Running on empty

Tim Nott puts us on the road to recovery with his definitive guide to a troublesome Word 97.

One common problem with Word 97 is getting the thing to run at all. I've come across two cases this month where clicking on the Word shortcut – be it on the Start Menu, Desktop or whatever – starts to launch Word, which gets partway through loading, then stops with blank toolbars and a frozen pointer. The entire PC then becomes a large desktop ornament, necessitating two Control + Alt + Deletes or a power-down in order to resume work. Although we covered a similar situation briefly last September, I think it's worth digging a little deeper.

Each of the two users had found a clue. The first was that clicking on a DOC file in Explorer started Word and loaded the file without a hitch, and Word then worked as normal. The second one was that reinstalling Word didn't cure the problem. Looking at these facts together

▲ STARTING WORD WITH A SWITCH

suggests it wasn't Word itself that was broken, but something that was trying to load with it – either Normal.dot, the default template, another global template or an Add-in.

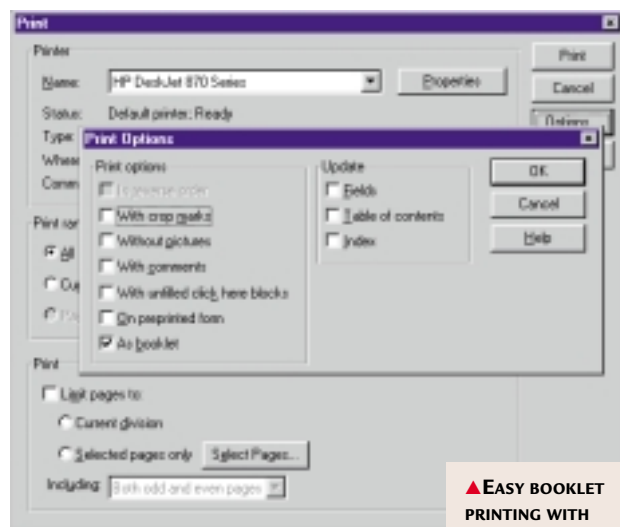The quickest diagnostic is to experiment with Word's command line

switches. Although you might think such things went out with DOS, they are very much alive and kicking. In November's column I mentioned how to start Word without creating a new, blank document, by using the /n switch. Unfortunately, I left out a rather vital piece of information, so I'll go over this blow-by-blow.

First, you need to create a new shortcut to Word, so right-click on the desktop or in the folder where you want to store the shortcut and choose New… Shortcut. Browse to Winword.exe, and complete the Wizard. Now right-click on the shortcut, choose Properties and add the appropriate switch to the end of the Target on the Shortcut tab. Note that – this is the bit I left out – if the target is surrounded by quotes, the switch goes outside the quotes: typically you'll get the quotes put in automatically if the path name contains spaces. The switch takes the form <space><forward slash><letter>.

As mentioned in November, the /n switch starts Word without creating a new document. Hence any Autoexec or Autonew macro in the Normal (default) template will not be run. All custom toolbars or menus in Normal.dot will be loaded, however. The /m switch starts Word with a new, blank document but prevents any macros running automatically. The /a switch starts Word without any add-ins, global templates or the existing Normal.dot being loaded. Effectively, it's like running Word from a brand-new clean installation. It also locks the
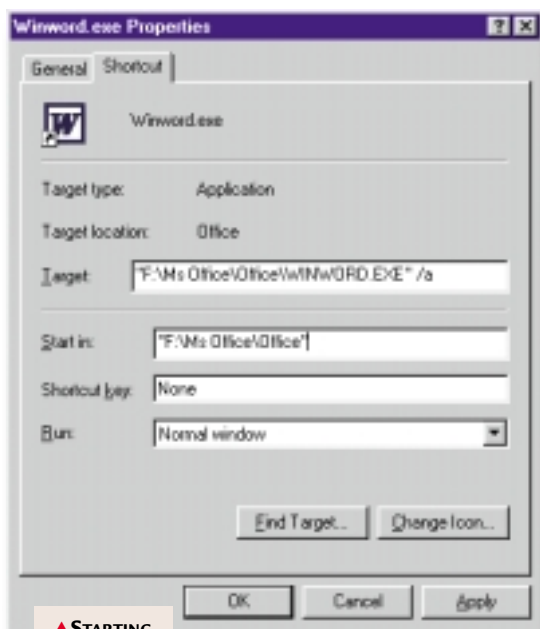

▲ EASY BOOKLET PRINTING WITH LOTUS WORD PRO

settings files against modification.

Having narrowed down the suspect list, the remedies are self-evident. If you rename Normal.dot, Word will create a new one based on the factory settings. You can use the Organizer (Tools, Templates and Add-ins) to rescue Autotext entries, toolbars and macros from the renamed Normal.dot. Be wary of copying Auto macros across, as these are possible causes of the original problem. If you move add-ins and extra global templates from the Office Startup folder elsewhere, they won't be loaded. Obviously, you should try these remedies one at a time, and note that the Office Startup folder is usually found in the same folder as the Office programs (eg Winword.exe). It is not the same as the Windows\Start Menu\Programs\ StartUp folder.

One final point – do make sure Word has crashed before embarking on the path of remedy. Some add-ins, notably those pertaining to speech recognition software, take a long time to load.

