

Chapter 7. Move Quickly Around Documents

[Sample chapter from *Write Faster With Your Word Processor* (<http://www.Geoff-Hart.com/books/write-faster/write.htm>)]

One nice thing about mouse-driven interfaces is how easy it is to move around: simply scroll to the right location using the scroll bar or the mouse's scroll wheel, then click the mouse where you want to begin working. Unfortunately, repeatedly moving your hands between keyboard and mouse wastes considerable time; it may only cost you a second or three each time you grab the mouse and then return your hands to the keyboard, but if you do that hundreds or thousands of times per day (and you do!), the wasted time adds up. This is doubly true if you're using the awkward pointing devices found on most laptop computers. Since most writers are skilled typists, it's more productive to keep your hands on the keyboard even when you need to move around. Yet many writers never master this skill and remain ignorant of the many powerful navigation shortcuts that are available.

In this chapter, I'll present the most efficient keyboard-based tricks for moving around a document while writing or revising, as well as a few non-keyboard or hybrid (keyboard plus mouse) tricks. Once you've mastered these techniques, Chapter 8 will teach you how to use them to select text more efficiently. Because both Windows and the Macintosh have increasingly standardized their keyboard commands across programs, these tips

will work in most software, with occasional variations. If your software doesn't support a particular useful shortcut, check its documentation or search the Web to see if you can discover an equivalent command. Alternatively, record a macro that will achieve the same result. (See Chapter 14 for details of how to record macros.)

Why bother using the keyboard? A colleague once challenged me to prove that the keyboard really was more efficient than the mouse. So I timed myself using mouse and keyboard, and found that learning just three new keyboard shortcuts for the most frequent kinds of moves saved me an average of 10 minutes per day. You can imagine that this encouraged me to learn all the other shortcuts described in this chapter. I haven't calculated the overall time savings, but I can tell you that this freed up enough time for me to take a 30-minute nap at lunch and still have time to finish the same amount of work per day.

Note that you can access any menu command from the keyboard. Chapter 5 describes how to do this in the section *Navigating menus from the keyboard*, and describes how to create new shortcuts in the section *Keyboard Shortcuts*. Word for Windows lets you jump between tabs in a dialog box by pressing Alt plus the letter assigned to the specified tab. In both Windows and Mac versions, pressing Tab and Shift+Tab will move forward and backward, respectively, between the fields in a dialog box.

Moving among directories in the Open File dialog

box: To move among the fields in the Open File dialog box, press the Tab key (or Shift+Tab to move in the opposite direction). To move upwards one level in Windows, press Alt+↑; for the Mac, press Command+↑.

Note that in this chapter, I've used a shortcut to describe the keystrokes for the Windows and Mac versions of Word (respectively): Control/Command, followed by the other key to press.

Small Jumps

Most cursor movements during writing and revision are between words, sentences, or paragraphs. You'll make these jumps so often that it makes no sense to be constantly interrupting your work to grab the mouse. Learn the following keystrokes instead:

- **Next or previous word:** Control/Command + → and Control/Command + ←, respectively.
- **Beginning or end of line:** Home and End keys, respectively.
- **Beginning or end of sentence:** There's no universal keyboard shortcut for doing this, so you'll have to research the shortcut for each program. (I'll describe how to create this shortcut in Word after this list.)
- **Beginning or end of paragraph:** Control/Command + ↑ Control/Command + ↓, respectively.

Word includes functions that jump between sentences, but to use them from the keyboard, you must define new keyboard shortcuts:

- Open the **Customize Keyboard** dialog box, as described in Chapter 5.
- Choose the template or file that should store these customizations. (Choose **Normal.dotm** to make the shortcut available in all documents.)
- Under **Categories**, select **All Commands**, then scroll through the command list until you reach **SentLeft**, the command for “move to the beginning of a sentence”. You can instead click inside the command list and start typing this name; Word will scroll automatically to that part of the command list as you type.
- In the field labeled **Press new shortcut key**, type the new key combination (e.g., **Control+Alt+Home**). Click **Assign** to implement the new shortcut.
- Repeat this process for **SentRight**, the command for “move to the end of a sentence” (e.g., **Control+Alt+End**).
- Click **OK** to close the dialog box.

