Date: 10/12/2012
Procedure: How can I import Outlook autocomplete (NK2) files into Outlook 2010
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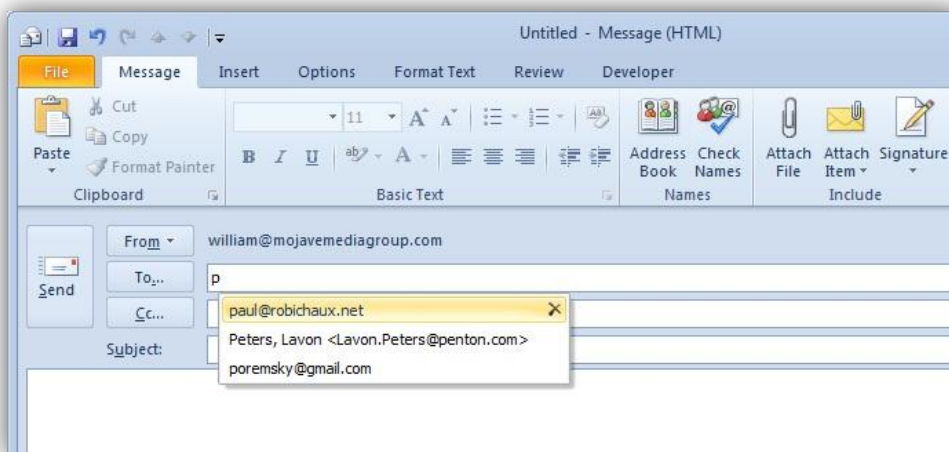**Created by:** HeelpBook Staff
Document Version: 1.0

HOW CAN I IMPORT OUTLOOK AUTOCOMPLETE (NK2) FILES INTO OUTLOOK 2010

Microsoft originally added the **Outlook** autocomplete feature, also called the nickname cache, to increase efficiency in addressing email messages.

The autocomplete list appears as you begin to type a recipient address in an Outlook form, most commonly a new email message. **Figure 1** shows an example of content in the autocomplete list rendered while addressing a new email message.

Many users have become dependent on this cache for choosing email recipients when composing messages in **Outlook**. I've seen users address messages by typing the first letter of the recipient's name in the **To** field, then hitting **Enter** without even looking because they anticipate an address they frequently use will appear on top of the list.

Customers have asked for greater accessibility to the *nickname cache*, and even the ability to manipulate content therein. Third-party vendors have responded with applications that allow for more user control of the *nickname cache*.

In **Outlook 2010**, **Microsoft** moved the nickname cache from a file, <profile_name>.nk2, to a hidden message in the user's default message store (either .pst or **Exchange** mailbox). The developers also made the nickname cache a little more portable for users moving to **Outlook 2010** by adding a *command-line* extension to import the content of an existing **.nk2** file.

To **import** an existing nickname cache file, it requires that the **.nk2** filename *matches the name given to the Outlook profile* into which the content is to be imported.

By default, **Outlook** assigns the profile name "**Outlook**" to the first profile created unless you manually change it. If you have only a single **Outlook** profile created for a user, it might just have that name. More likely, you've deployed **Outlook** to match profile names to user names.

To import an existing **Outlook** autocomplete cache file into an **Outlook** profile called Outlook, the .nk2 file will have to be renamed *outlook.nk2*. You must then save the file where it would reside in **Outlook** versions prior to **Outlook 2010**.

For **Windows XP** and **Windows Server 2003**, it's either:

```
\Documents and Settings\<username>\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook
```

or

```
%appdata%\Microsoft\Outlook
```

In **Windows 7**, **Windows Vista**, and **Windows Server 2008**, the location would be:
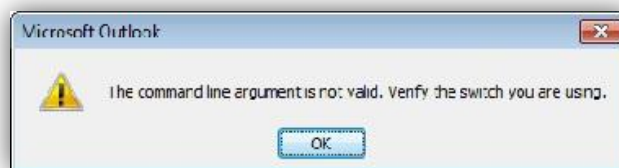
```
\users\<username>\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Outlook\
```

Outlook 2010 must be fully closed; that is, the outlook.exe process must not be visible in the**Task Manager Process** tab. Then, you initiate **Outlook 2010** via the command line with the following switch:

```
C:\Progam files\Microsoft Office\Office14>outook.exe /importNK2
```

When this command is executed, you're actually starting **Outlook**.

The import of the **.nk2** file takes place as **Outlook** starts. This switch has no additional options-you can't select an alternate path to an **.nk2** file with a filename that doesn't match the profile, for example. **Figure 2** shows the error you'll see if the switch is misspelled or parameters are added.

This import doesn't replace your existing cached addresses, but rather merges the content of the **.nk2** file into the hidden message holding the **Outlook 2010** nickname cache. The imported addresses will appear at the top of suggested recipients when the user starts typing in recipient address fields.

To prevent the file from being re-imported, **Outlook** changes the file name by adding a **.old** extension to the file. The file is otherwise unchanged and can be re-imported if necessary after removing the **.old** extension. **Microsoft** doesn't include any messages confirming a successful import to the user.

The upgrade process from **Outlook 2007** to **Outlook 2010** will migrate users' nickname caches automatically. It might be valuable to migrate nickname caches for users who are migrating from previous **Outlook** versions as well. Companies that have a set of addresses they anticipate their employees using on a regular basis could include such a cache in new Outlook 2010 deployments.

They could use an **.nk2** file saved from **Outlook 2007** (*or amended with a third-party application*) and use the **/importNK2** command-line switch to include that nickname cache template as part of their **Outlook 2010** deployment procedure.