



# TECH SNIPPETS

Information, Communication & Technology

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## MS Office AutoSave

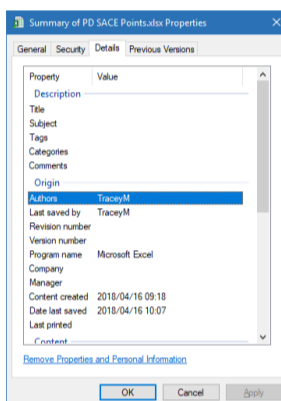


Microsoft recently introduced a change to their office apps which affects all users. They have chosen to turn the file **AutoSave** feature ON by default. You can see this at the top left of your screen when you have a Word or Excel document open (see image above). The change is intended to address the bad practice among users that they often type an entire document before saving it themselves for the first time.

However, with **AutoSave** ON, you lose access to the **Save** and **Save As** options in the **File** menu, and you may have difficulty establishing exactly where your file is being automatically saved to. If you prefer to be in control, you can simply toggle the **AutoSave** switch to the OFF position.

## Whodunnit?

Have you every come across a Word, Excel or PowerPoint document in your department and wondered who created it? Or perhaps you have had doubts about the origin of some work submitted to you electronically by a student? Provided the document is not too old and has not passed through too many hands, there may be a way to find out.



If you are browsing through a list of files using **File Explorer** or via the **This PC** desktop link, simply **right-click** on the file then click on **Properties** at the bottom of the pop-up list. This brings up no less than four tab pages detailing every property of the file. The **Details** tab page includes the author's name and the date of creation.

If you already have the document open in a MS Office app, just **left-click** on **File** at the top left. You can edit some of the file's properties here as well.

## Did you know?

- In computing, an **icon** is a pictographic symbol for a software tool, function or data file.
- An **emoticon** is a portmanteau of the words "emotion" and "icon". Originally, an emoticon was a pictorial representation of a facial expression using punctuation marks, numbers and letters to express the writer's feelings like :) and :( but his method has been largely supplanted by **smileys**.
- A **smiley** is a representation of a smiling face using a yellow circle and black facial features. "Smiley" is now also used as a generic term for any emoticon, including one that is not smiling.

Source: Wikipedia



## The ins and outs of PDFs

According to Wikipedia, the Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format developed by Adobe in the 1990s to present documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware and operating systems. Its file extension is **.pdf**.

When you open a .pdf file with Adobe Acrobat Reader or your web browser, it will retain all the formatting intended by its creator. On the other hand, when you open someone else's .docx file on your PC or laptop, MS Word will usually adopt your own default paper size and margins which can completely ruin the original formatting. This is why PDFs have remained in favour as the best file format for a document that is ready for distribution. PDFs also enjoy wide cross-platform support so you can be pretty certain that recipients will be able to view it using any device. This is not the case with other document formats, including .docx.

Most of us have come to associate PDF files with digital documents that cannot be changed by editing, a feature that has made them suitable for content that you don't want the reader to alter either intentionally or by accident. However, it has become increasingly easy to not only produce PDF files but also to edit them.

You normally open a .pdf file using your default PDF reader, which used to be Adobe Acrobat Reader. These days it is your default web browser that usually opens them. However, if you open a .pdf file with MS Word, it will be converted automatically to a normal .docx file which you can then edit as you please — unless the PDF file was locked by its original creator.

MS Word allows you to create your own PDF files as well. This can be easily done in one of three ways:

- When you save the final version of your .docx file, you can also choose to save it as a PDF file by choosing the **PDF (\*.pdf)** file format in the **File → Save As** dialogue box.
- Alternatively, with your .docx document open in MS Word, click **File → Export** and then click on the large **Create PDF/XPS** button on the right.
- As a last option, you can also click on **File → Share** and then click on the large **Send as PDF** button on the right.

These methods also work within MS Excel, MS PowerPoint and MS Publisher.

We recommend that you convert all your MS Office files to PDFs before distributing them electronically to students and staff so that your formatting is retained and they can be opened on any device. This is especially so when uploading them to Moodle.