

Microsoft Publisher 2007 – A Review

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The Publisher 2007 desktop publishing software application recently appeared, unrequested and without instructions, in the Front Range PC Users Group (FRPCUG) mailbox. Presumably, Microsoft sent it to us (and others) with the intent of receiving a review of the product. Since Publisher (in various versions) has been used for a long time as the authoring program for the FRPCUG newsletter (long before I became editor of the newsletter), I decided to review the program.

Once I figured out how to open the plastic container, I installed the program on a Dell Inspiron 6000 with a 1.4 GHz Pentium M processor, 2 GB of RAM and Windows XP/Pro SP2. No previous versions of Publisher were installed on the laptop. For the record, I have Publisher 2002 installed on an eMachines desktop with a 900 Mhz Celeron processor, 256 MB of RAM and Windows XP/Home SP 2.

I will start with the good news, courtesy of Frank Whiteley of the Computer Users Group of Greeley (<http://www.cugg.org>). His review, part of which is reproduced below with his permission, is located at

http://www.cugg.org/docs/reviews/Product_Review_Publisher_2007.pdf:

“What I was immediately curious about was whether .pub document sizes were more efficient due to image and other optimizations. I made a copy of a Publisher 2000 promotion document that was 7767KB. I opened it in Publisher 2007 and saved it under another name. The resulting document was 895KB. This is quite a size reduction. I printed both copies from their respective versions and there was no noticeable difference in print quality. However, I noticed that as I printed the 2007 version, 10MB were spooled to the printer, so there is quite an effective compression algorithm working. It does make collaboration between users more reasonable if drafts are transferred via e-mail.”


My experience is not so positive. To begin with, the FRPCUG newsletter uses a calendar feature of Publisher that is a “Design Gallery” object. In Publisher 2002 (and 2003), one needs only to click on the calendar to display what Microsoft calls a “Wizard Wand.” Then, by clicking on the wand icon, an option to change the date range of the calendar is displayed. This calendar update feature does not work in Publisher 2007. It turns out that I was not the first person to find this problem. After considerable research on the Microsoft website, I found the following at this URL:

<http://www.microsoft.com/office/community/en-us/default.aspx?dg=microsoft.public.publisher&tid=2f49bfb0-adb2-454d-9a99-46738ae0e901&cat=&lang=en&cr=US&sloc=en-us&p=1>):

How update design gallery calendar in Publisher 2007 like 2002? in [Publisher General Questions](#)




Search For: In:

RichMac 10/4/2007 2:04 PM PST


 Question

in Publisher 2002 could insert a calendar page into a document as Design Gallery object, then when click on it open wizard with option to change date range. IN Pub 2007 can insert the calendar image but click it has no effect. NO way to update - must just start over and get new image. Am I missing something?

Was this post helpful to you?

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Mary Sauer 10/5/2007 2:51 AM PST

 Answer

I haven't used the Design Gallery in 2007, but I did when I read your post. The Wizard Wand is missing, not only on the calendar, but on all the Design Gallery elements. This is a major bug and I will report it. Sorry, I can't give you a workaround. You could use the regular calendar templates and change the date range on those.

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 Mary Sauer MSFT MVP
<http://office.microsoft.com/>
<http://msauer.mvps.org/>
<news://msnews.microsoft.com>

Note that the missing “Wizard Wand” is classified as a “major bug.” Hopefully, that means Microsoft will eventually fix the problem. As of October 17, 2007, there is no update on the Microsoft website to fix the problem.

The next “issue” is problems with imported Word documents. Considering that both Word (in my case I am using Word 2002 SP3) and Publisher are both Microsoft products, there is, in my judgment, a strong case for calling the problems I list below defects (not “issues”) that need to be corrected by Microsoft.

In the File Menu of Publisher is an item called “Import Word Document.” The first time I tried to import a Word document into Publisher 2007, I received an error message that said a converter was needed. That converter is on the Word 2002 installation CD, not on the Publisher CD. Once the converter was installed, I discovered more problems.

