

## Welcome!

Welcome to the ninth issue of the CyberText Newsletter. The aim of this quarterly newsletter is to help make you more proficient by sharing some productivity hints and tips, to let you know (occasionally!) about some of our services, and to provide information that you may find useful. If you'd like me to address a particular aspect of productivity, let me know.

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## Document Layout: Hints

A colleague asked me for some tips on document layout. So I thought I'd share those I came up with in just a couple of minutes. Before I start, let me state: If there is an organisation style guide or template that you must follow, USE IT. However, if you have full control of laying out a document, then take into account some of these hints:

**Headings.** Make headings clearly stand out from the body text - use size, colour, font, and indent the body text to clearly indicate heading and sub-heading sections.

**Styles.** Use styles for consistency and so that the 'look and feel' can be changed in seconds for both headings and body text. Styles will make creating an automatically-generated Table of Contents much easier too (details on how to do this on p2 of this Newsletter).

**White space.** Don't be afraid of white space - it makes a document more readable.

**Lists.** For better readability (and depending on the audience), use bullets for lists of items, and use numbers for items in a defined sequence.

**Fonts.** Use no more than two font families - if the document is for reading on paper, then use a serif font (e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond) for the body text, and a sans serif font (e.g. Arial, Helvetica) for the headings. If it's for reading online only, then use sans serif for both. Use font sizes, colours, weights etc. to vary the look.

**Copy the professionals.** Take a look at some of the computer manuals and other instructional guides or non-fiction reference books you have at home. Just flick through them (don't read anything; just glance at the layout) and based on a quick gut reaction separate

them into two piles - those you find attractive and would like to look at more closely, and those you wouldn't want to look at again. Now take a closer look at those you'd like to look at more closely - look at how the book designer used headings, indentation, white space, graphics, graphic positioning etc. And take your cues from this - chances are, your gut reaction to the readability and attractiveness of a document will be the same as most other people's.

More resources:

For a summary of Colin Wheildon's *Type and Layout* (1995), see:  
[www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/archives/9601/techwhirl-9601-00689.html](http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/archives/9601/techwhirl-9601-00689.html)

*Communicating or Just Making Pretty Shapes* (also from Colin Wheildon; complete text)  
[www.ianmc.com.au/articles/cojimps.pdf](http://www.ianmc.com.au/articles/cojimps.pdf)

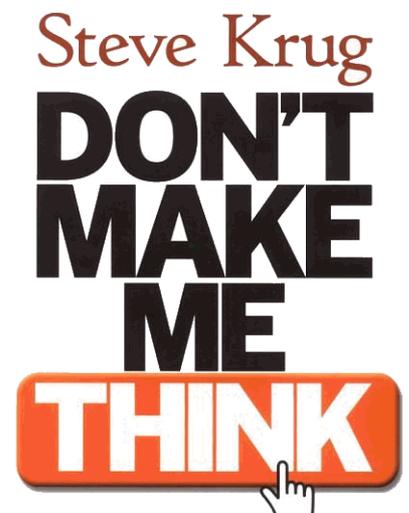
*Page Design and Layout for Improved Usability* (PowerPoint presentation):  
[deyalexander.com/presentations/pagedesign-2002.ppt](http://deyalexander.com/presentations/pagedesign-2002.ppt)

## Book Recommendation

If you're involved in anything to do with human/machine interfaces, be it computer software, hardware design, websites, even a humble retail store sign, then PLEASE get your hands on a copy of Steven Krug's *Don't make me think!* and spend an evening reading it. It is fairly short, extremely readable, full of common sense and lots of "Aha!" and "Of course!" moments. His basic premise is summed up in the title - if you are designing anything for anybody, make it so simple that they don't have to think about what they are doing. On a website, for example, that means using a button labelled **Search**, not **Find**, or **Go**, or **Look**, or anything else that causes the end-user to stop and think about what they may have to do. While his examples are predominantly web-related, the principles apply to any form of human interface design.

If you're not convinced, go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and search for this book, then click on **Look**

**inside this book** and read the introduction and the first two chapters online - for free! And if you don't want to buy your own copy from your favourite bookseller, then hop on down to your local public library and put in a request for it (it will probably be out!).



## Word: Automatic Table of Contents

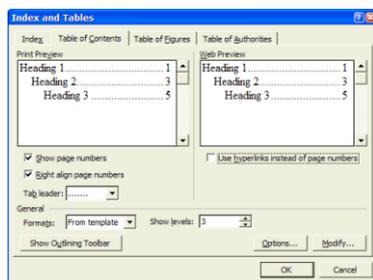
It is very easy to set up an automatic Table of Contents (TOC) in Word so that you don't have to manually type in headings and page numbers, and so that you don't have to go back and change them every time you update the document.

