

Crabby demystifies Word terms

Applies to: Microsoft Office Access 2007, Word 2007, Access 2003, Word 2003, Word 2002

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Crabby Office Lady

Welcome to my "demystifying" series, where I'll define some of the most common terms that are apparently vexing you, like pebbles in your summer sandals. This week we'll tackle Word, and we'll keep it simple.

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When a younger, less harried version of me started writing this column a little more than five years ago, I did a few columns about "demystifying" certain terms — computer terms, e-mail terms, e-mail protocols, and a couple of others. These were — and still are — very popular and well-received columns, because I think that they fill a need that isn't necessarily filled anywhere else on the Office Online site: They define some of the more basic terms that all of us writers, template creators, editors, and copy editors assume you already know. (And we all know what happens when we "assume" anything — I won't get into that here.)

Sure, we often define the more complicated words and terms for you, but I do know — from the feedback you give me, often a tad crabby yourselves — that you sometimes get stuck on a word and can't really go any further with the help you were trying get. That's when tempers flare, keyboards get broken, and innocent mice are treated like pesky rodents.

So for the next few weeks — throughout the summer, really — I'm going to try to soothe everyone (and save some hardware and a few relatively harmless rodents at the same time). I plan to write 10 columns, all about demystifying some of the more general terms and words that put people in a pickle. Of course, some of you may find these columns way too basic. If so, read another column, take a training course, catch a demo, or just get back to what you were doing. But for the rest of you dear readers, I'm hoping that this series will serve as a sort of touchstone for you. (I'm sure you'll let me know ...)

Ready, set ... define those terms!

This week, Word is up to bat. Here are 10 of the most requested terms calling for attention from your feedback. Some of them are pure definitions, while others explain the difference between two or more related things (you'll see what I mean).

Again, some of you know these like the back of your hand (although why you spend so long staring at the back of your hand, I have no idea), while others are gently relieved to now know that those brown spots are *of course* not age spots; they're *sun kisses*.

Headers versus titles

- A header is a little identifier that runs across the top part of your document. In a book, it may be the name of the chapter. A header provides quick information about a document in a predictable format. Headers are flexible, too: You can have different ones on odd and even pages; have a different one on just the first page of the document; and even use section breaks (which I'll get to in a minute) to create distinct document sections with different headers.
- Now a title is the actual title of your document — what you're calling it, and what you're typing up there in great big letters for all to see. Normally it isn't something that appears on every page (unless it's one of those books that uses a header to give the title and then the chapter name, too ... but I'm just trying to confuse you).

Footers versus footnotes

- A footer is like the header except that it runs across the bottom part of your document. (Head ... foot ... get it?) As with the header, it is flexible in the same ways. You can use footers for page numbering, date and time, just about anything you want to appear on every page (or just the first page, or on every other page, or whatever). How you apply headers and footers depends on which version of Microsoft Office Word you're using. Check Office Online and locate your version's Help site.

- A footnote is also some text at the bottom of the page, but it's not something that you can program to happen automatically, like a footer. A footnote refers to something that you've written within the body of the text on that same page. Maybe it adds a little bit more of an explanation, or names the author of a quote you used. Again, it's more than just a footer, which adds very little space at the bottom of your page.

The *Chicago Manual of Style* (a bible of sorts for many writers and editors, including me) says something with which I wholeheartedly agree: "A page of type containing more footnote material than text not only is unpleasant to the eye but may discourage all but the most determined reader." (And if I were using footnotes in this column, I'd use one here, to cite what page I got this from and from what edition of the CMS.) It's a little explanation of sorts or perhaps a reference to a quotation. And of course, a footnote should not be confused with an endnote, which appears at the end of the entire document and is usually very wordy and something no one reads anyway.

NOTE My copy editor took great offense when she read this and wants to say a little something here. Copy editor, take it away:

NOTE Thanks, C.O.L. (First, strike through "took great offense" and replace with "raised an eyebrow.") Actually, I'm interested in what Crabby might hear from you folks who use footnotes and/or endnotes in your work. People do read footnotes and endnotes, especially if they're reading a book or article about a subject they're passionately interested in and they want to make sure the author isn't making stuff up. When reading a nonfiction book, I keep a bookmark in the endnotes so I can flip back quickly to see the endnotes for the page I'm on ... Now Crabby, back to you ...

