Rewriting the dictionary

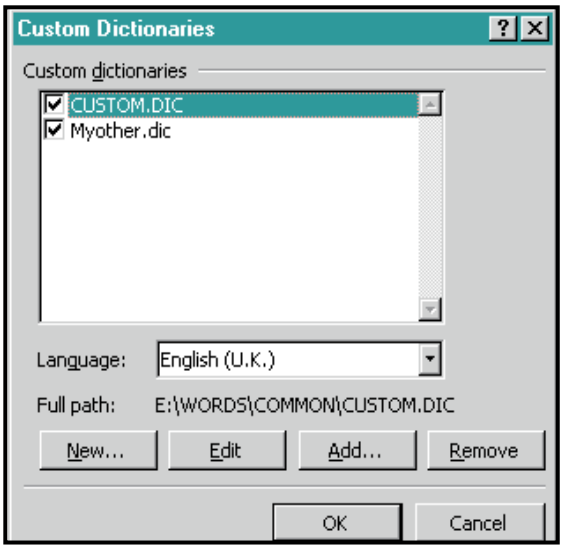
Run out of space in your custom dictionary? You could expand it or even add another one.

One problem that seems increasingly common is that of the Word 2000 custom dictionary suddenly becoming 'full', so you can't add any more words. This happened to Alan O'Brien – and to make it stranger still, Excel was happy adding words to the same dictionary.

There are, according to Microsoft, several reasons for this. First, some of the spelling engine files have been corrupted. To overcome this close all Office applications, then use the Windows Find tool to locate MSSPELL3.DLL and MSSP3EN.LEX and rename them with the .OLD extension. Start Word, and run a spelling check on some text: you will get a message saying 'This feature is not currently installed. Would you like to install it now?' Follow the prompts, inserting the installation CD when requested. The renamed spelling engines will be replaced with fresh copies and you can then delete the .OLD files.

Reinstalling the spelling files

If this still doesn't work, the custom dictionary may be corrupt. Close Office applications then rename CUSTOM.DIC to CUSTOM.OLD – see later for notes on its location. Start Word, then from Tools, Options, Spelling & Grammar, Dictionaries, click on New. Give the new dictionary a name, then Save. Next, open CUSTOM.OLD in Word and run the spell checker – you can add unrecognised words from the old to the new. Alternatively, close Word, and use a text editor to add words from the old to the new. Either method gives you the opportunity to do some spring-cleaning and eliminate those 'how on earth did they get there?' words.



Where it's at – the path to your custom dictionary

A third possibility is that the custom dictionary is, indeed, full to its limit of 64KB – around 5,000 words. Microsoft has two suggestions. First, use WordPad to open CUSTOM.DIC as a text file (Notepad won't open a 64KB file) and add the new words manually.

Alternatively, and rather more sensibly, start a new custom dictionary. This takes a little guile to set up: go back to Tools, Options, Spelling & Grammar, Dictionaries and Remove your custom dictionary. Don't worry, this is only temporary. Click New to create a new, empty dictionary. Give it a suitable name – not the same as the existing one – and Save. Add back your old custom dictionary. It will appear second in the list, which means although Word will check spelling against both dictionaries, it will only add new words to the first.

You can find your custom dictionary (which doesn't necessarily have to be named CUSTOM.DIC) by going to Tools, Options, Spelling & Grammar, Dictionaries, where you'll see the full path. By default, the Office 2000 installation locates your custom dictionary in C:\Windows\Application Data\Microsoft\Proof (Windows 95/98) or C:\Winnt\Profiles\<user name>\Application Data\Microsoft\Proof (Windows NT).

In my opinion, this is daft: it's better to keep it somewhere where it can be backed up with the rest of your work. I keep mine in the same sub-folder of 'My Documents' that contains my templates, addresses, and other vital stuff.

If you want to do something similar, then move CUSTOM.DIC to the folder of your choice. Next, alter the location where Word looks for the file by going once again to Tools, Options, Spelling & Grammar, Dictionaries, then remove the old location and add the new.

Copying tip

If you have a style, AutoText entry, toolbar, or macro in a Microsoft Word 97/2000 document or template that you want to use in another document or template, you can do this by clicking Templates and Add-Ins on the Tools menu, select Organizer, and click on the appropriate tab.

In the In DocumentName box, close the document or template if necessary, and open the file from which you want to copy an item. Do the same thing in the To TemplateName box, only open the document or template to which you want to copy an item. In the In DocumentName box, scroll down until you find the item you want to copy, select it, and click the Copy button. The item will now be added to the other document or template.

CONTACTS

Tim Nott welcomes your comments on the Word Processing column. Contact him via the *PCW* editorial office or email: **wp@pcw.co.uk**. Please do not send unsolicited file attachments.

