

SpellList Macro Documentation

Why I hate Spellcheckers

Work should not be routine. I hate it when a computer forces me to make the same sort of decision repeatedly—that's something the computer should do. So when I found myself punching the ignore button on the spelling checker nine times out of every ten, I asked *why*? I could find no good reason, other than every word-processor's spellchecker I have seen suffers from a major design kludge—they expect far too much of my time for their level of sophistication. Spellcheckers frequently (I would say 90% of the time) present me with utterly uninteresting information. Names I know are spelled correctly, specialized vocabulary, foreign phrases and word forms beyond the meager match-making capability of the spell-checker all combine to waste my time. Oh, to be sure, the custom dictionary helps somewhat, but they are unwieldy and sometimes I don't **want** to add a foreign word to my custom dictionary—especially when the word is a common typo or misspelling in English, or it's something I use so rarely that I hardly need it in a dictionary. The next step is supposedly on-the-fly spellchecking which corrects our words as we type them—I don't **ever** want to be warned in the middle of my train of thought that I haven't added "Thomas *Hobbes*" to the user dictionary yet, or that "*arete*" is not a properly spelled word in English, or that the spell-checker doesn't recognize the filename "*WORDWIN.INI*". Thought is fragile enough without my computer trying to quash it. So I asked: ***Why not create a spelling checker that doesn't ask us to babysit it?***

That's precisely what I have tried to do in these macros. What has emerged, I think, is a whole new way of spell checking a document. I call it **suspect word checking**. The suspect word checker does its work while you go grab a cup of tea, coffee, or a beer. When you come back, it presents you with a list of words its puny little brain didn't recognize. You—not it—decide which words are really misspelled and require your attention and which words it simply couldn't recognize. You decide which words to search for, which words to look up, and which words to ignore. The original implementation is elegantly simple—it just prints out a list of suspect words. Then if you're not sure about a word, you can check it using the find key. A more complex implementation is also provided which allows you work with a menu of suspect words, and check the context and the spell-checker's suggestions directly from a menu of suspect words.

If you like and use this program, please register it. If you use it for longer than thirty days, you must register. Registration is cheap, easy, appreciated, morally the right thing to do and it makes sure I can keep future versions and bug fixes in the pipeline. See the section called **Registration Info** for more details. I also appreciate hearing your feedback. My internet e-mail address is "rohrer@ai.mit.edu" and my snail mail address is found in the registration notice below.

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Disclaimer

Save your work before running the SpellList Macro! This is for two reasons: first, saving frequently is a good habit to form and will protect you in the long run; second, SpellListMenu is a bit of a memory hog, and might cause Microsoft Word to crash. Absolutely no warranty or guarantee is supplied or implied with this program. The user assumes all risk in its use. See the final section entitled "Software license agreement" for full details.

How the programs work

There are several different macros enclosed in this package. First, there is the simple implementation (SpellListSimple), which goes out and gets a list of suspect words and dumps them to the printer while you go do something else. It's a little quicker than the full-featured macro (SpellListMenu) which actually gets a list of these suspect words, then lets you work with the suspect words as list, adding them to a custom dictionary or correcting the spelling in context using Word's built-in spelling checker. The full-featured macro is somewhat slower but the interactive capabilities make it worth trying, and you have the added protection of being able find repeated word search--something the simpler program does not perform.

Why not try the macros right now? Make sure your printer is on and ready, and then click one of the following buttons to take SpellList for a test drive. SpellList will suspect word check this document and present you with its standard output. Then, if you like it, you can choose the installation button following to install SpellList in your normal template.

