to troubleshooting.

Using Registry Options

Suppose that a Registry problem has caused Word to stop responding, but you don’t want to completely delete the Word Registry keys, leaving you with the default settings. If you want to manually attempt to patch the Word Registry values, you can do so with the Registry Options tool. Not only does this tool make modifying the Word Registry parameters easy, but it also explains the purpose of each Registry value to you, making it difficult to make an editing mistake.

To use this tool, follow these steps.

1. Start Word normally and then open the Support.dot template.
2. In the Support.dot template, click the Registry Options button.
3. Now you can select the option you plan to modify and view a description of it at the bottom of the Set Registry Options dialog box.
4. If needed, change the data for the option in the Setting field and click Change (see Figure 6-15).
5. When finished modifying the Word Registry settings, click close and exit the Registry Options tool.

When you want to quickly modify a user’s custom Word settings, nothing is faster than the Registry Options tool. The last tool offered by the Support.dot template is AutoCorrect Backup.

Using AutoCorrect Backup

If you would like to take a user’s custom AutoCorrect settings and apply them to another user’s profile, then the AutoCorrect Backup utility is the perfect tool for the job. Due to its limited role, this is the least frequently used of the Support.dot tools, but is nonetheless valuable.

To export AutoCorrect settings with this tool, follow these steps.

1. Start Word normally and then open the Support.dot template.
2. In the Support.dot template, click the AutoCorrect Backup button.
3. In the AutoCorrect Utility dialog box, click the Backup button.

4. Select a name and location for the backup file in the Save As dialog box and click Save.
5. Click Cancel to close the AutoCorrect Utility dialog box.

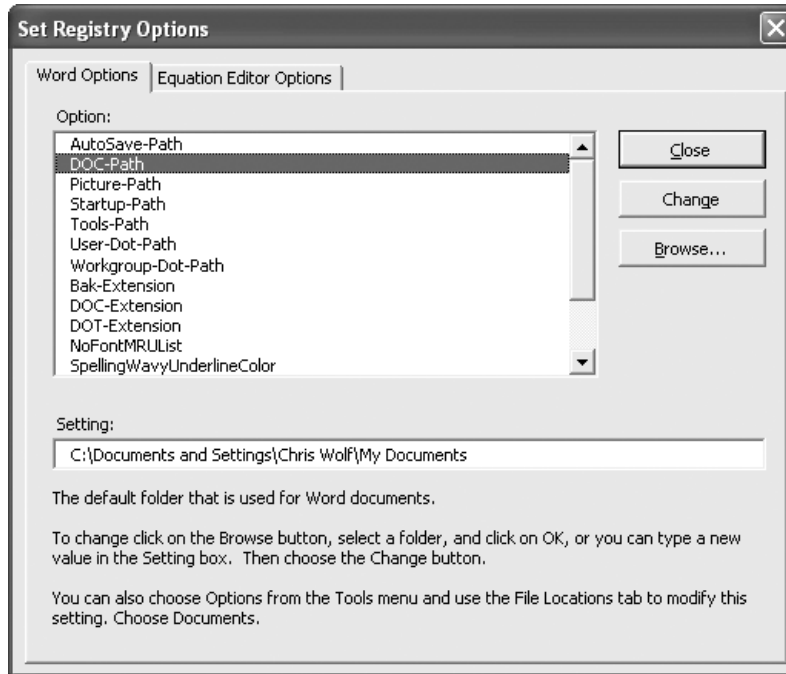


Figure 6-15. Modifying Word Registry values with the Registry Options tool

Once the AutoCorrect configuration has been saved to the network or to portable media, you can import the configuration for another user's profile. Have the user log on, and then follow these steps.

1. Start Word normally and then open the Support.dot template.
2. In the Support.dot template, click the AutoCorrect Backup button.
3. In the AutoCorrect Utility dialog box, click the Restore button.
4. When prompted that this will replace the current AutoCorrect entries, click Yes.
5. Browse to and select the AutoCorrect backup file to import and click Open.
6. When prompted that the restore is complete, click OK.

