

An Introductory Guide  
Creating Custom Keyboards  
and  
Assigning Keyboard Shortcuts in WordPerfect

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Preamble	...	...	...	...	...	1
Creating a Personal or Project Keyboard				...	...	1
Customising keyboards	...	...	...	...	...	3
Default Settings	...	...	...	...	...	3
Custom Settings	...	...	...	...	...	4
Adding Features	...	...	...	...	...	4
Adding Keystrokes	...	...	...	...	...	5
Assigning Programs	...	...	...	...	...	6
Adding Macros	...	...	...	...	...	7
Assigning Shortcuts to Templates	...	...	...	...	...	7
Appendix: Table of Keyboard Assignments	...	...	...	...	...	9

## PREAMBLE

CUSTOM KEYBOARDS and Keyboard Shortcuts are often underutilised features of WordPerfect. Used alone or in combination, these features can provide productivity bonuses.

WPWin comes with a range of default features or functions already assigned to keyboard shortcuts. Few users will never access or need all the default items, so some can be removed and other features or functions substituted.

Some users will be satisfied to add just a few shortcuts to the default keyboard; other users may find it more appropriate to preserve the default keyboard and create a personal, or a project, keyboard and assign<sup>1</sup> their preferred actions related to their preferences or the projects they undertake. It's a simple matter to switch between keyboards.

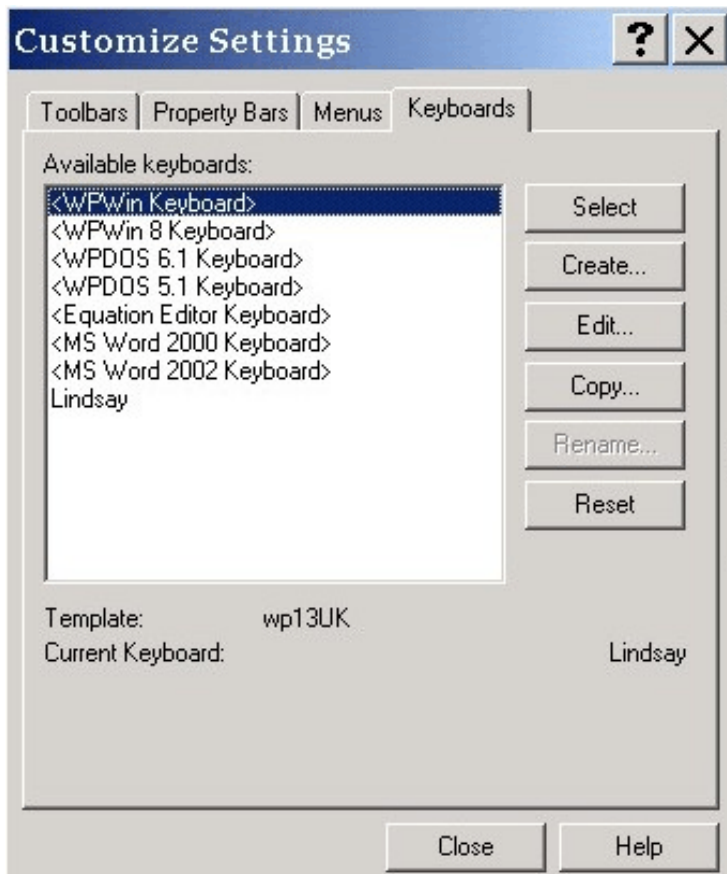
Experienced WordPerfectionists should consult Barry MacDonnell's treatment of this subject at <http://wptoolbox.com/tips/Assign.html>

## Creating a Personal or Project Keyboard

THIS ENTAILS COPYING an existing keyboard template and re-naming it.

