

# Get the lowdown on Office downloads

Applies to: Microsoft Office Access 2007, Excel 2007, OneNote 2007, Outlook 2007, PowerPoint 2007, Publisher 2007, Word 2007, Access 2003, Excel 2003, OneNote 2003, Outlook 2003, PowerPoint 2003, Publisher 2003, Word 2003

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**Crabby Office Lady**

**Sometimes you just need a little something to tide you over until a new version of Office is released: an add-in, an update, a white paper to prevent your Office programs from going all flabby on you. A nip here, a tuck there ... a quick visit to Office downloads can make you feel alive again.**

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Think of a trip to the [Microsoft Office Downloads](#) Web site like a trip to the bank, the grocery store, or even the cosmetic surgeon: Sometimes you just need to boost your power, stock up on necessities, or perhaps add a little fluff and well-being to your computing lifestyle. Office offers a variety of downloads designed to give you all of that and much, much more.

There's a significant difference between a trip to Office Downloads and a trip to, say, the plastic surgeon: All of our downloads are free. That's right: F-R-E-E. As in complimentary, gratis. On the other hand, as I view it, there are two parallels between plastic surgery and Office downloads:

1. Certain cosmetic procedures (Botox injections, liposuction, chemical peels) and certain Office downloads ([PowerPoint Viewer 2007](#), [Office Sounds](#), and [Microsoft Save As PDF or XPS](#)) tend to be more popular than the other offerings among the general population.
2. Conversely, certain cosmetic procedures (such as buttocks implants) and certain Office downloads (such as the [Microsoft Visual Keyboard add-in](#), where you can type in more than one language on the same computer) are often overlooked, hidden gems — things that you should perhaps explore more fully before passing judgment.

## Define the terms

If you're a regular Crabby reader, you know that I sometimes like to define some terms before jumping into the topic at hand. That way I know we're all on the same page. Rather than pelt all of you with that dry information, I've stuck it on a different page that you can refer to at your leisure: [Gimme the lowdown on downloads: Defining the terms](#).

## The how, when, and where of downloads and installations

Now that we have some of the major terms figured out, when it comes to how to find, when to find, and where to find Office downloads, I'm here to tell you that there is more than one way to skin a cat. However, being a lover of all animals (except Lancey, the next-door-cat who snatched a baby bird from its nest right in front of my daughter), I won't be sharing that information with you today (even if I knew, myself — which I don't ... and isn't that a shame for baby birds everywhere). I can, however, give you some advice — or at least ideas — about the how, when, and where of Office downloads.

### Keeping up with the Gateses

If you want to stay on top of the latest and greatest updates — the ones you **MUST** have to ensure that you're running the safest and most secure software possible — for any version of Office, the best thing to do is use Office Updates.

If you don't know if you're up-to-date, there are a few ways to check:

- **Microsoft Update** If you are running Windows Vista, Windows Update is now included in Control Panel. To check for updates: Click the **Start** button, click **Programs**, and then click **Windows Update**.
- **Office Update** This service is maintained to support versions of Office older than Office 2007, and for compatibility with operating systems older than Windows Vista. Go directly to the [Microsoft Office Downloads Home Page](#), and under the yellow **Check for Microsoft Updates** button (on the top right-hand side of the page) click the link **Office Update: Get additional Office Updates**. Again, note that if you are running Vista, this is not the link to click (and you'll receive a message stating as such). You can also go directly to [Office Update](#).
- **Order a service pack CD** Service packs tend to be fairly large and if you're using a 56Kb modem, chances are you have neither the time nor the inclination to download one. Thankfully, you can order a CD and have the service pack sent to you. Don't forget, though, that the postal person will need a few days to get that CD to your house. [Order Office Service Packs on CD-ROM](#)

## When you just gotta have it

If you feel you must have the [Live Search Maps Add-In for Microsoft Office Outlook](#) because you jealously noticed that your office-mate has it and you don't (known as "add-in envy"), you can just march right on over to the Office Downloads site and get it!

Add-ins are an example of a type of download that you can decide if you want to download or not; they tend to be yummy nuggets of enhanced features designed to make your life more fun, such as:

- [Microsoft Math](#) an add-in for Word 2007 that makes it easy to create graphs, perform calculations, and solve for variables with equations created in Word
- [Get Started Tab for PowerPoint 2007](#) is an add-in for PowerPoint that gives you easy access to free content on Office Online that helps you learn PowerPoint 2007. (The Get Started Tab add-in is also available for [Excel 2007](#) and [Word 2007](#)).

And let's not leave out the other sorts of downloads, such as viewers (that allow you and others to view Word, PowerPoint, Excel, or Visio documents without having those programs installed), publications (providing you with in-depth information on the various Office programs), demos (that let you see how a product, service, or feature works), and even audio downloads (hear [The Crabby Office Lady talk about OneNote](#) — why it's the program choice for taking notes).

## Let's go international

While most of my columns don't get translated into all the other languages that have an Office Online site (some things just don't translate well, as you can imagine), the fact is, more people use the U.S. versions of the products themselves than any other language even though there are more non-English customers than English-speaking customers. (Read that again to make sure you got it.)

Multilingual User Interface Packs (or MUIs), as well as Language Interface Packs (or LIPs), allow the international user interface (or "UI") to be applied to the English version of the international versions of Office products. This makes it easy for those folks who have the English version of Office to still be able to have some of the UI in their native language. It's like having the best of both worlds.

So, if you want to test this out on your Icelandic version of Word (or any other Office product for several other languages), visit these links:

- [Multilingual User Interface Packs \(MUI\) downloads](#)
- [Language Interface Pack \(LIP\) downloads](#)

Now, some languages don't have an Office Downloads Web site (sad, but true), so we offer them [More international downloads](#). This page offers downloads for many languages, including Farsi, Irish, Macedonian (FYROM), and Vietnamese.

**NOTE** For more information about using Microsoft products in languages other than English, visit the [Microsoft Local Language Program](#) Web site.

## Why so many? Why so often?

And finally, the ultimate question: Why do we have so many updates, so often? In a word or two: We're human, and we do make mistakes. But more than that, technology moves so fast that while we're busily fixing the issues that crop up after we make a product available, we're

also coming up with newer and better ways of doing things. And frankly, we get many of our ideas for new features from you, the loyal customers. So why should we let a good thing get away?

**NOTE** And how can you make a feature request? If it's about the Office Online Web site, you can [Provide suggestions and feedback to Microsoft](#). If it's about an Office product, you can [Suggest changes to Office products](#).

If we waited until every download was perfect before making it available to you, all of our fun and useful downloads would be few and far between. You'd be waiting and waiting and waiting.

And so, while we want to be competitive, we need to balance how long it takes to create the software and how perfect it is. We want to give you what you want since you're so darn demanding, but sometimes things don't go exactly as planned <gasp>, and we need you to install a patch (I mean an update). So if we ask you to do it, please do. It's for your own good, dearie; we're not just trying to drive you crazy.

**"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." — Thomas Edison**

## About the author

[Annik Stahl](#), the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Did this article help you?** feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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