Word® for Genealogy: An Improvement

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ABSTRACT: Users of the set of techniques introduced in my "Word® for Genealogy" articles[1] will have noticed the complex set of steps required for each technique. Here a set of eight useful 3-letter commands are introduced that simplify each technique to a single command. An inexpensive software product implements the improvement.

I shall assume that you are familiar with the original articles, particularly the notation used in them. Word® is the well-known text-editing application by Microsoft Corp. I shall introduce an application here that is not yet so well-known, ActiveWords®, by ActiveWords Systems, Inc., the importance of which shall become obvious.[2]

The eight commands (called "ActiveWords" by the application) that greatly simplify application of the Word for genealogy techniques are these, followed by a short description of each:

1ch	Insert first *Child* number	Causes i to be inserted at the selected point.
nch	Insert next *Child* number	Causes the next lowercase Roman number to be inserted at the selected point.
1pr	Insert first *Person* number	Causes 1 to be inserted at the selected point.
npr	Insert next *Person* number	Causes the next Arabic number to be inserted at the selected point.
ppp	Insert ellipsis (. . .)	Insert formatted ellipsis (exactly as shown) at the selected point.[3]
seq	Insert SEQ *Person* field command	Opens the Insert Field dialog at a place in the dialog for completing a SEQ *Person* field command at the selected point.
bmk	Insert bookmark	Opens the Insert Bookmark dialog at the selected point or the selected phrase.
hyp	Insert bookmark-style hyperlink	Opens the Insert Hyperlink dialog at a place in the dialog for choosing a bookmark to link to the selected phrase.

Use of these commands implies that you have started the ActiveWords application before you started the Word application. In a typical installation ActiveWords starts up automatically when you start your computer. ActiveWords intercepts your keystrokes before they reach the Word document. If it detects that you have typed one of the 3-letter sequences above,

then it implements the corresponding command (after first deleting the three letters so that they do not appear in your document).[4]

The seq command is especially important, so let's look at it in detail as an instructive example. Here is the description, from the original article, of the technique it implements:

> Click on Insert: Field: Seq: Field Codes, and then type the word *Person* after the word SEQ which is already provided. Then either type the bookmark name from memory, or click on the Options button, then click on Bookmarks, then find the desired bookmark in the list supplied, and click on it. Then—VERY IMPORTANT—click Add to Field before clicking OK.

Use of the single ActiveWord seq<space>,[5] typed at any time into the WORD document you are editing, causes the first eleven clicks or keystrokes of this long description to be done automatically for you—up through the space following *Person* (which is not mentioned explicitly above but is required)—and you do not have to remember where to click on the menu bar or subsequent dialog boxes. You still have to complete the SEQ *Person* command,[6] typically by filling in a meaningful bookmark name, followed by clicking on Add to Field and OK. In a genealogy book with hundreds of persons this one ActiveWord would save you several thousand keystrokes.

There is an important caution you must take in applying two of these commands, the last two. In one of the first six commands you will have selected a point position[7] to insert say a number, as opposed to selecting a phrase (that is, a word or set of words).[8] The first six commands will work properly if typed at anytime to the WORD document. The situation for the last two commands is different in general.

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[1] Alvy Ray Smith, "Writing Using WORD® for Genealogy: Utilizing Microsoft WORD® in Genealogical Documents in *Register*, or Modified *Register* [*NGSQ*], Format," *New England Ancestors* 5(2004, no. 3):50–53, 5(2004, no. 4):51–54, 5(2004, nos. 5–6):59–60, 6(2005, no. 1):50–51, 54; reprinted as chapter 7 of Michael J. Leclerc and Henry B. Hoff, eds., *Genealogical Writing in the 21st Century: A Guide to* Register *Style and More*, 2d ed. (Boston, NEHGS, 2006, 2d printing 2007), 65–107.

[2] A 60-day free trial version of the product may be downloaded from <www.activewords.com>. The purchase price is currently $50. For clarity of the prose, the registered trademark symbol will not be used hereafter but should be assumed for all software products.

[3] This extra command has nothing to do with the WORD for Genealogy articles. However, it is a command I have used often in formal genealogical writing. The spacing between the periods is forced with nonbreaking spaces.

