Tips on Using Word to Make Your Work Product Better, Faster, and More Efficient

By Montye B. Holmes, ACP

It seems like computers have been with us for as long as we care to remember. (Yes, I can remember my work life before personal computers existed, but I prefer not to remember that far back.) Many of us learned "on the job" or with very little formal training on the various programs that we use today. Maybe you were a WordPerfect® user but now use Microsoft Word® exclusively at your company and the transition from WordPerfect to Word went pretty smoothly (or possibly not so smooth and kicking and screaming all the way). Now that you've been using Word and things are going well, I'm here to tell you that there are many Word features that you are probably not familiar with that can make your work life easier and more proficient. I want to focus on a couple of features that are easily mastered and are incredible time savers.

First, let's talk about the *Quick Access toolbar*. Having the commands that are frequently utilized available on every screen is a time saver. The Quick Access toolbar is a small line of icons right under the ribbon bar and you can add items that are frequently used to personalize your own Quick Access bar. I have added the following frequently used items to my Quick Access bar: Save, Undo, Repeat Typing, Print Preview and Print, Quick Print, Save As, New Blank Document, Para Keep With Next, Insert Footnote, Insert Rows (into a table), Delete Rows (from a table), Para Widow Orphan Control, Small Caps, Symbols, Spell Check, Page Breaks, and Style. To add items to your Quick Access bar, simply click on the down arrow at the end of the current Quick Access toolbar and choose More Commands. From there you can locate and add any command that exists in Word.

Next, let me tell you about the feature called *"keep with next."* This feature has the distinction of keeping a heading or subheading with the paragraph that follows it. You find this feature on the *Home* ribbon under the *Paragraph* section on the *Line and Page Breaks* tab. I have added this feature to my Quick Access bar because I use it in many ways, especially in preparing and responding to discovery. Our office sets out the discovery request as a type of heading followed by the paragraph of the text of the request. For example:

Request for Production No. 1:

Produce a copy of your drivers' license.

Response:

See document produced.

The header line "Request for Production No. 1" has a *Para Keep With Next* code so that it always stays connected to the paragraph that follows. (Note that the formatting of the text of these paragraphs also contains line spacing of 12 pt after each paragraph. If you do not set up your paragraphs to have the 12 pt spacing after each paragraph, and you "old school" hit the enter key twice after the header line, then you will need to put the keep with next code on both the header line and the extra space line before the text of your request to make sure the header is connected to the extra space and the wording of the text.)

Another handy feature is the auto legal numbering *AutoNumLgl* which can be used in multiple ways on a daily basis. In the example, I used the auto legal numbering without a trailing period in the request for production line. The auto legal numbering can also be used with the trailing period and I do so in the body of my court documents as our office numbers the paragraphs in all court documents. I'm going to talk about these two uses of this feature separately.

First, a brief note about using auto legal numbering to number the paragraphs in the body of a pleading or motion. I have set up a style template I call "Body Para Numbering." The Body Para Numbering style is set up as double spaced with a first line indent of 0.5" and the *AutoNumLgl* code plus a tab. For example,

1. This Body Para Numbering uses the *AutoNumLgl* code with the period trailing the number and the paragraph

continued on page 16

continued from page 15

is double spaced. When you hit return at the end of the paragraph, you will get the same type of paragraph to follow.

2. Subsequent paragraphs have the same formatting.

Next, let's talk about the discovery example shown earlier that uses auto legal numbering without a trailing period in discovery requests. To find auto legal numbering go to the *Insert* ribbon, and in the text box click the down arrow next to the top, center icon named *"Explore Quick Parts"* and in the drop down menu choose *"Field."* On the *Field* dialog box choose *"AutoNumLgl"* and on the right side of the screen there is a check box that can be checked if you want your number to appear without the trailing period (*i.e.*, a "1" instead of a "1.") Select this feature when working with discovery requests where the number is followed by a colon instead of a period. In this case, you would type "Request for Production No.(space)" and after the space go to the Insert ribbon and choose *"Field"* and select *AutoNumLgl* and check the box to "display number in legal format without a trailing period." Now, to really speed things up and make it seem simple, use the *"Auto Correct"* feature to create a shortcut to type the entire line, including inserting the automatic code for the numbering and even the following response line. I typed the next four lines using only three letters: r, f and p.

