



Style counsel

Tim Nott likes our style — the style of our Questions & Answers section, that is. So much so, that he thoroughly recommends it and shows you here how it's done.

I'm not responsible for the layout of this column — that's the job of the production staff — but I do find it helpful to use a similar formatting style for the Q&A section, with the question in bold type, followed by the questioner's name, also in bold, followed by the answer in normal type. Furthermore, I like to have no line spaces within each query but a blank line between each complete Q&A, which all makes for a more logical and legible life.

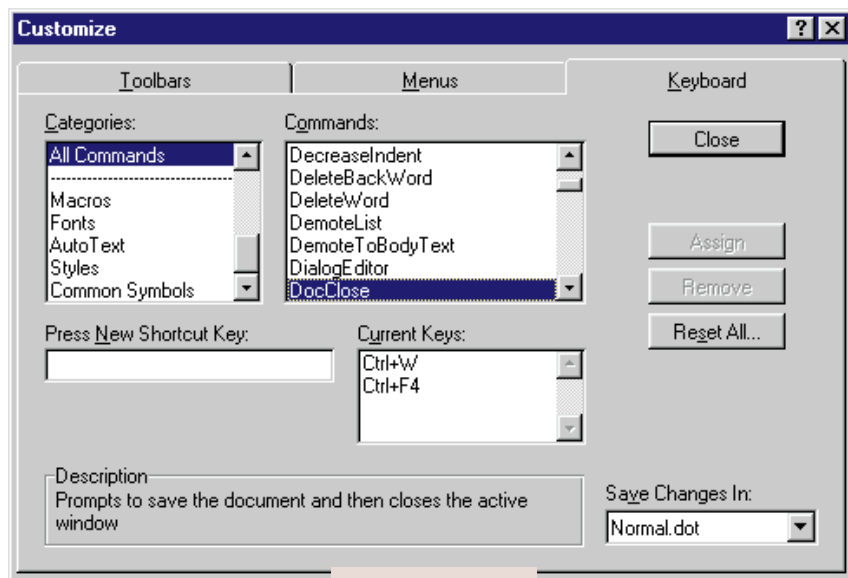
It wasn't until several months after the Q&A sections started that I bothered to spare the few minutes that have since saved me hours fiddling with formatting. For all you agony-column writers out there, here's how to automate it in Word.

Create a new style, based on Normal. In my case Normal is 12-point Times New Roman regular with 12-point spacing after each paragraph and none before. Call it, say, "Querysig". Make it bold (and whatever else you want) and set the Paragraph spacing to zero before and after. Now the clever bit. In the "Style for following paragraph" list, select Normal. Now create another style, called, say, Query. Format this similarly, but set the "Style for following paragraph" to "Querysig". Give the "Query" style a shortcut key: mine's Alt+Q.

And that's it. I hit Alt+Q, type in the question, hit return, type in the questioner's name, hit return again and I'm back in Normal to type in the answer. Assuming that I know what it is, that is.

Missing links

Tony Cattermole, you may remember from July's column, had a problem with a mysterious, but unknown, key combination that would cause Word 7 to close without saving files. Sean Blessit had some interesting insights to offer on "losing" documents in general. Although these defaults won't close Word itself,



▲ TURN OFF THOSE DANGEROUS SHORTCUT KEYS

they are potential traps for the unwary, especially those of us who frequently have to look down at the keyboard. Control + A selects the entire document. The next key typed will replace the selection, so if, for example, you start to type "A major problem..." and accidentally hit the Control instead of the Shift key, the following space will wipe out the entire document. Undo! Undo!

Similarly, Control + N starts a new document so when you look up you'll see vast blankness; but the original document will be hiding beneath it. The most insidious, however, is Control + W, which closes the active document. Imagine, as Sean suggests, that you start to type the word "Windows" but again, hit Control instead of Shift. If you're not looking at the screen, and don't have sounds turned on, you may not notice the "Save changes?" alert after Control + W. Word will then ignore the "i", but will respond to the "n" by closing the unsaved file. Nasty, eh?

The solution is to go to Tools, Customise, Keyboard, and remove the offending shortcut keys from the commands in the File menu. It might also be worth checking that no other potentially dangerous shortcut keys have been assigned: FileExit, for example, does shut down Word. But there's a catch (isn't there always)? On both my Word 7 and 97 installations, the Control + W

shortcut doesn't appear in the list of items under File.

You need to go to "All commands" and look for "DocClose" in order to nail the key combination.

WordPro tips

Further to July's plea for help in solving the propensity of WordPro's custom dictionary refusing to accept any additions, I have had one reply. Thanks to Dave Mooney for the following selections: "With the spell bar on-screen select Options, Edit Dictionary. Type the new word in the Edit box, and the Add button will un-grey. Press, and bingo, a new entry." His second suggestion is to open Explorer and find c:\lotus\comprnent\spell. Turn off both the Read-only and Archive attributes. This seems to cure the problem permanently.