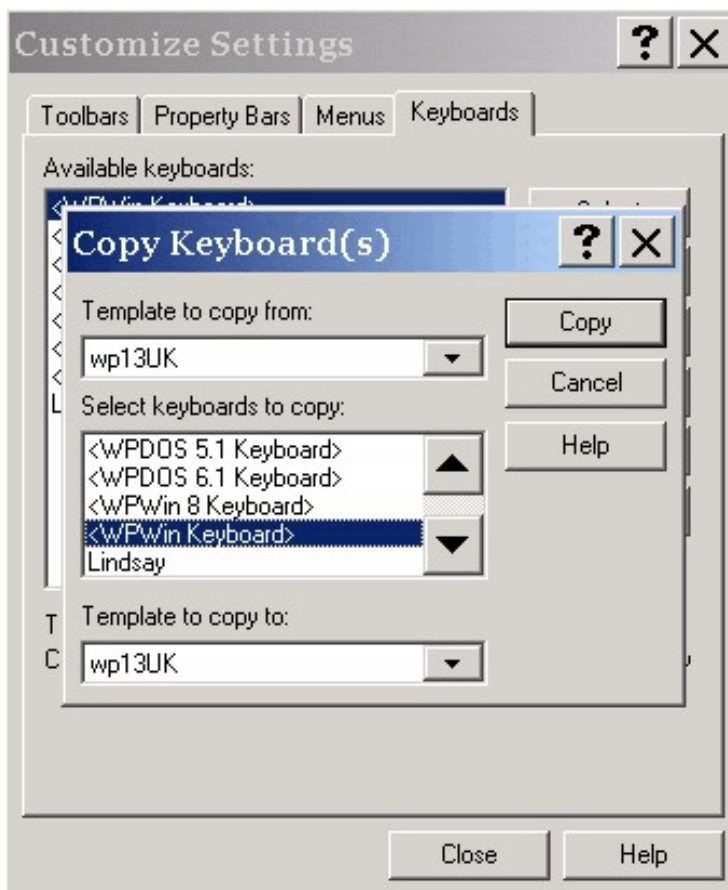
Tools > Settings > Customise > Keyboards displays a list of the available keyboards [ Dialog 1].

<sup>1</sup> Assigning shortcuts to a keyboard is sometimes referred to as 'patching'. While patching usually implies amendments or revisions to programs, patching is also used colloquially and in some computer magazines to refer to procedures or products that act as adjuncts to programs, such as keyboard shortcuts and plugins.



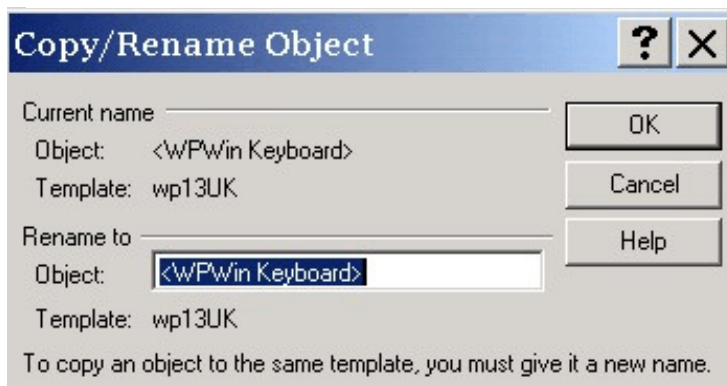
Dialog 1: The first entry is the default keyboard for the WPWin version installed, unless there's a personal or project keyboard selected. The last item in this list is an example of personal keyboard. Note the entry below the list pane identifying the currently selected keyboard.

In the Customise Settings [Dialog 1] select the type of keyboard required. In most cases the choice will be the default keyboard. Then press 'Copy'.



Dialog 2: Scroll to the preferred keyboard to copy. Note that the default version WPWin keyboard has moved down the list. Press Copy

The next step is to customise the default or your new keyboard.



Dialog 3: Type the new keyboard identity in the 'Object' panel; > OK. The new name will now appear at the foot of the keyboard list (see Dialog 1).

To switch between keyboards follow the Tools > Settings > Customise > Keyboards to the display in Dialog 1 and select whichever keyboard is required.

If you need to switch frequently, right click on the Applications bar at the foot of the screen, choose 'Settings' and scroll to and check the 'Keyboard' option. This places an icon in the bar that gives direct access to the Dialog 1 display.