7. Click Cancel to close the AutoCorrect Utility dialog box.
8. Close the Support.dot template.

Now that you have seen the value of Support.dot, the all-around troubleshooting tool, let's look at how to solve other Word problems that cannot be corrected with Support.dot.

General Word Troubleshooting

For general corruption of the Word application that cannot be fixed with the Troubleshoot Utility, don't forget about using Detect and Repair to correct the application problem. If a Word document is corrupted and will not open, then try to use the Open and Repair tool to fix the file; otherwise, you need to restore it from backup.

Since the Word application's scope extends far beyond the Word application itself, you may find that the source of a Word problem has little to do with Word. When Word fails and starts to give up on you, or you receive the error "Microsoft Word has encountered a problem and needs to close," you should first close Word and then restart the application. If the problem does not return once the document is reopened, there is little troubleshooting that you can do at this point. If the problem returns, look to the faults and related problems listed in Table 6-6 as your means to resuscitate Word.

Table 6-6. Word Problems and Probable Faults

Problem (Error)	Probable Faults and Solutions
Error occurs when printing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad printer driver. • Download an updated or correct printer driver from the printer manufacturer. If one does not exist, it's time to upgrade the printer.
Error occurs while typing or moving the mouse (mouse pointer skips across the screen).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad video driver. • Download an updated or correct video driver. • Not enough memory—add RAM.
Error occurs while typing text into a document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrupt user dictionary. • Corrupt AutoCorrect file. • Corrupt fonts. • Corrupt spelling and grammar files.

For problems occurring while the user is typing text, you have to determine which of four likely faults is the source. Remember that Word checks your work as you're typing, so when errors occur at this time, the cause of the problem is usually related to one of the files used while Word autochecks your work. When these types of errors occur, the easiest approach to resolving them is to systematically replace the files involved until the

problem disappears. In the next four sections, we begin with replacing the dictionary and finish with replacing the spelling and grammar files.

Replacing Corrupt User Dictionaries

When Word stops responding while the user is editing a document, begin by closing Word and all other Office programs, and then follow these steps to replace the dictionary.

1. Click Start and then select Search.
2. Select All Files and Folders, then scroll down, and select More Advanced Options.
3. Check the Search Hidden Files and Folders box.
4. Scroll back up and enter *.dic in the All or Part of the File Name field, make sure that Local Hard Drives is selected in the Look In field, and then click Search.
5. The search should return a list of Custom.dic files. Locate the file that resides in the profile folder for the user having the problem, right-click the file, and select Rename.
6. Enter a new name for the file, such as Custombak.dic, and press Enter.
7. Restart Word and try to edit the document. If the problem disappears, your work is finished. If not, the custom dictionary file was not corrupted, so you can repeat steps 1–5 to find the .dic files. This time, delete the new Custom.dic file in the user's profile and rename the backup version back to Custom.dic.

If replacing the user's custom dictionary file did not solve the problem, your next option is to try to replace the AutoCorrect file.

Replacing Corrupt AutoCorrect Files

To replace a user's AutoCorrect file, close Word and all Office applications, and then follow these steps.

1. Click Start and then select Search.
2. Select All Files and Folders, then scroll down, and select More Advanced Options.
3. Check the Search Hidden Files and Folders box.
4. Scroll back up and enter *.acl in the All or Part of the File Name field, make sure that Local Hard Drives is selected in the Look In field, and then click Search.
5. The search should return a list of MSO###.acl files (for example, MSO1033.acl). Locate the file that resides in the profile folder for the user having the problem, right-click the file, and select Rename.

