

# Word of Law

Word of Law is published weekly on Woody's Office Watch at <http://www.wopr.com>. WOW readers get the latest news, tips, and tricks on Microsoft Office and related topics.

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## THE SEVEN LAWS OF STYLES

1. [Use the least possible direct formatting](#)
2. [Format Follows Function](#)
3. [Use common names for styles](#)
4. [Avoid applying 'Normal' style](#)
5. [Change locally, then propagate globally](#)
6. [Use no empty paragraphs\(Avoid extra tabs\)](#)
7. [Tie automatic numbering to heading styles](#)

### LAW 1.

#### **Use the least possible direct formatting.**

All paragraph formatting should be applied through appropriate paragraph styles. Do not use the Format Painter.

The documents of legal practice should be highly consistent in formatting and structure. Sometimes they must follow prescribed formatting rules, such as those of courts. Legal documents get reworked intensely and reused constantly. Documents need to be reformatted in whole, whether to meet the requirements of different courts, or the practices of different departments. Portions of documents should be able to be moved and reused, with a minimum of reformatting.

Thorough use of styles, backed by appropriate templates, enables Word to work just this way. Direct formatting may seem to be a quick solution to special formatting needs, but it makes it difficult to “see” the source of formatting and to allow clean reformatting when a document needs to travel. The Format Painter is even worse, creating invisible formatting links that ought to be controlled by proper application of styles.

Note that this discussion applies to paragraph styles. Character styles have much less use. They will be covered in a future column.

### LAW 2.

#### **Format Follows Function**

With a nod of the head to our architect friends, this law tells us to name styles for the function text performs in a document, rather than the method of formatting. For instance, the most common text in many documents will use Body Text style. If in some documents it needs to be single spaced, while in others double spaced, don't use a “Single Space” style for one and a “Double Spaced Style” for the other. Use Body Text in both, but change the settings for Body Text (preferably through application of a grouped set of styles maintained in a template). Then the document will be instantly and accurately transformed from the formats required by one practice to those of another, with no fiddling around with formatting.

### LAW 3.

#### **Use common names for styles across the body of legal documents.**

Use Body Text as the style for the body text of all documents, Headings 1 through 9 as the style names for heading levels, and so on. Then, to change the overall formatting of documents, store the appropriate style settings in a template, and use the Style Gallery to switch formats.

## **LAW 4.**

### **Avoid applying Normal style**

Use Normal style as a base for other styles. Using Normal Style itself violates LAW 2.

## **LAW 5.**

### **Change locally, then propagate globally, but do not use the “Automatically Update” setting for any styles.**

The Automatically Update setting can cause nearly instantaneous havoc with document formatting. It represents a solution to an intrinsic issue in ease of use for Word. While styles have all the power we have described, modifying and managing them can be difficult to learn, and often, even for experienced users, difficult to do. To modify styles, users must dig through 5 levels of menus and dialogs, then climb back again. When you get there, the connection between the settings and text may be very difficult to see.

Automatically Update was supposed to solve that. For instance, changing Left and Right Indents or tab settings could be accomplished directly and visually with the controls on the Ruler. Then, with Automatically Update on, these changes would immediately change the style settings the same way. Unfortunately this can also happen accidentally, leaving users confused and frustrated.

Word has a better, more controllable way to spread local formatting changes to the style applied to a paragraph. Make the font, spacing and indent changes to one paragraph of the appropriate style. Then, select the paragraph including its paragraph mark. With the formatting toolbar on, press CTRL SHIFT S (or mouse click on the style name in the toolbar) and press ENTER. If (and only if) you have changed the formatting of the paragraph from that of its style, a “Modify Style” dialog will appear asking whether “you wish to modify the style to reflect recent changes” or reapply the formatting of the style to the paragraph. Choosing the first will then propagate the local changes to the style and change all paragraphs in the document with that style.

Catch 1. This technique does not work unless a toolbar is showing with the style name (standard in the default Formatting toolbar).

Catch 2. Spacing and indent changes can propagate using this technique whether or not the paragraph mark for the paragraph has been selected. Font changes for the paragraph as a whole can propagate only if the paragraph mark has been selected. If not, this technique will cause the font to revert to that of the style. Thus, learning the technique by selecting the whole paragraph, including its paragraph mark, achieves more consistent results.

Catch 3. This technique can leave hidden direct formatting. In a future column, we will look at a macro shortcut that will support these technique without the catches.

The following macro will remove the Automatically Update setting from all styles in a document for Word 97 and 2000.

```
Public Sub RemoveAutomaticallyUpdate()  
Dim aSty As Style  
    For Each aSty In ActiveDocument.Styles  
        aSty.AutomaticallyUpdate = False  
    Next aSty  
End Sub
```

## **LAW 6.**

### **Use no empty paragraphs**

Empty paragraphs are a relic of typing. They have no text except the paragraph mark. When documents use them for spacing, instead of styles set with proper paragraph spacing, they corrupt the clean global transformation of document formats.

Again, a brief macro can clean out empty paragraphs.

```
Public Sub CleanEmptyParagraphs()  
Dim aPara As Paragraph  
    For Each aPara In ActiveDocument.Paragraphs  
        If Asc(aPara.Range.Characters.First) = 13 Then aPara.Range.Delete  
    End If  
Next aPara  
End Sub
```

**NB: Avoid extra tabs**, especially in columnar presentations. For effective and reliable formatting of columnar material, each column should be separated by a single tab. This rule applies to simple columns of information. Any presentation with enough columns or complexity should be formatted with a table.

Don't forget the benefits of styles for this formatting. The tab settings for those columns can and should be incorporated in a style named for the number or type of columns. Then if the formatting must shift, a change of the format of the style will change all of the entries.

