

Questions & Answers

Handy Tips, Solutions and Answers to Common PC Questions

Do you have a question about an article, or need help with a computing problem? If you do, just drop us a line by email to editorial@pcforseniors.co.uk or editorial@windowsadvisor.co.uk and we'll do our level best to help!

When you write, please remember to include your customer number, your postcode, and the version of Windows you use (Windows 10, Windows 8.1, Windows 7, Windows Vista or Windows XP). Give us as much detail as you can about the problem to help us understand what's happening, and feel free to attach a screenshot or document if you think it would help to illustrate the problem or error.

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1. Does Word Spell-check Headings?

Typing mistake in a heading?

Question: *I noticed a glaring typing mistake in a heading in a Microsoft Word document, but Word hadn't given it a red underline. It had underlined mistakes elsewhere in the document. Any idea why it took no notice of this one?*

Marcus Ball

Formatting won't affect spell-checking

Answer: Whether something is a heading is really just a matter of formatting. If you specify that a line of text is a heading using the 'Styles' group on the Ribbon's Home tab, it gets bigger and bolder, and perhaps changes colour, but it's still text and it still gets spell-checked along with the rest of the document.

So my guess is that you'd typed your heading in ALL CAPITALS. Odd as it may seem, that's enough to make Word ignore it.

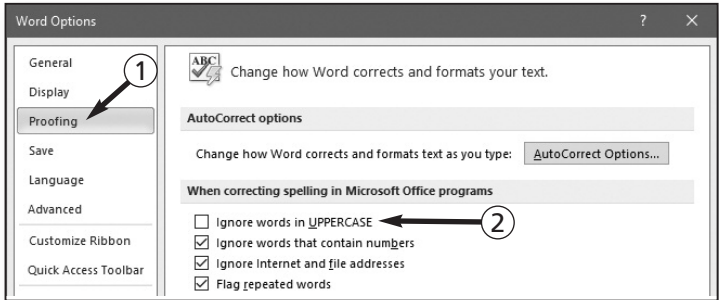
Word doesn't spell-check words in CAPITALS

The thinking behind this is that any string of capital letters is likely to be an acronym (such as CPU or HMRC or DVLA) which wouldn't necessarily appear in a dictionary, so Word avoids checking them and filling your document with squiggly red underlines. However, that does leave you to check for yourself that anything you've typed in ALL CAPITALS is correct.

As with so much in Word, you can choose whether or not this should happen. Here's how:



1. Click the blue **File** tab at the far-left of the Ribbon and choose **Options**.
2. At the left of the Word Options window, click **Proofing** ①.
3. On the right, remove the tick beside **Ignore words in UPPERCASE** ②.



While you're here, there's another, similar setting you might want to change. Currently, if you accidentally catch a number key when typing (giving you something like 'wo0rd' or 'wo5d'), that won't be marked as a mistake. You can put that right by removing the tick beside **Ignore words that contain numbers**.



4. Click **OK** and from now on Word will add a red underline to misspelled words typed in capitals.

2. Audio Files: What's the Difference?

Question: *I enjoyed your clear and concise explanation of picture file formats [in the Q&A section of update 6/19]. Could you please do a similar exposé of audio files?*

Michael Hammer

Answer: Happy to help. With audio files, once again there's quite a large number of formats used, and more of these remain in active use. They basically fall into three different categories: there's uncompressed audio, there's audio with 'lossy' compression, and there's audio with lossless compression:

Audio files come in three types

WAV files – uncompressed

- **Uncompressed audio:** this is the equivalent of the Bitmap format in the world of images – it's the pure CD-quality audio with nothing added and nothing taken away. These are known as Wave Audio Files and they have a .WAV extension. (Another, less-popular uncompressed format is .AIF.) A .WAV file has a size of about 30 MB per minute of audio, making a standard length pop song weigh in at about 120 MB.

MP3, WMA and others – lossy compression

- **Lossy compression:** in this category, the audio is compressed to give you a smaller file, and that compression causes you to 'lose' some of the detail of the sound (hence 'lossy'). As an example, a trick used by the best-known format in this category, MP3, is to strip out all the frequencies the human ear can't hear. That, along with some other trickery, turns our four-minute pop song into a file of about 8 MB.