Start of the sentence is multilingual: Both the **SentLeft** command and the **SentRight** command also move to the start and end of the sentence (respectively) in right-to-left languages.

Moving Within Tables

With the text cursor inside a table, you can use variations of the **Tab** key to move within the table:

- **Move to the next or previous cell:** Press the Tab key and the Shift+Tab combination, respectively.
- **Move to the first and last cells of a column:** In Windows, press Alt+PageUp and Alt+PageDown, respectively. On the Mac, use Control+PageUp and Control+PageDown.
- **Move to the first and last cells of a row:** In Windows, press Alt+Home and Alt+End, respectively. On the Mac, use Control+Home and Control+End instead.

Mastering tables: For tips on how to create and revise tables, see the article *Mastering Word's Tables* on my Web site.

Moving Around Documents That Contain Tracked Changes

I'll discuss details of using the Track Changes feature to work with an editor in Chapter 15. Here, I'll describe a few useful tricks for moving efficiently around documents that contain tracked changes. These movement shortcuts rely on two tricks: first, Word can move directly to tracked changes and skip the intervening text, and second, Word can selectively display or conceal certain types of tracked changes, which lets you ignore the concealed changes during your movements.

For a lightly edited document, you can move rapidly to the next or previous changes by clicking the Next Change or Previous Change icons in the Ribbon's Review tab. These commands skip all intervening text between the cursor position and the next or

previous tracked change. You can move even faster if you create keyboard shortcuts for these commands:

- Open the **Customize Keyboard** dialog box, as described in Chapter 5.
- Under the **Categories** heading, select **Review** tab (Windows) or **All Commands** (Mac).
- Under the **Commands** heading, scroll down to **NextChangeOrComment**
- Create a keyboard shortcut (e.g., **Control+Alt+↓**).
- Click **Assign** to implement the new shortcut.
- Repeat this process, but scroll down to **PreviousChangeOrComment** and choose the keyboard shortcut (e.g., **Control+Alt+↑**).
- Click **OK** to close the dialog box.

In documents that have been heavily edited using revision tracking, these movements can be inefficient because of the many changes. Instead, select the Ribbon's **Review** tab, open the **Show Markup** menu (Windows) or the **Markup Options** menu (Mac), and deselect any categories of changes that you (temporarily) don't want to show. For example, if you deselect all options except format changes, the shortcut keystrokes I've just described will move you to the next or previous format change and will ignore all insertions and deletions.

If you want to ignore all tracked changes while you move around (e.g., if you want to check the positions of graphics in a page layout), open the **Display for Review** menu in the Ribbon's **Review** tab and select **No Markup** so that only the results of your edits appear on the screen. Move to your destination

using any of the movement shortcuts described in this chapter, then display your tracked changes again by selecting **All Markup** from this menu. If you do this often, it's worthwhile defining a keyboard shortcut: under **All Commands**, scroll down to **ShowInsertionsAndDeletions** and assign a keystroke. I use **Control+Shift+D** to “shift the display” between showing and concealing the tracked changes.

Moving between comment balloons: Word 2019 removed the handy ability to move the cursor from inside the balloon for one comment to inside the balloon for the previous or next comment using **Control/Command** plus the **↑** and **↓** keys. Fortunately, you can restore these keystrokes by customizing the keyboard. (Follow the instructions before this note for moving between tracked changes.) Under the category **All commands**, scroll down to **NextComment** and **PreviousComment**, and choose a keyboard shortcut for these commands. Alternatively, under the **Review** tab's **Markup Options** menu, deselect all options except **Comments**. You can now move from comment to comment using the **Review** tab's **Previous Change** and **Next Change** icons, or create keyboard shortcuts for those commands.

