Outlook 2020 cannot open pdf attachments online file extension

I'm not robot!

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Updated: 08/31/2020 by Computer Hope Below is a listing of all the different reasons why you may be unable to open an e-mail attachment. Unrecognized file format One of the most common reasons why you can't open an e-mail attachment is because your computer doesn't have the necessary program installed to recognize the file format. For example, if someone is sending you a .PSD image file and you don't have Adobe Photoshop or another program that supports it, the file format cannot be opened. In this situation, we recommend you have the sender save the file as a different format that the computer supports and re-send the attachment. If you are going to be working with this file format often, install a program or viewer on the computer that supports the file format. Below is a listing of some of the more common file formats send over e-mail, their file extension, and the programs used to open those files. File type Extension Description Document .doc or .docx Microsoft Word documents and can be opened with Microsoft Word, OpenOffice Writer, or Google Docs. PDF .pdf Adobe PDF file that is opened with Adobe Acrobat or PDF reader. Spreadsheet .xls or .xlsx Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that can be opened with Microsoft Excel, OpenOffice Calc, or Google Sheets. Basic Image .gif, .jpg, .jpeg, .png These basic image formats are widely used and can be opened and viewed by every image editor or viewer. Compressed file .zip, .rar, .z A compressed file that must be uncompressed before the files contained in the file can be viewed. Bitmap .bmp Windows bitmap image that is primarily opened in Microsoft Paint and can be opened with many but not all image editors. Movie .avi, .mov, .wmv, .mp4, .mpeg Movie files that require a compatible media player program to play. Audio .mp3 MP3 audio file. Executable .exe, .com An executable file that starts the installation of a program. Be cautious of any executable sent through e-mail as this is the primary method of distributing viruses through e-mail. HTML .html, .htm HTML file. For example, a web page may be sent as an attachment in e-mail. Bad file association or problem with program If the file format is something your computer should be able to open, but it's not opening correctly, its file format may be associated with the wrong program. Or, the program it's associated with may be experiencing errors, or was removed. For information about how to view and change file associations, see: How to associate a file with a program in Windows. For example, let's say you want to view a PDF document. Many modern web browsers offer their PDF viewer, but this PDF is an attachment sent in an e-mail from a trusted sender. However, you don't have a PDF viewer, like Adobe Acrobat, installed. Instead of trying to open the attachment directly from your e-mail client, save the attachment to your computer (e.g., save it to your desktop). Then, right-click the file and under Open with, choose a different program to open the file. If this works and you want the program to always open this type of file, right-click the file and under Open with, choose another app. Check the box Always use this app to open and select the program you want to use and click Ok. Compressed file When needing to send multiple files over e-mail, it's not uncommon to compress all the files into a single compressed file and attach that compressed file to the e-mail. If the file is a .zip, .rar, or another compressed file format, it must be uncompressed before it can be opened. How to extract or decompress a compressed file. Antivirus program preventing If you have an antivirus protection program installed on your computer, make sure it is not causing problems with your attachments by temporarily disabling your antivirus. How do I disable my antivirus program in Windows? Sender has an Apple computer and you have a PC If the e-mail sender uses a Mac computer, and their attached files were not saved in a Windows-compatible format, you may be unable to open the attachment. Make sure the sender of the e-mail knows you're using Windows if they are sending you an attachment. Outlook add-ins If you are using Microsoft Outlook and unable to open attachments, make sure an add-in is not causing the problem. You can disable all add-ins in Outlook by following the steps below. Open Microsoft Outlook. Click File, Options, and then Add-ins Under Manage, click COM Add-ins. Click the GO button next to Manage, then uncheck all the add-ins. Once everything is disabled, click OK. Close Microsoft Outlook, then re-open Outlook to see if the issue is resolved. Corrupt file If none of the suggestions above helped determine or fix the problem, it is also possible that the attachment you received is corrupt. Reply to the e-mail asking the sender to verify the attachment works on their computer, and to create a new e-mail and attach the file again. February 9, 2022How to Fix According to recent data: More than half of the world's population i.e. 4.1 billion global users now actively use email, and it is projected to grow to 4.6 billion users in 2025!Furthermore, a technology market research firm stated that "In an office setting, an average office worker is reported to receive 121 emails per day and send 40 emails a day."So, it shows that sending and receiving emails has become the primary mode of communication for people as well as for companies. However, using email inevitably means facing various technical issues and, one of them is the inability to open email attachments. It's a big problem if you can't open attachments as sharing files, memos, invoices and other important documents as attachments on emails have become a norm in the tech world and thus, needs attention to be resolved in a timely manner.However, as the 'Can't open attachments' issue can be experienced by anyone, regardless of whichever email service one uses or chooses to use so; to be specific, if you're facing this in Microsoft Outlook then, luckily you're reading the right post.About 'Unable to Open