

Personal Sharing: File Sharing Can't Be Enabled Message

I get the message, "File sharing cannot be enabled", even though I have file sharing turned on. What do I have to do to enable personal file sharing?

This article has been archived and is no longer updated by Apple.

Personal File Sharing was first introduced in System 7, and has been a part of all subsequent releases of Apple system software (Mac OS 7.6, Mac OS 8.0, Mac OS 8.5 and so forth).

Try these steps in the order presented. If a step fails to restart file sharing, proceed to the next one.

Two Volumes With The Same Name

You may receive the "File sharing cannot be enabled" error message if two volumes of the same name are present on the desktop at the same time. For example, if an image was made of a mounted CD and then the image was opened, the error message would appear (if filesharing is enabled). This behavior is normal since the newly mounted image has the same name as the already mounted image.

Third-Party File Sharing Software

Find out if TOPS (a third party filesharing application) or other file sharing software was previously run on your system. Third-party filesharing software that performs this function can modify the System file, disabling Personal File Sharing. If so, do a clean installation of system software.

Adequate Volume Space

Look for adequate space on the volumes being shared on your computer. Mac OS creates an AppleShare PDS file which maintains information about what folders and disks are shared, and with whom. If there is insufficient space on **any** attached disk or partition, file sharing is not enabled. File sharing requires at least 360K of disk space available on each connected disk or partition. More space may be required when there are a large number of folders. If **any** volume (not just the startup volume) has less than 360K available, File Sharing reports "File Sharing Cannot Be Enabled."

The only exception to this requirement concerns locked volumes, such as CD-ROMs. The information required for sharing a locked volume is stored in the Preferences folder on the startup disk instead.

Adequate RAM

File sharing requires about 268K of RAM (Random Access Memory) to operate. Insufficient RAM may prevent Personal File Sharing from starting up. Either disable unnecessary extensions or acquire additional RAM for your computer.

Unmount PC or DOS Volumes

Make sure there are no DOS volumes mounted. If there are, eject the volume and try again.

Reset Parameter RAM

Reset the Parameter RAM (PRAM) by pressing the key sequence Command-Option-P-R while starting your computer. **Note:** This also resets the serial ports, so you may need to reactivate AppleTalk and reconfigure the Ethernet connections on some Macintosh computers.

Conflicting Extensions

Conflicting extensions may prevent Personal File Sharing from starting up. To test for this condition, use the Extensions Manager (if using System 7.5 or newer) to enable only Apple Mac OS extensions and then restart the computer. If Personal File Sharing now works, find the conflicting extension by turning on the extensions one at a time.

Delete the File Sharing Folder

1. Delete the File Sharing folder from the Preferences folder within the System Folder.
2. Restart the computer.
3. Turn File Sharing on.

Third-Party Formatting Software

If you format any media with a third-party utility, check with the vendor for compatibility with Personal File Sharing and replace the driver if necessary.

Recreate the AppleShare PDS File

You can delete an invisible file called AppleShare PDS on the top level of all connected volumes when sharing. The AppleShare PDS file may need to be deleted on each volume on multiple drive systems, or drives with multiple partitions.

To help troubleshoot in multiple drive situations, start the computer with just the startup volume on. If file sharing works in this configuration, add another drive to the chain and test file sharing each time until you find the drive that prevents file sharing from starting. You can then concentrate on the drive that fails and remove its PDS file.

Important: Deleting the PDS file removes all access privileges assigned to folders. You need to reassign access privileges to the folders.

1. Open Stickies from the Apple Menu, open a new note (any note).
2. Type anything (as long as characters are there).
3. Select Export Text from the File Menu.
4. Name the file "AppleShare PDS" (capitalization not necessary, but the spelling and the space is important).
5. Save the file on the first (root) level of the Startup Drive.
6. A dialog box will come up asking if you want to replace the file? Yes, you want to replace it.

Note: If it does not prompt you to replace the file (step 6 above), then it didn't work. Check the file name and saving destination.

If this is an AppleShare IP Server, another option is to use AppleShare IP First Aid (excerpt taken from article number 60021).

The ASIP First Aid utility also allows you to make PDS visible or invisible. Select the option you want from the Utilities menu, then select the appropriate volume. (The AppleShare PDS file, normally invisible, is located at the root level of each local read/write volume on the server's desktop.) By making it visible, you can manually back up the file to a floppy or some other volume. It is not essential that the file be made invisible again, but by doing so, you prevent the file from being inadvertently renamed or moved, which would cause a loss of privileges on the server.

An unsupported alternative is using ResEdit:

1. Use ResEdit or some other disk utility to make the AppleShare PDS file visible so you can drag it to the Trash. If you do not have such a utility, try to replace the Owner Name and Macintosh Name in the File Sharing control panel with different text. You can change them back to their original values later. When you start File Sharing, the system creates a new AppleShare PDS file on the startup volume.
2. Restart the computer.
3. Turn File Sharing on. New AppleShare PDS files are created.

Delete Users & Groups Data File

1. Turn file sharing off using the File Sharing control panel.
2. Move (do not delete) the Users & Groups data file, in the Preferences folder, to another folder outside the System folder.
3. Restart the computer.
4. Open the File Sharing control panel, and enter a new Owner Name, Owner Password, and Macintosh Name, replacing any previous data. Be sure to use new or different names.
5. Turn File Sharing on.

Note: You must reset all access privileges after completing these steps.

If this does not resolve the problem, move the Users & Groups data file back into the Preferences folder.

Reinstall Software

Before reformatting the hard disk, try reinstalling the system software or File-Sharing software and restart the computer.

Reformat

Back up the data and reformat the media. A bad block may be causing the problem.

Important: Be sure to back up your data before reformatting. The formatting process erases all data from the volume.

Published Date: Feb 20, 2012