Re: IT Tip-Micro (AutoText feature)
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Reduce typing and avoid errors by using Word's AutoText feature

Microsoft Word

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Word's AutoText feature lets you store text and graphics for use later. Any word, phrase, paragraph, and so on, that users type regularly is an AutoText candidate. Once they create the entry, they can insert the entire element instead of retyping it. Although this feature can help your users be more productive, many don't know about it.

Once you, and your users, are familiar with this feature, you'll quickly appreciate its advantages. Users will be more efficient because they'll type less. They'll also generate fewer errors because they're typing less.

Creating an AutoText entry is simple:

1. Type the word, phrase, or paragraph, or insert a graphic, and select it.

2. Press [Alt]+[F3] to open the Create New Building Block dialog box. AutoText is listed in the Quick Parts drop-down, which is in the Text group on the Insert tab. In Word 2003, choose AutoFormat from the Format menu. Click Options and then click the AutoText tab.

3. Enter a name for the AutoText entry.

4. Click OK.

Create New Building Block

Name:	addr
Gallery:	AutoText
Category:	General
Description:	
Save in:	Normal.dotm
Options:	Insert content only

OK   Cancel

Footer

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Word saves AutoText entries in the Normal.dotm (.dot) template. If users work with a different template, be sure to show them how to change that setting when creating entries by changing the Saved In setting. AutoText entries are available to anyone using the template or a document based on a template. Therefore, caution users not to use AutoText entries to store confidential data.

When creating AutoText entries, users might ignore the Name setting. Encourage them to give each entry a succinct and descriptive name. The above example uses the name addr for *return**add**ress*. The name radd might make sense, but if users enter more than one address, beginning with add for all addresses might help them organize their list. There's no right or wrong; with a little help, your users will come up with something flexible and easy to remember.

Using a short, unique name is important because you can use the entry's name to insert it as follows (bypassing the menu route):

1. Position the insertion point where you want to insert the entry.

2. Type the entry's name.

3. Press [F3] and Word inserts the entry.

Users probably aren't going to remember the names of dozens of entries, even with a good naming convention in place, so they'll need to know the menu route as well. Position the cursor where you want to insert the text and then do the following:

1. Click the insert tab.

2. Click Quick Parts in the Text group and choose AutoText.

3. Select the AutoText entry from the gallery.
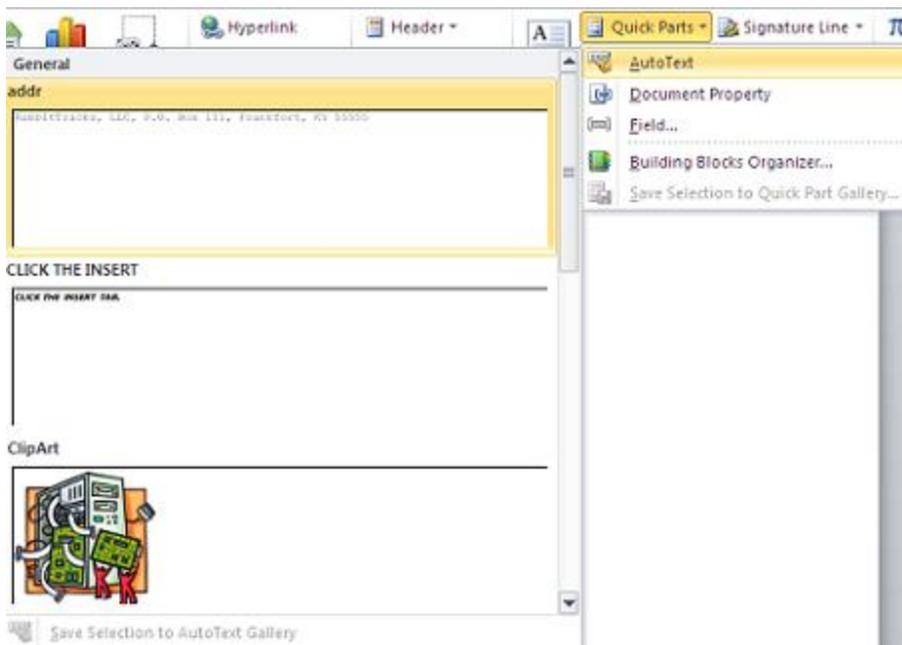
Modifying an existing entry is simple, but not quite as intuitive as you might like. This particular task might confuse users. To modify an existing entry, do the following:

1. Insert the AutoText entry into the document.

2. Make changes.

3. Select the modified content.

4. Press [Alt]+[F3].

5. Update the name setting, appropriately (using the name of the original entry).

6. Click Add.

7. When Word asks to confirm the change, click Yes.

Users can easily document their AutoText entries by printing a copy as follows:

1. Click the File tab (Office button) and then click Print in the left pane. In Word 2003, choose Print from the File menu.

2. Click the first Settings drop-down.

3. From the Document Properties group, choose AutoText Entries. In Word 2003, click AutoText Entries from the Print What drop-down.

4. Click Print.

Creating and using AutoText entries is easy. Perhaps the bigger challenge is getting users to remember to use them. Many users will benefit from storing simple phrases, such as company name, titles, and addresses. Encourage users to think of AutoText as a library of sorts, where they can store long paragraphs and clauses and then pull those pieces together quickly to quickly create a draft document. This process comes in handy with any kind of repetitive content--legal, scientific, proposals, disclaimers, confidential statements, and so on.