Attachments in Outlook' IssueNeedless to say, Outlook is an exciting email application offered by Microsoft that comes with loads of useful features. But, despite being so useful, sometimes it becomes a headache for the users. While we are saying this, we are referring to an incident where Outlook users find themselves unable to open Outlook attachments.The error message that Outlook users receive looks like this:Well...'Outlook won't open attachments— is one of the serious and annoying errors for Outlook email users, which is becoming common these days. Hence, today we have provided several solutions that you can easily implement to resolve the 'unable to open Outlook attachments' issue in real-time. So, without wasting much time, let's start the troubleshooting—When Outlook users face difficulties in opening email attachments, it certainly hinders their work, causes frustration, and makes them wonder why my Outlook attachments are not opening! So, before jumping in towards the solutions, it is advisable to know about the possible reasons which led to the problem and what can you do to avoid them in the first place.Reasons behind Occurrence of 'Outlook Attachments not Opening' Issue & Tips to Avoid ThemIn this section, you get to know about 5 main reasons why your attachments cannot be opened in Outlook and their respective tips to avoid them. They are as follows—Reason 1: Unknown File FormatTo open attachments, if a specific application is required that you do not have. For instance, you cannot open a received .psd image, if you have not installed an app such as Adobe Photoshop.Tip: Open the Extension with Associated Format Extension OnlyAs said, sometimes the format of the file prevents users from opening file email attachments so; specific applications have to be downloaded to open the extension with a particular format extension.Considering this, you should familiarize yourself with file extensions and the file types associated with them via looking at these below-given examples—File Type: Microsoft Word DocumentExtension: .doc or .docxFile Type: Microsoft Excel SpreadsheetExtension: .xls or .xlsxFile Type: Microsoft PowerPointExtension: ppt or .pptx or .ppsFile Type: Compressed fileExtension: .zip or .rar or .zFile Type: Adobe AcrobatExtension: .pdfFile Type: Compatible Movie PlayerExtension: .avi or .wmv or .mp4 or .mov or .mpegFile Type: Executable fileExtension: .exe or .comFile Type: HTML FileExtension: .html or .htmReason 2: Antivirus Programs or Firewall Even some antivirus programs or firewall protection can create hindrance or interference in downloading an email attachment while securing the computer system from all incoming data. So, because 'Attachments' are also part of such incoming data, you never know, maybe the antivirus or firewall protection installed on your device is blocking your ability to open/download genuine and safe Outlook email attachments by wrongly identifying them as a virus/malware.Tip: Temporarily Disable the Antivirus or FirewallYou should consider disabling your antivirus or firewall protection first. Then, after downloading an email attachment, ensure adding an exception to the antivirus or firewall program. Upon doing so, you can re-enable the antivirus or firewall protection on your system.Reason 3: Compatibility Issues Another major reason why you may not be able to open an attachment in outlook is the incompatible file format. If the attachments are created in a different OS from yours then, it will cause a problem. Let's suppose an email sent from a MAC computer and the file attachment is not saved in a Windows-compatible format then, this can certainly pose a problem in opening that email file attachment on a Windows PC and vice versa.Tip: Save File in a Compatible FormatYou will have to inform whoever is sending you a mail attachment that you're using a Windows computer and the attachment must be saved accordingly. Reason 4: Corrupted Files Next, while opening an email attachment in Outlook, if you receive an error message which says "the file is corrupted and cannot be opened" then, this means you've received a corrupted mail as an attachment and thus, you cannot open it because of the damage.Tip: Ask Sender to Create another FileIf the received file has been corrupted for being infected with one virus or another then, confirm with the sender whether that file is opening on their system. In case if not then, ask the sender to create and send another file that isn't corrupted.Reason 5: Unknown Symbols Incorporated in the File Name Last but not least, if an email attachment that you've received has symbols such as a question mark (?) or a plus sign (+) in the file name then, this also restricts the user to open the file attachments in Outlook. Tip: Correct the File NameIn such a type of 'special character' file name, you'll have to ask the email sender to edit and resend the email to you without including any unknown symbol in the file name.Now that you know what all sorts of reasons can cause 'Can't Open Outlook Attachments' error and what you can do to prevent it from happening again in the future; it's time to follow the below-listed methods if you can't access or download email attachments in Microsoft Outlook.7 Effective Methods to Fix Can't Open Outlook AttachmentsYou need to try out these ways to fix the most prominent reason blocking the Outlook attachments from opening or saving—Method 1 – Empty Outlook's Temporary Internet Files FolderWhether you know or not, when you download an email attachment in Outlook, it saves a copy of the attachment in the 'Temporary Internet Files' subfolder and if the storage limit of this folder is exceeded, you may end up getting the 'Cannot open attachment in Outlook' error.So, if the cause of the error is associated with the temporary Internet folder, then you can follow the steps given below to delete the files from this folder to resolve the issue—Step 1: Firstly click the 'Windows' button located on the top-left side to open 'Windows Search.'Step 2: Then, in the search bar, type "regedit" and hit 'Enter.' In doing so, a window will appear on the screen.Step 3: Inside it, you've to