I opened an Option A or Option C report file in Notepad and it looks very strange. Is this the file I should submit?

Maybe. If the file was created using Option A and it passes the software's validation function, then you should submit the file.

> In addition to Option A files, files produced by third-party software that comply with our specifications and have passed validation with Option A (as of version 6.1) or Option C (legacy versions), should be submitted.

The format for Option A or Option C text files was designed to make it easy to extract the data into a database. The format was not designed to make it easy for humans to read.

Each of the “fields” in a record ends with a “pipe” (|) character. There are several fields at the start of each line that repeat information that would be in the header area of a printed form. Each record is on a separate line. For example, one line from a Form 26 file might look something like:

```
0|C1234567|12345|12455-79|Contrac Blox|12|OZ|7/11/2011||60|123 Sesame St|New York|10210|
```

Different forms will have different numbers of fields. For a more detailed description of our text file format see the Text File Specifications section.