

## For your entertainment: sad tale of woe

*Source:*

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Word/microsoft.public.word.docmanagement/2005-01/2793.html>

---

*From:* jg70124 (jg70124\_at\_nospamyahoo.com)

*Date:* 01/14/05

Date: Fri, 14 Jan 2005 13:34:45 -0500

I've posted about my situation before, and got lots of good responses. Now, however, no responses are required – I am just posting to vent.

I'm working on a book with two professors of marketing, both older, both significantly less skilled with their computers than they think they are. There are also a bunch of other people involved: a research assistant, an editor, a consultant, and the publisher. There are Macs and Windows machines, and Word versions from 97 to 2003.

My job was to help the professors put their (disorganized) material in some sort of order, and to format the chapters (20) for the publisher. To do that, I put the material into an outline, created a style sheet, removed all the character formatting, and applied the new styles. That took about 6 weeks. I did it at the beginning of the process, and since no one else on the project had any understanding of styles, I became the de facto "keeper of the format". Which means that when ever anyone changed anything, they had to pass the material back to me to fix the format – I've been doing it for about 7 months now.

Last week, the lead author made a bunch of last minute changes, so he gave me the chapters this morning and asked me to do a final sweep of the formatting. When I opened the first chapter, I discovered – much to my horror – that the styles were gone. The footnotes (100's per chapter) were disconnected. The captions and cross references were broken. The document was all character formatted.

It turns out that at some point last fall, the lead author (who doesn't know styles) decided he didn't like the formatting (despite the fact that it was ordained by the publisher), so he hired a word processing temp to do a reformat. And it turns out she didn't understand Word styles either. So she converted all the materials in all the chapters to plain text, then applied character formatting. Since the author has been happily making changes to these plain text versions, we can't go back.

So now I'm sitting here thinking about spending 3–4 weeks re–doing the formatting, rebuilding the footnotes, and recreating the tables.

microsoft.public.word.docmanagement: For your entertainment: sad tale of woe

Lesson learned: for the next book (starting in a week or so), leave the thing in plain text until the last possible minute.