

# Notepad & WordPad

## Simplified Text Editors Offer More Value Than You Might Think

If you cannot afford Microsoft Word, consider using the two text editors that come free with Windows: Notepad and WordPad. After all, why do you need all the word processing power of Word when you only need to write the occasional letter or school assignment? In simplified terms, Notepad is a basic text editor while WordPad is a junior version of Word, but advanced users know there is more to these applications than that. Each provides uses and tools you may not have considered before.

The tips discussed throughout this article apply to the versions of Notepad and WordPad found on systems running Windows 98 Second Edition. If you are using another Windows operating system, the directions we provide might be slightly different, but generally speaking, the applications will work much the same.

### Easy Access

You can open Notepad and WordPad by clicking the Start button, Programs, Accessories, and double-clicking Notepad or WordPad, but if you use these applications regularly, consider creating an alternative route for quicker access. Our tips in this section explain how you can add shortcuts to your Quick Launch bar or within your Send To options. To find out how to create Desktop shortcuts, see "Windows Dressing" in this issue.

**Quick Launch bar shortcut.** You can easily drag a Desktop icon (such as a shortcut for Notepad or WordPad) to the Quick Launch bar to add it to that location. The advantage of using the Quick Launch bar is that you can not only launch applications faster, but you also can open files without launching an application beforehand.

The next time you need to open a text file, try dragging and dropping a file from Windows Explorer onto an icon of Notepad or WordPad in the Quick Launch bar, and the file will open in that application window.



**Send To whom?** Send To is a seldom used, but extremely handy Windows function. It enables you to select any file and open it in any related application, not necessarily the one that created it. To add Notepad to the Send To list, use Windows Explorer to open C:\WINDOWS\SEND TO. Hold down the CTRL key as you click and drag the Notepad icon from the Desktop to the Send To list in the right pane of the Explorer window.

Now, if you select any file in Windows Explorer, right-click it, and select Send To Notepad from the pop-up menu, that file will open in a Notepad window. This is a good method to use for files that have strange or unregistered file extensions (such as a file named: File\_id.diz). Follow the same process to add WordPad to the Send To list.

### Notepad

Notepad is a very basic text editor that lets you read, edit, or create text files that do not require formatting. If you need formatted text, you'll have to use WordPad or another word

processing application. Notepad is small, fast, and efficient at what it does, but don't expect the world.

**An open and close case.** Notepad saves text as TXT files, but it can read several other text-like file extensions, such as .BAT, .INI, .DAT, .DIZ, and .LOG. Many Web developers continue to use Notepad to create and edit their HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) files in order to have complete control over them.

Be careful: Notepad opens any file type, including executable (EXE) files, and then saves them in Notepad's TXT format. This can make that file unreadable by its native application. If you need to save the file with its original extension, select Save As from the File menu, and make sure you type the file name in quotes with the extension you want it to have, such as "autoexec.bat" (with the quotes).

**Stamping the date and time.** Notepad has two ways you can input the date and time into your text document. First, you can press the F5 key and the date and time information from your system clock is inserted into the document. Second, you can log the date and time every time the

document was opened and saved, and do so within the document itself.

Open a new Notepad file and type .LOG in the first line (note the period and the use of capital letters). Save the file. Now, each time the file is reopened and closed, a date and time stamp will be added, providing you with a log file.

**Wrapping it up.** Because Notepad is a simple text editor, when you begin typing in the document window, your words won't wrap to the next line, unlike more complex programs. You must either press the ENTER key when you want a line break or you'll need to turn on the word wrapping feature by selecting Word Wrap from the Edit menu.

**Forget fonts and formatting.** In the version of Notepad included with Win98 or newer, you can set the default font of the document by clicking Edit, Set Font to display a dialog box of choices. This capability is limited to changing the font text for the entire document; you cannot select portions of the text to only modify that font. And the next time you open Notepad, it will use the most recently selected font.

When you view a text file created in Notepad in another text editor, such as WordPad, the font formatting applied in Notepad may not apply to WordPad. This is because documents created in Notepad are saved as text files that do not include all font formatting information. The font settings you can choose in Notepad are only for display in the Notepad window.

**64KB limitation.** Other than not saving formatting information, Notepad's biggest limitation is that it has a 64KB maximum on the size of files it can create, open, and save. And any settings you define in your Notepad session may not save when you close Notepad.

**Not considerate of others.** Notepad also displays text without considering the output device, such as a printer. So, if a line in a Notepad file exceeds the printer's margin limitations, the printer must shorten the line so that it fits on the printed page.

