

## Creating .CSV Files

Simple, text only computer files with fields separated by 'commas' and enclosed within inverted quotes are called '.CSV files', named after their file extension. '.CSV' stands for a "**Comma Separated Values / Variables**" file. Such files have only the cell content, commas, a row separator and a text qualifier and are platform independent i.e. they can be accessed using any software. They are much smaller compared to other such files as they lack a lot of associated formatting that accompanies commercial software. .CSV files are the de facto standard for importing and exporting of spreadsheets and databases and have been around for a really long time.

There is no standard for CSV file formats and so these files are operationally defined by the format of the applications they are created in. Therefore, minor differences often creep in the files that are produced and used by different applications. That makes it a little difficult to process CSV files from multiple sources. However, the overall format is similar enough, for it seems to have gained widespread acceptance. Most of the database applications can accept and assimilate files of this standard.

Classes are implemented in modules to read and write tabular data in CSV format. CSV formats can be adjusted to gain acceptance by other applications or new CSV formats can be created.

### In the CSV File Format

- **Each record is one line but fields may contain embedded line-breaks, so a record *may* span more than one line**
- **Fields are separated with commas**
- **Leading and trailing space-characters adjacent to comma field separators are ignored**
- **Fields with embedded commas must be delimited with double-quote characters**
- **Fields that contain double quote characters must be surrounded by double quotes, and the embedded double quotes must each be represented by a pair of consecutive double quotes**
- **A field that contains embedded line-breaks must be surrounded by double quotes**
- **Fields with leading or trailing spaces must be delimited with double quote characters**
- **Fields may always be delimited with double quotes (The delimiters will always be discarded.)**
- **The first record in a CSV file *may* be a header record containing column (field) names**

### Advantages of .CSV files

1. The files are very small. The largest of files is about 100KB
2. As the data in CSVs is stored as text, they are supported by a wide variety of applications
3. They are easily imported or opened in applications such as spreadsheets
4. CSV files have maintainability advantage over other formats like XML files
5. Spreadsheets can be set up to contain the salient structural information in this format. Information can then be kept consistent with internal rules and macros, and it becomes easy to obtain views and print-outs of the site's structure for review
6. CSV files can be handed directly to clients acquainted with PC-based tools, so that they can do their own site maintenance with minimum training and low investment

### Creating a .CSV file for [www.EZlistmailer.com](http://www.EZlistmailer.com)

- You can create a .CSV file in any spreadsheet application like Microsoft Excel, Access or any special CSV editor
- A .CSV file has a minimum of three fields separated by commas and enclosed in inverted quotes

- To create a .CSV file to import into your mailing list on [www.EZlistmailer.com](http://www.EZlistmailer.com), the first three fields have to be **First Name**, **Last Name** and **Email Address**, necessarily in the same order and written in the same way. These fields are case sensitive, so please be careful while naming your fields
- Apart from these fields, you can also have any number of additional fields like “Address, Address2, Age, City, State, Country, Fax, Phone, Sex, Title, Zip” depending on your requirements
- After keying in all the required fields and info into your file, choose ‘Save As’ and save the file with an appropriate name followed by a ‘.CSV’ file extension.
- Your ‘.CSV’ file has now been created

#### Importing the .CSV file into your [www.EZlistmailer.com](http://www.EZlistmailer.com) account

- Log into [www.EZlistmailer.com](http://www.EZlistmailer.com) with your registered ID and password either through the ‘Create Mailer Now’ link or ‘Member’s Login’ link
- Once you login, click on the ‘Create List’ link
- In the page that appears, you will find two fields to fill details in – ‘Name of the List’ and ‘List Contacts File’
- Give your Mailing list an appropriate name to identify the members of that list in the ‘Name of the list’ field. Keep in mind that only alphanumeric characters and underscore ( \_ ) are accepted in this field
- In the ‘List Contacts File’, browse and select the .CSV files you have created and want to upload into the list and click on ‘**Create**’
- In this way your, .CSV file can be imported into [www.EZlistmailer.com](http://www.EZlistmailer.com) to populate your Mailing list

#### References:

<http://govpubs.lib.umn.edu/stat/csv.phtml>  
<http://freereg.rootsweb.com/howto/makecsv.htm>  
<http://www.python.org/dev/doc/devel/lib/module-csv.html>  
<http://www.creativyst.com/Doc/Articles/CSV/CSV01.htm>  
<http://afr.com/sharetables/latest/downloadhelp.html>  
<http://afr.com/sharetables/latest/downloadhelp.html>s