# Notes from Christmas Letters

(The associated data file is U3ANR trial.mdb)

## Christmas Letters

• Christmas letters mainly fall in to two classes:

Everything created by you, ie. self-designed.

Written by you but printed on custom designed commercial paper.

## Self-designed

• It is more personal to see a layout that is non-commercial.

• Because of printer constraints it is difficult to use the full width and height of the paper.

• Printing speed and costs are affected by the amount of clip art and fancy fonts that are used.

## Commercial Christmas paper

• Professional designs and commercial printing make full use of the paper.

• Cost of the paper is a factor but this needs to be balanced against ink cost for self-designed.

• The design layout of the paper can make positioning your text harder.

## Decisions to be made before starting

• Do you want one page or more?

• Does your printer handle duplex printing?

• Are you sending the letter inside a Christmas Card or is the letter sufficient?

Note: 3. above will be a determinant as to the way you format self-designed paper

## Adding to Commercial Christmas paper

• Add an extra graphic or a year date or some stylized text to fit in a vacant space.

• Put information into a header or footer set either for first page only or every page.

• Insert a watermark.

## Before starting your letter

- Decide the Font that you will use.
- Select a size for the font that you would find readable but as small as possible.
- Go to File menu, Page setup and adjust the margins to give maximum writing area available.

## Using commercial paper

- Hold a blank sheet of printing paper over the commercial paper and measure and mark the unusable parts of the paper.
- Go to File menu, Page setup and adjust the margins to give maximum writing area available.
Note: The pattern on the paper may mean that you need to adjust your left or right margin quite differently to the other.

## Write your letter

- If you are to use merge for the salutation, the first line should start Dear and a space and be followed by two or three Enters.
- Write the complete letter if you do not intend to personalise it with a different comment for each letter.
- If you do intend to personalise it leave a deliberate gap of say 5 lines at an appropriate place, (having your Show/Hide [¶] button set for Show helps).

## Test for fit on commercial paper

- If you have plenty of commercial paper print one copy of your letter on that paper.
- If not print on to a blank sheet of paper and hold it against your commercial paper under a strong light.
- Make minor adjustments to margins, font size, line spacing or text to get a fit.
- Remember that you may have left a paragraph blank on purpose.

## To merge using an address list

- Save your letter and leave it open in Word.
- It will become the *main document* in a merge.
- To go further you will need a data source, in our case an address list which can easily be created by using Tools>Letters and Mailings and selecting Mail Merge Wizard.

**Using Mail Merge Wizard**

• Step 1. Select *Letters. Next*

• Step2. As you have your letter open click on *Use the current document*.

• Step 3. As you need to make a database of details of recipients for your Christmas letter click on *Type a new list*. This is a lot of work to start with but the same list can be useful for other things and can be edited and added to to keep it up to date.

> • Click on Create under *Type a new list. The New Address List* dialog box will open. You can accept it as it is but it is suggested that you customise it.

> • In the dialog box click on Customise. In that dialog box use *Move up* and *Rename* to move "Company name" to the top above Title Then rename it Greetings. Rename "City" and "ZIP code" as Suburb/Town and Postcode respectively. Click OK.

> • Then fill in the details of the people that you want to send the letter to. You do not have to complete all of the details if time is short and for this task you could fill in only "Greetings" with (Colin, etc) and for safety's sake fill in the "Last name".

• Step 4. Your letter is already written so put your cursor on the top line where your Dear Colin will go and click on the *More Items* icon in the Wizard.

> • In the Insert Merge Field dialog box, click on Database field then select *Greetings* and click Insert and Close.

> • Look at the top line of text and it should read Dear «Greetings». Type a comma. Next.

• Step 5. Check that the previewed letter has the correct greeting line. If so move on to Step 6.

• Step 6. Select Edit individual letters and in the Merge to New Document select *All* records. A new document will open with all of the merged letters in it. Save the file. Then, if you need to, complete the personalised paragraph that you left available. Save the file again.

The merge is completed.

**Suggestions for printing your letters.**

Do a trial print on plain paper marked roughly with the custom layout.'

If you are printing from the file of merged letters you need to remember that the individual letters are not separate pages or letters but are **Sections** of the file. To print the first five letters you need to tell the printer to print Section 1 to 5 which is expressed as **"s1-s5"** or **"s1, s2, s3, s4, s5**".

Print your letters in batches of about five initially until you are confident that everything is printing correctly.

In the case where you have used two pages for your letter and the second page is on non-customised paper you could:

> If the only personalisation is on page 1 of the letter, print all of that page from the merged letter and then treat page 2 as a separate file and run it. You will then need to collect the letter together manually.
> or
> If there is personalisation on both pages print the merged letters by setting the output to reverse order and putting the paper into your printer with one non-custom sheet followed by one custom sheet for each letter. To set reverse order go to MS Word Tools menu, click on Options, click on Print tab and under Printing options put a tick in the Reverse print order box.

In all printing methods make sure that the custom paper is put into the printer the correct way Test first with a sheet of blank paper with Top written on it.