NACOP Newsletter

Message from the Co-Chairs

By: Barbie Ballengee, PWA
      Sherri Buxton, MWA

Happy Anniversary to ARS and to the National Advisory Council for Office Professionals (NACOP)! NACOP is celebrating its 10-year anniversary since being formed in 1994. Throughout the next year we will look at accomplishments which have created our "Proud Past," assess where we are now, and most importantly, we will look ahead and focus on our "Promising Future."

In November 1992, Jane Giles, Deputy Administrator for Administrative Management, formed a Secretarial Review Task Group to review the secretarial structure within ARS and to identify the key functions of those secretaries. Representatives from each Area, Administrative Management, the National Program Staff, and the Personnel Division made up the Task Group. The results of their review were published in January 1994, "Stepping Into the Future," and in this same month the National Council was formed. The original Task Group members were asked to become the first National Council.

ARS Celebrates 50 Years

By: Cathy Lonaberger, OA

November 2, 2003, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) reached its 50th anniversary milestone. In 1953, the Department of Agriculture consolidated most of its research functions into the newly named Agricultural Research Service.

Our research touches the lives of every American through the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the environment in which we live. All our employees can be proud of the unique contributions ARS has made during the past 50 years.

Our anniversary is an excellent opportunity for us to reflect on the core values that have made ARS a success–scientific quality, relevance, and outstanding customer service–while looking forward to the next 50 years and beyond.

Our Website is Live

We are pleased to announce that the NACOP Website has been reconstructed and is available for your use. Please take a moment of your time and visit us at:
http://www.arsnet.usda.gov/nacop
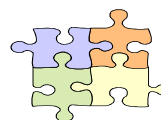
Managing E-Mail

By: Jan Cline, NPS

In USDA-ARS, e-mail is managed the same as hard copy documents. If a document is a Record, it must be managed in accordance with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) – General Records Schedules (GRS). The GRS 20, Electronics Records management instruction, remains in effect.

Correspondence being handled through the e-mail system that is considered official must be documented in our official files. The following, taken from the REE Agencies' Records Management Manual, is pertinent to this subject:

What is a Federal record? 44 U.S.C. 3301, states in part as follows:

"…all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the U.S. Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operation, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them. Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included."

In plain English: A record is any recorded information relating to the work of your office, regardless of who created it or the media on which the information was recorded (including; paper documents, photographs, microfilm, motion pictures, sound records, computer tapes, and diskettes, etc.).

Non-record material: Made or received solely for reference or supply; containing no significant evidence of agency activities (i.e. extra copies of records, personal papers, etc.).

You may ask, why create and maintain orderly records? Well, it makes sense, it's the law and records are our history.

File retention for e-mail or electronic records is the same as a hard copy document. See NARA-GRS 24 schedule to determine the retention period. Once you have printed an e-Mail to paper, you're electronic copy can be deleted.

A special thanks to our Agency Records Administrator, Stephen Pollard, 202-720-3359, spollard@ars.usda.gov. http://ardor.nara.gov/grs/grs24.html

Helpful Hints

By: Mary Edwards, PWA

Are you a committed WordPerfect user because of the reveal codes function? MS Word does have reveal formatting and "What's this?" The functions are not quite as revealing but helpful.

Do you dislike the AD-202 and AD-616 pages you get from NFC using TN3270? To pretty them up and keep the forms to one page, change your "Print Queue Setup – 3270 Plus." Check the Suppress Banner Page, Hold jobs in Queue without Printing, Substitute CR/LF for LF, and Scale font width to fit page. Then when processing, the printer will not just print out documents. Hit on the IPD icon and your documents shown can be opened using View Date File. They are opened with Notebook, hence workable. Deleting the header and footer in Page Setup, a hard return here and there, maybe adjusting mileage entry by deleting a couple of rates and mileage or saving the file as text and opening and doing a little re-formatting in MS-Word or WordPerfect, whichever or whatever works for you – one page AD202 or AD616. If saved in MS Word or WordPerfect,

these are more easily opened if attached to submit for approval via e-mail.

Microsoft Word Tips

By: Robin Stratton, PWA
Frustrated with the move from WordPerfect to Microsoft Word? Below are a few of the major complaints and problems that I've heard from locations and some tips on how to overcome them.

Word's Auto Formatting can sometimes be more annoying then helpful. When Word thinks it is smarter then you and adds numbers, bullets, tabs, double spacing, etc. the easiest solution is to hit "Undo" (control+Z) or backspace.

You can also turn off all or part of the Auto Formatting by:
Tools
AutoCorrect Options
Then removing the checks from the actions you do not want Word to perform

When making changes after a document is typed, you must highlight the text you would like the formatting to apply. Word does not assume that everything after this point should follow the same formatting as it does in WordPerfect.

You can also turn on Show/Hide, to view the paragraph formatting.

You can easily set tabs using the Ruler. To turn on the Ruler, choose View then make sure there is a check mark next to Ruler. You will simply need to click on the Ruler where you want your tab or drag the tab to the proper location. You can also change the tab setting before setting it by selecting from the small box on the top left hand corner of the Ruler:

Left Tab
Center Tab
Right Tab
Decimal Tab
Bar
Hanging Indent, first line
Hanging Indent, remaining lines

Once your tabs are set, you can make changes by selecting the text, then double clicking on the tab in the Ruler. This will bring up the tab formatting box and you can make changes to each individual tab, such as making a left tab and right tab with dot leader.

When you insert a picture in Word, it simply inserts it in line with the text. To move a graphic any where on the document:

Select the graphic
Insert
Text box

You can create columns by using the column button on your tool bar, or Format, Columns (remember to select the text you wish to have in columns). To navigate between columns, press CTRL+SHIFT+ENTER to insert a column break and move to the next column.

To use a different header or footer on your document:

File
Page Setup
Layout tab
Header and Footer options, Different Odd and Even or Different First Page

You can also use Section Breaks (Insert, Break) to have different header and footers throughout the document. On the Header and Footer toolbar, unselect the "Same as Previous" button (highlighted below) to change a header/footer for each section.

Using Adobe Acrobat

When you installed the full version of Adobe, it created two short cut options on your Word tool bar that you can just click on when you are ready to convert a document to PDF

Convert to PDF
Convert to PDF and Email

Or, print to a PDF through File, Print, then select Acrobat PDF Writer or Acrobat Distiller as your printer.

Create a usable form with Adobe by using the Forms Tool

Use the cursor to draw a box where you would like the field to be. The Field Properties box will appear and you will be able to format the field from here. Be sure all fields have a different name within a document or if you have multiple fields with the same name, the data entered will be identical in all the fields with that name throughout the document.

When the form is created, click on the Text Tool to use the form.

To post a PDF file on your web site for viewing, you will need to be sure to change the settings in Acrobat Distiller by changing the Job Options to "eBook"