

WordPerfect® Macros Easy Enough for Anyone to Learn

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Doug Loudenback
Lawyer



Like most lawyers, Doug Loudenback isn't an IT specialist. He has no formal training in computer science or programming languages. But like most lawyers, he regularly finds himself looking for a faster way to complete all the documents he has to prepare on a daily basis. "Just out of curiosity I started to look into the macro functionality of WordPerfect," says Mr. Loudenback. "I quickly realized it wasn't very hard to figure out how to do it – even for a layperson. Today, my collection of macros is being used by a thousand lawyers across the state."

Doug Loudenback was admitted to the Oklahoma Bar in 1968. After spending two years in the army, he worked in two medium sized law firms for several years before setting up his own law practice in Oklahoma City in 1980.

"My love affair with WordPerfect began in 1986 or 1987," says Doug Loudenback on the phone from his office. "Being a user of WordPerfect since version 5.1 for DOS, I became irrevocably hooked on the program once I became proficient at writing macros. I wrote numerous document assembly macros and participated in lawyer tech seminars to get people to notice the amazing capabilities available at their fingertips. At the time, I gave away macros for free and tried to teach others how to write them."

When Windows® 3.1 entered the computer world, Mr. Loudenback grudgingly decided to make the jump from WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS to the Windows version. Grudgingly, because he had invested a lot of time and effort to hone his macro-writing skills and wasn't looking forward to learning a new macro language in a different operating system.

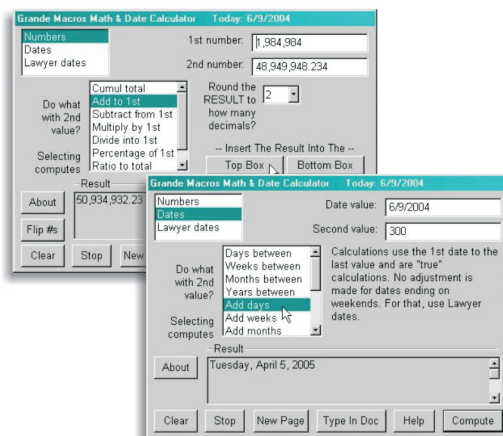
So for about a year he worked without the benefit of having access to his library of macros. It didn't take long, however, before his colleagues in the law firm asked him if he knew how to create macros for the Windows version of WordPerfect.

"I didn't, but I couldn't resist the challenge any longer," laughs Doug Loudenback.

It only took him a few months to get back up to speed on the Windows side of macro writing, and he quickly realized that there was a pent-up demand for easy-to-use productivity enhancements in the legal community. Lawyers and paralegals prepare a large amount of documents on a daily basis with very specific formatting requirements, and a single macro might only save a minute or two, but these minutes quickly add up. "The savings potential is substantial, even for a small law firm," says Mr. Loudenback.

By the time he had a collection of Windows macros for WordPerfect, Doug Loudenback decided to sell them to other lawyers as a package called Grande Macros.

"I thought it was an appropriately modest title," chuckles Doug Loudenback.



This popular bundle of macros can be ordered through the Oklahoma Bar Association's website at www.okbar.org.

A full version of the Grande Macros collection costs approximately \$150, with an upgrade price for existing customers of about \$80. Most of the macros are specific for Oklahoma lawyers, but Mr. Loudenback is currently working on a WordPerfect macro that has the potential to become available to every family lawyer in the country.

"My new program, Grande Calendar, will make a Child Visitation Calendar as short as one month or as long as 12 years, using all standard federal holidays, school holidays, summer visitations, and so on. It will be a standalone program that can be connected to child support calculations, featuring a full range of

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user options in all such regards," explains Doug Loudenback. "It's still a work-in-progress but it will be applicable on a national level. All done with the vibrant WordPerfect legal community in mind."

Many lawyers use WordPerfect for its many legal-specific features like Pleading Papers, and seamless integration with third party applications like Amicus Attorney, CiteRite and PCLaw. But Doug Loudenback stands firmly behind WordPerfect mainly because of its combination of ease-of-use and powerful features such as Reveal Codes, Make It Fit and Publish To PDF, as well as its user-friendly top-to-bottom lineal approach to writing documents.

"I consider Publish To PDF to be one of the most essential elements of the program, and I use it on a daily basis – in my work with clients, to create PDF documents for the Oklahoma Bar Association Family Law Section, as well as for my own website. Many of the PDF documents I make include hyperlinks that are both internal to the particular documents as well as external to e-mail and Internet addresses. It's so convenient!"

Doug Loudenback is his own webmaster and creates most of the pages for his site by using the WordPerfect Publish To HTML command.

"Almost all of my non-structural HTML stuff is made using the WordPerfect 12 Publish To HTML command, and then by manually editing the resulting files as needed. Everything seen at www.dougloudenback.com has a WordPerfect origin," says Mr. Loudenback.

Like many WordPerfect power-users, Doug Loudenback has found a few favorite features of his own:

"The extraordinary table features are some of the most powerful elements of WordPerfect. The formulas can emulate the functionality of a full-blown spreadsheet program, including such elements as lookup capability. The exceptional

abilities to format the borders and fill are icing on the cake."

Needless to say, Doug Loudenback is a big WordPerfect fan, but he realizes that it's crucial to be compatible with Microsoft Word, and he's impressed with the ability to round-trip files between the two formats without losing formatting or functionality. Mr. Loudenback describes the workflow for his work on the OBA Family Law Section's Practice Manual.

"This particular document contains hundreds of user forms, and we decided early on that the forms had to be available in both WordPerfect and Word format. WordPerfect 12 has an impressive capability of saving to .doc, which has made our task a whole lot easier. The form files remain WordPerfect files for WordPerfect users, but are converted to Microsoft Word using the WordPerfect 12 Save As Word capability for a reasonably seamless process. But, some taken-for-granted WordPerfect features do not exist in Microsoft Word, such as the ability to justify different parts of the same line differently, and so some 'dumb-down' formatting is occasionally necessary."

While Doug Loudenback works mostly in WordPerfect, he's also proficient in the other applications in the WordPerfect Office suite. In his role as a family lawyer, he uses Quattro® Pro extensively in making spreadsheets for property and debt balance sheets, budgets, etc. Almost every client file has one associated Quattro Pro file containing data pertinent to the case. And he uses Presentations™ 12 for all his presentations needs.

"I speak at Continuing Legal Education meetings on a regular basis and I use Presentations 12 for my many other presentations as well. My wife is a professor at the University of Oklahoma in the Native American Art History area, and she's a big presentations fan as well. And, I also like to make slide-show CDs from digital images during family and other occasional trips. For all such things, I use Presentations," concludes Doug Loudenback.