Moving Using the Search Tools

Many of the most useful movements you'll need to make while revising a manuscript aren't built into your word processor. The solution? Use the **Find** dialog box to do the hard work

for you! The basic principle is simple: word processors can move to any character or pattern that you can find using the Find dialog box (see Chapter 12 for details), so all you need to do is figure out how to find what you're looking for. If you'll do this often (e.g., to move to the next chapter's title), record a macro that follows your instructions on how to find that information. (See Chapter 14 for instructions on how to record a macro.) Use the following steps:

- Open the Find dialog box (Control/Command+F).
- Type the character or pattern you want to find. For example, type "Chapter" if you want to move to the next chapter title.
- Click the Find Next button to move to the next instance of that character or pattern.
- Close the dialog box.
- If you've recorded a macro that stores this series of steps, assign a keyboard shortcut to the macro. (See the descriptions earlier in this chapter for details.)

Using this approach, I created many remarkably useful ways to zip around a document at top speed based on things I frequently need to move to while I'm editing someone else's manuscript or revising my own. Here are some examples to inspire you to create your own movement shortcuts, and the keyboard shortcuts I defined for each of them:

- **Next or previous punctuation:** I created search macros to find periods (Control+.), commas (Control+,), semicolons (Control+;), and colons (Control+;:).
- **Numbers:** Since I mostly do scientific editing, I deal with many numbers. Word's code to search for a number is ^#,

and the keyboard shortcut I use is Control+3. Memory aid: the number sign (#) is above the 3 on the keyboard.

- **Brackets:** My authors insert many parenthetical comments and equations, so I've created search functions for each bracket type; the keyboard shortcut is Control plus the specific bracket; for example, Control+[takes me to the next opening square bracket.
- **Years:** Since I often need to check literature citations based on the author/date citation method, I use the search text `^#^#^#^#` (Word's code for "find four numbers in a row"), and implement this search using the keyboard shortcut Control+Y. Memory aid: Y = year.

I also created keyboard shortcuts to perform most of the same searches, but moving backwards through the document. All I needed to do was to click the Find Previous button while I was recording the macros. To take advantage of the keyboard shortcuts I've already memorized, I simply added the Shift key to each of these shortcuts; for example, Control+Shift+[moves to the previous [. Depending on the type of writing or revision you do, you'll likely have a whole series of things you need to be able to reach quickly. Pay attention to the kinds of movements you're doing most frequently, and create search macros that help you perform those moves in a single keystroke.

Bigger Jumps

Sometimes you need to jump farther, such as between screens, pages, or sections. Rather than scrolling, learn the following keystrokes instead:

- **Next or previous screen:** PageUp or PageDown, respectively.
- **Section break or manual page break:** Open the Find dialog box (Control/Command+F) and search for the code that Word uses to define breaks. Word uses ^m for a *manual* page break; ^b for a section *break*, and ^l for a manual *line* break.
- **Graphics:** Open the Find dialog box (Control/Command+F) and search for the code Word uses to define a graphic: ^g.
- **Beginning or end of a document:** Control/Command+Home or Control/Command+End, respectively.
- **A specific section:** Open the Find dialog box (Control/Command+F) and type a word or phrase that appears for the first time in that section. For example, if you want to move to the next chapter and each chapter title begins with the word *Chapter*, type that word as the search term. If you know the chapter number, add that to the search term.

Chapter 5 describes Word's Outline and Navigation Pane view modes. Both let you move quickly around a document when you don't remember details of a title or heading. Because Outline view allows you to expand and collapse the display to show and conceal some of the document's headings and their subordinate text, it also lets you eliminate the distance between

consecutive headings when you scroll or use keyboard shortcuts. You can then move from one heading to the next with a single keystroke (e.g., by pressing the down arrow key), and once you arrive, you can expand the outline again and resume your editing. With the Navigation Pane displayed, you can click anywhere in that pane to move to that position in the file, and immediately begin editing from that point. Although this requires the mouse, the potentially large distance you're moving makes this approach efficient.

