



Making Microsoft Word Work the Way You Prefer

YOU PROBABLY USE MICROSOFT WORD, AND THERE'S A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT MICROSOFT WORD SOMETIMES ANNOYS YOU. MAYBE WE CAN ELIMINATE SOME OF THE ANNOYANCES.

Today's word processors all attempt to perform tasks that word processors shouldn't be asked to perform, but my focus today is Microsoft Word, which is part of Office 365.

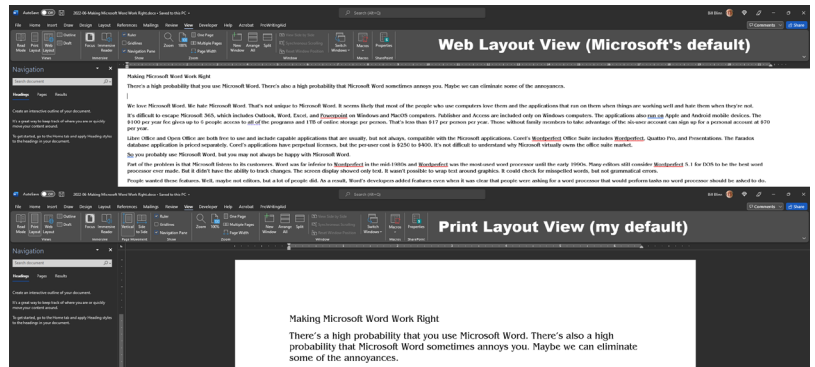
Why just Word? Libre Office and Open Office are both free to use and include capable applications that are usually, but not always, compatible with the Microsoft applications. Corel's Wordperfect Office Suite includes Wordperfect, Quattro Pro, and Presentations. The Paradox database application is priced separately. Corel's applications have perpetual licenses, but the per-user cost is \$250 to \$400.

Microsoft has the home market because up to six family members can share an account that costs \$100 per year and includes Outlook, Word, Excel, and Powerpoint on Windows and MacOS computers. Publisher and Access are included only on Windows computers. The applications also run on Apple and Android mobile devices. Enterprise pricing for employees is also attractive.

So you probably use Microsoft Word, but you may not always be happy with Microsoft Word. Some of the problems are the result of requests by those who use Word. Microsoft listens to what users want and often adds desired features even when they're not particularly logical or effective.

Word was far inferior to Wordperfect in the mid-1980s and Wordperfect was

BY DEFAULT, WORD OPENS IN WEB DESIGN VIEW, WHICH IS THE WRONG CHOICE FOR NEARLY EVERY POSSIBLE USE.



the most-used word processor until the early 1990s. Some still consider Wordperfect 5.1 for DOS to be the best word processor ever made, but it didn't have the ability to track changes. The screen display showed only words. It wasn't able to wrap text around graphics. It could check for misspelled words, but not grammatical errors.

People wanted these features and Word's developers added them; others followed. Today's word processors are all bloated, so we must ignore unwanted features, turn off ill-advised functions, and find ways to force Word to get the basics right.

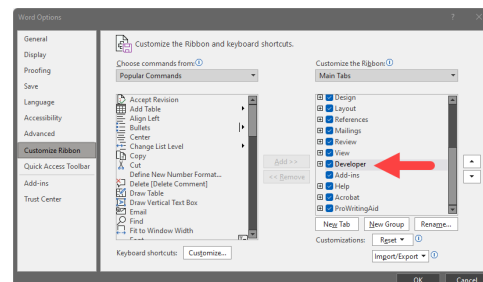
Whether a function is useful depends on the user. Editors say Word's grammar checker is absurd. Although most recommendations are incorrect or questionable, occasionally Word notices something I've missed, so I don't disable it. Deciding what to change is up to the user.

The Wrong Default View

WHEN WORD IS LAUNCHED, IT DEFAULTS TO WEB LAYOUT VIEW. THAT'S RIDICULOUS! HERE'S ONE CHANGE EVERY USER SHOULD MAKE BECAUSE WORD IS A LOUSY TOOL FOR WEBSITE DESIGN.

If the user is writing a letter, instructional materials, or any other common document types, the appropriate mode is Print Layout view, and it should be the default. There should also be an option somewhere on one of Word's many menus to make it the default. No such setting exists. Instead, users must create a macro that runs automatically.

That's easy to do if you have already enabled Developer mode. Few people have, so that's the first step.



MODIFYING THE DEFAULT VIEW REQUIRES USING DEVELOPER MODE, BUT THAT'S DISABLED BY DEFAULT.

Click *File* in the menu and then select *Options*, at the bottom of the Home screen. Then choose *Customize Ribbon* in the panel that opens, scroll down the Main Tabs list on the right side of the panel, and place a check mark next to *Developer*.

When Developer Mode is active, select it from the ribbon and then click *Macros* to open a dialog box.

Type *AutoOpen* in the Macro Name box and click the Create button. Some text will already be present in the macro, and the last line will be *End Sub*. Insert a blank new line above *End Sub* and type: `ActiveWindow.View.Type = wdPrintView`

Click the disk icon to save the macro and close the Visual Basic for Applications window. New documents will always open in Print View. Although that's more work than it should have been, it's a relatively easy fix that permanently eliminates the annoyance.

