



Steve Maurer Publications Newsletter

Computer, Software, and Internet Tips and Tricks!

August 14, 2003

Notes from the Editor

Hello folks!

It's time for the kid's to hit the books here in the beautiful Ozarks. School starts Monday here in beautiful downtown Fayetteville, Arkansas. As you may remember, my son graduated last year...this is the year of the cap and gown for my daughter! She is looking forward to traversing the hallowed halls of learning at Fayetteville High (Go, Bulldogs!). Really, she is. But I'm not sure I'm ready, what with all the meetings, events, and money to spend! And it is my baby who is going to be a Senior this year. Boy does the time fly. I can remember when I could hold her in the palm of my hand...oh, wait a minute, that was the dog. But Momma and I are very proud of her, she has quite the artistic ability and is a good student. Of course, we are also proud of our boy, now becoming a man and making a living at a good job. (Which reminds me, I wonder if he can loan me a few bucks....)

All of which brings me to the topics of this newsletter. If you are a student or have a student in the family, or if you have the need to write reports, articles or even books in your line of work, these tips are for you. Both tips are for Word users, but I am sure other word processing programs have similar features. The first tip, "Using Shrink to Fit" is great for short documents. The second one, "Using Master Documents and Subdocuments" is a real life saver if you are writing long documents like books or novels, or documents that will be divided into sections. I am using this feature while I am in the process of writing another book on email based on Outlook Express 6 and a technical book for industrial maintenance. So without further ado, on with the computer tips!!!

Using Shrink to Fit in Word

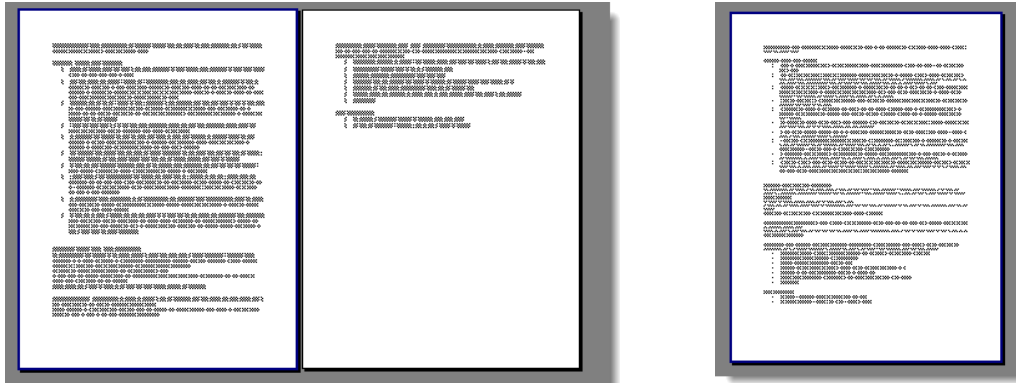
Well, you have written a supposedly one-page report, maybe for the boss, or for school, or to post on the web for sale. But your one page report has somehow spilled over onto another page. And the bad thing is...just a line or two or a paragraph has escaped to page two. Perhaps you just need to print one copy and you really don't want to staple it together, looks so unprofessional. Or maybe you need 50 copies and now you will have 100 sheets of printing, fifty of which will have just a few lines on it. You could try to cut some copy, but you have written your topic so tightly that there is just no "fat to trim". What is a person to do?!

Relax, calm down, there is a simple solution (you know it must be simple if I use it!). After you have typed out your masterpiece, go into Print Preview. You can get there by clicking on "File" in the menu bar, then down to "Print Preview", or click on the "Print Preview" button, the one with the magnifying glass over the sheet of paper.

Once you are in Print Preview mode, you will see the offending lines, plain as day. Now here is the fun part. There is a little button called the "Shrink to Fit" button. It looks like three pieces of paper, two darker ones and



one white one, with a curved arrow from the two to the one. This is the shrink to fit button and it is your friend. Click it and the two pages will become one! Fantastic, magical...cool! What happens is that Word will go through the document and adjust each font size until the second page information fits on the first page. You will need to view the output to make sure it is not too small, but on two-page reports or small documents, there shouldn't be a problem. Here are some



before and after screen shots (printed version only). Same document, shrunk to fit!