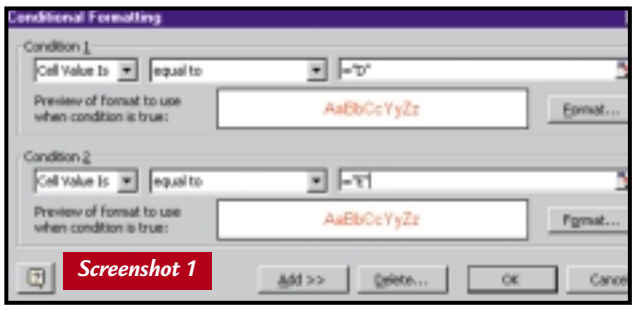
Figures in the red

Stephen Wells shows you how to make your text a little more colourful, to distinguish its value.

Joe McGregor wrote in to ask how to make the text in a cell go red if he inputs a D or an E. He also wanted to know how he could make it go red if the figure is less than 50. The answer depends on which spreadsheet and version you're using. Conditions based on numbers offer more opportunities than text.

As long as the condition is a variation of a number (like less than 50, as in his example), you can use a custom format with any version of Excel. Choose Format, Cells, Custom and enter [Red][<50]#;General. The standard colours entered this way are black, white (for use on a coloured background or to make a certain value disappear), red, green, blue, yellow, magenta and cyan. To increase the range to the 56 colours available on the standard Excel palette, you can use the colour number system. If you view the palette shown with the Font Colour tool on the Formatting toolbar you can count across the rows and find the numbers. If you like colour 17 instead of [Red] you would enter [Color17] – (Excel only understands the US spelling).

For formatting based on entered text, in later versions of Excel you can highlight the appropriate range then select Format, Conditional Formatting. You are then offered a dialog box (screenshot 1). Using your own example, make entries so that the box reads, Condition 1, Cell Value is equal to D. Excel will change this to =“D”. Click the Format button and select red. Then click Add and include a second (but equal) condition for the letter E. If your version of Excel doesn't offer this option, you can get the same result by entering representative numbers instead of letters. Format the cells like this: [Red][=4]“D”;[Red][=5]“E”;General. When you enter A, B or C on the worksheet, the cell display will show those letters in black. But enter 4 and it will display D in red, enter 5 and it will display a red E.



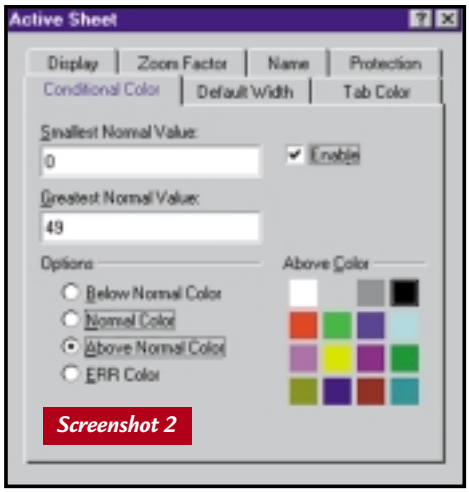
Excel's Conditional Formatting dialog box. The colour of the displayed or printed font is changed by the rules you set

Some people prefer to use macros. Figure 1 (left) shows a listing that will do the above.

If the range of cells you are using is not A1 to A100, you can change the fourth line. Press Alt & F11 to bring up the VBA editor. Double-click on Sheet 1. Then enter the listing in the right-hand box. Press Alt & Q to close the editor and return to your Excel workbook. To give your macro a keyboard shortcut, press Alt & F8, then choose Options and assign your preferred key combination. A good choice might be Ctrl & Shift & C.

Corel Quattro Pro offers a different way to create a single conditional number format, as seen in screenshot 2. Right-click on the sheet tab and choose Sheet Properties, then the Conditional Color tab. In the Smallest Normal Value box enter zero and in the Greatest Normal Value box enter 49. Click the Enable box. Then click on the Normal Color button. The colour palette title will then change to Normal Color and you can click on the red square; then click the Above Normal Color button and click the black square.

For the conditions of formatting based on text, you would write a Quattro Pro syntax macro or a PerfectScript.



Quattro Pro 8 allows the conditional formatting of text colours throughout a worksheet

Unfortunately, there are no standard built-in options in Lotus 1-2-3 for creating conditional formats. You would either need to write a 1-2-3 macro or a LotusScript.

FIG 1

Displaying text in colours

```
Sub ChangeColour()
Dim Cell As Range
Worksheets("Sheet1").Select
For Each Cell In ↙
Range("A1:A100")
If Cell.Value = "D" Then
With Cell.Font
.ColorIndex = 3
End With
End If
If Cell.Value = "E" Then
With Cell.Font
.ColorIndex = 3
End With
End If
Next
End Sub
```

(*Key:* ↙ *code string continues*)

CONTACTS

Stephen Wells welcomes your comments on the Spreadsheets column. Contact him via the *PCW* editorial office or email **spreadsheets@pcw.co.uk**. Please don't send attached files until requested.