

Standard Formats and Versions

A successful online learning environment should invite the student to your subject rather than create a barrier to learning. This means that, as far as possible, students should be able to use common and low-cost software to access and work with your course materials. These tools should be standardized, wherever possible, across the institution to avoid unnecessary duplication, expense, and the additional time and effort to use different kinds of software.

This means that course content should generally meet standard formats and versions so that students have the greatest flexibility in the hardware and software that they can use. Unless the course demands very specific technologies, students should generally be able to handle the course content whether they are working on computers running Windows XP, Windows Vista, Macintosh OS X, or Linux operating systems. The following formats and versions cover most common requirements.

Office Applications

Students use **Office 2003**, **Office 2007**, and **Open Office**.

Office 2007 or 2003 formats should be readable in all cases, and allow students to open and easily modify your content. You may also wish to use **PDF** or **RTF** formats.

Interactive Multimedia

Wherever you have the choice, use the following formats to ensure that your students can easily view your media:

For videos: **MOV**

For audio: **MP3**

For interactive applications: **SWF** (Flash)