Making Other Changes

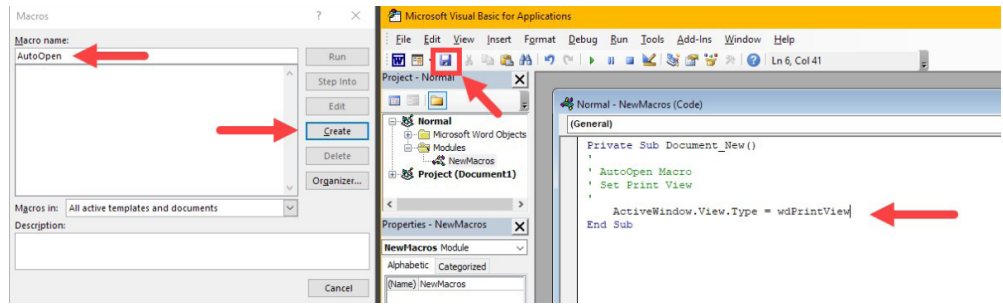
PERHAPS THERE ARE OTHER THINGS YOU WISH WORD DID DIFFERENTLY. THE NORMAL TEMPLATE CAN HELP WITH THAT.

Word uses templates to store starting information for documents. Modifying *Normal.dotm* will affect all new documents so you can change the typeface, margins, styles, and a lot more. Define multiple templates to establish starting points for letters, for memos, and for any other types of documents you create.

To open *Normal.dotm*, choose *File, Open* from the menu and then browse to *C:\Users\{your user name}\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Templates*. You'll see *Normal.dotm* in the list of files.

One of the most frequently changed settings is the default typeface. Because many styles in Word are based on the Normal paragraph style, changing it changes any style based on Normal.

If this makes you nervous, don't be concerned. Errors can be eliminated by deleting the Normal template. Word



WITH DEVELOPER MODE ACTIVE, THE USER CAN WRITE A ONE-LINE MACRO THAT RUNS WHEN A NEW DOCUMENT IS CREATED AND SWITCHES FROM WEB VIEW TO PRINT VIEW.

will then create a new version with all the default settings in place.

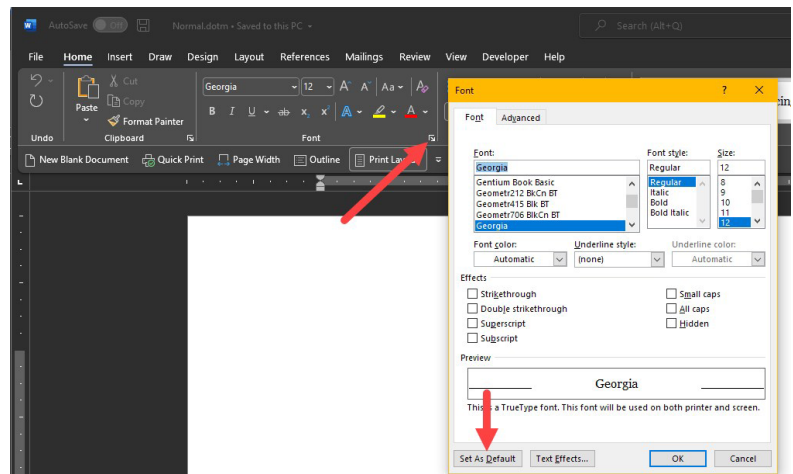
To change the default typeface, click the Font expansion icon to open the Font dialog. Also check the Advanced tab if you want to modify ligatures, number forms, and other specialized settings. After selecting the options you want, click the *Set As Default* button and choose the *all documents* option.

Specialized Templates

MICROSOFT DOESN'T STORE YOUR PERSONAL TEMPLATES WITH *NORMAL.DOTM*. THAT WOULD BE TOO EASY, WOULDN'T IT?

Creating a specialized template such as a letterhead is easy. Open a new document and add the graphics, headers, and footers you want in documents based on this new template.

MODIFYING THE DEFAULT TEMPLATE ALLOWS THE USER TO CHOOSE THE PREFERRED TYPEFACE, TYPE STYLE, COLUMNS, SPACING, MARGINS, AND MANY MORE VISUAL ASPECTS.



To modify the default margins, start with the Layout tab and choose Margins. You can select one of the defined options such as Normal, Narrow, Moderate, Wide, Mirrored, and the Office 2003 Default or create your own custom margins.

Other settings that can be changed here include character spacing, layout, text formatting, paragraph formatting, document formatting, styles, text, pictures, AutoText entries, and keyboard shortcuts.

Configure *Normal.dotm* to use your most common settings, and then create specialized templates to save even more time.

Modify the Normal paragraph style if you want it to be different from the default template. When all of the changes are in place, use *Save As*, specify a *Word Macro-Enabled Template* document, and it will be saved in *C:\Users\{your user name}\Documents\Custom Office Templates*.

To use the template, choose *File, New*. Then scroll down and select *Personal* to show any templates you've created. Templates that you use frequently can be pinned, which adds them to the top section of the templates list.

With just a bit of effort, Word can be tamed. Ω