**Overlooked printing features.** You can direct Notepad to add header and footer information that will print in the document hard

copy. To access these settings, select Page Setup from the File menu.

Like some other Notepad settings, any header and footer information you add is only available for that Notepad session and is not saved when you save the document or close Notepad. The default settings are:

- Header: &f (document's file name)
- Footer: Page &p (the word "Page" and the page number)

There are other codes you can use in either the Header and Footer fields for various settings, including:

- To left-align the characters that follow: &l
- To center the characters that follow: &c
- To right-align the characters that follow: &r
- To print the current date: &d
- To print the current time: &t
- To print an ampersand (&): &&

If the formatting code is not the first item in the Header field, Notepad will automatically center the header. For example, to align a title to the left side of the page, type &l*Title Text* (replacing *Title Text* with the actual title that you

want to print as the header) first in the Header field. You can incorporate text, with or without a code, into the Header and Footer fields, and it will print in its appropriate position.

And you can use more than one combination of codes in the Header and Footer fields (such as the date and time). Leave a space or two between each combination to make the header or footer easier to read. If you leave the Header and Footer fields empty, no header or footer will print.

## WordPad

WordPad is a simple word processor that has been bundled with all Microsoft Windows operating systems since Windows 95. It is basically a stripped-down version of Microsoft Word. It is best for creating simple documents that don't need fancy formatting or features. WordPad is not able to create columns, generate tables, or check spelling and grammar. You cannot customize its toolbars, either. Still, WordPad is exceptionally stable; it rarely, if ever, crashes.

**Works with multiple formats.** All files created in WordPad are saved, by default, to Word's DOC format. So, if you decide to purchase Word later on, you won't have to retype or convert all your WordPad documents. Another advantage of using WordPad is that you can easily open documents created in other popular word processing programs, including Word and WordPerfect. If someone sends you a Word document, for example, you can open it and see most of its formatting without having Word installed on your system.

WordPad can read multiple file formats, such as RTF (rich text format), HTML, and ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) text. When you save one of these documents using the Save As command from the File menu, you can save it as another file type, but WordPad may remind you that doing so might remove certain formatting characteristics.

WordPad also can handle documents of any size, which makes it ideal for viewing and editing text content that is too large for Notepad.

**Setting tabs and indenting paragraphs.** The quickest way to set a WordPad tab is to double-click the ruler right where you want the tab stop. Even when you resize or reposition your WordPad window, WordPad saves the tab settings. You can also indent a paragraph by changing its first line setting or adjusting the left

## Advanced Tip

### Use Notepad To Search The Registry

Looking for a precise value in the Registry can be a tedious chore. Although the Registry Editor has a Find tool to help with your search, it can only do so much and isn't always the best option. Even if you know the value you want and what Registry section it might be in, you may not have a clue as to where its exact location is. You can use Notepad to help you search through the contents of the Registry, enabling you to find specific values more quickly.

Before you begin, please note that incorrectly modifying a Registry setting can cause serious problems that may require you to

reinstall Windows. You should be familiar with the Registry Editor before attempting such adjustments. For more information, see the Registry articles in the "Windows Me & 98," "Windows 2000 & NT," and "Windows 95" sections of this issue, depending on which operating system your computer uses.

To open the Registry Editor, click the Start button, select Run, and type **regedit** in the field provided. Notepad can only accommodate a certain amount of text, and selecting a root folder's contents may be too large to fit in a Notepad file, so try to pinpoint where you think the value might be. For example,

if it relates to a specific software product, open HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE, then SOFTWARE, and select the *SoftwareName* key (its icon resembles a folder).

Next, select Export Registry File from the Registry menu. Select a location for the new file, type its name (such as: **name.txt**) in the File Name field (be sure to include the .TXT extension with the file name), and click the Save button. Double-click the new Name.txt file to open it in Notepad. Then, select Find from the Search menu, and type the value or text you want to search for in the Find What field.

or right margins for the entire paragraph. To modify these settings, select Paragraph from the Format menu and make your changes in the dialog box that displays on-screen.

**How does it look?** You can print preview your document and set its printing margins, paper sizes, and orientation. To do this, select Print Preview from the File menu. When the next window displays on-screen and the page is in preview mode, you can zoom in and out, as well as check the formatting on several pages or view two pages at a time. Then, if you like what you see, click Print.