[4] ACTIVEWORDS commands can be any number of letters.

[5] This means click the keys s-e-q-<space> in that order, where s is of course the key labeled with "S," etc., and <space> is the spacebar. ACTIVEWORDS allows you to change the <space> key (the "trigger of instant ActiveWords") to anything else you want, such as <space><space>. By default <F8> always works, as the "trigger of all ActiveWords," so s-e-q-<F8> would also work.

[6] If you want to use a naming convention other than *Person*, then you will have to edit the ACTIVEWORDS commands yourself to make the change.

Consider the bmk command for inserting a bookmark. Sometimes you might want to select a phrase, rather than a point position, and insert a bookmark corresponding to that phrase. If you arbitrarily type bmk<space> to the WORD document, the selected phrase will be deleted and replaced with "bmk" (because that is how WORD works). The inserted "bmk" is deleted by ACTIVEWORDS as it executes the insert bookmark command, but the result is that the phrase you originally selected will have been deleted. For this type of command (one that works on a selected phrase rather than at a selected point), use the method described next.

ACTIVEWORDS provides a dialog box with a small window into which a command can be entered. If a command is entered this way, then the selected word or phrase is not deleted when the command is executed. One place to find this small window is on the "AWMonitor bar." A typical installation of ACTIVEWORDS makes this bar available when the cursor is placed near the top of the screen. Another way to make such a window available is by typing <control><space>.[9] This causes the "AW Action Pad" to pop up, containing an editing window into which you can type a command—for instance, one of the eight ActiveWords above.

As an example of the latter usage, consider the task of inserting a hyperlink from a child, say Experience Partridge, to her sketch which has been previously bookmarked with the bookmark *EXPERIENCEofPRESERVED*. Select the phrase "Experience Partridge" in the child line. Type <control><space> to cause the AW Action Pad to pop up. In its editing window, type hyp<space>. This will cause the Insert Hyperlink dialog to appear, with the list of bookmarks displayed (and the AW Action Pad will disappear). Then you would select the bookmark *EXPERIENCEofPRESERVED* from the list, and click OK (twice). If the selected phrase disappears, then you have failed to use the AW Action Pad or the AWMonitor bar to enter the command. You have entered the command directly and it has caused the selected phrase to be erased as the hyperlink was inserted.

To obtain the library of genealogy commands discussed here, enter the following url in your internet browser's window: *ftp.alvyray.com/Tutorial/* and press <Enter>. Move the file listed there named *Genealogy ActiveWords for Word 2003.awb* into the ACTIVEWORDS folder on your main disk, typically <C:\ Program Files\ActiveWords>. If Microsoft INTERNET EXPLORER is your browser then an easy way to do this is to right-click your mouse on the filename *Genealogy ActiveWords for Word 2003.awb*, then click on Save Target As . . . on the menu that pops up. Find *C:\Program Files\ActiveWords* in the dialog box window provided, then click Save. Other browsers provide similar functionality.[10]

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[7] Where you simply click and release the (left) mouse button at a single point, say at the end of a word.

[8] This is a standard Microsoft (hence WORD) skill: Click the mouse button down at one end of the phrase then, keeping the (left) mouse button depressed, move to the other end of the phrase and release the mouse button.

[9] This sequence may be set by the user of ACTIVEWORDS to a sequence of the user's choice.

On the ACTIVEWORDS menu, click on Wordbase: Insert: *C:\Program Files\ActiveWords\Genealogy ActiveWords for Word 2003.awb*. Click Open. You will be asked which WordBase to use. Just use the default MyProfile. Then click Insert and then OK. The commands are ready for use.

Version comment: I created this library for ACTIVEWORDS version 1.9 with WORD 2003 running under WINDOWS XP. If there is sufficient demand for older or newer versions of WORD, I will undertake to write versions of the ACTIVEWORDS command library for them.

Acknowledgement: To Marsha Hoffman Rising, CG, FASG, who served as beta-tester of this software as she did for the original WORD for Genealogy techniques.

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[10] For example, you can save to your desktop, then move the desktop item to the *C:/Program Files/ActiveWords* location.