You can undo the "shrink to fit" operation unless you save the document after shrinking. If you save it, you will have to manually resize it.

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Using a Master Document and Subdocuments

So, you are going to write the newest, best-selling novel. Or maybe a screen play, technical manual or your memoirs. In any case, the writing adventure you are going to embark on is one that will require you to divide your work into several, perhaps many, sections or chapters. Managing a large document can be quite a daunting task. Even my "Email Primer", though just thirty-eight pages, was a challenge to work on.

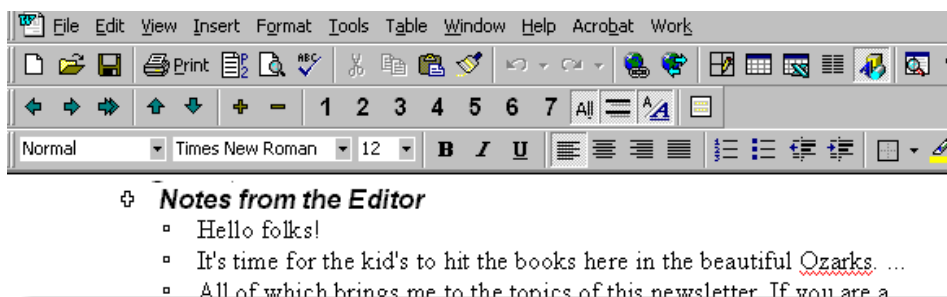
I always work from an outline when ever I am writing a new work. I've written several how-to manuals and safety manuals for industry and I always start with an outline, whether in Word or in PowerPoint. This gives me a path to follow in my writing and keeps the flow of the work smooth, with few offshoots or digressions. Electronic outlines are much easier to use than paper ones as they can be more easily altered as additional topics come to mind or as you realized that a topic is actually a subtopic of another. In the past I have used the Outline View in Word, but I have recently changed to a different method for long documents. Let me briefly explain briefly what the Outline View is and then why I now use the Master Document/Subdocument method.

Outline View

This view can be accessed by clicking "View" on the menu bar and choosing "Outline" or by the keyboard combination of [Alt] + "V" + "O". (The [Alt] key is used in conjunction with the menu bar in many cases.) You can create the backbone or outline of your document quickly and easily in this view. The arrows on the tool bar will move the sections in or out, up and down, creating the hierarchy of your document topics and subtopics. You can view with formatting or without,

and there are many other options that are available which make creating the outline of your document simple and easily modified. Your entire document can be written in this view, although it may take a little getting used to.

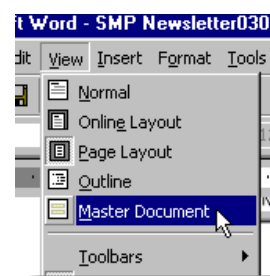
While this view is fantastic for designing small to medium documents, if you are writing a book or a similar long document, especially one that will be divided into chapters or sections, you may find that the Master Document/Subdocument method will better suit your needs.



The Main Document/Subdocument View

To use the Master Document/Subdocument, click on "View", then scroll down to "Master Document" and click. The Master Document view opens...but wait!

Steve, this look suspiciously like the Outline View. Well...yes, it does and it is used in very much the same way. Your topic hierarchy buttons are there, along with the other elements of the Outline View. You can expand and collapse the outline in this view also. But there is an important difference. In fact, if you are in Outline View you can access the Master Document view by clicking a button on the tool bar. It looks like a sheet of paper with rectangular boxes on it. (View the photo above).



