



What Can Styles do for you?

Part 1 of 3: Efficiently working with Styles

Esquire Innovations, Inc., a leading provider of Microsoft Office integrated practice management software services and applications for the legal market, counts more than 550 law firm and in-house council clients utilizing its applications. Esquire Innovations has been developing, supporting, and selling document creation, formatting, re-purposing, comparing, and metadata management software applications in the legal industry since 1999. Innovative Software + Astonishing Services = Extraordinary Client Success

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Introduction

I think Microsoft Word Styles are awesome! I've seen firms transform their work product (and morale when users implement styles in their Word documents.

Here's my argument for using Microsoft Word Styles – The work product for law firms is documents. Thousands of documents are created on a daily basis. I believe the attorney's role should be "word-smithing" for those documents, not formatting text and paragraphs. What a waste of time! So much time can be spent getting formatting to "just work" in Microsoft Word that word-smithing is short changed...resulting in decreased currency. Using Styles will provide your firm with distinct advantages.

Faster Formatting: All the bold, underlines, font sizes, paragraph indents, etc, can be contained in just one style.

Consistent look and feel to firm documents: When the same styles are used across the board in a firm, the documents have a consistent look and everyone knows how to work with them.

Global Formatting: If you have a 60-page agreement and you need to change the font size on fifty headings in the document, you better know how to do some advanced find and replace or you'll have to go to each heading and change it manually. With Microsoft Word Styles you can change the style once and it is automatically changed throughout the document.

Building Tables of Content: Using Heading styles makes creating TOCs automatic.

Documents are smaller: The amount of space a style definition takes up in a document is significantly less than all the direct formatting applied to fonts and paragraphs.

Stable Documents: Documents that are correctly formatted using styles are less likely to become problem documents later in the document lifecycle, saving time and frustration down the road.

Here are some tips for using Microsoft Word Styles in Office 2007.

Displaying the Styles in your Document

Wouldn't it be nice to view your document and see the styles applied to each paragraph in the left margin? Well you can, by changing the "Style Area Width."

Change the document view to Draft

- a. From the View Ribbon, click Draft.

Display the Style Width Area

- a. Click the Office Button (in the top left hand corner of your window) and click the Word Options button (Figure 1).

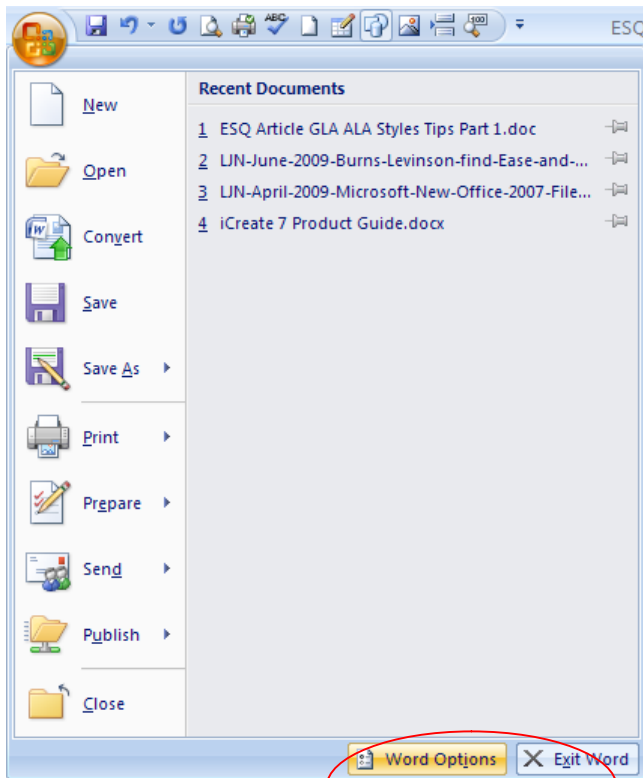


Figure 1

- b. Navigate to the Advanced menu and scroll down to the Display section (Figure 2).
- c. In the “Style area pane width in Draft and Outline views” type the width you want to display in the margin, such as 0.75.”
- d. Click the OK button.

