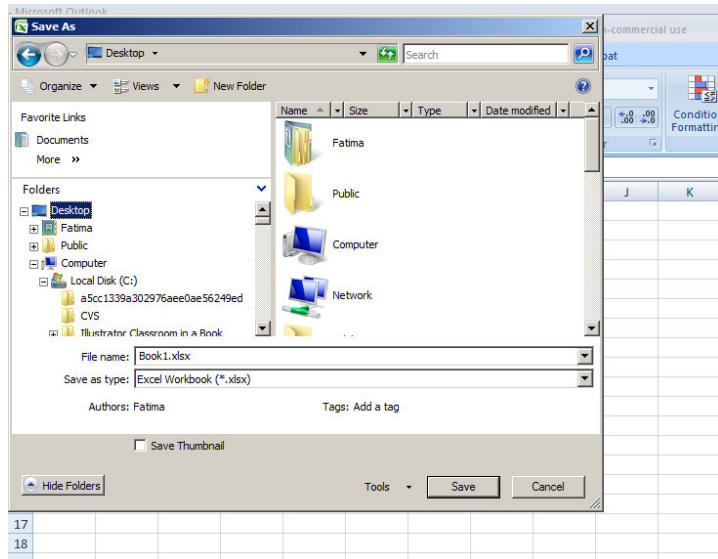


## How do I format my file?

Formatting your file is dependent on a couple of variables.

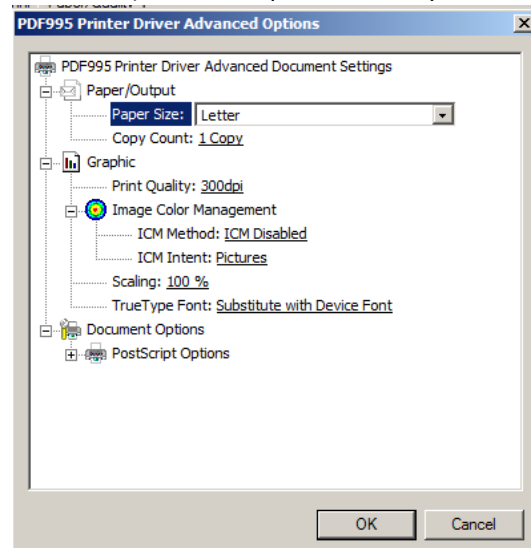
1. What **software program AND version** is your file created? And does the person/people you want to share the file with have the same program and version? If you answered, "I don't know" then it helps you to explore the path of the file. For example, if you have a spreadsheet created in Excel 2007 and you are sharing it with clients that have a previous version, they will not be able to open the Excel 2007 saved file.

Ask the end user of the file what program version he/she has and then save accordingly. When saving the file, select "FILE > SAVE AS >" and in the "Save as Type" pull down menu, select the appropriate setting/version. This works with just about any software program and it's good to click on that pull-down and see what options are available.



2. Now, if you want to **share a document universally** with various people, maybe post something on your website for viewers to download, you will want to use Portable Document Format, most commonly known as PDF. Most websites come equipped with Adobe Acrobat Reader already installed making it easy for you to launch a PDF at the click of the button. But, creating a PDF document is a little more challenging. You can purchase Adobe Acrobat that gives you a variety of features to enhance your document. However, there are free services out there that you can test drive with very minimal inconveniences such as [www.pdf995.com](http://www.pdf995.com) (for more information on PDF visit [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com) the creators of PDF). Some computers will let you RIGHT click on the file (in your folder/drive browser screen) and select "Convert to ADOBE PDF"

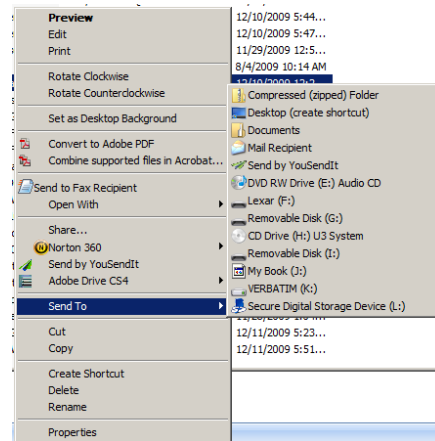
3. The other variable is **file size**. As we know the large files seem to kill e-mail exchange servers and most often times crash during the upload/download. If you are sending an image file to a printer that requires a 300 dpi, then make sure to not reduce the resolution as this will visibly affect the final product. If output resolution is not critical you are able to shrink the file size down. For example, with a file saved as a PDF, when you are "printing" you can elect the resolution to a lower number. Typically, this setting can be in the Advanced Options of your PDF driver menu. Simply



change your PRINT QUALITY from 300 dpi to 144 or even 72dpi (for PDF to view on the web). Keep in mind what the final use of the file will be. Another way to bring down the file size is to “ZIP” – or PC users or “COMPRESS” for Mac users. (*File size is a chapter’s worth discussion; this is just a rule of thumb to help you with understanding File Format.*)

**PC Users:**

On Windows, RIGHT click on the file or folder and then select “SEND TO > Compressed (Zipped) Folder. This will create another file with the same name, but the icon will have a “zipper” on it.



**Mac Users:**

RIGHT click on the file or folder and then select “Compress [FILENAME]”

Most times, the file size will be impacted significantly. However, there are times the file size is not impacted very much at all.

There are also services if you do file exchange of large files. Companies such as [www.YouSendIt.com](http://www.YouSendIt.com) give you a free trial so you can try it out.

**Quick Check List**

- How will the file I’m sharing be used? Print, web, editable, etc. The answer to these questions will dictate what you can and cannot do to the file.
- Is the file in final version? If you do not want others to make edits to the document, you can lock (within the software) the file or make it a PDF which are “snapshots” of the document.
- What is the recipient needing from you with this file? Know who is using it and how they will use it will help you decide the best format for your file.
- When in doubt, ask. Most people I come in contact prefer to give the steps needed to get it done then waste time on letting you try to troubleshoot and hopefully figure it out.