Should I Send People Word Documents?

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In a word… **NO.**

Microsoft Word produces typographically ugly documents, and the Office 365 suite consumes many gigabytes of space on your disk, but it's your choice to use this tool if you like. Just please, please export it to something that works on any platform, like a PDF file.

	Microsoft Word	PDF
Size?[1]	2.79MB	1.32MB
Macro virus possible?	Y	N
Accidental edits possible?[2]	Y	N
Available on Linux?	N	Y
Cost?[3]	$400	$0
Software used for creation?	MS Word	ANYTHING[4]
Displays properly if my computer doesn't happen to have the same fonts as the author's computer?[5]	N	Y

Figure 1: *Comparing MS Word format to PDF*

Further Reading:

1. PDF vs Word (DOC): When to Use Each

2. Top 10 Reasons To Use PDF Instead of Word, Excel, or PowerPoint

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[1]Comparing a Word document with images vs. that same document exported to PDF with MS Word. This can get even worse for the Word (or PowerPoint) document if the underlying template contains a bunch of images and so on that never get used. I've had slide decks that consume 2+ megabytes in PowerPoint, and get exported to a 100K PDF file.

[2]Also note that PDF format allows users to mark-up the text, highlight, and perform various other proofreading tasks. The file may be shared while this happens. Only one user may edit a Word document at a time.

[3]Cost for Microsoft Office 2016 Professional.

[4]LaTeX, Adobe Acrobat, and even Microsoft Word itself can all create PDF files. There are many other methods.

[5]Note that MS Word is also terrible at typography. It completely ignores ligatures present in fonts, and does not properly kern text. Even HTML rendered through a browser does this to some extent.