Error! Bookmark not defined.§Error! Bookmark not defined.§Error! Bookmark not defined.§

When you install SpellList, the SpellListMenu, SpellListSimple and EditDictionary macros are copied into your normal template and will be available from any document. The installation routine automatically adds "SpellListMenu" and "EditDictionary" as choices at the bottom of the Edit menu, and will inquire as to whether it should add "SpellListSimple" to that menu as well (recommended). You may also choose to reassign the ABC button on the toolbar from Word's built-in spellchecker to SpellListMenu (recommended unless you have removed the ABC button from its normal spot on the toolbar). Additionally, you may choose to reassign the F7 key from the built-in spelling checker to SpellListMenu (not recommended if you occasionally check the spelling of a single word as you write). These options are selected by checking the appropriate box when you press the install SpellList button above. Finally, the installation routine will add SpellList and EditDictionary choices to the Help menu. (Note: If after installing SpellList you should notice that SpellListSimple appears under the Edit menu even though you left the box unchecked, don't worry: "SPELLIST.DOC" already has all the macros installed as options under the Edit menu even before the installation button is pressed.)

Technical note: The SpellList macro programs work by using a dummy dictionary to store the suspect words, then converting it into a document for editing and printing purposes. You may find the latest version of the misspelled words file in your program directory (wherever the file "WINWORD.EXE" is stored) under the name "XYZWORDS.DOC". You may not use a custom dictionary with the names "XYZ.DIC" or "EMPTY.DIC" as those dictionaries are reserved for use with SpellList and are erased and recreated without warning by the programs.

Edit Dictionary

Ever want a utility that allowed you edit your custom dictionaries easily? EditDictionary does just that for up to 64 dictionaries up to 512 words long. You can edit misspelled words, add and remove words, merge dictionaries and even print them out. EditDictionary will edit only custom dictionaries which are stored in the program directory (wherever the file "WINWORD.EXE" is stored). To access EditDictionary, choose EditDictionary from the bottom of the Edit menu.

How to register

You are licensed to try **SpellList** and **EditDictionary** for thirty days free of charge, after which you must either register it or delete it. The entire **SpellList** package costs only \$20 (check or money order), and is available from:

Tim Rohrer
1234 E. Silver Street
Tucson AZ 85719

For your twenty dollars you will receive a clear conscience and a disk with a current, updated version of the software with no registration reminders. For quantity pricing you may inquire at the address above or contact me via e-mail at "rohrer@ai.mit.edu" on the internet. Please no phone calls.

See the section entitled "Software Licensing Agreement" at the end of this document for license details.

Bugs known and how to report

Report bugs by sending e-mail to "rohrer@ai.mit.edu" on the internet or via snail mail to Tim Rohrer, 1234 E. Silver Street, Tucson AZ 85719. Your bug reports are appreciated. Please describe the problem as fully as possible.

Future Enhancements

I have a number of future enhancements planned if there are enough registered users to keep future versions in the pipeline. If you are interested in seeing a version of spellList for another software program, it may already be in the works.

Acknowledgments

The earliest version of the present form of the SpellList program was written for Word for Windows 1.1 while I was at Southern Illinois University. Its inspiration is owed to the slow speed of spellchecking on their networked system. I used to start the macro up and go for a cup of cocoa instead of waiting for the clunky networked spell checker to ask my opinion on every word. I wrote the Word 6.0 version to work on my own 486, and then backwards translated the 2.0c version. This program could not have been written without the help of several good books, including *The Hacker's Guide to Word For Windows* and *Take Word for Windows to the Edge* (both recommended).

Removing SpellList and EditDictionary

Should you decide not to register the SpellList package once your trial period is over, you must remove SpellList from your normal template of Word for Windows. Follow these steps to remove SpellList from your normal template.

1. Start Word for Windows.
2. Choose FileNew and use the Normal template.
3. Choose ToolsMacro.
4. Highlight SpellListMenu.
5. Choose Delete.
6. Highlight SpellListSimple.
7. Choose Delete.
8. Highlight SpellListHelp.
9. Choose Delete.
10. Highlight EditDictionary.
11. Choose Delete.
12. Choose Close.
13. Exit Word for Windows and save the global command and glossary changes (Answer "Yes").

This procedure will remove the SpellList package from your system.

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