Word, Excel, or PowerPoint Crashes or Freezes (macOS)

What does this procedure actually do and why am I doing it?

You are essentially testing your Office .plist files to determine if they are the source of the problem with an Office application. "Testing" a preference file simply refers to removing the preference file from the default location (~/Library/Preferences/) and verifying that the Office application starts normally (the Office application will automatically re-create a preference file when it starts if the preference file does not already exist in the default location. To test a preference file, simply move the file from the default location to a different folder, for example a folder you create on your desktop.

Mac OS X only:

1. Quit all Office applications.
2. Navigate to your ~/Library/Preferences/ folder and drag the file(s) listed in the section below to your desktop. To access the ~/Library/ folder, from Finder, hold the option key and click the Go menu, then select the Library from the Go menu.
   (NOTE: "~" indicates your user home directory. (ie. /Macintosh HD/Users/yourusername/)
3. Move the following files from your Preferences folder to a folder on your Desktop:
   - **~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.Word.plist**
   - **~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.Excel.plist**
   - **~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.PowerPoint.plist**
4. Relaunch the problematic application (Word, Excel or PowerPoint).
   The .plist file(s) will be recreated when you do so.
5. If the application starts successfully and is running normally, trash the old file(s). In the case of the Word Preferences/Settings file, you will have to reset some preferences (and, for versions earlier than Word 2008, the AutoCorrect settings).
6. If this doesn't fix the issue, quit all Office applications again, move the Office .plist files to a folder on your Desktop. The Office .plist files are as follows:
   - **~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.office.plist**
   - **~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.Office.prefs.plist**
7. Relaunch the problematic application (Word, Excel or PowerPoint).
8. If this procedure doesn't work for you or causes other issues with your office applications, I recommend that you move the new files to the Trash and drag the original files back to where they belong. (If you are using Office 2008 or Newer, look for leftover preferences from earlier versions (see below) and remove them from your preferences folder).

In Office 365/2019, 2016, 2011, or 2008:

~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.Word.plist
~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.Excel.plist
~/Library/Preferences/com.microsoft.PowerPoint.plist

If testing these files in Office did not fix the problem, then check to see if you have leftover preferences from Office 2004 or earlier versions. The .plist files for 2004 are listed below.

In Word 2004:
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.Word.prefs.plist
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.Office.prefs.plist
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Office Font Cache

In Excel 2004:
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.Excel.prefs.plist
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.Office.prefs.plist
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Office Font Cache

In PowerPoint 2004:
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.PowerPoint.prefs.plist
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/com.microsoft.Office.prefs.plist
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Office Font Cache

In Word X:
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Word Settings
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Microsoft Component Preferences
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Microsoft Office Settings
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Carbon Registration Database
~/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Office Font Cache

Revision #1
Created 19 February 2019 22:30:56
Updated 21 February 2019 17:46:41