

Normal-dot-dot and how it can work for you

Program description

This seminar will discuss the electronic template that all Word documents are built on. The file named **Normal.dot** (“Normal-dot-dot”), also known as the “Normal template,” is stuffed, jammed, and packed with functionality. Yes, everything that anyone would require to build a document for any purpose, from a shopping list to a 50-volume encyclopedia, can be found in Normal-dot-dot

To a degree greater than many writers realize, we work on files for which Normal-dot-dot is the foundation. Understanding and using a few of these features can raise our productivity and reduce the frustration that can come in the electronic side of the document development process.

However, much of the functionality of the Normal template, is completely extraneous to most of our needs. Not only extraneous, but actually in our way, cluttering things up. If only we could build an electronic template that has just the features we actually use, then maybe we could gain more mastery of those features! We could have well-behaved page headers, and easily troubleshoot and fix problems with multilevel numbered headings. Content from a dozen sources would integrate seamlessly (at least as far as format) into our documents. A better quality of life could be ours.

Well, actually, we can do that. We can develop a custom electronic template. On Saturday, September 20, we will get together in Berkeley to discuss just exactly how.

Details

This seminar is in 2 parts, each part approximately 45 minutes long. Lunch will be provided between the 2 parts.

The ideal audience for this seminar may be 10 to 20 attendees who work with Word routinely and are, or wish to become, familiar with the challenges of long documents.

Here's a sample of the topics to be covered.

Part 1

The nature of the Normal template

What it is. Why it's there. Why it's invisible. Five ways to see it.

What it does. What it doesn't do (not much). Why you can't ever get away from it. Five documentation tricks it will do for you, if you ask it properly.

Paragraph and character styles

What they are. What they do. The relationship between styles and template. How to make paragraph and character styles do everything you want them to do and nothing else.

Why be Normal?

The concept of the custom template.

How custom templates can help you get the job done

Experiences from the field with real faked-up documents.

Part 2

Building a custom template

We'll build one together. I'll drive.