Word Tips for Editors

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Bruce Rosenblum, chief executive officer, and Elizabeth Blake, senior product manager, of Inera, Inc, gave a thorough presentation on how editors can use Microsoft Word more effectively.

Because most authors write with Microsoft Word, most editors who work on screen also edit in Word. Microsoft Word was designed primarily as a writing tool, but Word can be enhanced as a powerful editing tool through exploration and customization.

Blake and Rosenblum alternated in touching on a number of useful topics—personalizing Word, formatting options, text selection and pasting, document navigation, find and replace, and using the function keys.

Start personalizing Word by selecting Tools/Options and the General tab. Expand your "recently used files" list to show up to nine files instead of the default of four.

You can turn off Word's "smart" cut-and-paste option (which automatically adjusts spacing around selected text) from the Clipboard by selecting Tools/Options and the Edit tab. In the same dialogue, you can turn off the Paste Options clipboard icon, which is on by default (and often obscures part of the document text after pasting).

From the Tools menu you can access AutoCorrect Options. The options on the AutoFormat tab allow you to turn off AutoFormat as you type or apply selected AutoFormat options to a document. Mark the Replace "straight quotes" with "smart quotes" box to change straight quotation marks to smart (curly) quotation marks. Create shortcuts for inserting frequently used text into documents by using the "Replace text as you type" option on the AutoCorrect tab. The Customize options on the Tools menu allows you to add frequently used formatting tools (such as superscript) to your Word toolbar with the Commands tab.

Experiment with the AutoCorrect and AutoFormat features. Word's automatic conversion of fractions (such as 1/2) to fraction characters (½) can be disabled, as can Word's automatic capitalization of the first letter of a sentence or table cell.

To use Word's format painter, click the paintbrush icon on the Standard toolbar and "paint" over text to reapply formatting from another part of the document. Double-click to reapply formatting multiple times.

Some time-saving keyboard commands used in formatting are

- Redo last action by pressing Ctrl-y.
- Undo last action by pressing Ctrl-z.
- Strip formatting by pressing Ctrl-space.

- Select an arbitrary block of text, such as a column, using Alt-mouse click-and-drag.

By selecting Paste Special from the Edit menu, you can normalize fonts, colors, and formatting when pasting in text from another document, e-mail, or the Web.

The Document Map, on the View menu, enables you to navigate quickly through a document to which Word styles have been applied. A document outline appears in a new pane, and the headings can be reviewed and clicked on to move easily through the sections of a document.

The function keys at the top of the keyboard provide several useful editorial tools. For example, Shift-F5 allows you to return quickly to the most recently edited text after opening a document. You can also use it to cycle through the three previous edited places in an open document.

Tiny icons at the bottom left of the screen are used to change among Normal, Web, Print, Outline, and Reading layouts. Also at the bottom of the screen, the text "TRK" can be used to turn Track Changes on and off with a double click.

Blake also touched on a few tips for Word 2007. Because the user interface is radically different from that of earlier versions of Word, Microsoft has made an Excel workbook available that lists all the Word 2003 tools and commands and their new locations in Word 2007 (*office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA100744321033. aspx?pid=CH100487431033*).