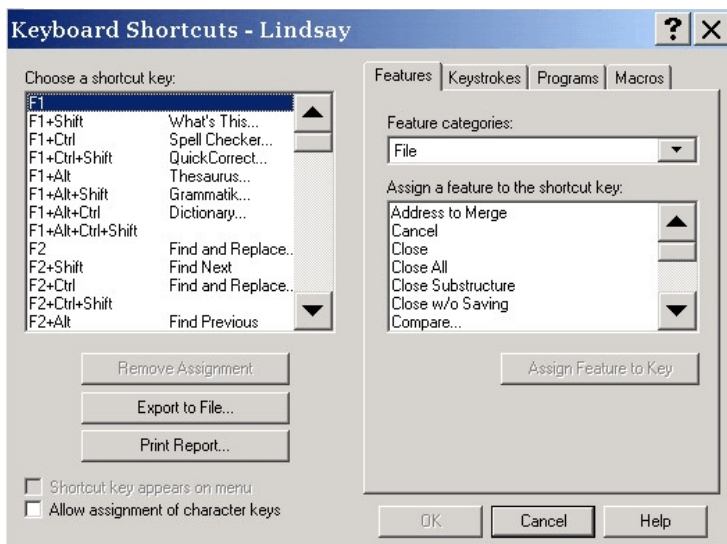
## CUSTOMISING KEYBOARDS

KEYBOARDS, with their default and user-assigned feature and functions, are stored in a wpxll.wpt file where 'xx' is the WPWin version number and 'll' is the user's language identity — wp13uk. Prudence suggests this file should be included in a backup routine.

### Default Settings

The first step is to see what features or actions have already been assigned on the default WPWin keyboard.

Tools > Settings > Customise > Keyboards > Edit displays a scrollable list of shortcuts and their assigned feature or action [Dialog 4].



Dialog 4: The 'Export to File ...' push button opens a view of your file manager in 'Save As' mode. Change the .csv extension to .wpd or .txt to facilitate creating a table.

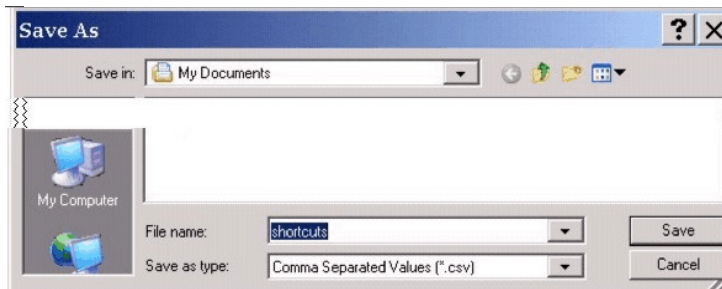
For those not familiar with spreadsheets, amending the default shortcuts.csv to shortcuts.wpd or .txt provides a list that can be easily

converted to a table. First select the list, then Tables > Create > amend the defaults in the dialog to "Size Column to Fit" > OK provides a three-column table with the shortcut combination in the first column, the already assigned features or actions displayed in the second column. The third column can be used for notes to identify the user-defined additions [see Appendix for additional points about modifying and expanding the table].

## Custom Settings

There are four categories of assignable settings: Features; Keystrokes; Programs; and Macros.

It is not wise to amend the basic word processing combinations that are almost universal across most categories of programs such as Ctrl/ O [Open File List]; S [Save file]; C [Copy]; V [Paste]; X [Cut]; Z [Undo]; F [Find/Search



Dialog 5: This composite dialog shows the default file location. The file extension can be altered to .wpd or .txt.

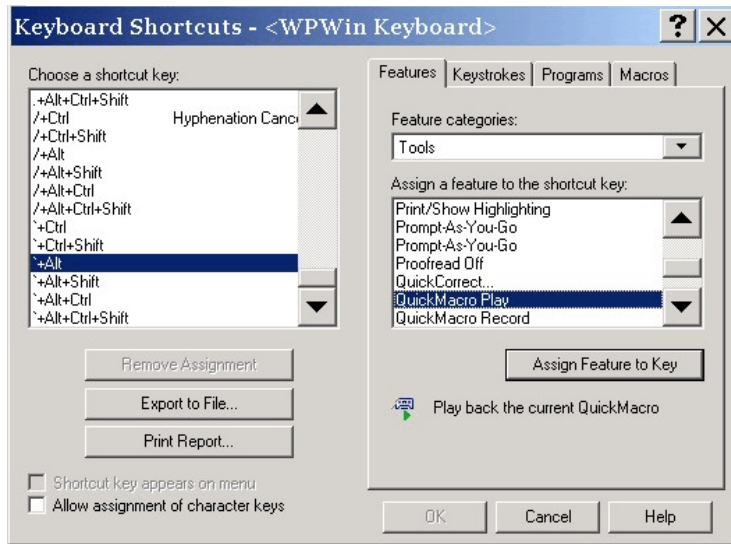
and Replace]; P [Print dialog]; N [New Document].

