

# Microsoft Word

Let's get right to it this week. If you work in the legal world, you will encounter and use Microsoft Word in one of its various forms. Microsoft Word has become the word processor in law firm environments.

Many of us grew up using Microsoft Word and it is just part of life. Many lawyers, however, grew up with Word Perfect or not using any type of word processor at all.

Currently, Microsoft is pushing a cloud based Word software. In my tests, it is not yet ready to carry the work load required by the legal profession.

In addition, there are many other competitors to Microsoft Word now. More people rely on tablets with app versions of Microsoft Word. While these apps are impressive in their own way, they still miss some of the key functionality that a lawyer may need, depending on the practice type.

This week's assignment will introduce you to the key features you should know and understand in the legal context. There are many more skills you will need (and likely already have) when using word processing software and the more you know, the better you will be able to handle the work. But, focusing on the areas listed below will help get you started.

Here are some articles you should read to improve your knowledge of Microsoft Word:

- Dear Lawyers: It's Not Word, It's You, by Barron Henley
- Five Microsoft Word Rules You Must Follow, by Barron Henley.
- Using Microsoft Word Styles, by Deborah Savadra.
- Create a table of contents or update a table of contents, Microsoft Support Article.
- 3 Changes to make next time you open Microsoft Word, by Seth Wilson.
- 5 Microsoft Word Tips to Make Lawyers' Lives Easier, by Mark Wilson (no relation to Prof. Wilson).

Here are some resource sites that you can save for future reference with Word related issues.

- Resource Site: Word for Lawyers.
  - Link: <http://lawtechpartners.com/word-for-lawyers.html>
- Resource Site: Productivity Software for Lawyers.
  - Link: <http://lawlibrary.colorado.edu/SubjectsPlus/subjects/guide.php?subject=Productivity>
- Resource Site: Legal Office Guru.
  - Link: <https://legalofficeguru.com>
- Articles on Microsoft Word by Seth Wilson.
  - Link: <http://sethrwilson.com/tag/microsoft-word/>
- Video on Microsoft Word Shortcuts for Lawyers.
  - Link: <http://businessoflawblog.com/2014/01/microsoft-word-lawyers/>

# Microsoft Word Skills

Here is a list of the basic word processing skills needed in the legal support arena:

- Ability to type
- How to format a document
- How to open and save files (and different file types)
- How to copy and paste appropriately
- How to remove formatting from a document and start fresh
- Knowledge of basic typeset formatting (bold, underline, italic, fonts and font sizing)
- Knowledge of tabs (tab stops, alignment types, tab leaders)
- Knowledge of tables (how to create, manipulate, and sort)
- How to use alignment (left justify, right justify, full justification)
- How to work with page numbers
- How to work with footnotes
- How to work with headers and footers
- How to use Styles
- How to use numbered/bulleted lists
- How to make a Table of Contents
- How to make a Table of Authorities
- Advanced: Track Changes
- Advanced: Mail Merge
- Advanced: AutoText/Quick Parts
- Advanced: Plug-ins for Microsoft Word

## ScreenCast

Watch the screen cast put together by Prof. Wilson to get an idea of how these features work.

## Conclusion

There's a lot to Microsoft Word, but there are also many resources available to you as you are learning some of the skills above.

The good news is that you likely know many of the skills you need already. In time, you will pick up the other skills, either because you were forced to learn to fix a problem or you learned the skill to make your life easier.

Read the materials and comment on your favorite word processing features and tricks. Comment on whether you think cloud based word processing systems are ready for the legal industry. Comment on key word processing skills you will need in the legal field.