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Individual Plugin Research: Microsoft Word Add-Ins

After doing some research on the subject, I have determined that creating a Microsoft Word Add-In seems like an easy and useful way to implement a lot of helpful features for the NewVivo project.

For my research, I followed most of this tutorial on the Microsoft website to get a hang of how Word Add-Ins function: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/office/dev/add-ins/tutorials/word-tutorial>

That tutorial covers all the basics of creating your own Microsoft Word add-in. It doesn’t take very long to get through (maybe like 30 minutes to an hour), so the learning curve for implementing this isn’t bad at all.

The required software was really quick and easy to install, and once you have it set up, it’s just a matter of inserting whatever Javascript code you want into the template files it creates for you. Changing how the add-in’s GUI looks is just done in HTML/CSS, so that’s not too complicated either.

As for the Javascript code functionality itself, we’ll mainly just need to call some functions that are already pre-made in the Word API (<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/javascript/api/word?view=word-js-preview>).

The main one that I think should be useful is this one that allows us to read highlighted text: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/office/dev/add-ins/develop/read-and-write-data-to-the-active-selection-in-a-document-or-spreadsheet>

There’s also this one for searching within a document, but since we want to search multiple documents at once, we’ll probably want to find another solution using our external program, probably just by unzipping the word docs and reading the XML files directly. Here’s that searching documentation anyway though: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/office/dev/add-ins/word/search-option-guidance>

Overall, it seems like creating a Word Add-in is an easy and simple way to implement the functionality of highlighting and tagging text, as there’s already a built-in function for reading highlighted text, so all we’d have to do is write some quick code to save that highlighted text to the correct file within our database.