

.xls

The .xls (or .xlsx, starting with Excel 2007) extension indicates a file saved as a type Microsoft Excel document. Though offered as a download format on a wide range of data sources, opening these files generally requires proprietary Microsoft software in a version compatible with the one in which the document was saved.

If you have an older version of Excel, you may be able to download compatibility software from Microsoft that lets you open the newer file. Alternatively, you can turn on file conversion in Google Docs and upload the file, where it will be converted to a Google Spreadsheet and can then be downloaded as an .xls file.

Metadata, formulas and macros may be lost during any conversion process, and often the importing software will warn you of this possibility. However, this message will appear whether or not any of these special features are in use in the original document. The only way to confirm whether meaningful information has been lost is to contact your original data source.