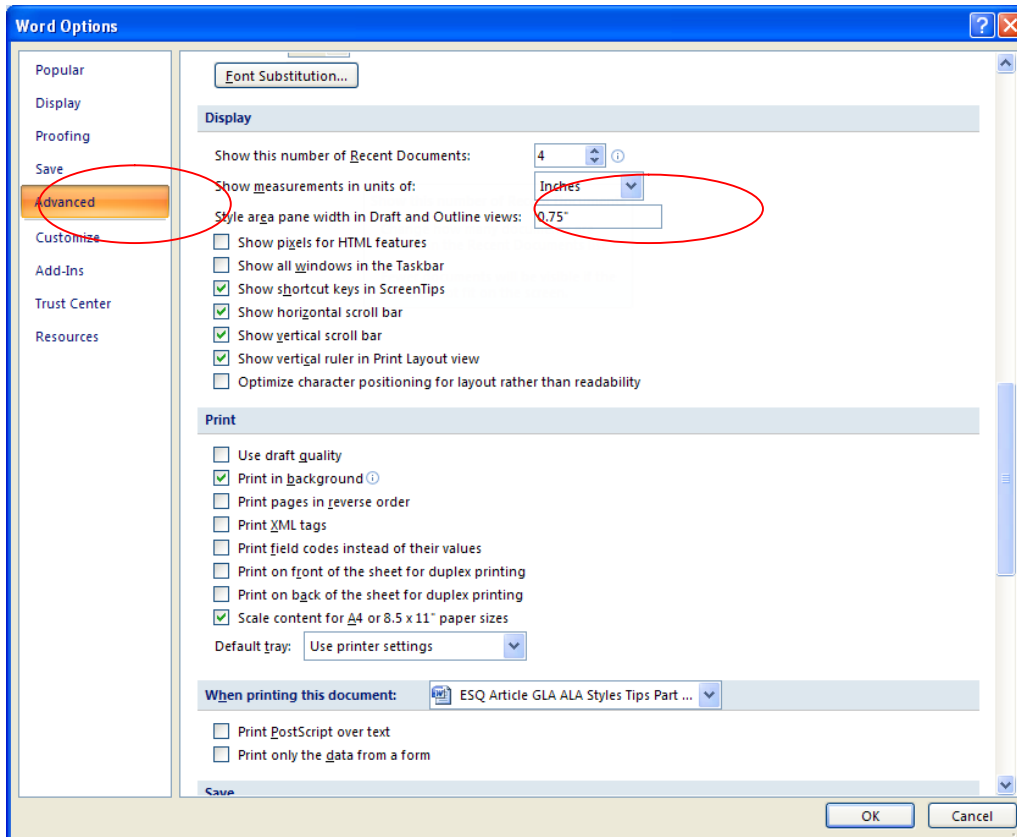


Figure 2

The names of applied styles appear along the left margin for each paragraph (Figure 3).