The writer who suggested this law complained that time and again he received documents that included only default tabs, with as many as necessary to separate the columns.

There is a deeper issue here. Not a law, but a motto: Typing, get over it!

The standards and habits of the era of mechanical typing have been very hard to stamp out, even after nearly more than 20 years of word processing. When one had to change tabs settings mechanically, it was possible, but not practical, to change settings for special parts of a document. Typists left their tabs one half inch (or the metric equivalent) apart, and tabbed repeatedly. Many, perhaps most, still do.

In the era of non proportional fonts, typists were taught to type two spaces after a period. All word processing programs have been designed to include extra space automatically in proportionally spaced fonts. Type **one** space. After years of preaching this rule to enormous resistance, I can cite as authority Rule 2.1.4 of Robert Bringhurst's elegant book, "The Elements of Typographical Style." <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0881791326/woodsoffiawatcwo>

If only we could learn to present the documents of law practice and other organizations with the clarity, beauty and love of print he offers.

## LAW 7

### Tie automatic numbering to heading styles

This may be the hottest issue for Word 97 in legal practice. First, we will not finish this topic in this column. In fact, before we can really master automatic numbering, we will touch Word 97 at many levels. Topics to be covered will include (not necessarily in order) the linkage of styles to templates, the relationship of direct paragraph formatting to style based formatting, the mysterious and intricate List Gallery (the Word VBA name for the dialog entitled "Bullets and Numbering"), the relationship of the Windows Registry to the List Gallery, the Outline View, the Document Map, Tables of Contents and strategies for the structure of legal documents. We must understand the basic conflicts in the methods Word 97 uses to format numbers and paragraph styles. We cannot avoid some attention to the numbering tools from earlier versions of Word.

Even to write that list feels frightening. Before we start trying to sort these issues out, is it worth it? If there are problems with automatic paragraph numbering and styles, why bother? Wouldn't it be easier to just type the numbers? Isn't there an easy solution?

In the WOW spirit, if the reward is great enough, we will pick apart and rework Word 97 to make it work, if we have to. We have to.

Attorneys love to number paragraphs in their documents. From simple sequential numbered or lettered paragraphs, numbering in legal documents may flower into complex schemes. Beyond outlines such as:

- I. Main Heading
- A. Subheading
- 1. Subsubheading.

legal documents may use schemes such as:

- 1. Main Heading
- 1.1 Subheading
- 1.1.1 Subsubheading

or

## ARTICLE I

### Main Heading

#### Section 1.01 Subheading.

As the preceding paragraphs indicate, the formatting of the levels is as important to the geography of a document as the numbers. That link cries for the use of styles. Styles force paragraphs with the same function in a document to have the same formatting. That's what Law 2, Format Follows Function, means.

If we want (legal) documents to be fully interchangeable and reusable, style based formatting (supported by appropriately formatted templates) is a must.

In significant ways, Word 97 rewards documents that attach their hierarchy of numbered paragraphs to Heading Styles 1 through 9. The built-in settings for the Document Map and the Outline View make documents structured this way modular and powerful to navigate and edit. The Document Map allows a user to travel from heading to heading in a framed view. The Outline View allows users to move, insert and delete segments of a document with a single mouseclick or keystroke. Tables of contents can be constructed from the contents of the headings without additional coding. When all this works, those who write with their word processor achieve the full potential of Word 97.

The simple truth is that it doesn't always work, and the failures can be subtle and difficult to understand.

For this column, we will describe the clash between style based formatting and number formatting. We will save other issues for future columns.

Following the Laws of Styles, if the numbering scheme is to be attached to Heading Styles 1 through 9, it would be natural to expect to use the format settings for each of the styles to control all elements of the formatting of those paragraphs, including fonts, left, right and first line indents, paragraph spacing, borders and shading, to name some. We might even want to use the techniques described in Law 5, "Change locally, then propagate globally."

Troubles arise when one tries to change the numbering format. When the numbering format is changed through the List Gallery, left indents, first line indents and tab settings for Heading Styles 1 through 9 that have been set in those styles (other than through the List Gallery controls) can change. Users perceive these changes as instabilities or bugs in the operation of the styles. In fact, Word also controls the left indent, first line indent and first tab setting through the List Gallery. If control of these settings is made solely through the settings in the List Gallery, the problems can be limited. Using the List Gallery for these settings is harder and far less natural than the methods of Law 5.

We will need to dig deeper to fully understand and control these functions. A solution lies in developing and storing templates with the numbering and associated formatting properly configured for the heading style levels, then applying those style settings to a document through the Style Gallery (or the equivalent macro function), when it is necessary to change numbering formats. The number levels themselves are applied through application of the appropriate style. If set up and managed properly, end users can apply automatic numbering consistently and accurately.

We (just) need to work through the techniques and traps for those templates. There are plenty of twists and turns.

Corrections and Clarifications: The following macro for removing the “Automatically Update” property of a documents styles avoids an error relating to character styles:

```
Public Sub RemoveAutomaticallyUpdate()  
Dim aSty As Style  
    For Each aSty In ActiveDocument.Styles  
        If aSty.Type = wdStyleTypeParagraph Then  
            aSty.AutomaticallyUpdate = False  
        End If  
    Next aSty  
End Sub
```

Returning to the bookshelf, please consider Word 97 for Law Firms, <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0761513167/>, an essential guide and reference for Word 97.

In the very brief time since the distribution of the first Word of Law, many of you have written thoughtful and complimentary messages. Thanks for the suggestions and encouragement. It will take hard work to live up to the expectations, but it is worth the try.

<http://www.woodyswatch.com/wow/> or e-mail to [wow@wopr.com](mailto:wow@wopr.com) to get your own **free** subscription.