Formatting marks

- I'm covering this one because my Uncle Phil called up one day with the strangest problem (or so it seemed). "Honey, there are these little marks running all around my sentences, and I never put them there. They're like two straight lines with a 'what're you think you're doing?' hand on the hip." Hmm. Gremlins? Improbable (but not impossible, as anyone who's had a computer knows). After a few minutes of thinking, I finally figured out that Uncle Phil had hit the **Show formatting marks** button somehow. I told him about that button, but he didn't know what formatting marks were (nor did he really care, but he was quite polite about it). And why should he know? He isn't a writer or an editor, and most people probably wouldn't know a *formatting mark* from a *grammar font kit* (which, as it turns out, is an anagram for "formatting mark"). Anyway, we got it turned off and he went back to whatever it was he was doing (which is usually sending out e-mail messages without a Subject line. Uncle Phil ... if I've told you once about using the Subject line, I've told you a hundred times ...).

A formatting mark can be a paragraph mark (it appears at the end of a paragraph)



A nonbreaking space (a raised circle between words)

Nonbreaking[°]space¶

A text-wrapping break (a symbol that indicates that text is wrapping below an object, such as a picture)



A manual line break (appears at the end of a line when you press SHIFT+ENTER)



There are many, many more. If you want to see what they look like, in any version of Word you can choose to show or hide your formatting marks. Just check Office Online for each version's explanation.

Views

There are a few different ways to look at (in other words, *view*) the document you're working on in Word. Some views are available only in Word 2007, some came along only in Word 2003, and some are as old as dirt. Get on the **View** menu (or the Ribbon, which is part of the Microsoft Office Fluent user interface in Word 2007) in your version of Word to see what's available to you. I'll bet you have a favorite.

- **Normal view** Normal view shows text formatting but simplifies the layout of the page so that you can type and edit quickly.
- **Print Layout view** You can see how your document will look once it's printed. You can see it in a variety of sizes — 100%, 50%, 25%, and so on.
- **Reading Layout view** This view is designed to make reading documents on the screen more comfortable. It removes many of the distracting elements in a Word document such as toolbars and rulers. This helps you concentrate on the content only. However, note that Reading

Layout doesn't necessarily show you how the document will look once it's printed. Text may appear larger and page breaks may be off, too. It's just a good view for easy reading. It's like the Barcalounger of views.

- **Full Screen Reading view (new for Word 2007)** This was previously called Reading Layout view (in Word 2003). It's similar to this view except that it gives you the added bonus of being able to see the document as it would appear on the printed page. So it's really a Reading/Print Layout view. (And if I ruled the world, I'd call it just that.)
- **Document Map** This is a pane that runs vertically down the left edge of a document and displays an outline of the document's headings. It's a great way to move quickly through a document while keeping track of where you are. You can use the Document Map when you're in Reading Layout view to jump to different sections of the document.
- **Outline view** This view shows the headings of a document indented to represent their level in the document's structure. You can also use Outline view to work with master documents. When you want to look at the structure of a document and to move, copy, and reorganize text by dragging headings, this is the view to use. (And I know you learned, way back in English class, what an outline is and why we use one. See, Mr. Fine? Even cheerleaders concentrate on other things besides new cheers.)
- **Web Layout view** When you're creating a Web page in Word or a document that will be viewed on the screen, work in this view.

Page breaks and section breaks

- A page break is where, well, one page ends and another begins. If you need a page to end artificially, that is, before the text has reached the bottom margin, you can insert a page break and start a new page. (This is great for you students who want your term papers to appear longer but you never heard that from me.)
- Now section breaks are a bit different. They can divide your document into sections and then format each section the way you want. For example, with a **Continuous** type of section break, the top section of a page in your document can be a big block of text with a few different headings, while the bottom half of the page can be two columns of information. Stay with me now. You can even do a **Next page** section break, which adds a section break and starts the new section on a new page; you can use an **Odd page** or **Even page** break, which starts a new section on the next odd-numbered or even-numbered page.

