



Word macros made easy—really!

By Bob Mohr

STC Senior Member

The word *macro* seems to frighten a lot of people. They immediately think, “Uh oh, that’s programming stuff. No thanks!”

Microsoft Word macros are programs, of a sort, but you don’t have to know about programming to take advantage of them. I’ll show you how to exploit Word’s power—with macros—and without programming.

So, what is a macro—really? Word’s online help defines macros this way: *A macro is a series of Word commands and instructions that you group together as a single command to accomplish a task automatically. Instead of manually performing a series of time-consuming, repetitive actions in Word, you can create and run a single macro—in effect, a custom command—that accomplishes the task for you.*

The help also goes on to say:

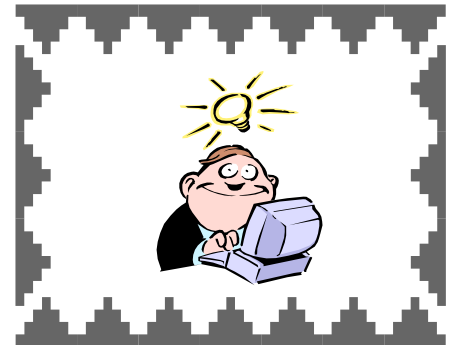
Here are some typical uses for macros:

- *To speed up routine editing and formatting*
- *To combine multiple commands*
- *To make an option in a dialog box more accessible*
- *To automate complex series of tasks*

Let me offer a simple example.

How many times have you wanted to print the current page of a multi-page document? Likewise, how many times have you gone through the repetitive routine of clicking **File>Print**, selecting **Current Page**, and clicking **OK**? Sure, two of the clicks are eliminated by using **Ctrl+P**, but they’re replaced by two keystrokes. You can print the current page of a document with just one mouse click: Use a macro!

continued on page 3



INSIDE

Chanda Child named Internal VP	4
Pride and recognition	4
Continuing a tradition	4
Thank you, corporate sponsors!	5
Web learning opportunities 101	6
Online SIG meets	7
Don’t miss ...	7
The world’s best FrameMaker resources	8
Leaders light the way	9
Calendar	11
Membership news	11

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We invite readers to submit material on subjects of interest to Society and chapter members. Please credit reprinted material and send a copy of the original to the editor.

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ABOUT STC

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering the art of communicating technical information and promoting the education, improvement, and advancement of its members. Membership is open to those employed in, interested in, or concerned with the profession of technical writing, information design, publishing, or associated disciplines.

Mission statement

The Phoenix chapter of STC is recognized as the hub of technical communication where members enhance their skills and knowledge while building professional relationships.



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To create the macro, you record the exact keystrokes (or mouse clicks) you would normally use to accomplish printing the current page. Begin with the macro recorder:

1. Click **Tools>Macro>Record New Macro**. The Record Macro dialog box appears.
2. Type a name for the new macro. Make the name something meaningful like PrintPage.
3. Click **OK**. A Stop Recording toolbar appears on the screen, and a cassette icon is attached to the mouse pointer. From this point on, whatever you type and whatever you click are included in the macro.

Now you can record the steps to print the current page:

1. Click **File>Print>Current Page**.
2. Click **OK**.
3. Click the **Stop Recording** button on the macro toolbar.

You now have a macro, stored in the Normal.dot file, called PrintPage. To make the macro easy to access, assign it to a toolbar or menu. Once the PrintPage macro is assigned to a toolbar, clicking it always prints the currently displayed document page.

The PrintPage example is great for creating macros of a permanent nature, but you can also create macros for repetitive tasks that you may never do again. For example, I once had the misfortune to work on a document that was full of “formatted” paragraphs that were shaded, bolded, center-justified, and in the wrong font. Had the author created his abomination using styles, I could have changed the formatting of the styles easily, but the whole document (50+ pages) used the normal style.

Here’s how the troublesome paragraphs looked in the original document:

```
HRESULT GENERATEXML([OUT, RETVAL] BSTR STRXML);
```

Can you imagine “manually” formatting dozens of paragraphs like this? I can’t.

I first created a new style that I later applied to the text line. Then, I recorded a macro to remove the previous formatting and apply the style. Following are the highlights of what I did.

I started the macro recorder and, at the Record Macro dialog box:

1. Clicked the keyboard icon. The customize Keyboard dialog box was displayed.
2. Pressed **Alt+X**. I frequently use these two keys, since they are close together and are quickly operated with two fingers.
3. Clicked **Assign**.
4. Clicked **Close**.

The Macro Record toolbar was displayed and ready to record. I then deleted the lines above and below the text, then applied the new style to the text line.

When finished, the modified text line looked like this, without the background shading:

```
HRESULT GenerateXML([out, retval] BSTR strXML);
```

After saving the macro, all I had to do was place the insertion point at the beginning of each paragraph block and press **Alt+X** to instantly transform the paragraph. Thanks to the macro, I was able to convert dozens of those boxy paragraphs in just a couple of minutes.

I’m sure you can find many uses for macros. Once you do, you’ll probably want to copy some of those macros to templates or other documents so that others can use them.

To copy macros from Normal.dot (the default template) to another file, use the Organizer:

1. Click **Tools>Templates and Add-ins**.
2. Click the **Organizer** button. The Organizer dialog box appears.
3. Click the **Macro Project Items** tab. By default, the macros stored in Normal.dot are displayed on the right side (source file), and the macros stored in the current document are displayed on the left side (target file).
4. Select an appropriate source and target file by clicking the associated **Close File** button. When clicked, the button toggles to an **Open File** button.
5. Click the **Open File** button, and choose the appropriate file.
6. Select a macro to copy from the source side, and click the **<<Copy** button. The selected macro is copied to the target side. (The same process works for Styles, AutoText entries, and Toolbars.)
7. Click the **Close** button when finished.