## Adding Features

There are many WPWin menu features that have not been assigned to shortcuts. As an example take the Quick Macro features of WPWin.

Having created the Quick Macro there are two options for invoking the Quick Macro Play feature — by mouse or keyboard.

There can be a substantial advantage in assigning the Quick Macro Play feature to an easily remembered or physically convenient keyboard combination. Examination of the shortcuts reveals that the Alt / [grave accent below the tilde symbol] is unassigned. Dialog 6 shows the result of Tools > Settings > Customise > Keyboards > Edit > scroll to Alt /; choosing Features Categories > scroll to Tools; scroll to Quick Macro Play in the Tools features list.



Dialog 6: Whichever keyboard shortcut and feature combinations are selected will be assigned when the 'Assign Feature to Key' button is pressed.

Pressing the 'Assign Feature ...' button completes the process. It also makes the 'Remove Assignment' button active to facilitate changes or correcting errors.

In this example, for a right-handed user, having assigned the 'Quick Macro Play' button to a convenient left-side key combination, it can be invoked with the left hand while the right hand uses the direction keys and/or the mouse to position the cursor at the next point where the macro is to be invoked. Left-handed individuals might choose other combinations.

To move quickly in the 'Choose a shortcut key' list, press the preferred key combination on the keyboard to jump to that location in the scrollable list.

While generally it would be unwise to change default WPWin settings, this can be done when there is little likelihood of the assigned feature being used or it is more convenient to assign it to an alternative combination. For example, assigning 'NextOpenDocument' from the default Alt/F6 to Ctrl/[grave] may suit users with a limited hand span who prefer a one-handed action to switch to an open document rather than a two-handed action for the default setting, particularly when there is no mouse provision for this action. This shortcut can then switch between two documents, or scroll through all open documents.

Another example for potential change is Ctrl/E which is assigned 'Justify Centre'. Changes in text justification are likely to be infrequent and can always be made by keyboard or mouse access to the menu Format > Justification > Centre, so this shortcut could be assigned to a feature or action the user knows will be in demand. For anyone writing genealogical material, assigning Alt/E or Ctrl/E to the multinational character 'é' will speed up the insertion of 'née' into the text.

Identify frequently used, but not default, features and assign them to shortcuts.

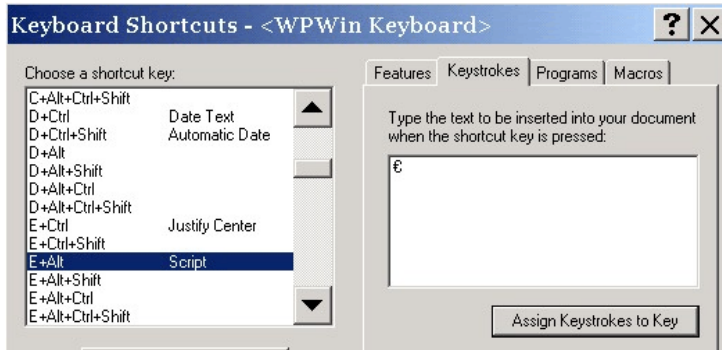
## Adding Keystrokes

In many respects this feature is an alternative to Tools > Quick Words feature.

