

Newsletter

Issue #1: Dec. 2001

Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of the quarterly CyberText Newsletter!

You have received this inaugural issue because you are one of our current or previous clients, or because you're a friend/colleague—you might even be both!

The purpose of this newsletter is to let you know about some of our services as well as providing you with some productivity hints and tips.

If you don't want to receive any further issues, or if you'd like me to address a particular aspect of productivity, let me know.

Rhonda Bracey
rhonda.bracey@cybertext.com.au

Did you know...

...that CyberText doesn't just offer technical writing services? We also do:

- Editing
- Critiquing of web sites
- Writing web content
- Training
- Research
- ... in fact almost anything to do with information!

In future issues I'll discuss some of these in more detail.

Did you know...

... that I am a freelance writer for the *Smart Computing* stable of magazines in the US?

All the great articles in their various magazines are archived on their web site at <www.smartcomputing.com>. To view the articles I have written, search for 'bracey'.



Adobe Acrobat 5.0

Adobe Acrobat 5.0 has been out for a few months now. This is the full version of Acrobat... the one that *creates* PDFs. (By the way, there is a new Reader available as well.)

One of Acrobat 5.0's new features is that you can save a PDF document as RTF, ready to open it in your favourite word processor and edit the text. You may lose some formatting, but you do get to keep the text.

There's also a free Paper Capture plugin you can download from Adobe's web site <www.adobe.com>. With this plugin, you can apply a form of OCR (optical character recognition) to a scanned text document allowing you to search for any text on the scanned page.

And did you know that from version 4.0 onwards, you've been able to capture single web pages or entire web sites as a PDF file? (Of course, you wouldn't try to capture Microsoft's entire web site, would you?) This is a great feature for viewing web pages offline, or sending a list of benefits to a customer, all formatted exactly as on the web site — great for when you don't have an up-to-date printed brochure to send. I'll show you how use Acrobat to capture web pages as PDFs in the next issue.

Tech writing

It's not just about processes and procedures. We also write:

- Online help for software
- Training manuals
- User guides
- Quick reference cards
- Internet/intranet content
- Forms
- PowerPoint presentations

Clear instructions

From *Swift 3D User Guide* by Nick Petterssen, Electric Rain Inc.

Puttin' this puppy on your unit

Installing *Swift 3D* onto your computer is just like installing any other piece of software.

1. Pop the CD-ROM into your coffee cup holder that doubles as a CD-ROM drive...

Contributions to "Clear Instructions" welcome! If you find a terrific or horrendous piece of technical writing, send the details to info@cybertext.com.au

Managing Director: Rhonda Bracey
PO Box 318
South Perth
Western Australia 6951

Mob: 041 993 5516
Fax: (08) 9367 5801
E-mail: info@cybertext.com.au
Web: www.cybertext.com.au

Word hints and tips: Remove excess characters

Whether you like it or not, *Microsoft Word* has the biggest share of the word processing software market. If you can get it to perform, you can save a lot of time and frustration.

Let's start with text you want to copy from web pages or from e-mail messages.

In Word 2000 or 2002 you can copy text from a web page and it will paste into Word quite successfully. But in earlier versions of Word you get paragraph marks or line breaks scattered in the middle of sentences. Some people ignore them; others spend ages removing them manually — a painful process. E-mail messages pasted into Word usually have these too, as well as the > character. So how do you get rid of them? You make Word's Find/Replace earn its keep! Before you start, turn on the show/hide formatting toolbar button by clicking . You'll now see all the paragraph breaks (¶) and the line breaks (↵) plus other formatting characters.

You're going to make three passes of your document using Find/Replace. We'll use excess paragraph marks in the example. First, you'll remove all double paragraph marks and replace them with some garbage characters that you'll use as placeholders for where you want the real paragraph marks. Then you'll find all the single paragraph marks and replace them with a space. Finally, you'll find all the placeholders and replace them with the paragraph marks you *do* want.

1. Press **Ctrl+H** to open Find/Replace.
2. In **Find**, type **^p^p**, then press the TAB key. (You get **^** by pressing **Shift+6**; you **MUST** use a lower case **p**.)
3. In **Replace**, type **QQQ**. (QQQ is the placeholder. Why QQQ? Because these letters are unlikely to be part of the text.)
4. Click **Replace All**.
5. In **Find**, type **^p**, press TAB, then in **Replace** press the spacebar once.
6. Click **Replace All**.
7. In **Find** type **QQQ**, press TAB, then in **Replace** type **^p**.
8. Click **Replace All**. All the excess paragraph marks should now be gone and you should have a much cleaner document.

If the text has line breaks, then substitute **^p** with **^l** (that's lower case L for Larry). To get rid of the > marks, type > in **Find**, and then make sure there is nothing in **Replace** before clicking **Replace All**.

Of course, if you have lots of documents with these excess formatting codes in them, then this trick quickly becomes tedious — so in the next issue I'll show you how to create a macro for this procedure and assign it to a keyboard command. Then you'll only have to press a key or two and all these changes are made automatically!

If you do not want to receive any further copies of this Newsletter, send an e-mail to info@cybertext.com.au asking to be removed from the mailing list.

Travelling?



If you know me, you know I LOVE travelling. So you know I don't make this recommendation lightly.

If you don't have a travel agent you use regularly, then I can recommend **Gina Maitland** and her staff at Alpha Travel in Nedlands, WA. Gina has organised all my travel (personal and business) for at least the last five years — airfares, accommodation, car rentals, travel insurance, the lot! And she knows a whole lot of little tricks that you just can't get from the internet travel sites. Earlier this year she saved me a packet on a return airfare to the US because she was able to tell me about a 'Circle Pacific' fare. She is also able to get an inside run when the cheap fares are announced — so instead of waiting on hold with Qantas etc. you can call Gina and she'll do the booking for you, still at the cheap fare rate, in a fraction of the time.

Phone: (08) 9386 3699

E-mail: gina@alphatravel.com.au

Web: www.alphatravel.com.au

Note: CyberText created and manages Alpha Travel's web site — but even if I didn't, I'd still use them for my travel! In fact, I was a happy customer long before I got involved in their web site.

Do you know anyone...

... who has taken a redundancy, started their own business, needs office space?

Available for lease: a 2- or 3-person furnished, serviced, modern, and secure office at Suite 13, 18 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands, WA. 27m², plus secure undercover car bay.

Contact: Ian Crutchley at Chesterton International on (08) 9322 1700.

Late News!

My proposal to present a paper at the STC Conference in Nashville in May 2002 has been accepted! YeeHaa!

Official And Ominous-Looking Small Print

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