## We can exercise a (tiny) bit of control over Microsoft programs!

Individual programs in the Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, Access, Outlook, PowerPoint and OneNote) have their own set of "Options" that can be used to help you to use the programs in the way that you want.

Here is a guide as to how these work by giving some examples of configuring some options in Word 2010. The 2007 and 2013 versions of Microsoft Office programs work in a similar way. If you are still using a version of Office that is older than 2007 then it would be a good idea to upgrade as older versions are inherently less secure and more likely to harbour viruses and other such nasties.

There are several ways to access the "Options" for Word. The easiest way is to select the "File" tab and then click on "Options" near the bottom of the menu. The screen that opens shows the options grouped down the lefthand side and the individual settings for the selected group of options are displayed to the right of the options menu.
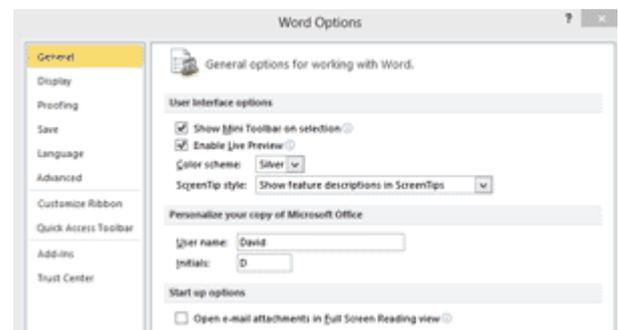


*Figure 1 – Word Options*

**For instance, in the "General" group** (see figure 1) there is an option that turns on or off the "Live Preview" throughout the use of Word. In some cases, as here, there is a small letter "i" in a circle that shows some more information about a particular option if you hover your mouse pointer over that letter "i". "Live preview" is the feature that shows you what would happen if you actually chose the option you are currently hovering your mouse pointer over (eg the "styles" options on the "Home" tab). Some people find the "live preview" a bit confusing and intimidating, whereas others find it useful. So, here in "Options" is the ability to turn it on or off.

**OK, don't worry** – I am most definitely not going to go through every item that can be changed in "Options"! Let's just look at a few others that you might find useful in the hope that you might be encouraged to have the occasional look at "Options" to see if you can "tweak" Word to work more closely to your own wishes.

**Click on the "Proofing" group** (lefthand side of screen) to show the "AutoCorrect Options". The dialog box that pops up is very useful in showing what text replacements are

already configured. For instance, if you type "(c)" (without the quotes) then Word will automatically change this to the copyright symbol (a letter "c" in a circle). You can add your own replacement text in the empty boxes above the current replacement list (see figure 2).

For instance, I get niggled at having to try and remember how the word PowerPoint is capitalised to make it appear the way Microsoft would like. Therefore, I have created replacement text so that when I type "ppoint" (without the quotes), Word replaces it with "PowerPoint". Likewise, my fingers seem to insist on typing "Microsoft" as "Microsfot", so I have instructed "AutoCorrect" to replace the wrong spelling with the right one.

Click the "OK" button at the bottom of the dialog window if you wish to save any changes made.
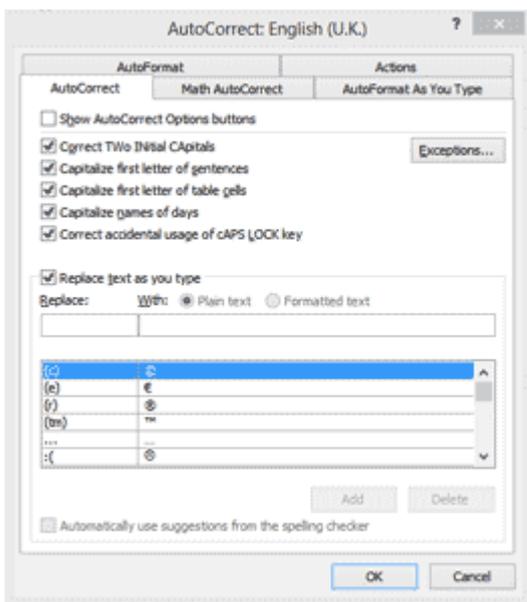


*Figure 2 – Word AutoCorrect Options*

**Also in the "proofing" group** is the option to "check spelling as you type". This is another option that seems to polarise users into those who like the program to help them out with their spelling and the others (like me) who are disproportionately indignant at the idea that a computer program could possibly have anything to teach them about spelling (especially an American program teaching us how to spell English!) Well, here is the option to turn realtime spell-checking on or off.

**In the "Save" group** is the option to change the "default file location". If Word assumes that you open and save your documents from/to a different folder than your preferred one, then you can change it here. Whenever you have the option to either type in a location or "browse" to it (as here), then I would always recommend "browsing" to it as there is much less chance of making an error in specifying the location.

**Also in this group** is the option to change the type of file that is created by default when you save a document. There is just a chance that you may wish to save as a Word document (1997-2003) if you habitually share documents with someone using a very old version of Word (as versions earlier than 2007 can not normally read documents made in Word 2007 or later).

So, if you find that you consistently need to change a setting that Word assumes you want, it may be worth spending a few minutes scanning through "Options" to see if there is a way of changing that particular setting to the default that you would prefer.

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