The lossy formats are popular, because we all want to cram as many songs as possible into a small space, so numerous other formats have joined MP3. Microsoft has the Windows Media Audio Format (.WMA); music you buy from Apple uses the Advanced Audio Coding format (.AAC or, more commonly, .M4A); and yet another popular format is Ogg Vorbis (files with .OGG extensions). They all compress the audio in different ways, but it takes a good ear to tell the difference!

FLAC – lossless compression

- **Lossless compression:** as you might guess, this category holds formats in which the files are compressed to make them smaller, but without any loss of audio data or quality. The most popular lossless format is Free Lossless Audio Codec (files with .FLAC extensions). There's also Apple's equivalent, .ALAC, and Microsoft has a lossless version of Windows Media Audio (but still with the extension .WMA, making it difficult to know whether you have a lossy or lossless WMA file). For obvious reasons, a lossless

audio file is going to be a good deal larger than the same song in one of the lossy formats, although it should still be a good deal smaller than if it were uncompressed.

The Windows Media Player program included with all versions of Windows can play the majority of formats mentioned above. If you come across a rarer format it won't play, a good bet is to try VLC Media Player from videolan.org/vlc.



So, given such a wide choice, which audio format should you use?

Well, if you record and edit music, perhaps using a program like Audacity (audacityteam.org), keep your audio uncompressed (as a .WAV file) at least until you know you've finished editing it. If you continually open, edit and resave one of the lossy-compression formats, you'll lose more data from it each time you save.

Use WAV for files you're working on

If you're buying music and you want the best quality you can lay your hands on – not minding that it will cost you more money and take up more space – use a store that sells lossless FLAC or ALAC files, such as uk.7digital.com. (However, there's no point in converting your existing MP3 files to FLAC format: you can never regain the quality that was lost in creating the MP3 – you'll just end up with a bigger file that sounds almost identical.)

Choose FLAC for high quality (but large files)

If you're not so particular about the audio quality, and certainly if you don't want to use more disk space than necessary for your audio files, choose MP3 or one of the other lossy formats. Most of us can't hear the difference between lossless and lossy compression anyway, and if your audio files are speech rather than music, you certainly won't gain anything from using FLAC or ALAC.

MP3 is the best choice for most of us

3. Can I Refer to Cells on Other Excel Sheets?

Add figures from different sheets?

Question: *I've set up an accounts spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel in which the figures are split over various worksheets – a different sheet for each month of the year. How can I create formulas that will take figures from the different sheets and add them together?*

Rebecca Wheeler

General cell notation

Within a worksheet, the cells are identified by the column letters (A, B, C, ...) and the row numbers (1, 2, 3, ...), rather like the game of Battleships, so the cell 'C6' is at the junction of the third column and the sixth row. The formula **=C6+C7+C8** adds together the figures in that cell and the two cells below it.

Specify the name of the worksheet

If you have several worksheets in your spreadsheet and you want to create formulas involving figures from different sheets, you construct the formulas in the same way, but you also have to include the names of the worksheets in which the cells can be found.

An exclamation mark splits the worksheet name from the cell

If a worksheet's name is **January** and you want to refer to cell **C6** on that sheet, for example, the notation would be **January!C6**. The exclamation mark is Excel's special symbol to denote that what preceded it is the name of a worksheet and what follows it is the name of a cell on that sheet. If the name of a worksheet includes a space, enclose the name in single-quotes: **='January 2019'!C6+'February 2019'!C6**.

4. Why Has My Recycle Bin Disappeared?

Missing Recycle Bin icon?

Question: *I've just noticed that I don't have a Recycle Bin icon on my desktop any more. I don't know when or how it disappeared; I've only noticed it's gone because I need to recover a file. How can I get it back?*

John Lynch

Answer: This is certainly something that can happen in Windows, often for no obvious reason – it wasn't necessarily anything you did!

Before we look for a solution though, here's one thing to check: do you have any windows open at the moment? It's possible that the Recycle Bin icon is still on your desktop, but it's moved from its usual position and hiding behind a window. Try minimising or closing any windows so that you can see the patch of desktop behind them and rule out this possibility.