You can store macros in document and template files. You can leave all of your macros in the Word Normal.dot file, but if anything should happen to this file, Word recreates it and your macros are lost. An alternative is to store the macros in a “utility” document or template from which the macros can be copied and used elsewhere as needed.

Word macros used over and over save you a tremendous amount of time, with no programming required. If you do want to try your hand at programming macros, the VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) language provides even more power and capabilities.

Editor’s note: This article originally appeared in Blue Pencil, the newsletter of the Pittsburgh chapter of STC.





Chanda Child named Internal VP

By Kathy Graden

Chapter Secretary

The Phoenix Chapter board of directors has selected Chanda Child as Internal Vice

President for 2001–2002. Chanda has graciously accepted the board’s invitation to fill the position, left vacant when Internal VP-elect Amy Shogan resigned.



Chanda Child

Since joining STC only three years ago, Chanda has been very active in Phoenix Chapter events. She was a volunteer judge for CARSEF (Central Arizona Science and Engineering Fair) in 1999, 2000, and 2001 and served as CARSEF co-chairperson in 2000. She worked on the 1999 Region 5 Conference Publications Committee. In 2000, she was a publications judge in her first PAO Competition. Chanda has written articles for *Rough Draft* and is one of three STC members who presented “One-Source Documentation” at the March dinner meeting.

Chanda is an independent training consultant who has been developing and delivering classroom and computer-based training in the Valley since organizing her company, Ocotillo Training, L.L.C., in 1997. Over the past 16 years, she has developed training in the fields of oil exploration and refining, manufacturing process control, aerospace, and telecommunications.



Pride and recognition

By Linda Shacklock

Program Manager

June is the month in which we honor Phoenix Chapter volunteers and CARSEF award winners at our annual awards and honors banquet on June 12. Help celebrate their achievements, and hear Jim Morgan, a Phoenix chapter past president, talk about perceptions of technical communicators and why we should take pride in what we do.

The title of Jim’s presentation is:

“I’m a writer.”

“Oh?”

“A technical writer.”

“Oh.”

It’s an unusual title, but it drives home one of Jim’s key points—many people outside our profession have no idea of what we do or how we contribute to the companies and organizations that employ us.

Students whose technical papers won awards at CARSEF, along with their family members or teachers, will be joining us for this special meeting, so please come and help us welcome and congratulate them.

The awards banquet closes the 2000–2001 chapter year. During July and August, we will hold informal chapter meetings with no programs but lots of networking opportunities. (See the *Calendar* in this issue for date, time, and place information.) Dinner meetings with guest speakers will resume in September.



Continuing a tradition

By Kathy Graden

Newsletter Editor

Over the past few years, STC Society-level committees have been generous to the Phoenix Chapter and its members, to the point where winning awards has become a chapter tradition.

Since I came to the Valley in 1996, the Society has honored us with two Chapter Achievement Awards and has named three Phoenix STC members (Marian Barchilon, Tom Barnett, and Freya Winsberg) Associate Fellows. STC has bestowed Distinguished Chapter Service Awards on a select group of chapter volunteers (including several people who will receive awards at our awards banquet this month). And the publicity campaign for our 2000 Publications, Art, and Online Competitions earned a Distinguished Technical Communication Award.

Rough Draft has just extended this winning streak by winning an award of Excellence in the Society’s 2000–2001 Newsletter Competition. This newsletter received the third highest score in this year’s competition. And this latest award is the 11th won by the newsletter in 11 years.

With deep gratitude, I thank my sharp-eyed copy editors, Carl Gotlieb and Freya Winsberg. And without Tom Barnett, John Brinegar, and Dottie Tucker, the electronic version of *Rough Draft* couldn’t exist. Thanks also to all who contributed art, articles, or ideas this past year.



Thank you, corporate sponsors!

The Phoenix STC Chapter extends a heartfelt “Thank You” to the central Arizona companies who supported chapter events and activities in 2000–2001. Because of your generosity, we had an extremely successful and rewarding chapter year!

Special recognition goes to the following corporations, which helped with multiple STC events this year:

Salt River Project



Delivering More Than Power™

- Furnished meeting space, other amenities for chapter events.
- Subsidized employees’ time for the Society’s 2000–2001 STC Newsletter Competition and judging at the Central Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair (**CARSEF**).
- Subsidized cost of printing services for monthly meeting postcards, the **Rough Draft** newsletter, and the 2000 **PAO Competitions** banquet program.



- Donated printing for participation awards and other materials for participants in **CARSEF**.
- Gave employees time off to judge students’ papers at **CARSEF**.



AG Communication Systems

- Donated employees’ time, supplies, meeting rooms, copying services, and training facilities for the **PAO Competitions**.
- Gave employees time off to judge students’ papers at **CARSEF**.



- Donated employees’ time to plan and organize the **PAO Competitions** and to judge students’ papers at **CARSEF**.



- Co-sponsored and helped to publicize Jane Smith’s seminars on developing CBT and multimedia training.

The following companies also receive warm thanks for donating employees’ time or subsidizing costs for Phoenix Chapter events:



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Ocotillo Training, L.L.C.

