

IN THIS ISSUE:

~ Mail Merge Tips

COMING NEXT MONTH:

~ Virus Hoaxes

ReadyNetGo ... News

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Mailing Tips for Fast Delivery

You can help to speed up your mail delivery by adhering to postal regulations. For instance, the post office uses postal bar codes as an automated way of delivering mail. Each bar code contains specific information about the particular address. Having a bar code on your letter or postcard will move that piece faster through the system.

To add a postal bar code to a label or envelope in Word 97 or 2000, click on **Tools** on the main menu & scroll down to **Envelopes and Labels**. A dialog box appears. Click the **Options...** box. Click the box next to **Delivery Point Barcode**. In the preview pane, you should see a series of lines above the address. These lines will be printed automatically on your label or envelope and will help to deliver your piece faster.

Here are some more tips for fast postal delivery:

- 1) Print Names and Addresses in UPPERCASE letters.
- 2) Do **NOT** include punctuation (Ex: no commas or periods).
- 3) Include the city, state and zip on one line. Don't type anything below this line.
- 4) Remember to use zip +4 codes on all mailings.

Mail Merge to the Rescue

Have you ever wanted to send out a letter or mailing to many people but didn't want the inconvenience of editing each piece manually? Well, that's where Mail Merge comes in. With the mail merge feature in MS Word, you can create personalized mailings that will print automatically without having to type in each individual's name, address or any other specific piece of information.

Mail merges can be used for creating customized letters, faxes or envelopes, for creating directories, catalogs or inventory lists, or for customizing email messages. If you have an MS Access file, MS Excel spreadsheet, email address book or any other database or text file, you can create a mail merge and significantly reduce time spent on formatting, editing, and printing personalized documents.

There are four parts to creating a mail merge:

- 1) Opening or creating a main document which contains generic information that you want to repeat in each form letter, mailing label, envelope, catalog, email message etc.
- 2) Opening or creating a data source, which contains the data that varies in the merged document.
- 3) Inserting merge fields, which are placeholders that tell MS Word where to insert the data from the data source. This is the information that changes for each document.
- 4) Merging the information together into a third document that can be saved, printed, faxed, or emailed.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.geocities.com/figabil/ - World of Proverbs
2. www.geocities.com/~spanoudi/quote-05.html - Another dose of proverbial wisdom.
3. www.nhtsa.dot.gov/kids/ - Safety tips for kids for around school and the community.
4. www.halloween-online.com - Every resource available for your halloween enjoyment.

What is a data source?

A data source is a file that contains the data that varies in each copy of a merged document. For example, a data source can include the name and address of each recipient of a form letter.

You can think of a data source as a simple table. Each column in the data source corresponds to a category of information, or data field – for example, first name, last name, street address, and postal code. The name of each data field is listed in the first row of cells, which is called the header record. Each subsequent row contains one data record, which is a complete set of related information – for example, the name and address of a single recipient.

When you create a mail merge document, you place generic header fields in the document where you want personalized information to go. If you use the designated mail merge header fields from your data source, Word will automatically place your variable information in the correct location. There is no limit to the number of fields you can use nor is there a limit on the number of places you can assign a header field. If you want to repeat someone's name in a letter 5 times, simply insert the <<First Name>> and/or <<Last Name>> header in the appropriate place.

Creating a Mail Merge Step-by-Step

Here's an example of how to create a mail merge document in Word 97 or 2000:

- 1) Locate your data source (Ex: an Excel file) and make sure that the information is correct and the headers are properly labeled. Close this document and make a note of where the file is located.
- 2) Open Word and click **Tools** on the main menu bar.
- 3) Scroll down to **Mail Merge, Create, Form Letters, New Main Document**.
- 4) Click on **Get Data, Open Data Source**, and open the file that you just created or opened. Be sure to change your "files of type" to the same file extension as your data source.
- 5) Once you do this the Mail Merge toolbar will appear and you will be in the new document. Click on **Insert Merge Field**. Note that the field names that are in your data source will be in the drop down list. Insert the fields where you want them to appear, click on **Merge to a New Document** and watch the results. At this point you can save, print, fax or email this new file.

Word 2002 or Word XP makes mail merges even simpler. If the task pane is open, Word will give you step-by-step directions by following the Mail Merge Wizard. Click on **Tools** on the Main Menu, scroll down to **Letter and Mailings** and scroll over to **Mail Merge Wizard**. Follow the directions on your screen and Voila! what used to take hours now only takes a few minutes.

**Have You Backed Up Your
Computers Today?**