■ **Booklets for Lotus eaters**
Further to last month's how-to-athon on creating booklets in Word 2000 and 97, here's how to do it in Word Pro 9. Create a new document using the Booklet.wpd SmartMaster. Type document. Print document. That's it – Word Pro takes care of page numbering, imposition,

cs & DTP
sheetsDatabases
Word Processing
Windows3.1
Visual Programmi
S/2
Unix
Networks

Questions & answers

Q How can I get a preview of the selected template when I create a new file in Word? There's a space for a preview in the File, New dialog but it always says 'Preview not available'.

MIKE PENROSE

a *You need to create the preview picture first. Close the File, New dialog, then go to File, Open and open the template (.DOT) file itself. From File, Properties, tick the 'Save preview picture' box. Save and close the template – you'll find that File, New will now show a preview.*

Repeat for other templates you want to preview.

▲ **ANY PICTURE EDITOR YOU LIKE – AS LONG AS IT'S MICROSOFT WORD**

Q How do I back up my user dictionary and AutoCorrect file in Word?

GILBERT PENCHAUD

a *You can find out where your user dictionary is from Tools, Options, Spelling and Grammar. Hit the Dictionaries button and the*

path and file will be revealed. As mentioned last month, Word 97 stores its AutoCorrect (*.ACL) files in the main Windows folder. Word 2000, however, stores them in C:\Windows\ ApplicationData\Microsoft\ Office, again with the .ACL extension.

Q How can I use Microsoft PhotoDraw as the default picture editor in Word 2000? Although there is a list box under Tools, Options, Edit for the Default Picture Editor, this only contains Microsoft Word itself, and I can't work out how to add PhotoDraw to the list.

VERONICA WALDORF

a *You're going to love this. Although PhotoDraw ships with the premium edition of Office 2000, it can't be used as the default picture editor for Word as, according to Microsoft, its installation does not add the registry keys needed for Word to recognise it. The Knowledgebase article concludes, rather unhelpfully, 'Microsoft has confirmed this to be a problem in Microsoft PhotoDraw 2000.'*

Q In Word 97 I have a small letter-heading template that includes the

date. When I subsequently open documents made with this template, the date is always changed to the current date, which rather destroys the point of saving the document. How can I stop the date being updated?

DAVID HAYNES

a *There are several ways to do this. What I do with my letterhead template is first create a bookmark called 'date' where I want the date to appear. Then I have the following code in an Autonew macro, which runs automatically when I start a new letter.*

```
ActiveDocument.↲
Bookmarks("date").↲
Select Selection.↲
InsertDateTime ↲
DateTimeFormat:=↲
"d MMMM, yyyy",↲
InsertAsField:=False
(Key: ↲ code string continues)
```

The option statement in the code ensures that the date is inserted as text rather than an updating field.

Q I use Word 97 to prepare technical manuals. I use lots of callouts to label scanned diagrams. None of the default callouts is just what I want; so I use a macro to set the colour, line weight, arrowhead, reduce the gap and apply a border. This works well; I'm proud of my macro, but I should prefer to be able to make subsequent callouts to default to the style which I am applying with

the macro. Is this possible?

SARAH BIRKIN

a *You can preserve most of the callout formatting by getting the first one as you want it then right-clicking on it and selecting 'Set Autoshape Defaults'. Bear in mind these will then apply to all drawn objects.*
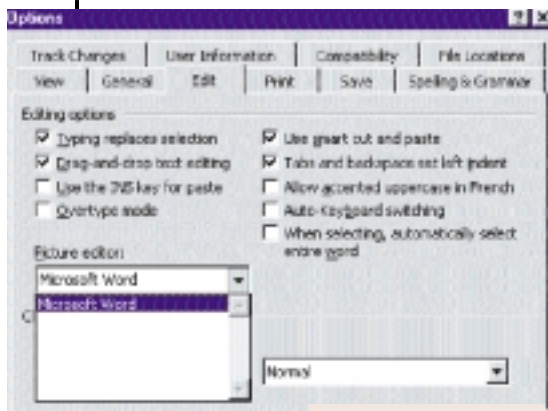
Q HELP please – I hate the damned Office Assistant. OK, I can get rid of it for each letter I write, but I want it OUT permanently, or at least until I want to see it again.

ALAN STOUT

a *In Word 2000 you have the option to turn off the Office Assistant permanently as well as hide it temporarily. In Word 97, the same right-click, Options, brings up a number of choices. If you deselect 'Using features more effectively' you won't get the dreaded 'It looks like you're writing a letter…' message. For a more drastic solution, move all the .ACT files out of the Actors sub-folder of the main Office folder – this will remove the Office Assistant and revert to a standard help system. In the unlikely event that remorse should strike you, reinstating the .ACT files will bring Clippit and his pals back to life.*
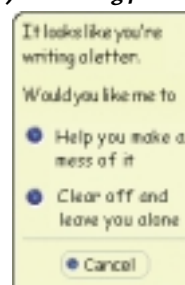

▲ **KILL CLIPPIT BY HIDING HIS .ACT**

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setting landscape format, margins and so on, right down to prompting you to turn the paper over. At least it does in theory, because it wouldn't do the last bit for me – it kept taking fresh sheets of paper from

the tray. After rather a lot of wasted paper, I managed to tame it by running out, which gave me time to replace the first sides back in the in-tray. Even so, it's a lot easier than the Microsoft method.