6. Enter a new name for the file, such as MSO1033bak.acl, and press Enter.
7. Restart Word and try to edit the document. If the problem disappears, your work is finished. If not, the AutoCorrect file was not corrupted, so you can repeat steps 1–5 to find the .acl files. This time, delete the new MSO####.acl file in the user's profile and rename the backup version back to its original name, such as MSO1033.acl. If you did not try to access the AutoCorrect Options from the Word Tools menu, a new .acl file might not have been created. If this is the case, just rename the .bak version of the file back to its original name.

Some Microsoft documentation states that you should not rename any MSO####.acl files. This is incorrect. In fact, there is normally only one MSO####.acl file in each user's profile, so it is the only .acl file that you would have a choice to rename to replace a corrupt AutoCorrect file.

Replacing Corrupt Fonts

If the AutoCorrect file was not the source of the Word problem, then your next option is to assume that the font being used is corrupt and replace it. Unlike the previous two problems, a corrupt font affects all users running Word on the system, not just a single user. Fonts are installed on computers and are not unique to users using the computer. When a font is suspected as the fault, you should first make a list of the fonts used in the document and then replace the fonts one at a time until the problem disappears. To replace a corrupt font, follow these steps.

1. Open the Control Panel and double-click the Fonts icon.
2. Find the suspect font, and then drag and drop it onto the Desktop. This removes it from the installed fonts without deleting it.
3. Open Word. Since the font is no longer installed, it is replaced in the document with another font. If the problem is resolved, then run Detect and Repair to repair the Office installation. The font will be replaced during this process, and you can delete the instance of the font that appears on the desktop.
4. If the problem still exists, then reopen the Fonts folder in the Control Panel and drag the font that was moved to the Desktop back to the Fonts folder. Next, move another font contained in the document to the Desktop, and repeat step 3 to see if the problem is resolved.

If replacing the suspected corrupted font did not resolve the problem, your last option is to replace corrupt spelling or grammar files, since by default they are also queried while a user is editing a document.

Replacing Corrupt Spelling and Grammar Files

To replace corrupt spelling and grammar files, follow these steps.

1. Open Word, click the Tools menu, and select Options.
2. Click the Spelling and Grammar tab in the Options dialog box.
3. Now clear the Check Spelling as You Type and Check Grammar as You Type checkboxes and click OK.

If the problem goes away after you disable the spelling and grammar checking tools, then you can fix the corruption by running Detect and Repair.

Summary

As you have witnessed, manually diagnosing and repairing Office corruption problems is a lengthy process. When the problem is associated with a single user, you may want to simply rename the user's profile folder. To do this, log the user off, rename the user's folder in the Documents and Settings folder, and then have the user log back on. If the problem disappears, then it was embedded in the user's profile. To make the user happy, you can copy his Favorites and My Documents folder contents into his new profile and copy his Outlook.pst file into his new profile, if e-mail is stored locally. While there is always a way to identify the exact cause of a problem, it doesn't always make the most business sense.

Detect and Repair often allows you to quickly repair Office application problems, and when document corruption rears its ugly head, don't forget about the Open and Repair tools available in Word and Excel. When diagnosing and repairing Office problems, remember to use the right tool for the job and use the right process when troubleshooting. You cannot go wrong with the systematic "checklist" approach for eliminating what's right. Eventually, you will find the fault. When dealing with Office corruption, always remember to refrain from wanting to flex your troubleshooting muscle when diagnosing a problem. All too often, the 30 minutes of work lost by the user results in two or more hours of diagnosis and repair. If a backup exists for a corrupted file, and only noncritical data that can easily be replaced will be lost, use the backup. If you really want to practice troubleshooting in a non-mission-critical situation, remember "That's what friends and family are for!"

A great way to prevent corruption problems with Office documents from ruining everyone's day is to educate users to get in the habit of saving documents daily using the Save As feature instead of simply using Save. For daily versions, the user could use Save As, then enter the regular name of the file, followed by a hyphen and then the name of the day. This way, the most work that will ever be lost due to corruption will be that of a single day.

