N e w s l e t t e r

I s s u e # 6 : M a r c h 2 0 0 3

Welcome!

Welcome to the sixth issue of the quarterly CyberText Newsletter.

Our aim is to help make you more proficient by sharing some productivity hints and tips, and to let you know about some of our services. If you'd like me to address a particular aspect of productivity, let me know.

You have received this newsletter because you are one of our current or previous clients, or because you're a friend/colleague. If you don't want to receive notification of any further issues let me know and I'll remove you from the mailing list.

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I can live without…

Chain emails, terrorist warnings, virus alerts, "I'm so happy—please pass this on to 100 other people, and you will be too"…

If these email gems are getting you down, and you're not sure whether to forward the email to everyone in your address book—STOP!

Check out these two sites first, BEFORE you click that Forward button. You'll get the low down on what is a hoax and what isn't, and what falls somewhere in between.

- www.snopes.com
- www.urbanlegends.com/ulz/

Word: Automated Tables of Figures

If you create long Word documents with lots of captioned diagrams, tables, or figures in them, then you may be faced with the nightmare of having to update the numbering whenever you add a new figure or table to the document. And if you refer to this number within the text (e.g. "See Table 4"), that's another place you have to remember to keep up to date. You can automate this process—and produce automated Tables of Figures as well, just like an automated Table of Contents.

These instructions apply to any captioned tables, figures and diagrams. I will use 'figure' to refer to each of them.

Labelling a figure in Word

1. Position the cursor beneath the figure, then select **Insert > Caption** from the menu.
2. Select **Figure** from the dropdown list.
3. Add any extra caption information after the caption number (e.g. Figure 3: xxxx).
4. Click **OK**.
5. The caption is added, using the Caption style (you can modify this default style if you want by selecting **Format > Style** and then selecting **Caption**). The number is automatically sequenced even if you add another figure between two existing figures with captions inserted like this.

Referring to a figure in the body text

The caption must exist (see above) - you can't reference something that isn't there.

1. In the body text, select **Insert > Cross-Reference**. (This path may vary according to the version of Word you are using.)
2. Select **Figure** from the Reference Type dropdown list. All figures that have been inserted as a caption are listed in the bottom half.
3. Click once on the figure that you want to refer to. In the Insert Reference To dropdown, select how you want the information displayed (e.g. select "Only Label and Number" to just display "Figure x" and not the entire caption).
4. Click **Insert**.

OCR software

About 4 years ago I tested some OCR software thinking that I could easily get printed documents into Word. Not so easy. After avoiding this issue for years, I bit the bullet and trialled some recent software—with great results (95% and better for most printed text). The software I purchased was Abbyy Fine Reader. Much cheaper than OmniPage! Details: www.abbyy.com (price: about $350 AUD; available in Australia from www.topsoft.com.au).

(…from page 1)

Creating a Table of Figures

The caption must exist (see page 1).

1. Position the cursor where you want the Table of Figures to be placed (it usually goes just after the Table of Contents).
2. Select **Insert > Index and Tables** from the menu. (This menu path may vary according to the version of Word you are using.)
3. Click on the Table of Figures tab.
4. From the Caption Label dropdown list, select the type of table you want to create - Figure in this example. Make any other changes as required.
5. Click **OK**.
6. You may want to add a title above the list just like you do for Contents.

Clear instructions

Check out the Golden Bull awards from the "Plain English Campaign": www.plainenglish.co.uk/goldenbull.html

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

Outlook: Plain text emails

HTML-formatted emails can look pretty, and you can get some great effects with backgrounds, various fonts, font colours, font sizes etc. However, they take longer to download, take up more internet bandwidth, and many people can't see those effects you spent hours perfecting. Not everyone uses Outlook to view their email, and those on the road may be using a web mail interface from their ISP which either converts it all to plain text anyway, or shows all the HTML tags, making your email almost impossible to read. The quickest way to send emails that can viewed by anyone, anywhere is in 'plain text' format:

1. In Outlook 2002, select **Tools > Options**, then select the Mail Format tab.
2. In the Message Format section, select **Plain Text** from the dropdown list, then click **OK**.

Word: Getting rid of hyperlinks in a TOC

More recent versions of Word like to do some of your thinking for you—which can be a blessing or a curse, depending on how much you like Word.

One of the things Word thinks you should do is have your automated Table of Contents (TOC) entries as hyperlinks, and it may even put a blue underline beneath them for you. But what if you don't want this?

In all versions of Word you can remove the hyperlink attribute from the TOC field code using the following method:

1. Using the keyboard arrows, position your cursor just in front of the first TOC entry.
2. Right-click, then select **Toggle Field Codes**. The field code is displayed—it will look something like **{ TOC \o "1-3" \h }**.
3. Delete the **\h** part.
4. Press **F9** to refresh the Table of Contents.

Acrobat: Marking up edits

The full version of Adobe Acrobat has some neat editing tools that allow you to mark up a PDF document you have been sent. You can highlight text that needs to be changed, add 'sticky' notes, circle sections, and so on. The tools you use are:

Each has a dropdown arrow that displays extra functions. For example, the Highlight tool can also work as a Strikeout or Underline tool, and the Pencil tool can also create boxes, circles, or lines.

Once you have added your editing object, right-click on it, then select **Properties** to change its colour, width etc.

News!

Broadband: For those clients for whom I work from home, you'll be pleased to know that I now have ADSL broadband internet connectivity. "Faster than the average bear, Boo-Boo."

STC Conference, Dallas, May 2003: I will be presenting a paper at this conference. Coming home, I'm stopping off in New Zealand to spend a couple of days learning lots from the AuthorIT people.

New clients: Education Department of WA (documentation for the ICT division), and Gemcom (online help for their ProdTrak system which is used in the mining industry).

Brilliant February! Saw James Taylor and Jackson Browne in concert over two weekends. And met Jackson Browne… Doesn't get much better than that!

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