Viagra falls

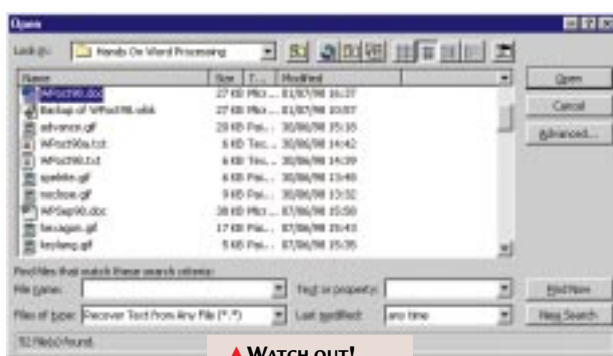
A little fun. Start a Word document, set the language to US English, and type the phrase "Unable to follow directions", without the quotes. Highlight it, hit Shift + F7, and see what the thesaurus offers.

PCW CONTACTS

Tim Nott by post via the PCW editorial office (address, p10) or at wp@pcw.co.uk

Questions & answers

Q Whenever I open a document from within Word 97 it displays a lot of document information at the bottom of the page. This does not happen if I open the document from the Recent Documents list or Explorer. How do I stop the



superfluous information appearing?

PETER MOODY

a This sounds like you have "Extract text from any file" set as the default "Files of type" in the Word Open dialog. This will append a list of Styles and other information that is stored in the document along with the text. It will also lose the formatting. This setting is "sticky" so if you use it once, it will stay that way until you change it back to "Word Documents".

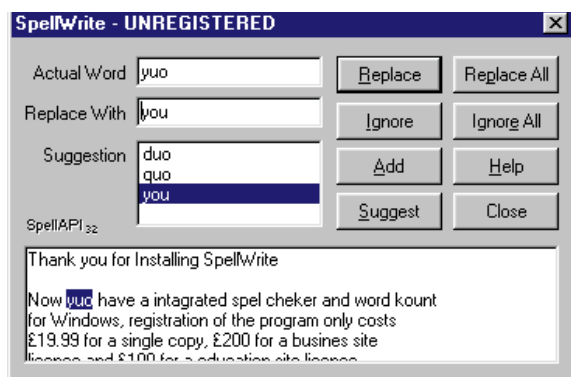
Q Can you default the Microsoft Write application which comes as part of Windows 3.x to automatically save as text and not as Write format? I don't want to use Notepad as it has a restriction as to how much text can be opened. Are there any Microsoft Write or (Notepad) spell-checking utilities which can be attached?

ANTHONY HUNTE

a No to the first question. Yes to the second.

Take a look at the Software Library on July's cover CD-ROM and you will find both Windows 3.x and Windows 95 trial versions of SpellWrite, which checks spelling in any application.

If you missed that issue you can get it from www.nerdsunlimited.com.



a Yes, this can be easily done. Save As... then from the "Save as type" list, choose "Text only with line breaks".

▲CHECK SPELLING ANYWHERE: FROM OUR JULY CD

Q In previous versions of Word you could set a "dirty" value to control whether Word prompted the user to save the changed document. Is this possible in VBA?

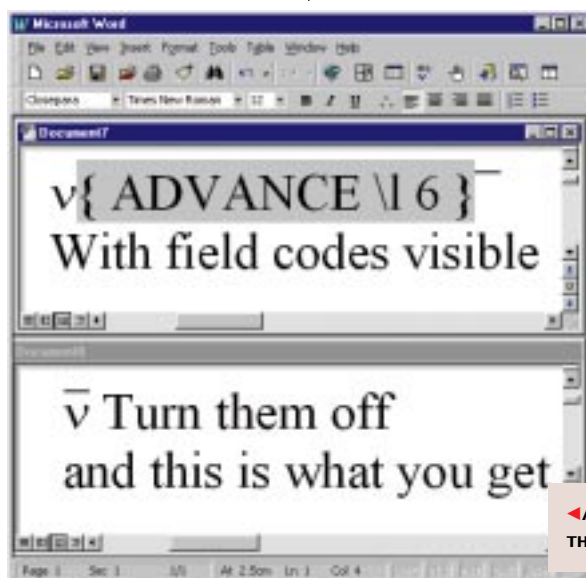
PETER GUTTRIDGE

a Indeed it is — the incantation is *Active Document.Saved=True*. For the full dirt, look up *SetDocument Dirty* in the Visual Basic Equivalents for WordBasic commands section of the Word VBA help file.

Q I would like to use Word 97 to write documents that

subsequently are to be transmitted by teletypewriter. The software that does the converting does not recognise word wrapping. Is there a way to automatically add a carriage return when the cursor reaches the end of a column?

GAETANO TIMPERI



◀ALL THE NUS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

Q I've recently written a series of physics textbooks. A

contributor sent me a file converted from WordPerfect. The antineutrino uses a Greek nu with a bar over it. When these were translated from WP to MS Word, the translation retained the overprinting. But I can't find any info about it in the help files, nor has anyone in one of the word processing newsgroups been able to suggest any cause. A Mars Bar for a correct answer!

MARK ELLSE

a This is Word being clever. If you turn on Field Codes you'll get a clue. The bare nu (looks like a script v) is from the Symbol font. This is followed by an ADVANCE field that repositions the text following, in this case six points to the left, followed by the overscore character (Alt + 0175) in the default font. You can achieve a similar effect by typing the nu, selecting it and adjusting the character spacing from Format/Font. One important point is that if you obtain the nu from Insert/Symbol, rather than just by changing to the Symbol font and typing "n", you'll find

it stays protected if the font of the surrounding text is changed.