

Using MS Word to Edit on Screen: On the Comment Function in Word 2000

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At times, you may find it more convenient (even necessary) to edit someone else's work on the computer screen rather than paper. But how can you insert queries and comments without cluttering another person's work? This handout offers one solution by explaining how to use the comment function in MS Word 2000. The instructions tell you how to

- let others know who's making the comments
- add your own comments
- view comments made by others
- delete or print comments

To benefit from these instructions, you should already have a basic understanding of how to create documents using MS Word. Although the instructions were created for Word 2000, they may prove useful with other recent versions of the software.

About the Comment Function: Virtual Sticky Notes

The comment function in MS Word is roughly equivalent to adding a sticky note to a printed document. Because of this similarity, the comment function has the same benefits as sticky notes. That is, they

- allow you to insert your own comments into someone else's file (or even into your own) without substantially rewriting the original text
- allow others to find your comments quickly
- can be discarded easily and without damaging the original text

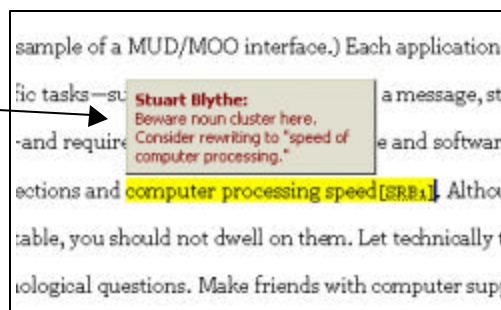


Fig 1. The comment function is similar to using a highlighter and sticky notes

As Figure 1 illustrates, an inserted comment appears on writer's screen as highlighted yellow text. When the writer places her or his mouse icon over that text, the comment appears. It disappears when the icon is moved again.

To Let Others Know Who Wrote a Comment

MS Word allows numerous people to respond to the same draft. That means you must ensure that readers can recognize who wrote the comments in their file. Usually, you can do that by adding your name or initials automatically to each comment. To do that,

1. choose *Options* from the *Tools* menu at the top of your MS Word screen (an *Options* window will appear, giving you numerous options)
2. choose the *User Information* tab
3. enter your name and initials in the appropriate boxes (see Fig. 2)
4. click the *OK* button

After that, your name or initials will appear with each comment you create (see Fig. 1).

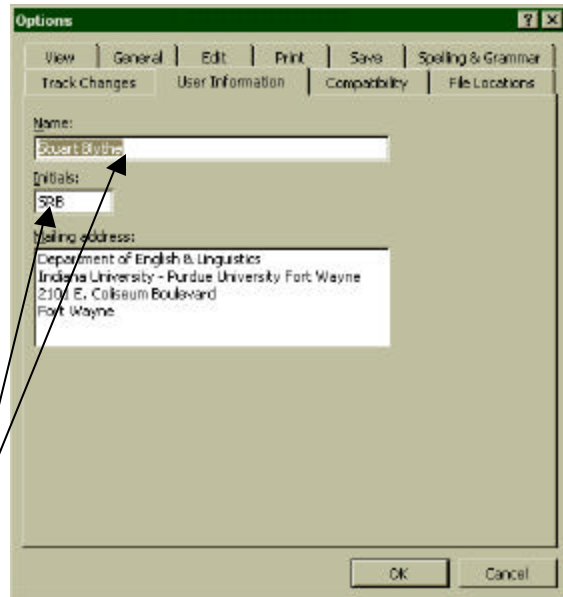


Fig 2: Enter your name and initials using the *User Information* screen

To Add Your Own Comments

Once you have set your identity under *User Information*, you are ready to add comments. To add a comment

1. Select the text you want to comment on. (You select the text just as you would for copying, cutting, and pasting.)
2. Select *Comment* from the *Insert* menu at the top of the MS Word screen.

Once you complete step 2, your screen will divide in two. The lower portion gives you space to type your comments (see Fig. 3). If you want to close the comment portion of the screen, click the *Close* button at the top of the lower comment window.