Request for Production No. 2:
Produce
Response:

Notice that the number automatically went to 2 because I have already used the automatic numbering code earlier in this document, so now the code increases to the next number. I have a similar *Auto Correct* shortcut set up for interrogatories and for requests for admissions. This makes drafting and typing original discovery requests a breeze.

This leads me to my favorite feature in Word: the *Auto Correct* feature. You can take any word or phrase and set it to type correctly with any shortcut you assign to your word or phrase. For example, you've seen how I use "rfp" to type the four lines shown in the example above. I also have certain phrases that I use in discovery objections that I shortcut with *Auto Correct*. My shortcut for "vague and ambiguous" is "vand." My shortcut for "is not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence" is "notcal." I also use shortcut words to correctly type certain citation phrases that are frequently used, *i.e.*, when I type "sw3d" my computer automatically corrects it to "S.W.3d."

Auto Correct is easy to use and so helpful that when I find myself typing one word over and over (as in a name of an entity that may be typed over and over in a single document), I will create a shortcut on the fly just for that one name or phrase. After I'm done with that word or phrase, I can go back into *Auto Correct* and delete the shortcut if it is something that I will not use in the future. I once used the *Auto Correct* feature to type a transcript of a meeting where four parties were talking and I had to transcribe the dialog of the multiple parties. Each time a person spoke, I had to put his or her name or initials on that line so I created a shortcut for each person. I later went back and deleted those shortcuts because I no longer needed them.

Replace	With
sw2d	S.W.2d
sw3d	S.W.3d
fsupp	F. Supp.
f2d	F.2d
f3d	F.3d
sct	S. Ct.
cprc	Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code Ann.
fincode	Tex. Fin. Code Ann.
buscom	Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann.
trcp	Tex. R. Civ. P.
frcp	Fed. R. Civ. P.
notcal	is not reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence.
subjectto	Subject to the foregoing objections and the general objections and without waiving same,
subjecttono	Subject to the foregoing objections and the general objections and without waiving same, no items have been identified that are responsive to the request.
fishingobj	Objects to this request as being overly broad, unduly burdensome, harassing, and constitutes an impermissible "fishing expedition" as that term is described by law. See Loftin v. Martin, 776 S.W.2d 145 (Tex. 1989).
rfa	**Request for Admission No. (code for AutoNumLgl):** Admit or deny that **Response:**
rfp	**Request for Production No. (code for AutoNumLgl):** Produce **Response:**
rog	**Interrogatory No. (code for AutoNumLgl):** Identify . **Answer:**
Certificate of service	**Certificate of Service** On _____, 2015, the foregoing document was served pursuant to Rule 21a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure as indicated below:

Here is how you set up the auto correct feature for your own shortcuts: Click on the *File* tab at the top of your screen and go to the last item on the menu and choose *"Options."* On the *Options* screen click on *"Proofing"* and then choose "*AutoCorrect Options*." On the *AutoCorrect Options* screen, you should be on the *AutoCorrect* tab (there are several tabs available) and toward the bottom half of the screen you will see "*Replace text as you type*" and a table set up where you type the shortcut word you want on the left and the text you want to be inserted on the right. In this article I have listed out several of my shortcuts as examples of what you can do with *Auto Correct*.

As you can see, there are thousands of ways to use the *Auto Correct* feature. These are just a few of my favorites. I hope you find this feature as helpful as I do.

Lastly, I want to mention a tip on stretching out a line in the middle of a paragraph when you must force the remainder of the paragraph to the next page using a page break *(Control + Enter)*. This usually happens when you want to keep two lines of your very last paragraph on the next page with your attorney signature block. When you force a page break in the middle of a paragraph Word thinks you are ending the first part of the paragraph and starting a new paragraph on the next page so it ends your paragraph with a hard return. The way to stretch out the last line of the part of the paragraph that is left on the page is to insert a soft return code or *Shift + Enter* key. If you have the *Show/Hide* codes on, you will actually see what looks like an arrow pointing left with a tail pointing up. This is the soft return code.

I hope you have found these tips helpful and that you will discover many uses for these tips and tricks to make your work product better, faster, and more efficient.

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