So, what is so great about the Master Document view? Be patient, I'm getting to that. After you have created your document outline, using headings for the various topics and subtopics, you are ready to create the subdocuments. Let's assume that you are writing an introduction for your book and then used Heading format 2 for your chapters. While holding down the left mouse button, drag your cursor over all of the document you have designated as chapters. Just make sure that the first Heading 2 formatted line is the first one. Now click on the "Create Subdocument" button on the toolbar. It looks like a sheet of paper with a single yellow rectangle on it. Word will now create subdocuments based on the first heading style in your selection. For instance, if you had Heading 2 as the first style in the selection, all Heading 2 formatted lines will become subdocuments. You will notice that each subdocument is now surrounded by a rectangular

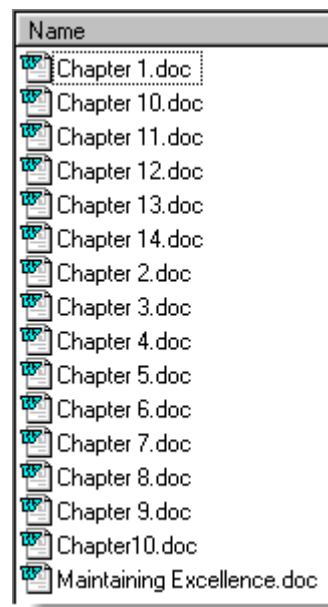


box. The subtopics, represented by other heading formats, are included in the box for the main topic for that subdocument.

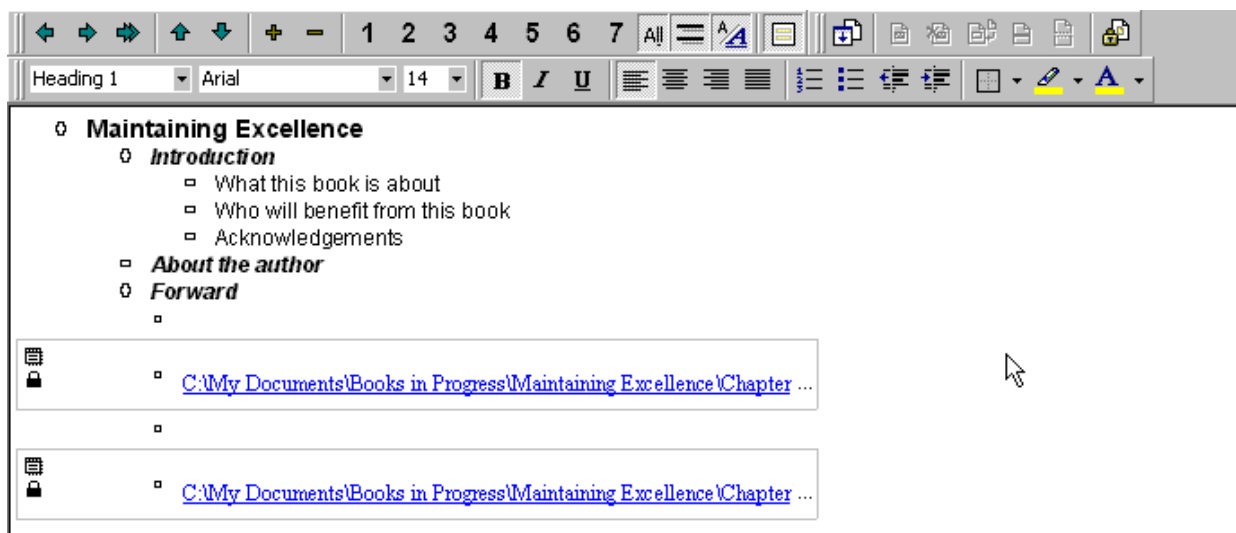
Now comes the really interesting part. When you save your document, each subdocument is saved as a separate file. The Main Document can be named as you wish, each subdocument is save with a filename derived from the heading formatted line. For instance, if you formatted using Heading 2, and named your sections "Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3" and so on, then the

subdocuments would be named: chapter 1.doc, chapter 2.doc, chapter 3.doc, etc. I would suggest saving this master document to a separate folder so that you can keep track of the subdocuments. When you look in the folder, you will see the master document and each of the subdocuments.