Is it hiding behind an open window?

Failing that, there are three solutions to try. Work through them in the order presented below.

Solution 1: check whether all desktop icons are hidden

Can you see any icons on your desktop at all? If all the icons that should be on your desktop have disappeared, here's what to do: right-click the desktop, move the mouse pointer to **View** and see whether there's a tick beside **Show desktop icons**. There should be. If there isn't, that's your culprit: click that item and all your desktop icons (including the Recycle Bin) should reappear.

Perhaps all your desktop icons have been hidden

If there was a tick beside **Show desktop icons**, don't click it (that would hide them!). Just press the **Esc** key on your keyboard a couple of times to close the menus.

Solution 2: tell Windows to put the Recycle Bin icon back on the desktop

So it seems that the Recycle Bin icon really has vanished. Let's try to put it back:

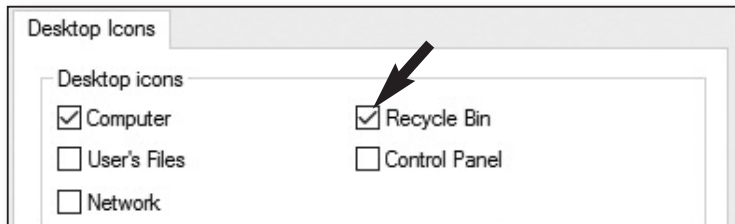
1. Right-click a blank space on the desktop and choose **Personalise**.
2. Follow the appropriate step below for your version of Windows:



- Windows 10: at the left of the Settings window that has just opened, click on **Themes**. Then, at the far-right, click on **Desktop icon settings**.
- Windows 8.1 or Windows 7: at the left of the Control Panel window that has just opened, click on **Change desktop icons**.

Tell Windows to show the Recycle Bin icon

3. At the top of the dialog that opens, tick the box beside **Recycle Bin** and then click **OK** and close the Settings or Control Panel window. This should have put back the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop.



Solution 3: Create a new Recycle Bin icon

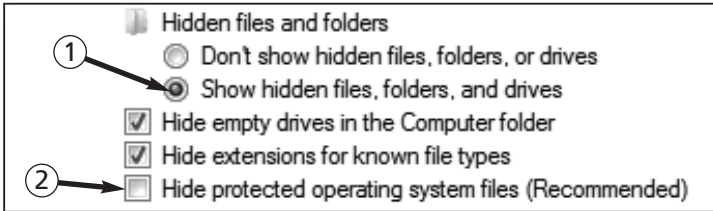
The solution above really should have worked, but in some situations it doesn't. If it hasn't worked for you, the steps below will do the trick:



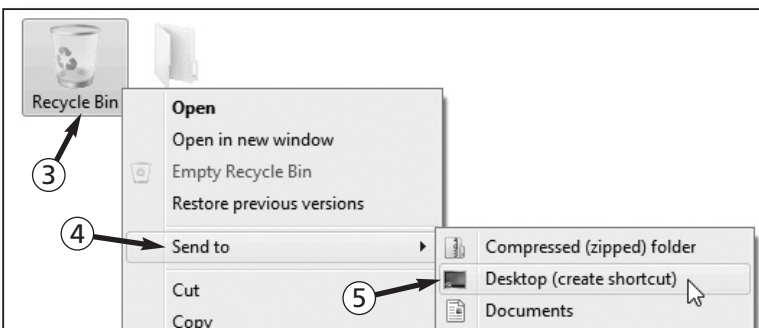
1. Press **Win+E** to open File Explorer (known as Windows Explorer in Windows 7).
2. In Windows 10 and Windows 8.1, switch to the **View** tab on the Ribbon and click the top half of the **Options** button. In Windows 7, click **Organize** at the left of the toolbar and choose **Folder and search options**.
3. In the Folder Options dialog that opens, switch to the **View** tab.
4. In the **Advanced Settings** box, click on Show hidden files, folders, and drives ① to select that option.

Adjust these two settings

5. A little lower down, remove the tick beside **Hide protected operating system files (Recommended)**
 - ②. A little warning message will pop up at this point: click **Yes**.



