

Using files from previous versions of Ability

Ability Office 2000 can import, and in most case use directly, files from all previous incarnations of Ability, including:

- Ability Office 98 – released 1998
- Ability for Windows 1.5/1.6 - released 1995/1996
- Ability Plus 3.0 - released 1995
- Ability Plus 2.0 - released 1992
- Ability Plus 1.0 - released 1987
- Ability 1.2 - released 1985

In the first four cases, the process is identical, see [Using DOS Ability files](#).

For Ability for Windows, see [Using Ability for Windows 1.5/1.6 files](#).

For Ability Office 98, see [Using Ability Office 98 files](#)

Using Ability Office 98 files

Ability Office 2000 can be installed on the same PC as an existing Ability Office 98 installation. Either the 98 or 2000 versions can be removed without affecting the other.

The file format has not changed for Write and Spreadsheet so these files are generally interchangeable between the two versions. However, if you create a spreadsheet in Ability Office 2000 with more than one worksheet, only the first sheet will be visible in Ability Office 98. If you create a spreadsheet in 2000 with a chart or WriteFX object (or a Write file with a Write FX object) you will not be able to view the file in the 98 version.

Database 2000 now shares the same file format as Microsoft Access. Some of the field types have changed, along with their usage. See [Database conversion](#) for more details.

When opening a 98 database with 2000, you will be prompted to "convert" the file. This updates the field types to the 2000 format and also makes a backup copy of the original database.

Database conversion

When converting database files from Database 98 to Database 2000 the field formats are updated according to the table below.

Since the databases are interchangeable with Microsoft Access, the Access field equivalents are also listed.

98 field type name	Converted to in 2000	Notes	Access 97 equivalent
Character	Character	No change.	Text
Memo	Memo	No change.	Memo
Numeric	Numeric	No change.	Number
Date	Date/Time	Use the Field Format options to select between Date and Time.	Date/Time
Time	Date/Time	As above.	Date/Time
Enumerated	Enumerated	Format updated automatically. No action need be taken.	No equivalent – reads as Text
Incremental	Incremental if data conforms, Numeric otherwise.	Note the functionality has changed. Ability Office 98 supported "step by 2". The new Incremental field type (equivalent to Access AutoNumber) only supports the concept of a unique sequential number. The new Incremental format is much better suited for creating Primary Key indexes since its uniqueness is managed at the database engine level and not at the application level (as was previous).	AutoNumber
Logical	Logical	Format updated automatically. No action need be taken.	Yes/No
Calculated	Calculated	Format updated automatically. No action need be taken.	No equivalent – reads as Text
OLE	OLE	No change	OLE Object
Picture	OLE	Use OLE instead (can do everything the previous Picture format could).	OLE Object

Using files from DOS versions of Ability

Ability Office will import files from all [previous DOS versions](#). This includes most features from Write, Database and Spreadsheet.

See:

[Using Write documents](#)

[Using spreadsheet files](#)


[Using databases](#)

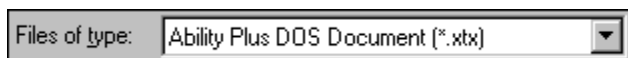
What won't import

- Paper size - this is always reset to the default A4 or Letter according to your printer setup. This is because the paper sizes allowed in DOS versions of Ability hardly ever match those available with printers in Windows.
- Master forms. The layout from database won't be brought in with the database import. This will hopefully not cause too many problems since Ability Office has an automatic form generator and it's easy to drag and drop fields to new positions.
- Links to other files are a general problem that this version of Ability Office has not been able to address properly. Single, one-way links can be re-built once both files are imported. Embedded spreadsheets can be reinserted, again, once both files are imported.
- Macros - Ability Office 2000 has a comprehensive set of Macro commands. Any existing macros won't be imported however since there so little match between Windows and DOS commands.

Using Write documents from a DOS version of Ability

To open a Write file in Ability Office 2000, follow these steps:


1. Run the Ability Office 2000 Write application - select the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, Select **Ability Office 2000** and then **Ability Write**.
2. Select the **Open** button  or select the **Open** command from the **File** menu.
3. Select the directory where your old Ability files are located. [Trouble finding the files?](#)
4. In the Files of Type box set the type to Ability for DOS.




5. Pick the file you want from the list and select OK.

Ability will open the file and display it on screen. The DOS version of Ability could only understand simple fonts that aren't really used under Windows anymore. So, the first step you'll probably want to make is to convert the font:

1. Choose the **Select All** command from the **Edit** menu.


2. Use the Font drop-down box  to select a Windows font - try Arial or Times New Roman.

Now save the file: select the **Save** button  or select the **Save** command from the **File** menu. For more information, see [what happens when imported files are saved](#).

You're now free to use any of the new formatting and layout capabilities Write.

Using spreadsheets from a DOS version of Ability


To open a spreadsheet in Ability Office 2000, follow these steps:

1. Run the Ability Office 2000 Write application - select the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, Select **Ability Office 2000** and then **Ability Spreadsheet**.
2. Select the **Open** button  or select the **Open** command from the **File** menu.
3. Select the directory where your old Ability files are located. [Trouble finding the files?](#)
4. In the Files of Type box set the type to Ability for DOS.



5. Pick the file you want from the list and select OK.

Ability will open the file and display it on screen.

Now save the file: select the **Save** button  or select the **Save** command from the **File** menu. For more information, see [what happens when imported files are saved](#).

What happens when imported files are saved

When saving a file from a [DOS version of Ability](#), the following occurs:


1. A new file is created in the updated Ability Office format.
2. The old file is preserved unchanged.

For example, if you import a Write file called banklet.txt, after saving the file in Ability Office you'll have two files: banklet.txt (not changed) and banklet.aww (the new format).