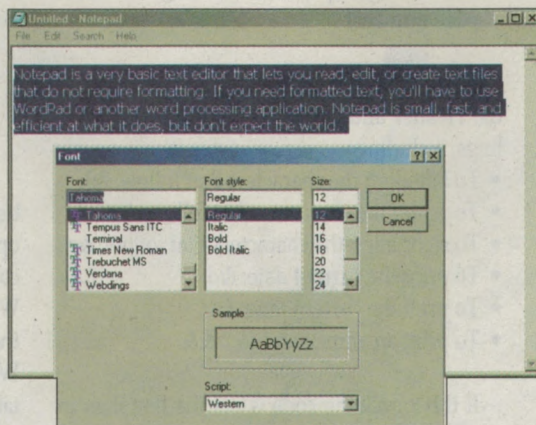
Click File, Page Setup to display the dialog box where you can set printing margins, choose the paper size, and select its orientation (portrait or landscape).

**Configure it.** In addition to the Print Preview and Page Setup configuration options that we just described, WordPad allows you to set up other standard ways of behaving through its Options dialog box. And, unlike Notepad, it saves these settings when you exit the program. That way, you don't have to re-create these settings the next time you use WordPad.

To open the Options dialog box, select Options from the View menu. Here, you can change the unit of measurement used in the ruler and for tab stops, change how the mouse works when selecting text, and decide if you want the word-wrapping feature enabled.

**Inserting and embedding.** WordPad works with other features of Windows so you can insert or embed graphics, spreadsheets, etc. into your documents. Select Object from

the Insert menu to open the Insert Object dialog box and make your selections. Then, when you select an embedded object such as an Excel spreadsheet, the WordPad menus and toolbars are temporarily replaced by those belonging to Excel. And while you're "in" the embedded object, you can use all the features of the application used to create it



**Although newer versions of Notepad let users set a default font, the settings you choose are only for display in the Notepad window and may not appear in other word processing applications.**

(such as Excel). When you finish, click outside the embedded object to return to the WordPad toolbars and menus.

**Direct e-mail attachments.** Do you need to e-mail your document to a friend or colleague? Don't bother opening your e-mail client and adding an attachment to a new message because you can accomplish the same task from within WordPad. Click Send from the File menu, and your e-mail software will automatically open

with the document already attached. Add the recipient's e-mail address and any explanatory text, and the message is ready to send.

**Find and replace.** You've decided you don't like a word or phrase you've used throughout your document and you want to change it to something else, so what is the easiest way to do this? Use WordPad's Replace tool to make the necessary changes.

Select Replace from the Edit menu, type the unwanted word(s) in the Find What field, and then type the word(s) you want to replace it with in the Replace With field. You also can direct WordPad to only look for whole words and match the case of your word selections. Once you've made your choices, click Replace All to replace all occurrences of the unwanted word(s) with the new word(s). Or, you can view each occurrence of the word(s) before deciding to click Replace, by clicking Find Next instead.

An advantage of editing HTML in WordPad instead of Notepad is that you'll be able to use WordPad's Replace functionality if you have a lot of common code to change.

**Post it on your Desktop.** Did you know you can create reminder notes (electronic equivalent of "sticky" notes) in WordPad without even saving the document? Open WordPad, type the text for your reminder note, date and time stamp it if necessary, select the text, and then drag it to a blank area of the Desktop. A WordPad Document Scrap icon (with a yellow highlight) will appear on the Desktop. Even if you close WordPad without saving the text, the reminder note remains on your Desktop. Double-clicking the icon reopens WordPad, displaying the full text of the reminder note.

**Watch where you drop files.** Be careful when you drag and drop other text files into an open WordPad document. If you drop the file onto WordPad's title bar or a blank area of the toolbar, the file opens in WordPad, ready for editing; if you drop it into the document area, it is created as an embedded object.

**Final Words & Notes.** If you don't have great demands for fully featured word processing software such as Microsoft Word, then the free applications of WordPad and Notepad just might be what you're looking for. Give them a try; your checkbook will thank you for it. **LS**

## A d v a n c e d T i p

### Make WordPad The Default Program For DOC Files

If you regularly use Microsoft Word and want to minimize the possibility of Word macro virus attacks, then you might consider always opening DOC files with WordPad instead of Word.

To change the association for DOC files, open Windows Explorer and select any DOC file to highlight it. Then, press the SHIFT key as you right-click the file, and select Open With from the pop-up menu. (This option does not appear if you don't hold down the SHIFT key as you right-click.) In the dialog box that displays, choose WordPad from the list, and then select the Always Use This Program To Open This Type Of File checkbox. WordPad is now the default application for DOC files. You can use the same method with TXT files if you don't want them to automatically open in Notepad.