When a Word document is imported into a Publisher document, and the Word document has graphics (e.g., jpg files), the graphic cannot be moved once imported. That is, it cannot be moved using the arrow keys or by dragging it. It can be moved by using by using the Layout tab of the Format Picture feature of the Picture Toolbar. Or, you can select a graphic, cut it and then paste it back in, and the arrow keys and dragging method will work. There are several other options available on the Picture Toolbar that, once selected, will allow the graphic to be moved using the arrow keys or drag and drop method. Not a big deal you say? Well . . . OK, maybe not. After all, Publisher is certainly less expensive than Quark™ or InDesign™. Yet . . . the “work-arounds” are very inefficient. Please note: this problem is not new to Publisher 2007. It exists in Publisher 2002 (and, I assume, in Publisher 2003). I, personally, am disappointed that this problem was not corrected in the 2007 version. Perhaps Microsoft does not consider this behavior a problem.

Even more troubling is the way Publisher handles certain text formatting from an imported Word document. Specifically, there are problems with imported bulleted lists. I offer

some explanation here as background. As editor of *k-Byte*, the FRPCUG newsletter, I often make use of the APCUG PUSH articles. I frequently make minor formatting edits to these articles in order to better match the text to the newsletter format. I usually make those edits after saving the downloaded file (which is usually an .rtf document) as a Word document (.doc file). Perhaps I should stick with the .rtf file, for the problem of missing bullets does not occur when using .rtf documents, either in Publisher 2002 or 2007.

Here is an example, using a portion of a document recently distributed by APCUG:

I saved the original .rtf file as a Word document and added the bullets. Note the last item in the list. The text is properly indented.

Notes: (Reference)

- 8 bits = 1 byte
- bps = bits per second
- kbps = 1,000 bits per second (1)
- Mbps = megabits per second
- MBps = megabytes per second [(1) Approxim
ignored for this article since all estimated valu

Here is what happened when I imported that document into Publisher 2007:

The bullets have disappeared. Plus, note the text in the second line of the last item in the list. Because of the missing bullet, the text has reflowed.

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= 1,024, is ignored for this ar

Here is what happened when I imported the same document into Publisher 2002:

No problem.

My initial conclusion was that Publisher 2007 does not handle imported Word documents as well as Publisher 2002. To test that conclusion further, I created a test document—starting with a blank document. The results of that test confirmed my initial conclusion. If you are interested in the results of that test, please contact me at the email address above and I will send you those results.

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I need to return to my earlier comment:

“Perhaps I should stick with the .rtf file, for the problem of missing bullets does not occur when using .rtf documents, either in Publisher 2002 or 2007.”

Perhaps I should stick with the .rtf versions. However, I do not accept that as the correct approach. Word and Publisher are key elements of the Microsoft Office suite. Individually—and certainly combined—they are relatively expensive software investments. Microsoft claims that the .doc format offers greater capability than the .rtf format. Warning messages are built in to Word and are displayed, depending on features used, when you try to save a Word document as an .rtf file. Therefore, if I use those “extra” Word capabilities, I expect them to be compatible with Publisher—**as they have been in previous versions**. I don’t like the idea of “paying more (or even the same) for less.” Perhaps with enough feedback from the User Group community, Microsoft will correct the defects I have described (although I am not optimistic about such an outcome).

There are other changes to Publisher 2007 that I consider unnecessary and annoying, so if you are considering an upgrade to Publisher 2007, I suggest you wait awhile. At least wait until Microsoft fixes the “major bug,” if they ever do.

*[Update January 15, 2008: A message posted on the Microsoft Publisher 2007 Discussion Group webpage dated 12-07-07 said that the bug **may** (emphasis added) be fixed with a service pack. No release date for the service pack was provided.]*

Or try something new and free. I understand that changing software—especially a desktop publishing application—is not a trivial task. Nevertheless, if you are not forced to be compatible with other Publisher users outside your own organization, a freeware application may be an excellent alternative. And, of course, if you have multiple Publisher users within your own organization, a freeware application can save that organization substantial money, provided all the users can be convinced to switch.

There are two freeware desktop publishing applications available that I am aware of, although I have not personally tested either application. One is open source and relatively new (2003), called Scribus. Another is a free version of a proprietary application called PagePlus.

If you are interested in either application, here are the links:

- For Page Plus:

<http://www.freerifsoftware.com/> (Windows only)

- For Scribus:

For info: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scribus> and <http://www.scribus.net/>
(Linux/Unix, MacOS X, OS/2 and Windows)

To download: http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=125235

If you **are** interested in either application, and decide to test either or both (or have tested either or both), please let me know what you think of them. Send your comments to me at the email address above.

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