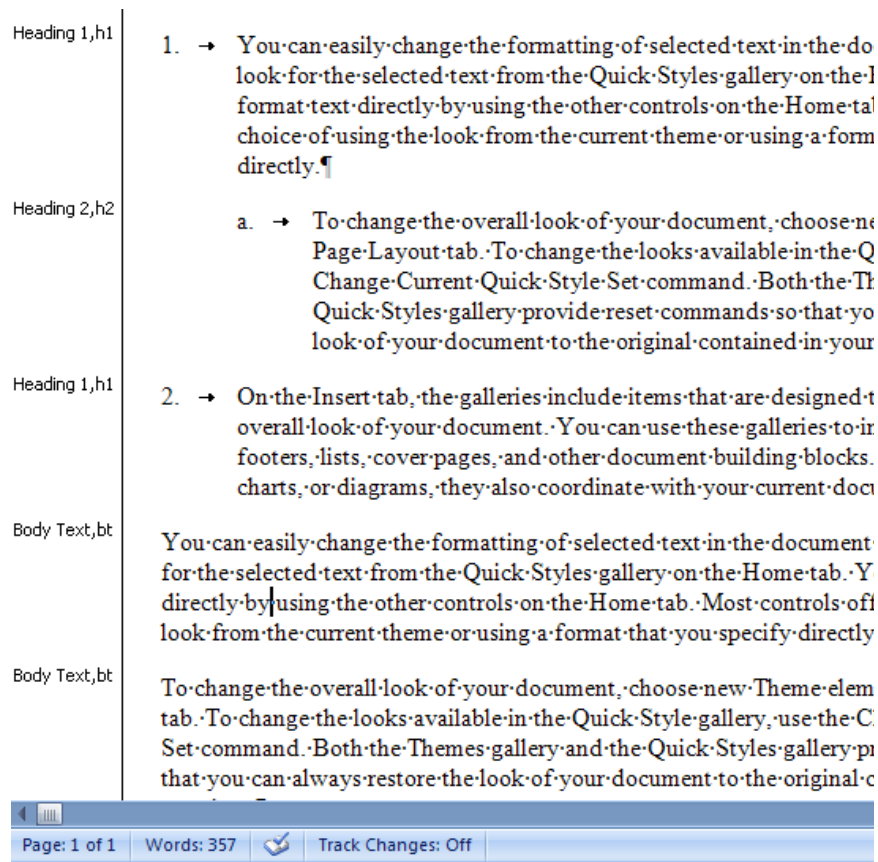


Figure 3

Now that you see the styles used in your current document, how can you apply, modify, create and remove those styles quickly?

Applying Styles:

One of the reasons people avoid using styles is that it seems to take longer to make changes to a style than to apply direct formatting. By learning to apply styles quickly, you will see how using styles actually makes formatting documents less time consuming.

A fast way to apply a style is the keyboard shortcut “Apply Style”.

- a. Select the paragraph you want to apply a style to by clicking anywhere in the paragraph.
- b. Press Ctrl+Shift+S to quickly display the “Apply Styles” window (see Figure 4).
- c. Type the name of your style or press Alt+Arrow-down to drop down the style list and arrow down to the style you want to apply.
- d. Press Enter.

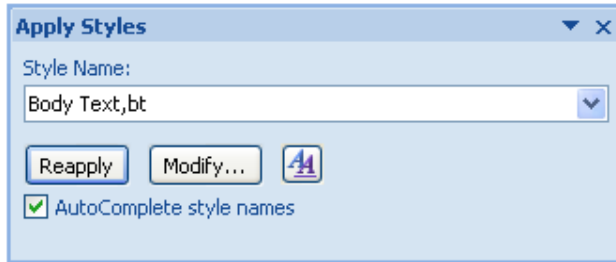


Figure 4

Modifying Styles by Example:

To change the font or format of a paragraph, follow these steps:

Turn on Prompt to Update Style:

- a. Click on the Office Button (in the top left hand corner of your window) and click the Word Options button (see Figure 1).
- b. Navigate to the Advanced menu and select “Prompt to update style” (Figure 5).

