

How Offline Files Works

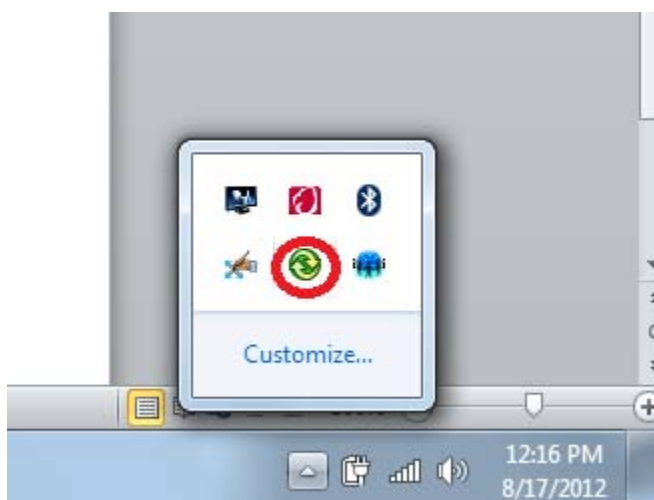
With many teachers and staff members in the district now using laptops, it has become more important that everyone understand how the offline files feature works in Windows 7.

What is “offline files”?

Offline files is a feature in Windows that allows you to continue working on your documents while you are not connected to the network in the school district. Normally, all of your documents, pictures, desktop icons etc. are stored on a server in the school you work at. Your computer automatically stores a local copy of this file in case the network connection is lost, and does some magic in the background to make it seem as if nothing has happened despite the fact that you are no longer connected to the file server. Offline files are essential for laptop users who want to be able to work on their documents at home.

On desktop computers it is very rare that connection to the file server is lost. Usually this only happens if there is a network problem or the file server has crashed. On laptops, you are disconnecting from the network every time you bring the laptop home with you. This can cause “synchronization” issues between your laptop and the file server which you will need to manage. If you make changes to a document on your laptop while it is disconnected from the network, and you make changes to the same document on another computer that IS connected to the network, you will have a conflict.. This conflict will be reported in the sync center and you will need to tell the computer which version of the document you want to keep.

Managing your offline files in the Sync Center



In the lower right corner of your screen, on the task bar and next to the date/time, is an up-arrow. Clicking this will show a bunch of small taskbar icons. One of them is the sync center icon. If you right-click this icon, you will open a context menu that will allow you several options - including resolving conflicts (mentioned above), and forcing your laptop to sync its files with the network.

Forcing Synchronization

Normally, when your computer detects that it is connected to the school's network again, it will automatically re-synchronize your files (upload any changes you have made since you were last online back to the file server). However, if you wish to ensure that your files are fully synchronized before going back offline, you can choose the 'sync all' option from the menu after right-clicking the Sync Center icon. This will force the computer to verify that all of your offline files are up to date with what is on the server.

Resolving Conflicts

To resolve any existing conflicts, choose the 'view conflicts' option after right-clicking the sync center icon. A window will open listing all of the discovered conflicts. From here you can check off all of the conflicts you wish to resolve and then choose which version of each file you want to keep (the version stored on your laptop from when you were working offline, or the version stored on the file server).