Themes

- People seem to get very confused about themes. A theme is simply a set of unified design elements and color schemes. It makes designing anything very easy. When you apply a theme to a document (or to a presentation or a Web page, for that matter), the following elements are customized with that particular theme's design: fonts, font colors, background colors, body text and heading sizes (I know you know what a heading is), horizontal lines, links (not-yet-clicked links, already-clicked links, in-the-process-of-being-clicked links), table border colors, and all level of lists (bulleted, numbered, and so on). Why go through and make all those design decisions yourself when we've given you a theme park of themes? Why indeed ...

Bookmarks

- No, it's not a little piece of leather or laminated paper that you stick inside your book to know at what page you left off. (Well, actually it is that, but not in this case.) In Word, it is sort of like a regular bookmark in the way that it identifies a place in your document that you mark for future use. I like to use bookmarks when creating a big term paper. For each chapter I write, I assign a bookmark to it: Unbelievable Chapter 1, Remarkable Chapter 2, Invigorating Chapter 3, and so on. Then, when I'm somewhere in the document and I want to be invigorated all over again, I can go to the **Bookmark** dialog box, pick the bookmark for Chapter 3 that I created, and hop to it. (Of course, this is a completely fictitious account of how I use bookmarks because I finished my term paper writing long ago and never plan to return ... But weird — I now sort of write term papers for a living. How did that happen?)

Default

- No, this is not a tennis term. (And no, I don't know that because I'm a tennis player. I am not a tennis player. When I was 12, I traded baby-sitting a tennis instructor's kid for tennis lessons. One day the little brat I was baby-sitting ran into the house with the garden hose on full blast. I chased him out and into the cul-de-sac ... where he was promptly hit by a car and set in a body cast for five months. Needless to say, I never learned to play tennis. It has, shall we say, bad connotations for me.)

But I digress ...

Default simply means what's already been set up. When you open a Word document the first time after you've installed Word, the font that shows up is the default font. The margins are set by default, certain toolbars are on by default. The great thing about default is that you do

not have to accept it. Go ahead! Customize away! Bring the hose into the house! Say goodbye to default! Say goodbye to tennis lessons! Join the swim team instead!

File extension

- A file extension is simply the little letters, preceded by a period (or "dot"), that are at the end of a file name. These seemingly insignificant parts of your document are actually quite important (and significant) — they tell us what sort of document it is — namely its format — and if we have access to it. (And as anyone knows who accidentally renamed a file extension, changing these few little letters can have dreadful results.)
- For example, a Word 2007 document has the extension **.docx**, which tells us that only Word 2007 programs can open it. The extension **.doc** means that this document was created and saved so that Word 97-2007 can open it (.doc tries to be everyone's friend and grew up to be a politician). The extension **.dotx** is a Word 2007 template, while **.dot** (also known as dot-dot) is a Word 97-2003 template. Now, **.dotm** is a macro-enabled template, and you'd better be careful who you got it from. Other examples of file extensions (not Word-related but just thrown in here as a bonus: **.jpeg**, **.gif**, and **.png** (image file extensions); **.mp3**, **.wav**, and **.wmp** (music file extensions); and finally, **.416** (you'd better have filed for a tax extension).

Add-in

- We like add-ins — they make life more interesting, they add new functionality. They're downloads that you can choose to add (or not) after you've already installed your program. Sometimes they've been created by the people who already created the original programs but who wanted to have even *more* fun with you. I like to think of add-ins as accessories; you know, things you can't live without: a Birkin bag (right — as if I'd know a Birkin bag if it emptied its contents onto my head); a stint at Lindsay Lohan's rehab center (you know, just for the 4-star food); a pair of elastic pants at Thanksgiving (now *that* I know).

An example of an add-in for Word is the **International Character** toolbar, which lets you insert international characters (you know, like umlauts and funky Vietnamese accents) in 26 languages! Who doesn't need that, I ask you? Another example is the Stock Actions for the Research Task Pane add-in, which allows you to insert stock quote information from the MSN Money Stock Quotes service into Microsoft Office documents and spreadsheets. Who needs a Birkin bag when you can have that?

And there you have it: 10 terms that may (or may not) have been vexing you. Now I hope you can go about your day and not get caught like a deer in the headlights when you're trying to maneuver your way across that highway of knowledge.

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends. " — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

About the author

[Annik Stahl](#), the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Did this article help you?** feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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