Keystrokes can apply symbols to shortcuts, such as the monetary

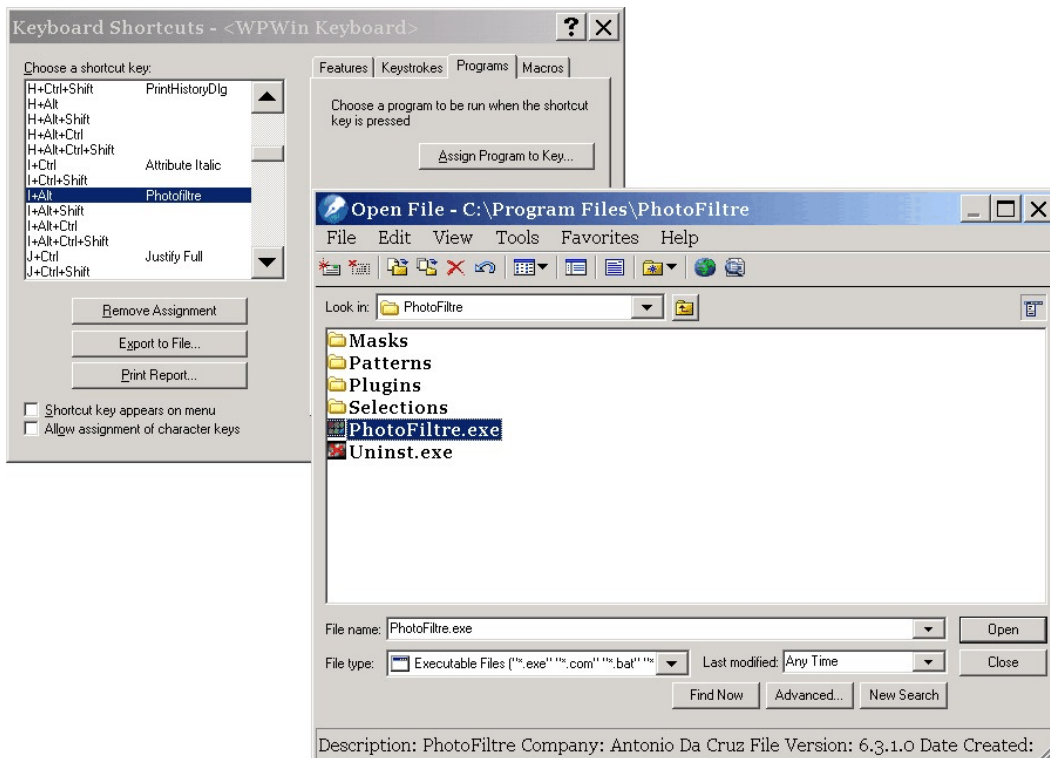
symbols (see Dialog 7). Assignments of items in WPWin characters sets to keystrokes shortcuts are identified in the scrollable list as 'Script'. While this is unhelpful in the list, the actual assignments can be correctly identified in a table of assignments the user prepares (see Appendix).

Similarly, text entered as keystrokes shortcuts are identified by the first word of the text, and the full text can be recorded in the table of assignments. Note that the text in Keystrokes panes cannot be formatted and is displayed as regular text to full measure when the shortcut is invoked. If formatted text is required the better option is the record the text as a macro, with any associated formatting, and then assign the macro to the shortcut (see below).



Dialog 7: The Euro currency symbol has been assigned to Alt/E. Note that the title line of dialog identifies the keyboard being customised.

## Assigning Programs



### Dialog 8:

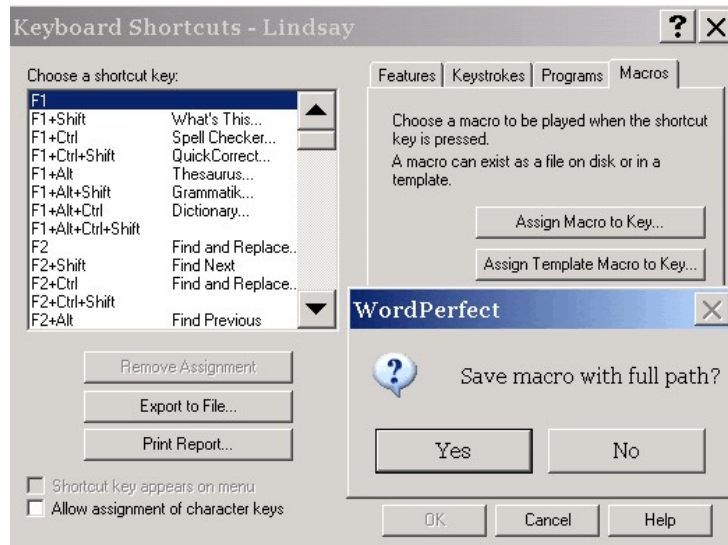
Adding programs to shortcuts is largely 'point and shoot' (Dialog 8). Tools > Settings > Customise > Keyboards > Edit > Programs tab.

