Grading Electronically: Tips, Tricks, and Shortcuts

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Outlook Add-Ins

Xobni (xobni.com) allows you to quickly find email messages, attached files, and contact information for anyone who has ever emailed you. With the large number of students each term as well as various committee responsibilities and other collaborative projects, Xobni has made managing the onslaught of email much easier. [Free, also available in paid 'plus' version.]

Simply File (www.techhit.com/SimplyFile), allows you to quickly file messages in folders. Once it 'learns' what messages tend to go where, a click of the button will file your message. [Free 30-day trial; $39.95]

If you frequently receive email attachments, **EZDetach** (www.techhit.com/ezdetach) is another must-have. Select all the messages that have attachments you would like to save, and EZDetach will rename them according to the criteria of your choosing, and save them in the file folder you designated. All with just a few mouse clicks. [Free 30-day trial; $39.95]

I learned about **BccThis** (bccthis.com) after the conference, so it wasn't included in my presentation, but it's a must-have for Outlook, GMail, or Blackberry. After writing a message to two or more people, you can include an additional comment that is sent to just a subset of your recipients. This product is still being actively developed, so watch for improvements, although I really don't know what could make it better. [Free, although there may eventually be a paid version.]

PhraseExpress

Phrase Express (phraseexpress.com) allows you to create keyboard shortcuts for commonly used phrases. If you use the 'comments' feature in Word to leave comments on student papers, this tool is a must have. Imagine typing '#pv' and having the words 'passive voice' appear. This program will also let you use keystrokes to run programs, open folders and files, open websites, and do web searches. And much more. [Free, with paid upgrades for commercial use.]

Audacity

Tired of typing or handwriting your comments on student papers? Provide audio feedback instead. Audacity (audacity.sourceforge.net) is an easy way to record your comments. "Page 1, paragraph 2... What are you trying to say here?" [Free.]

Dropbox

File sharing tools make it easy to access and share your files from multiple computers. **Dropbox** (dropbox.com) puts a folder in your My Documents folder. Anything you put in there automatically syncs with your other computers that have the same Dropbox account. You can also choose to share some of your Dropbox folders with other people. With both services, any change made to a shared file immediately triggers an update for everyone who shares that file. [Free with 2GB of storage. For more space, upgrade for a monthly or annual fee]

MS Word 2007 Shortcuts

Use the **Quick Access Toolbar** for your most frequently used commands. You can either click on these with your mouse, or you can use the keyboard shortcut ALT-1 to select the first icon, ALT-2 to select the second icon, and so on. To customize this toolbar, select the down arrow to the right of the toolbar, and select from the options given or click "more commands."

On my Quick Access Toolbar, I have the following commands: Open document, print preview, new document, track changes, and print to PDF.

Use **keyboard shortcuts**. ALT will show you the shortcuts on the ribbon. For example, ALT-H will show you all the shortcuts for the Home tab.
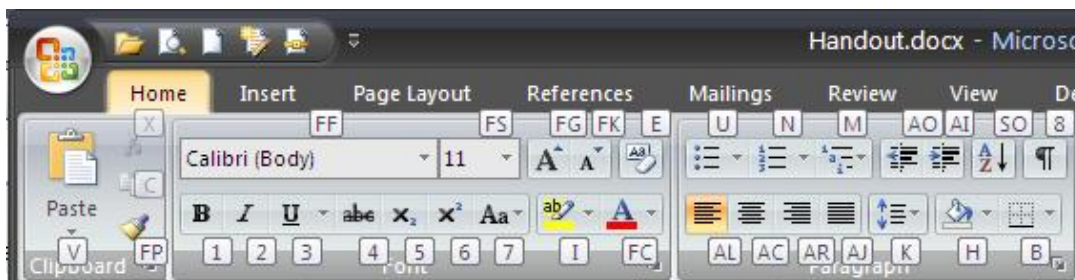
Common keyboard shortcuts.

Home Tab	Simultaneous	Sequential
Copy	CTRL-C	ALT-H-C
Paste	CTRL-V	ALT-H-V
Select all	CTRL-A	ALT-H-S-L-A
Bold	CTRL-B	ALT-H-1
Italics	CTRL-I	ALT-H-2
Underline	CTRL-U	ALT-H-3
Clipboard		ALT-H-F-O
Close file	CTRL-W	ALT-F-C

Review Tab	Simultaneous	Sequential
Insert comment	CTRL-ALT-M	ALT-R-C
Track changes	CTRL-SHIFT-E	ALT-R-G-G
Research	ALT-Click	ALT-R-R

Other		
Undo	CTRL-Z	
Redo	CTRL-Y	
Print	CTRL-P	ALT-F-P
Save file	CTRL-S	ALT-F-S

Additional Tips, Tricks, and Shortcuts

If these are the sorts of tech tips you're looking for, you're invited to visit my blog, Technology for Educators at sfrantz.wordpress.com.