

Tried and true tips for MS Word

By Graeme Eggins.

Based on readers' tips recorded by New York Times columnist David Pogue.

NB: not all shortcuts will work on all Windows systems.

* Pressing the BACKSPACE key erases to the left and the DELETE key erases to the right.

* Press SHIFT + down / up arrows to select a few sentences or a paragraph.

* When you re-open a Word document the cursor is automatically placed at the start. But if you press SHIFT + F5 the cursor will jump to where you were when you last worked on the document.

* To check the word count of an article press ALT+T+W

* Files can be moved from one folder to another by dragging the file icon over the icon of the destination folder.

* On most versions of Windows, double-clicking the blue top of a window (the title bar) will maximise the window, or return it to its former size if it's already maximised (much easier than mousing to the "maximize" button at the upper right).

* In Microsoft Word SHIFT + F3 makes a word change from all uppercase to all lowercase to just the first letter upper case and so on.

* ALT+ F4 closes the active window, the same as if you click the top-right "X" button.

* You can copy objects from one folder to the other by holding down the ALT key while dragging.

* You can navigate a document quickly by pressing CTRL and pressing one of the direction keys. This makes the cursor jump from beginning of one word to the next in the direction you indicate when you use the left and right arrows. Pressing up and down jumps the cursor from paragraph to paragraph. It's much faster than moving space by space to where you want to go.

* Use the PRINT SCREEN button to save a picture of the whole desktop (and ALT-PRINT SCREEN for just the active window). You can paste the image into Word (or many other programmes) with the PASTE command. You can also edit the image in any graphics programme.

* Press CTRL 2 will double space a document. Press CTRL 1 to reduce to single space.

* When something is highlighted and you wish to change it, DON'T CLICK DELETE, just type the change. So many people want to hit delete or pick up the mouse...a totally unnecessary move!

* If you mess up a document, try the UNDO button (left facing curved arrow on the toolbar) or hit CTRL + Z. If that doesn't work, close the document. When prompted whether you want to Save, click NO. Reopen the document. Anything you hadn't saved will be gone.

* In MS Word 2003, suppose you want to copy/delete only a vertical strip of text, and not the entire page. You can do this by pressing the ALT key, and selecting just the text you need. You can do this across pages of a multi-page document too - keep the ALT key pressed, and drag your mouse pointer (keeping the left button pressed) all the way to the end of the document.

* You can enter sentences in Autocorrect, i.e. for example you can enter your name "John Smith" in Autocorrect so that you do not have to type it all the time (you have to be careful though).

* Don't save a file from your shiny new copy of the latest Word in its own format unless you know the recipient has the same version: use an earlier Word format, or rich text format (RTF) to make sure it will open.

* If you are having trouble pasting something or if you want it to be in the same font as the other material in the document, instead of clicking on Paste or CTRL + V, click on "Edit", "Paste Special", then "Unformatted Text." That takes out all of the formatting in what you are pasting and it adopts the formatting where you are pasting it.

* In a Word document if you want to change the size of the text use CTRL [(left square bracket) to make it one font size smaller and CTRL] to make it one font size bigger. This helps when you are trying to fit text inside a box or maximize the spacing on a page.

* You can split screens in MS Word. Clicking on the little rectangle in the upper-right hand corner (above the scroll bar) of a Word screen will divide the screen in half; each will now have its own scroll bar. It's then possible to keep one section of your document in front of you while scrolling down or up in the other portion of your screen. (The "Window" tab from the top menu will also activate and de-activate this function.)

* Use Insert > Symbols to get a cents sign, foreign alphabets and similar characters.

* The F4 key in MS Office repeats the last action performed regardless of what it was: delete, make bold, insert row/column, paste etc.

* A range of text or cells in Excel, or just about anything, can be selected by clicking at the beginning and then shift-clicking (holding the shift key while you click) at the end of a block.