select the 'Edit Menu.' Step 4: From the expanded menu, click on the 'Find' option.Step 5: Now, what you've to do is type 'OutlookSecureTempFolder' and just start the search.Step 6: After this, you will soon see the same name located on the right side of the window and underneath this name; you'll see a path something like this"C:\Users\AppData\Local\…" under the Data column.Step 7: Now, you need to note down this path on a notepad to copy it.Step 8: Following that, you've to again click the 'Windows' button to paste the path (you just copied) in the search bar and.Step 9: Upon doing so, press the 'Enter' button and this way, the related folder will appear in front of you.Step 10: From that folder, you need to select all the files to delete them.Step 11: Once you've done that, you can quickly 'Restart Outlook' and then, access your attachments to check if that works, or you still face the problem. Though, this solution proves effective in 95% of cases to resolve 'Unable to open Outlook attachments' error but, if this fails, you can skip to the next method.Method 2: Clean System's Temporary FilesAnother effective way out is that you can clean your system temporary files. For that, these are the steps to be executed—Step 1: Open 'Windows Search' by clicking the Windows button which is given on the top-left side.Step 2: Then, in the search bar, you need to simply type "%temp%" and hit 'Enter.' As you do so, a folder will appear on the screen.Step 3: From it, you've to select all the 'Temporary Files' listed there.Step 4: Following that, just hit the 'Delete' button.Step 5: Now, in the end, you also need to empty the 'Recycle bin.'Once done, you can 'Restart Outlook' and then, try to open the attachment. Hopefully, it should work now.Method 3: Use Save-As OptionIf you are not able to open Outlook attachments by double-clicking on them, consider the 'Save as' option. In order to use 'Save as' option to save attachments from emails and view them, you need to perform the below given steps—Step 1: Begin by clicking the right-click action on the 'Attachment.'Step 2: Then, click the 'Save As' option from the contextual menu that appears.Step 3: Next, you've to select any 'Location' other than Desktop or the default Download folder.Step 4: After that, just give a 'Name' to the attachment and 'Save' it.Albeit, this method works in most of the cases but, if it does not work in your case, you can move on to try the next listed method.Method 4: Disable Outlook Add-InsAt times, Outlook add-ins form much junk and end up preventing the application from performing properly. So, you never know, maybe the add-ins that form part of your Outlook is the actual reason why you're facing the 'cannot open attachments in Outlook' issue.Therefore, if you can't open a file attachment then, you can also try disabling Outlook add-ins. To do so, just follow these steps—Step 1: On Microsoft Outlook, first of all click on 'File menu' to open. Step 2: Then, select 'Options' and navigate onto the 'Add-ins' section. Step 3: In that, you need to click on the 'COM Add-ins' option which is located under the 'Manage' section.Step 4: Upon doing so, make sure to click on the 'Go' button. Step 5: Now, what you need to do is 'Uncheck all the add-ins' available there.Step 6: Once all add-ins have been disabled, you can simply click 'OK.'Now, you just need to 'Close' and 'Re-open' Microsoft Outlook to ensure whether the encountered issue has been resolved or not yet.Method 5: Set Your Microsoft Email Address as the Primary Email AddressEven after disabling Outlook add-ins you're unable to open Microsoft Outlook attachments and instead, receive an "access is denied" error, then it may be because you have set a non-Microsoft email address as the primary email address.So, in order to not receive the same error again, you can consider changing the primary email address to your Microsoft email address via following these steps—Step 1: First of all, visit the Microsoft account page using your preferred web browser.Step 2: Then, perform the login procedure to get access to your Microsoft account.Step 3: Once you get access to your account, go to 'Your info' and simply select 'Manage your sign-in email or phone number.'Step 4: Now, in the 'Make primary section' you just have to provide your respective 'Microsoft email address' that ends either with @outlook.com, @live.com, or @hotmail.com.Still, if you can't open attachments in Outlook then, it might be due to the fact that you're missing some important Outlook updates. So, in order to install the latest Outlook updates, these are the steps to be followed—Step 1: Launch the Microsoft Outlook application and click on the 'File' tab.Step 2: Then, open the 'Office Account' tab to click on the 'Update Options' button.Step 3: Following that, select 'Update Now' option in the menu that appears on the screen.Step 4: Now, simply 'Restart Outlook' to check if this method is of any help!If none of the above methods work in your case, then the problem might be caused by a corrupt Outlook.PST file. In this case, you need to use the advanced PST repair software like 'Stellar Outlook Repair Tool' and repair the PST file to see if that helps!#Bonus SolutionSince Outlook Web Application can also restrict the download of files with some specific extensions so, if you are facing a problem while downloading files of specific extensions using Outlook Web Application; you can simply consider changing the policy settings to allow the required file types. To be precise, you need to remove a file extension from the 'blocked application list' to add it to the 'allowed lists.'Note: For this, you can also contact your Exchange administrator.That's all! These are the main ways to fix the Outlook attachment-related issues. Though most of the users have benefited from these methods, in case, these listed ones are not helpful to you then, maybe a new Outlook installation is required in your case. Above all, you can refer to Microsoft Support for taking further help to troubleshoot attachment-related problems in Outlook.Related Topics that Might Interest You:Unable to Send Emails from Outlook? Check How to Fix it