



RIDING CIRCUITS

By Lawrence M. Friedman

Word Revealed!

Listen to me, Brothers and Sisters. I have seen the revealed Word. I have seen a better way to work and the salvation of our Office. I have seen a new reason to turn away from the temptation of our friends at Corel and become a convert to Microsoft. You too can see the revealed Word, and I will tell you how.

The answer to our prayers, Brothers and Sisters, is CrossEyes from Levitt & James. CrossEyes is an add-in for Word that simulates the Reveal Code feature of Corel WordPerfect and lets the user peek behind the curtain to see how a document is formatted. This simple notion of letting the user see and understand document formatting gives the user much more control over their documents and avoids exasperation.

But how, pray tell, did we get here? Lawyers often draft heavily formatted documents. Briefs have lots of headings, block quotes, italics, tables of authorities, tables of contents, etc. And, Court rules dictate font sizes, margins, paragraph numbering, etc. Contracts might have fields for merged text and cross references.

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So we need to control our word processor at a much more detailed level than the average office worker dashing off memos and letters.

Confessions of a Lawyer

As a rule, we also don't like to fight with our software. We want it to think the way we think. That means many of us want text to appear on the page as if we were using a typewriter. When you hit the tab key, the cursor should jump a half an inch. We don't want the whole paragraph to be reformatted. Or, if I put a single bullet in a paragraph, I don't necessarily want everything that follows it to be bulleted. Even if the whiz kids at Microsoft think that is what everyone should want to happen.

Word thinks too hard for its own good. Word makes fundamental assumptions about how you are going to format your documents. Those assumptions are built into the various styles that control paragraphs and sections of Word documents. This is a great idea if your fundamental goal is to produce clean looking documents with uniform formatting and minimal formatting within a paragraph. If you need to change formats a lot, styles can be a powerful tool as long as you use them properly.

The trouble is that many of us don't

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understand or use styles properly. There are a number of reasons for this. Chief among them is that many of us are converts from WordPerfect and we expect Word to behave the same way. It does not. Also, many of us simply do not want to be bothered with studying the program to learn how to use it well. We want to type, finish the job and get on with our lives.

Signs and Wonders

So, here comes CrossEyes to the rescue. Amen.

Once activated, CrossEyes opens a window on the bottom third of your screen.

In the window, your text is visible along with color-coded formatting codes. As you move the cursor through your Word document, the pointer moves along in CrossEyes. Character-level codes (typeface, for example) are displayed before and after the affected text. Paragraph and section-level formatting follows the paragraphs and sections in another color.

Beyond just displaying formatting codes, CrossEyes lets the user modify formatting by double clicking the code in the CrossEyes window. CrossEyes does this by using the code as a link to the Word dialog box that controls the formatting option. For example, double clicking the code "Centered" in the CrossEyes text, brings up the Word paragraph formatting dialog box with the alignment options already selected.

The program is customizable so that you can display codes in one of two pre-defined color schemes or create your own. You can also display the complete text in the CrossEyes box or a truncate text that lets you focus on the formatting codes.

CrossEyes 2.0 is available for downloading from www.levittjames.com. There is a free trial period for 15 days. A single license costs \$75 and there are enterprise license plans available.

The program is actually a Word macro, so you have to set your Word security

features to enable macros. I set macro security to Medium. Once you are set up, you might want to tell Windows to always trust macros from Levitt & James. I would not recommend that you set your security to Low as this will increase the risk of infection by a Word macro virus.

CrossEyes is a great idea and Microsoft should be embarrassed that a third-party added it. It finally let's you wrestle Word into submission. It is probably a sign of Microsoft's arrogance that it has refused to do this on its own. If you are a WordPerfect user forced to use Word, this could be the miracle you have been waiting for. ■