You can double-click on any of the subdocuments and it will open, ready for you to work on. But now you will only have the topic you want to revise, edit or add to in front of you and you don't have to search down through your entire literary creation! In the mood to work on Chapter 2? Click, click and you're in to begin! Want to just concentrate on Chapter 27...no problem, just do it! Want to take Chapters 5 and 6 with you to the dentist office? Just copy them to a floppy to use on your laptop, then when you get back, transfer the revised file back to the folder and overwrite the old file. Word of Warning: don't change the filename or terrible things could happen. I'll explain in a minute. If you have "My Briefcase" installed (a Windows default) use it. It will automatically update the old file with the new file. Hmm...might be a good topic for another newsletter...



Now that you've save the master document and all the little subdocuments, it is time to see the real power of this method. Find the master document in the folder (it's the one YOU named) and open in it. It will open in one of two ways. It will either look just like it did when you saved and close it OR it will have the master document text followed by HYPERLINKS to the subdocuments. Clicking on a hyperlink will open that subdocument in a new window, ready for your creative juices to flow.



When you are done working on that subdocument, save and close it and the master document will show again. Click on another hyperlink to a different subdocument and go to town on that one. Now an explanation: This is why you don't want to rename the subdocuments. If you change the file name, Word won't be able to find the subdocument and the hyperlinks won't work. You can also work in the original view, especially if you need to modify or add to your outline. Clicking [Ctrl] + \ will toggle back and forth between the expanded view and the hyperlink view. There is also a button on the tool bar that will do the same thing.

You can add more subdocuments after you have created your master document. And you can even link documents that you have already created to your master document and make them subdocuments (it will not alter them, just link to them).

After you complete a subdocument you can combine it with the master document, but it is not necessary. You select the subdocument item for that subdocument, this will select the entire subdocument. Click on the button on the tool bar for removing a subdocument. It looks just like the "create subdocument" button, except that it has a red X on it. The subdocument will now become part of the main document. The separate file for the subdocument in the folder will remain, but you can delete it now as the subdocument is merged with the main document. BUT...if you highlight the subdocument in Master Document View and press [Delete], it is removed completely from the main document, although the separate file is not deleted in the folder. Use this if you decide the subdocument does not fit in with the main subject matter after all, but would make a good article for another publication.



As I stated previously, you do not have to merge the subdocuments into the main document, you can leave them linked if you want. This can be especially helpful if you know in advance that all or part of your document will need to be revised in the future. Merge only those parts that will "stand the test of time", but leave the "inevitable editables" as subdocuments. When you do revise them, it will be updated automatically in the master document. The merged documents can be deleted from your computer, leaving only the ones that may need revision. But wait...are you planning to sell your book? Wouldn't it be nice to offer a sample chapter for folks to download and preview? Hmm...the subdocuments can stand on their own, can't they. Viola, a sample chapter already separated out as separate file!

Working with the Main Document/Subdocument may take a little getting used to, but I believe that you will find that it will make writing your next "Best Seller" more efficient and less nerve wracking. Have fun with it!

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Quote-ables

Snow and adolescence are the only problems that disappear if you ignore them long enough. - Earl Wilson

Cool Links

I would like to introduce you to a new friend of SMP. She is Cathryn Peters, the Wicker Woman. Cathryn Peters, owner of The Wicker Woman business, specializes in antique wicker furniture restoration, all types of seat weaving, including chair caning, and deer antler basketry. On this site, she freely shares her information and resources to promote, encourage and preserve the art

and craft of chair seat weaving and wicker repair. Visit Cathryn's site at <http://www.wickerwoman.com> . She has a newsletter you can sign up for that contains great tips for the care and feeding of your wicker furniture!

Sorry for the bad link to Barbara Brabec's World last newsletter. Actually, one link was good, the other didn't work. If you didn't make it to her website, here is the link again (correct this time): <http://www.barbarabrabec.com> . I had a little trouble spelling Barbarabrabec, but then again, I have trouble with my favorite food, bananananana! By the way, if you are interesting in starting your own home business, be sure to go to Barbara's site and check out her two volume "Home Made Money" set. This Brabec classic has been just revised and updated to include information for businesses using the Internet. Tell her Steve sent you!

As always, visit the "Classroom" on my website at <http://steve.maurer.net> to see what new tutorials I have posted. I will be posting the "Shrink to Fit" tip as a tutorial, complete with screen shots.

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