The only 'rule' is that you must use styles for your headings. You can either use Word's built-in Heading styles or create your own. To get a hierarchical TOC, make sure you also use hierarchical heading styles for each topic's main heading, sub-heading, and sub-sub-headings (e.g. Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3).

Set up your document using hierarchical heading styles for your headings and sub-headings. For this exercise, use Word's default Heading 1, 2, and 3 styles. Leave some space at the beginning of the document - this is where you'll insert your auto TOC.

When you are ready to test the auto TOC, click in the empty space at the beginning of the document. From Word 2002's menu, select **Insert > Reference > Index and Tables** (the command may be slightly different in earlier versions of Word but it is still on the **Insert** menu).

Select the **Table of Contents** tab. If you don't want your TOC as blue hyperlinks, clear the **Use hyperlinks instead of page numbers** check box. Click **OK** - your auto TOC is inserted at the



beginning of your document. If you don't like the fonts used, or how the heading levels are indented, or want to exclude a heading style from being reported in the TOC, click anywhere in the TOC, then select **Insert > Reference > Index and Tables** again.

Click the **Options** button to specify the styles to use to create the auto TOC, and the hierarchical level appearance they will take (this is very useful if you want to include an extra style in the TOC, such as an Appendix style at level 1). Delete a number from a box to not display that style in the TOC. When finished, click **OK**.

Click the **Modify** button to change the 'look and feel' of the TOC. Select the TOC style, then click **Modify** to change its font etc. Repeat for all other TOC levels. When you have finished changing the appearance of each TOC level, click **OK**.

You will be asked if you want to replace the existing TOC - click **OK** to do so. After you add more content to the document, or need to update the page numbers in the TOC, you'll need to update it. The quickest way is to click anywhere in the TOC then press **F9**. You will be asked if you want to update just the page numbers or the entire table. The safest option is **Entire Table** - this updates the page numbers and adds or removes headings to reflect the current headings used.

## Pet Peeves

A great example from a colleague: "Our local supermarket put up some new signs several months ago - Isle 1, Isle 2 etc. These are 'professionally' printed signs; I use the word 'professionally' in its loosest sense. Despite protests to the previous owner and the new owner the signs are still up. The reply was - "...it doesn't matter

does it?" No wonder the average kid is confused!" (By the way, in case you are wondering what is wrong - it should be "aisle" not "isle".)

And from another colleague: "... misspellings/pronunciations like 'antartic'; and 'pronunciations' like 'libry', 'febry', 'nukular' bug the hell out of me!"

**A special word about apostrophes.** Having been referred to as the "apostrophe nazi" on the odd occasion, I found the **Apostrophe Protection Society's** website an absolute delight. Not only does it clearly and simply set out the rules for when to use an apostrophe (and when not to), but there are some great photographic examples of apostrophe abuses - especially 'greengrocer's apostrophes'. More details at: [www.apostrophe.fsnet.co.uk/](http://www.apostrophe.fsnet.co.uk/)

If you want a fun apostrophe usage guide for your office, take a look at [angryflower.com/bobsqu.gif](http://angryflower.com/bobsqu.gif)

## PaintShop Pro 8.0: New features

One of the graphics tools I use almost every day is PaintShop Pro (PSP). Version 8 (released earlier this year) has lots of neat new features. One that I have used extensively already is the **Enhance Photo > One Step Photo Fix** toolbar option, which takes your original photo and adjusts for colour, light, softness, sharpness, clarity, and so on - all with one click. This feature really helps make your photos clearer. If you have haze in the background, this button will remove a lot of it, making the clouds and even buildings stand out (it removes SOME of LA's haze/smog, but definitely not all - I don't think any commercial software at this price can do that!). Another new option is the magnifying glass effect (**Effects > Artistic Effects > Magnifying Lens** from the menu). With this you can focus on a particular part of the image and magnify it. For example:



## News

**Website:** More changes have been made to the CyberText website ([www.cybertext.com.au](http://www.cybertext.com.au)) to make it compatible with browsers such as Mozilla (Netscape 7), and Opera 7.

**STC Australia Chapter Competition Judge:** I am one of the judges for the technical publications entries in this year's competition for the Australia Chapter. Those entries judged best in Australia are eligible for the International Competition. The winners will be announced at the STC Annual Conference in Baltimore (May 2004).

**STC Australia Chapter:** In 2004, I will be taking over the webmaster role of the Australia Chapter's website.

**STC Annual Conference, Baltimore, May 2004:** Char James-Tanny and I will be doing a joint demonstration of some of the efficiencies to be gained using AuthorIT's single-sourcing software.



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