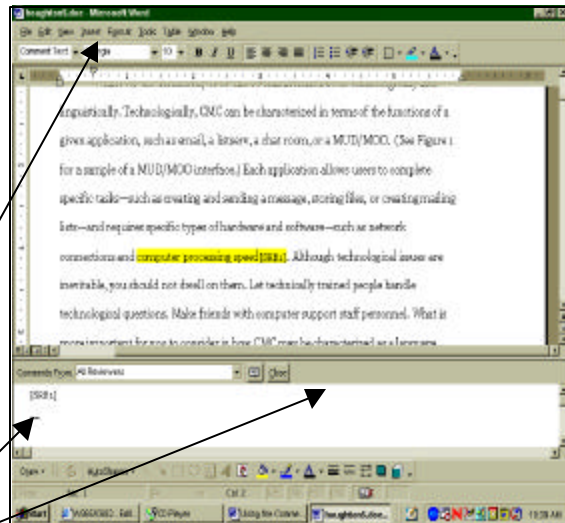


Fig 3. The split screen view for entering comments

To View All Comments at Once

You may want to see the comments you've made, or to review all the comments made by someone else. In such cases, choose *Comments* from the *View* menu. (The comment window pictured in Fig. 3 will reappear.) You can scroll through the comments.

To Delete a Comment

To delete a comment,

1. place your cursor just to the right of the highlighted text (see Fig. 4)
2. hit the *backspace* key (The commentor's initials will be highlighted; see Fig 4)
3. hit the *backspace* key again (The comment will be deleted)

Note that the original text will not be deleted—just the comment text.

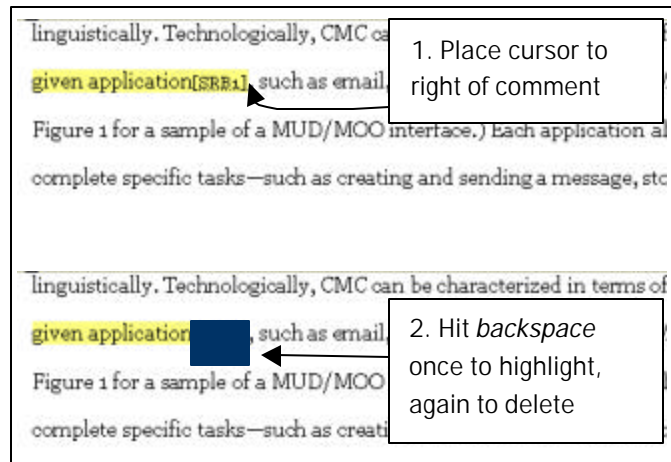


Fig. 4. To delete a comment, hit the *backspace* key twice; the comment will disappear, but the original text will remain

To Print Comments

To print a set of comments without printing an entire file, begin as you would to print any document:

1. Choose *Print* from the *File* menu at the top of the MS Word screen
2. From the *Print* window, select *Comments* from the *Print what* menu (see Fig. 5)
3. Click the *OK* button

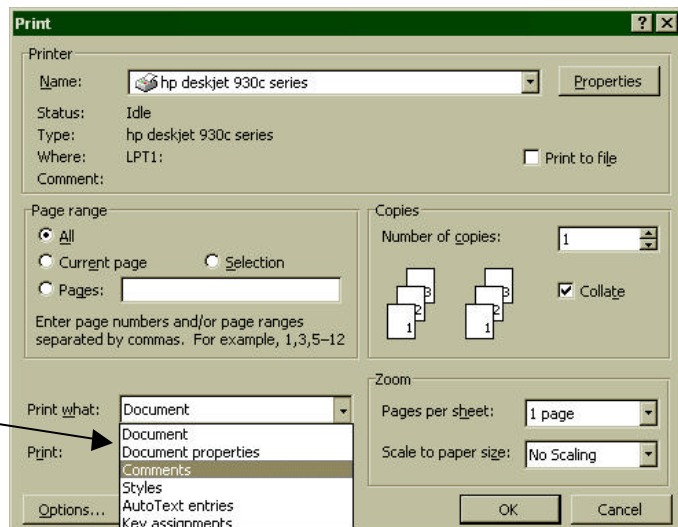


Fig. 5. To print comments, select *Comments* from the *Print what* menu of the *Print* window