Finding a section by its title: Word lets you search for words that appear at the start of a new paragraph by typing $\wedge p$ (the code Word uses for a carriage return) before the word. For example, searching for $\wedge p$ Chapter will not find phrases such as “see Chapter 10” in mid-sentence. Similarly, if you need to find a word that has been forced onto the next line using a manual line break (by holding the Shift key and pressing Return or Enter), type $\wedge l$ (lower-case L) before the word instead. If the word has been forced to the beginning of a new page or section, type $\wedge m$ or $\wedge b$ (respectively) before the word.

Moving to a bookmark

Software that provides a bookmark function lets you jump to any named bookmark using a *go to* or *jump to* function. In Windows, the usual keyboard shortcut is Control+G; on the Mac, it's Command+Option+G. If you prefer, open the Find dialog box (Control/Command+F), and select the Go To tab. Both in Word

and in software that doesn't provide bookmarks, you can accomplish the same result by using symbols or words as placeholders and searching for those targets. An ideal bookmark is something that won't appear in the file, because you want to avoid having to skip repeatedly over normal uses of those characters in the text. Typing special characters around a marker makes it stand out and makes it easier to find; consider, for example, *[continue]* or *℘check this℘*. Such phrases are good choices because they also clearly identify the bookmark's role. If you use such bookmarks, add a reminder in your revision checklist to remove them when you've addressed each problem and add another reminder to ensure that you haven't missed any during your final revision.

To use Word's built-in bookmark function, position the cursor at the desired location, and then:

- **Windows:** Ribbon > Insert tab > Bookmark, then name the bookmark.
- **Mac:** Insert menu > Bookmark, then name the bookmark.

To move to a bookmark, use the Control+G and Command+Option+G keystrokes, then type the bookmark name. The dialog box also lets you go to other useful things such as sections, lines, comments, and tables. To avoid the need to pass through this dialog box each time you need it, record a macro that performs all the necessary steps, including closing the dialog box, and assign a keystroke.

Moving to a specific page

Most *go to* functions also let you jump to a specific page. Word offers this option in both the Windows and Mac versions. If you prefer to use the mouse, many programs that provide a

page number at the bottom of the screen let you double-click the page number or open a popup menu beside the page number and select a page. Word 2019 for Mac no longer provides this shortcut.

Returning to your previous position

Getting back to where you started: Word offers a nifty shortcut (Shift+F5) that steps backward, one jump at a time, to previous positions where you changed text. Unfortunately, Word frequently gets confused (particularly if you insert a comment) and loses track of these positions. This means that it's wise to manually insert a bookmark to ensure that you can easily return to your starting point.

If you need to temporarily stop writing or revising so you can move elsewhere in the document (e.g., to confirm the wording of a chapter title so you can type the correct cross-reference), it's easy to leave a bookmark in the file and use the Find function to find and return to that bookmark. I've standardized on [] (two square brackets) or <> (two angle brackets) because both are short, easy to type, and unlikely to occur in anything that I write or edit. I created the keyboard shortcut Control+Shift+B (memory aid: shift the cursor to the bookmark) to move me instantly to that bookmark. An additional benefit is that Word highlights the bookmark characters when it finds them, so I can delete them in a single keystroke by pressing the Delete key. It took me a few weeks of practice to learn to automatically insert a bookmark whenever I was about to move elsewhere in the doc-

ument, but given how often I do this every day, it saves me an enormous amount of time each week.

Really Big Jumps

Sometimes you actually want to jump much farther than within a document—between files or programs, for example. Try the following:

Recently used files (across all programs)

Both the Mac and Windows let you display recently accessed documents for the operating system as a whole:

- **Windows:** Recently used documents or favorite documents are displayed under the **Start** menu. For each program in that menu, right-click on the program name to show these files.
- **Mac:** Under the Apple (🍏) menu, the **Recent Items** option initially only shows recently used programs. To add recently used *documents*: Apple menu > System Preferences > General tab > Recent items menu. Choose a number.