Once you're happy that everything is working to your satisfaction, you can delete the old file. Or you can just leave it as a backup - it won't take up much disk space.

Using databases from a DOS version of Ability

To import a DOS database, you first need to create a new Ability Database to hold the information (see [how database files are arranged](#) for more information). If you haven't already created a new database, follow these steps.

1. Run the Ability Office 2000 Database application - select the Windows **Start** button, select Programs, Select **Ability Office 2000** and then **Ability Database**.
2. Select the **New** button , select the **New** command from the **File** menu, and enter a new name for your database.

Now you can import each DOS database file to a new table.

1. Select **Import** from the **File** menu.
2. Select **Ability 1.2 DOS Database** or **Ability Plus DOS Database** from the list of source types.
3. Select the directory where your old Ability files are located. [Trouble finding the files?](#)
4. Pick the file you want from the list and select OK.

How database files are arranged

In the DOS version, you'll be used to having different files for different databases. For example, a simple system may look like this:

customer	a list of customers
custsort	sorted version of customer
products	a list of products
sales	a list of orders made

The databases would be stored in separate files that would appear on the Library Screen.

In the new Ability Office Database, you would usually store all these in a single database file with each of the imported files forming a new table. This is because they are all *related* - a sale is made to someone from the customer list who is buying an item from the product list. Even if the data is not related, it is usually more convenient to store them all in a single file. There is no restriction to do this however - you can create as many databases as you wish.

If you have created any sorted or subset files in a DOS version of Ability, you should only import the original. This is to avoid duplicating data. In the above example, you can import *customers* or *custsort*, but not both. It is much easier to sort and filter information in the new Ability Database, so don't worry about not importing sorted lists or subsets - the important thing is the data itself.

Finding the old directory


If you're having troubles finding files from a previous version of Ability, there's a good chance they'll be located in one of the default directories created during installation (or a sub-directory of one of these). The most likely candidates are:

c:\ability

c:\ab2

c:\ab3

To select one of the above directories in an Open dialog and make it current, follow these steps:

1. Click on the **Up One Level** button  until you see one of the above names in the main list.
2. Double-click on the folder name.
3. If necessary, double-click on a sub-folder as well.

Once you've located the correct directory, you'll see a list of your old files.

DOS versions of Ability

This covers any previous version DOS versions of Ability as follows:

Ability 1.2 - released 1985

Ability *Plus* 1.0 - released 1987

Ability *Plus* 2.0 - released 1992

Ability *Plus* 3.0 - released 1995

Using Ability for Windows 1.5/1.6 files

Ability Office will import Write documents, spreadsheets and databases from the previous Ability for Windows.

See:

[Using Write documents](#)

[Using spreadsheet files](#)


[Using databases](#)

What won't import

Forms cannot be imported. This will hopefully not cause too many problems since Ability Office has an automatic form generator and it's easy to drag and drop fields to new positions.

Using Ability for Windows Write documents


To open a Write document in Ability Office 2000, follow these steps:

1. Run the Ability Office 2000 Write application - select the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, Select **Ability Office 2000** and then **Ability Write**.
2. Select the **Open** button  or select the **Open** command from the **File** menu.
3. Select the directory where your old Ability files are located. [Trouble finding the files?](#)
4. Pick the file you want from the list and select OK.

Ability will open the file and display it on screen. The next time you save the file, the format will be updated to the new version.

Using Ability for Windows spreadsheets

To open a spreadsheet in Ability Office 2000, follow these steps:

1. Run the Ability Office 2000 Spreadsheet application - select the Windows **Start** button, select **Programs**, Select **Ability Office 2000** and then **Ability Spreadsheet**.
2. Select the **Open** button  or select the **Open** command from the **File** menu.
3. Select the directory where your old Ability files are located. [Trouble finding the files?](#)
4. Pick the file you want from the list and select OK.

Ability will open the file and display it on screen. The next time you save the file, the format will be updated to the new version.


Using Ability for Windows databases

There are three steps to getting the databases from Ability for Windows 1.5/1.6 into the new Ability Database.

- **Save the all the existing databases in the Ability Exchange format:**

For a recap on how to do this in the previous version, see [exporting 1.5/1.6 files](#)

- **Create a new Ability Office 2000 database:**

1. Run the Ability Office 2000 Database application - select the Windows **Start** button, select Programs, Select **Ability Office 2000** and then **Ability Database**.
2. Select the **New** button , select the **New** command from the **File** menu, and enter a new name for your database.

- **Now you can import each of the database exchange file to a new table:**

1. Select **Import** from the **File** menu.
2. Select **Ability for Windows 1.5 Exchange** from the list of source types.
3. Select the directory where your old Ability files are located. [Trouble finding the files?](#)
4. Pick the file you want from the list and select OK.
5. Repeat steps 1 through 4 for each file you want to import.

Save the all the existing databases in the Ability Exchange format

This process is explained at the end of the Database Chapter in the Ability for Windows User's Guide.

1. Run the Ability for Windows 1.5 or 1.6 Database application - select Cancel when prompted to open an existing table.
2. Select the **Export** command from the **File** menu.
3. Select the table you want to export from the list displayed and select OK
4. Select the **Ability Exchange** format in the **List Files of Type** box (hint - it's the last in the list).
5. Enter a name for the table in the **File Name** box (you can simply use the table name if it is 8 characters or less). Don't replace the AWX extension.
6. Select the OK button
7. Repeat steps 2 through 6 for each table you want to export.