First select the shortcut key combination. Then press the 'Assign Program to Key' button and a file folder is displayed. Navigate to the program required and select the executable file; press 'open' the keyboard assignment is completed.

In the image above, an image editing program used to process screen captures for this paper has been used as the example.

Frequently used programs may be assigned permanent shortcuts; others will be essentially temporary assignments for specific activities.

## Adding Macros



Dialog 9: Press the 'Assign Macro to Key' button to open the default macro folder or navigate to the required macro location.

Adding macros is also largely 'point and shoot'. Use the Merge/Macro tab<sup>2</sup>, and select the required macro for the chosen shortcut.

If macros are stored elsewhere than the default WPWin location, this alternative folder becomes the default folder and will be opened when the 'Assign Macro ...' button is pressed. If a macro to be assigned is not stored in the default folder, use the option to 'Save macro with full path'.

Macros allow more complicated actions to be initiated and are therefore potentially more useful. Apart from the default macros packaged with WPWin, there are a substantial collection of very useful or specialist macros available from sources such as Barry MacDonnell's web site [<http://wptoolbox.com/>].

## Assigning Shortcuts to Templates

Experienced WordPerfectionists should consult Barry MacDonnell's treatment of this subject at <http://wptoolbox.com/tips.html#2>

The process of assigning shortcuts to templates differs slightly in that the template is displayed before shortcuts can be added.

For example — File > New from Project > Create New [Tab] > Correspondence, Business > memo > Options > Edit WP Template (Dialog 8). Once the 'Edit WP ...' option is activated, the memo form is displayed. Shortcuts can then be added in the ordinary way and the new 'Memo' keyboard is added to the list of keyboards.

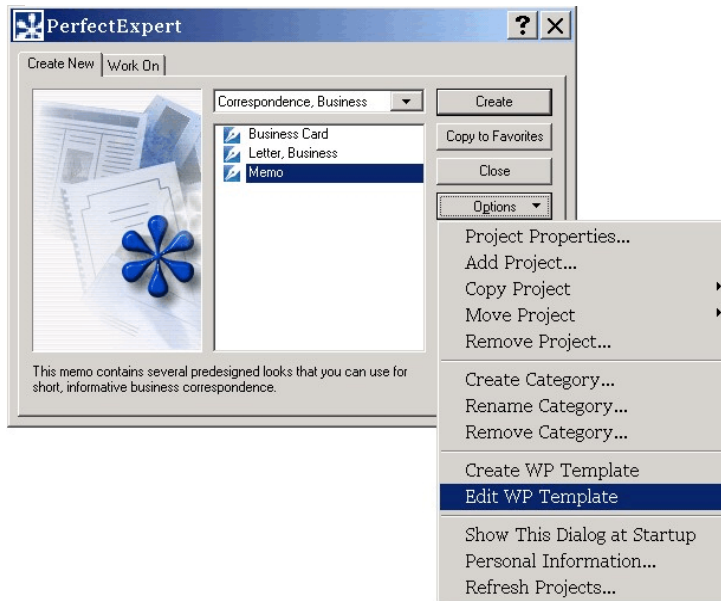
When opening the template subsequently, the associated keyboard must

<sup>2</sup> See Tools > Settings > Files > Merge/Macro tab for default location.

also be selected. This could be automated by a ‘triggered’ macro.

If user-prepared templates are to have shortcuts assigned, a suitably descriptive template identity is desirable in anticipation of it being recorded in the scrollable keyboards list.

In saving the new keyboard a ‘Location’ option is offered to enable one of two options: ‘Current template — saves the keyboard in the current template’ or Default template — saves the keyboard in the default, *i.e.* makes the shortcuts available across all documents. Whenever the template is retrieved the related keyboard must also be invoked if it is not invoked as a template macro.



Dialog 10: When the ‘Edit wp Template’ is clicked, it opens the pre-designed memo form. The contents of the form can be edited and any keyboard shortcuts assigned as features, keystrokes, macros or programs are stored with the template.