6. Click **OK** to close this dialog. This takes you back to the File Explorer window. At the left of this window, click on **This PC** (in Windows 10 or 8.1) or **Computer** (in Windows 7) to see your list of drives on the right, then double-click the icon for your main hard drive (whose name ends with **C:** in brackets). *Display the folders on your C: drive*
7. Now you'll see all the folders on your hard drive, with a few you probably won't have seen before. Double-click the folder named **\$Recycle.Bin**. *Find the Recycle Bin icon...*
8. Now, along with one or two oddly-named folders, you'll see a familiar-looking Recycle Bin icon. Right-click that icon ③, move the mouse down to **Send to** ④ and choose **Desktop (create shortcut)** ⑤. *... and 'send it' to your desktop*



9. That has added a new Recycle Bin icon to your desktop. It's currently named **Recycle Bin – Shortcut**, but you can right-click it and choose **Rename**, delete the - **Shortcut** from the end and press **Enter** if you wish.

Restore the original settings

10. Before you close the File Explorer window, we need to reinstate the settings we changed earlier. Repeat steps 2 and 3 above to return to the **View** tab of the Folder Options dialog. Click the option **Don't show hidden files, folders, or drives**, and tick the box beside **Hide protected operating system files (Recommended)** then click **OK**. You can now close File Explorer and you've finished.

5. Why Can't I See Pictures in My Emails?

Do pictures 'expire' in email messages?

Question: *Several weeks ago, I received an email message from a company which, at the time, I ignored, intending to read it later. I've just got around to looking at it and I can see a lot of boxes where pictures should be, but they're empty. Is this because I've waited too long and the pictures 'expire' or disappear after a certain time?*

Gregory Harding

Answer: This is an interesting question because in one way you're right, but there's also a bit of a misunderstanding!

If they were included in the message, they remain forever

When someone includes pictures in an email message, they can do it in either of two ways. The first is to attach or embed the pictures so that they become a permanent part of the message. Using this method (which is by far the most common), as soon as you receive and open the message, you'll see the pictures in the text, or you'll see them listed as attachments which

you can double-click to open. None of this ever ‘expires’: you can keep this message for months or years, and you’ll always be able to open it and look at the pictures.

The second way is commonly used by companies who send out large quantities of email and want to keep their costs down. Rather than including pictures in the message itself, they keep the pictures on their website and simply include links to those pictures in the email message. As a result, when you first open the message, all you see are empty boxes where those pictures should appear.

For security reasons, your email program doesn’t automatically collect the pictures from the website. This is because this method is also popularly used by senders of spam, and by collecting the pictures, your email program would be confirming to the spammer that you’d received and opened the message.

In this situation, if you’re sure the message isn’t spam and you’d like to see the pictures, you can tell your email program to download them and display them. I’ll explain how to do that in a moment.

If you do tell your email program to download the pictures, they’ll be stored in the email message permanently thereafter: you’ll be able to open the message whenever you like in the future and you’ll still see the pictures.

However, if you leave it too long to do this, you can find that your email program is unable to download the pictures because they no longer exist. Nothing has ‘expired’ as such, but the company that sent the email message has deleted them, using the space for other pictures sent in more recent messages.

Therefore, if someone sends you an email message containing only empty boxes where the pictures should

Pictures could be replaced by empty boxes

Your email program doesn’t collect the pictures...

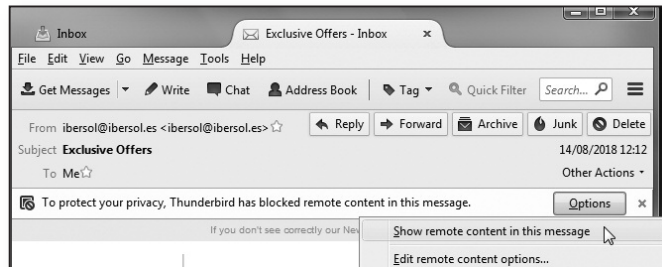
... unless you tell it to do so

If you wait too long, they may not be available

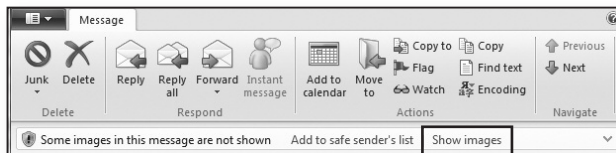
Download the pictures

be, and you'd like to see those pictures, it pays to grab them as soon as possible. Here's how to do that in the popular email programs:

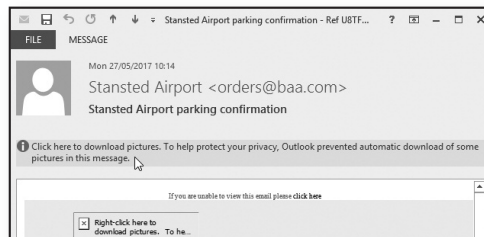
Mozilla Thunderbird: in the yellow bar that appears immediately above the text of the message, click the **Options** button at the far right and then choose **Show remote content in this message**.



Windows Live Mail: in the yellow bar that appears above the text of the message, click the link that reads **Show images**.



Microsoft Outlook: click the blue bar near the top of the message that begins with the words **Click here to download pictures**.



6. Help! My Tablet's Keyboard Isn't Showing

Question: *I was just about to type a website address on my tablet and I realised I no longer have a button to open the on-screen keyboard, so I can't type any more. How can I get it back?*

Touch keyboard button disappeared?

Leslie Talbot

Answer: On a tablet computer with Windows 10 or Windows 8.1, the on-screen keyboard (or 'touch keyboard', as it's officially called) will sometimes appear of its own accord. You simply tap the text box you want to type into, and up it pops.

Sometimes the keyboard appears automatically

Sometimes it won't, however. That's not an error in Windows, it's simply that different types of program work in different ways (and trust me, you don't want a more detailed explanation than that!).

When you've tapped a text box, or something else you want to type into, and the touch keyboard doesn't appear, that shouldn't be a problem. Near the clock on the taskbar you should see the touch keyboard icon indicated below: tap it and that on-screen keyboard will appear.

If it doesn't, just tap its icon



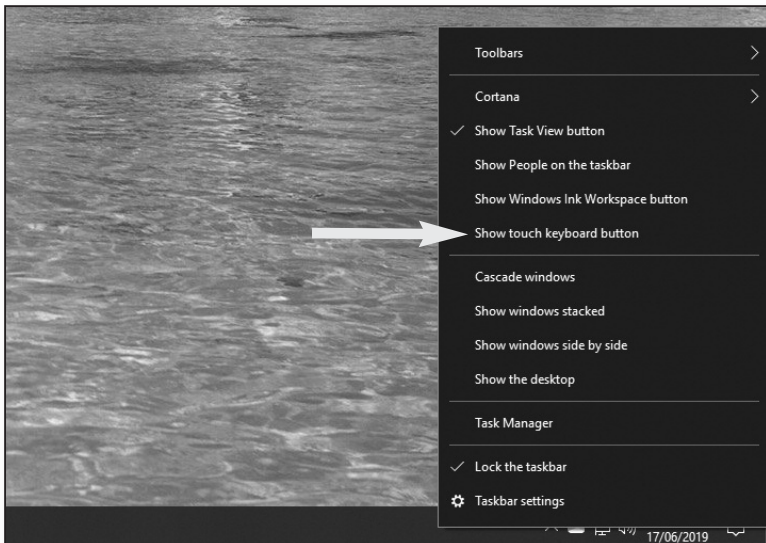
Sometimes, though, for no obvious reason, this touch keyboard icon can disappear, leaving you high and dry, and this is apparently what has happened to the questioner. In that case, there's a simple two-step

Bring back the icon if it's vanished

solution to bring it back, although it varies a little according to whether you're using Windows 10 or 8.1. Here's what to do:



1. Press-and-hold a blank space (not an icon) on the taskbar for about two seconds. This is the touch equivalent of a right-click, and it brings up the taskbar's context menu.
2. On this context menu, do the following:
 - **Windows 10:** tap the **Show touch keyboard button** item.
 - **Windows 8.1:** tap the **Toolbars** item, which causes a submenu to appear beside it, and then tap the **Touch Keyboard** item on this submenu.



Straight away, the touch keyboard icon reappears on the taskbar, and you can tap it to use the keyboard.