Recently used files (for the current program)

Most software now provides a **Recent files** or **Recent items** option under the **File** menu that provides access to the files you recently worked on:

- **Windows:** To implement this feature, Ribbon > File menu > Options > Advanced tab > Display subheading. Choose a number from the menu beside **Show this number of recent documents**.

- **Mac:** The number appears to be fixed at 15, but if you open the File menu and select Open Recent, the More... option provides access to all documents you've opened in recent weeks.

Switching to the desktop: To move to the desktop in Windows, press Windows key+M or Windows key+D to minimize all Windows (move them to the status bar). Any new keystrokes (e.g., typing the name of a document to select that document) will now apply to the desktop. Press Alt+Tab to return to Word. On the Mac, Command+F3 will move you to the desktop if Mission Control is enabled in the control panels. If not, F11 will hide all application windows and reveal the Desktop. Click on the Desktop to access its contents. Press F11 again to restore the open windows.

Frequently used files

It's helpful to place shortcuts to frequently used documents in convenient locations, such as on your desktop, or in the Start menu (Windows). To create shortcuts (Windows) or aliases (Macintosh) that point to a file:

- **Windows:** Right-click the file and select Create Shortcut. Drag the shortcut to a convenient location. To make it appear under the Start menu, drag the shortcut into the Start menu.
- **Mac:** Right-click on the file and select Make Alias or select it and press Command+L to create an *alias*. Although you

can't add individual documents to the Apple (🍏) menu or the Dock, you can create a folder that holds these shortcuts and drag that folder into the right side of the Dock (beside the Trash icon) or into the Sidebar of a Finder window.

A note of caution about shortcuts and aliases:

Shortcuts and aliases *point* to a file; they are not the file itself. Thus, be careful to ensure that you have included the actual file (not its shortcut or alias) in your backups.

- **Libraries:** Some software (though not Word) also offers a “library” function that provides fast access to frequently used files.

Word used to offer a separate **Work** menu that you could add to your menu bar, beside the other menus, to provide access to documents that you use frequently. This menu is no longer available, but there's an alternative:

- **Windows:** Beside recent documents displayed under the File menu, you'll see a push-pin icon. Click that icon and the currently open file will move to the top of the menu and stay there until you click the push-pin again to unpin the document.
- **Mac:** Display the list of recent documents and select **More...** to display all recent documents. You can now right-click a document and select **Pin** or **Unpin** to (respectively) retain it on or remove it from the menu. Pinned documents are accessed from the list of recent documents, but you have to select the **Pinned** tab in this dialog box to see them.

Once you've added documents to the menu, you can open any document that you added to the menu without having to first find it on your computer. If you move the document, the link will be broken and you'll have to find it again in its new location.

Other open windows within an application

In most software, you can switch between two open documents via the **Window(s)** menu. In Windows, the standard keyboard shortcut for switching between documents is **Alt+Tab**; for the Macintosh, the keystroke is **Command+`** (the accent character below the Esc key on most keyboards).

Other open programs

If you're documenting software or researching something on the Web and must switch repeatedly between the software or Web browser and your word processor, it's particularly useful to be able to switch between programs using the keyboard. The shortcuts are **Alt+Tab** for Windows and **Command+Tab** for the Macintosh; press that shortcut repeatedly until you reach the desired program.

Experiment!

Some of these shortcuts can be expanded or customized with a little creativity. For example, if you frequently have to move to the next instance of a particular heading style, record a macro that opens the Find dialog box and defines the search target as text formatted using that heading style, then create a keyboard

shortcut for that macro. (For details on finding text properties such as heading styles, see Chapter 12. For details on recording macros, see Chapter 14.) Pay enough attention to how you work so that you can identify the kinds of jumps that you need to do repeatedly, then find or develop a keyboard shortcut that lets you make those jumps quickly and easily. The time savings can be enormous. Plus, as a bonus, you'll impress the heck out of your friends and colleagues when they see you doing this.