Users should explore the full range of features and options of templates for themselves as they are a powerful resource for creating regularly required purpose-designed documents. Templates can have associated macros triggered on opening, closing, when printings, etc. Users should explore the full range of features and options of templates for themselves as they are a powerful resource for creating repeatedly-used documents. Barry MacDonnell’s treatment should be consulted for more details.

This document was set in the Open Source font Gentium Book Basic, 12pt with 2 pt leading. It was chosen for it’s robust appearance in the PDF format.



## Appendix: Table of Keyboard Assignments

*The principal text and this appendix includes a number of suggestions and observations made in an exchange of messages in the WPWIN-L newlist in late May 2008, and particularly the contribution of James E. Clapp to the discussion, and his suggestions for improving the table.*

*The discussion below assumes that readers have convected a file of the default assignments to a table.*

THE TABLE OF DEFAULT ASSIGNMENTS has two omissions. ‘... WordPerfect [in recent versions] exports the current assignments as a comma-delimited file[.csv], which means that shortcuts that use the comma key, and any shortcuts to macros that have a comma in their names, come out wrong.[Clapp]’ Note also that a .csv file in Excel causes additional problems because =, +, - are "reserved characters" in Excel and get treated differently.

As created with .wpd or .txt extensions instead of the default .csv:

	+Ctrl	DecreaseColumn
	+Ctrl+Shift	DecreaseColumn

should be:

,+Ctrl	DecreaseColumn	
,+Ctrl+Shift	DecreaseColumn	

The table from an exported file only records any existing assignments and makes no provision for listing assignments to other possible combinations.

There are some 454 assignable shortcuts (535if the number pad is included).

There is a choice between adding rows to the basic table of default assignments to record any user assignments, or creating a master table, transferring default assignments, and then adding user assignments. The advantage of the larger table is that un-assigned shortcuts are easily recognised(see Dialog T1 below). This simplifies the choice of combinations that are easy to remember or fall conveniently for the user’s keyboarding preferences.

James Clapp’s approach uses the extended table, with a code to indicate whether the assigned feature is a default, a macro and its source, or a re-allocation of a function from the default. Dialog T1 shows short samples of his approach.

He warns — ‘...be aware that the default assignments change slightly from one version of WordPerfect to the next...’[Clapp].

F10		
F10 + Shift	D	DisplayPopupMenu
F10 + Ctrl	D	MacroRecord...
F10 + Ctrl + Shift		
F10 + Alt	D	MacroPlay...
F10 + Alt + Shift		
F10 + Alt + Ctrl		
<hr/>		
A + Ctrl	D	SelectAll
A + Ctrl + Shift	D	QuickWordsInsert
A + Alt	M	Attachment.wcm
A + Alt + Shift		
A + Alt + Ctrl	Ⓜ ME	AlignandDistribute Run Archive.wbt
A + Alt + Ctrl + Shift		
<hr/>		
B + Ctrl	D	AttributeBold
B + Ctrl + Shift	D	InsertBullet
B + Alt	M	EnhancedBlockProtect.wcm
B + Alt + Shift	ME	CleanUpAndBackUp
B + Alt + Ctrl	M	BeginInstallationNote.wcm
B + Alt + Ctrl + Shift		
<hr/>		
C + Ctrl	D	Copy
C + Ctrl + Shift	D	DropCapStart
C + Alt	ME	CopyNumber
C + Alt + Shift	M	CopySelectedLetter.wcm
C + Alt + Ctrl	D	PasteUnformattedText
C + Alt + Ctrl + Shift		
<hr/>		
D + Ctrl	D	DateText
D + Ctrl + Shift	D	AutomaticDate
D + Alt	M	DateCopied.wcm
D + Alt + Shift	ME	DateTime
D + Alt + Ctrl		
D + Alt + Ctrl + Shift		
<hr/>		
Q + Ctrl + Shift	D	QuickMarkSet
Q + Alt	M	QuickMark2Find.wcm
Q + Alt + Shift	M	QuickMark2Set.wcm
Q + Alt + Ctrl		
Q + Alt + Ctrl + Shift		

Dialog T1: Portions of James Clapp's table of keyboard assignments. Default assigned functions are black; user assigned functions are tinted.

Empty cells in the second and third columns indicate unassigned items.