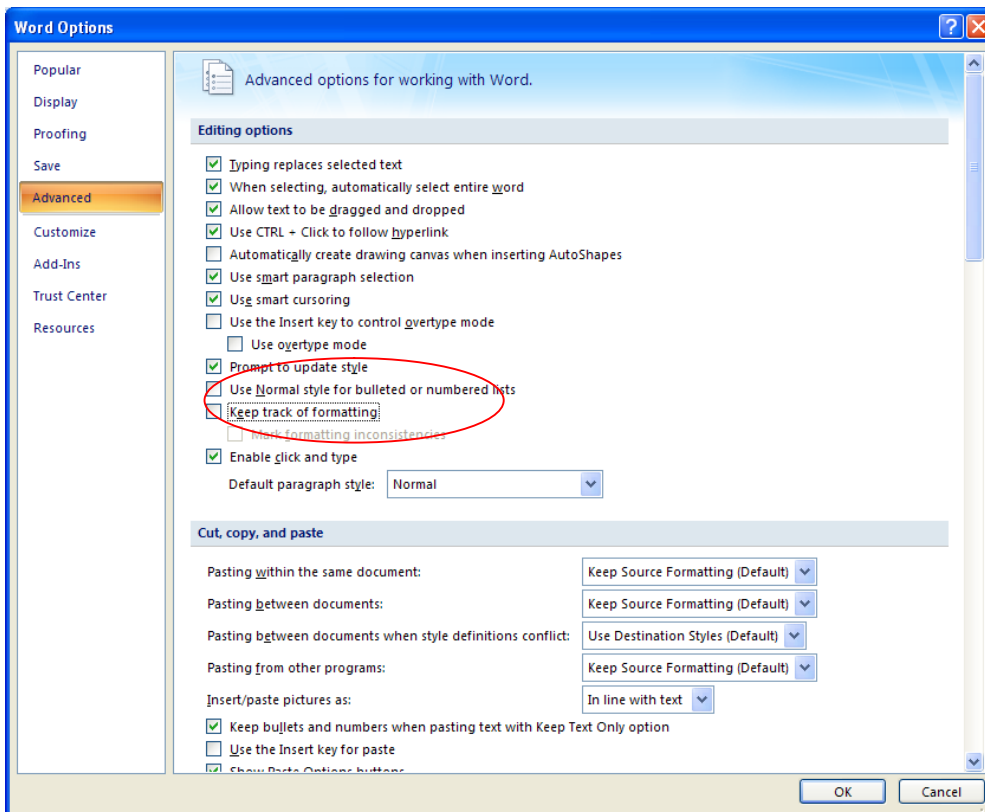


Figure 5

Next Step:

- a. Choose a paragraph that contains the style you want to change.
- b. Using direct formatting, format the paragraph and the fonts the way you want the paragraph to appear in the rest of the document.

- c. Select the entire paragraph (triple click in the paragraph).
- d. Press Ctrl+Shift+S.
- e. The Apply Style window appears (see Figure 4).
- f. Select Reapply. The Modify Style window appears (Figure 6).
- g. Select “Update the style to reflect recent changes?” and click OK.

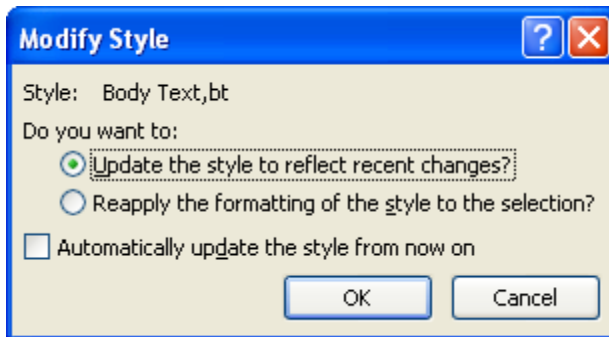


Figure 6

The style is now updated to your preferences and all associated paragraphs are updated accordingly. New paragraphs will be properly formatted as well.

Create Styles by Example

To create a style that doesn't exist in your document is as easy as creating by example.

- a. Choose a paragraph that you want to use as an example to create your style from.
- b. Format the paragraph and the fonts the way you want them to appear.
- c. Press Ctrl+Shift+S.
- d. Type a name for this style.
- e. Press Enter.

You now have a new style you can apply to any other paragraph in your document.

Resetting Formatting and Starting from Scratch

There will be times when the formatting in a document is really out of control and you want to start from scratch without retyping.

Resetting the Paragraph Format

- a. Click in a the paragraph that contains the format you want to reset.
- b. Click the Clear Formatting button on the Word 2007 Home Ribbon (Figure 7).

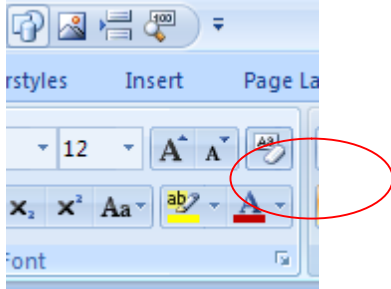


Figure 7

Or using Keyboard commands:

- a. Click in a the paragraph that contains the format you want to reset.
- b. Press Ctrl+Shift+N.

This applies the Normal style.

Removing Direct Character Formatting

- a. Select the text that you want to reformat.
- b. Press Ctrl+Spacebar.

This resets the font to the font format in the underlying paragraph style.

Resetting the Paragraph Formatting

- a. Select the paragraph that contains the format you want to reset (triple click in the paragraph).
- b. Press Ctrl+Q.

This removes direct paragraph formatting and resets the paragraph formatting to the underlying paragraph style.

Summary

Learning to use styles efficiently and correctly can save hours in formatting documents, will help your firm create documents that are consistently formatted, and prevent the frequency of corrupted documents.

In next month's issue Part 2 of 3: Tips for Working with Problem Documents...Revealing and Fixing Style and Formatting Issues.

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