**Macs and Electronic Submission: RESADMIN Responses**

**Original Question:**

*I’m considering taking on a Mac laptop as my primary work laptop away from my desk. As a pre-award administrator, I have some trepidation about using a Mac to prepare documents for submission to* [*Grants.gov*](http://Grants.gov/) *and other electronic portals. The computer will have Microsoft Office for Mac and Adobe Pro. Has anyone encountered issues with Macs in this regard? Have you encountered any other issues as Mac users that might affect your administration of grants?*

**Answers:**

1. I have been using a Mac for five years, and have no problems at all preparing any documents for either [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) or Fastlane.   I know that there used to be interface issues, but those have all been resolved for the most used grant portals.    I would have no qualms recommending a switch to Macs.
2. I have an iMac at home and have used it for various grant preparation tasks, but not submission through Grants.gov.  As for using Adobe Pro – there is no difference at all in using it on a Mac or a PC, so odds are pretty good that you shouldn’t run into problems with Grants.gov submissions.

One of the big benefits of the Mac is how easy it is to use/access/manage media files.  Windows can’t hold a candle to it, even Windows 7.

However, I have Office for Mac (can’t remember which version) and personally do NOT recommend it, especially if you are accustomed to Office 2007 or 2010 on your PC.  It is a giant step backwards both in terms of functionality and ease of use.  Quite irritating and counterintuitive, really.  That goes for all of the applications in the Office suite.  I don’t know if they have fixed this with current versions of MS Office for Mac, but something you’ll want to do your homework on before committing to a Mac.

1. You shouldn’t have any problems. Just be sure that, as with Windows-based systems, you pay attention to the correct version of supported browser and system software. I work on a Mac laptop at home (and sometimes in the office), combined with a Windows-based PC and have no problems whatsoever.
2. I didn’t need to send this to the whole list but thought I would tell you one issue I’ve had with my mac.  I bought one of those Macs with the large screens and was told that remote desktop (which I use to access my PC at work) worked fine on the MAC.  It did work but the remote screen is tiny and I can’t seem to enlarge it full screen like I can on my PC.   I’ve tried to figure this out since I got it but still no luck.   I have a PC laptop to work from otherwise it would be frustrating.

If you don’t use remote desktop I don’t think you will have any issues.

1. I use both a Mac and a PC frequently and have not had any problems; however, one of our faculty had a new Mac with the newest software and latest version of Adobe and DID have a problem . . . I think the grants.gov people try to keep us as well as they can, but they not be able to . . . I would agree with the person who advised that you check to be sure the versions you are using are compatible with g.g.
2. I  have been in pre-award research administration for over 15 years and have ALWAYS used a Mac exclusively with absolutely no problems.  Even if the days of pre-PDF [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) submissions, I was able to submit without problem on a Mac using the Citrix client.  The move to PDF files made using a Mac virtually indistinguishable from using a PC.  I would definitely encourage your move to a Mac!
3. I have not had that trouble, but I will often covert such files to PDFs just as a precaution.
4. One of the great things I like about my Mac is that currently I have the most recent three versions of Word and multiple versions of Acrobat – probably go back close to 10 years! So, if I get a document that some poor soul has created using old software, I can often open in the original software and keep saving it “forward”.
5. I always encourage our investigators to convert these kinds of documents to PDFs themselves so that they can be certain of the final result. I’ve heard from users of both Macs and PCs that the converted PDF isn’t always 100% like the original. However, I’ve not heard recent comments on this issue, nor did it ever seem to be a universal, wide-spread problem.

I have occasionally had problems with PDFs that Mac-using faculty have created through an additional option that’s available on the Mac. (I’ll send you screen shots later offline if you’re not familiar with this capability.) However, if you have Acrobat Pro and can convert to PDF in Word or print to PDF through the “usual” processes, you shouldn’t have any problems that are specifically Mac-related – unless, of course, the original docs were created using really outdated software.

1. I haven’t had any problems using my Office suite on either Mac or PC, sharing documents between the two platforms, but I’m not doing heavy-duty page layout. However, I do have “charge” of our electronic submission User Guide, and I’ve never noticed any problems sharing this large document, with simple graphics and layout, between the two platforms. You can see little oddities, for example, if you use an Excel spreadsheet in first one platform then the other, but usually only display issues. Do make sure that you have Office 2011 so that you can also have Outlook, if you want to use something other than web-based mail.

It would not surprise me that there would be some compatibility issues if a PI were to send you a graphic-laden Word document created on one platform that might not display correctly on another platform, regardless of which platform was used to create it. You definitely won’t have any problems with Adobe formsets: Although we use system-to-system transmission for most of our Grants.gov submissions, I have frequently downloaded the Adobe package at home, worked on it, sent it to work, worked on it there (on my PC), and generally just bounced it back and forth… no problems. Shouldn’t be any submission problems, either, to Grants.gov.

I principally use Firefox on both Mac and PC. If you’re used to Internet Explorer on your PC, you won’t be able to use it on your Mac: Microsoft stopped supporting IE for Mac many years ago and have issued no upgrades. I often use Safari on my Mac, as well. Probably should stay clear of Chrome except for personal use, although I haven’t checked the Grants.gov website lately to see if they are supporting this browser yet. I’ve never heard any of our faculty who do a lot of FastLane “business” complain about any problems there, either.

1. I use a Mac at Work ad a PC at home and toggle between the two on weekends and have no issues. This was not the case when we were using Pure Edge. I love my Mac and tolerate my PC :).
2. I use a Mac Powerbook laptop as my only workstation, at my desk and on the go.  While it's a change going from PC to MAC, I've had no problem with using an electronic systems.  Now that the Office suite has Outlook, it's a pretty seamless integration.  Only two of us in the office use MACs; everyone else is PC and we don't have any troubles.
3. The University of Michigan Office of Research and Sponsored Projects have been using MAC's for submission of proposals for over 25 years. Only issues we encounter is faculty who only give us 2 minute before the deadline to submit :-)
4. I use a Mac at work (and I work I pre award too), and I've experienced no issues using [grants.gov](http://grants.gov), eCommons, FastLane or any other federal submission portal. I've got a newer iMac with Office 2011 and Acrobat Pro as well.