

Re: Using Word Mail Merge feature for custom templates

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Word/microsoft.public.word.mailmerge.fields/2006-01/msg00156.html>

- *From:* Cindy M -WordMVP- <C.Meister-C@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 11 Jan 2006 11:22:34 +0100
-

Hi =?Utf-8?B?Uy5TYW5naGFuaQ==?=,

- > As this is going to be a controlled application, I can recommend the version
- > of Word required in order to use this solution.
- >
- > You are suggesting that I store the content in XML at server end and when I
- > transfer this XML Internet Explorer will invoke MS-Word to handle the
- > content? But how can I instruct Word about the mail merge fields? And how do
- > I get the data back when user finishes editing and Saves it? One of the
- > requirement is that the editing feature should be available from browser and
- > user should have a button to save document at server side.
- >
- > Also, can I use the WordProcessingML for generating mail merged output? Any
- > link/pointer to help related to this language?
- >

I think the first question that needs to be answered is whether the user is going to be able to use the Word interface at all? A browser knows to open a WordProcessingML file in Word due to the PI Word writes into it. But if you're expecting everything to happen in a browser environment, I'm not really sure what's going to happen. You'll need to do some testing.

You also need to see if mail merge will even work in the scenario you're postulating. Mail merge won't link to a HTTP-URL, it requires a traditional file path, either to a local drive or a LAN location. You mention you found an article that will allow mail merge to work with a data source in a remote location. Do you have a link to that article?

If you mean the user is to create his template in the browser, but afterwards will use it in Word outside the browser, things should work. You can extract the content of the document as WordProcessingML, which will include the merge fields. The only thing that will be lacking is the Page Setup information. automation should be able to pick that up and write the missing information into the XML.

I think you need to do two things

1. Determine whether the functionality you need is available when a word document is opened in the browser environment

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2. Save a Word 2003 document as XML then open it in something like Notepad or an XML editor and get a feel for the WordProcessingML file format. There's a Word 2003 SDK on msdn that goes into this in some detail. You'll also find the schemas up there with documentation. Basically, you can create a Word document on the server without Word being present. A user can open it in Word and use it, just as with any Word document.

>> What you can do depends on the version of Word available to you. If it's Word
>> 2003, you can save and modify the file as WordProcessingML, Word's XML
>> vocabulary. The user can open and work with the file as a Word document.
>>
>>> First, I will apologize in case I am posting this in wrong group/section.
>>> The question is related to Ms-Word and Mail Merge functionality but is also
>>> to do with using these features in a web environment.
>>>
>>> Here is what I am trying to achieve:
>>>
>>> In a web application (.NET platform), I need to provide users with an
option
>>> to create template for a letter using their own content/formatting/images
and
>>> also use few mail merge fields to include information from a backend DB.
>>>
>>> Finally this letter needs to be saved on server and used for generating
>>> letters, using mail merge functionality, as and when requested by user.
>>>
>>> After some research and going through some MS-KB articles, I found
mechanism
>>> of specifying custom fields for mail merge in a document and also using
data
>>> source from remote server to specify the data for mail merge. The articles
>>> also mentions that Word cannot be hosted on a web-page as a control.
>>>
>>> I would like suggestion as to what options does .NET and MS-word provides
to
>>> achieve the desired functionalitiy? All ideas and suggestions are very much
>>> welcome. I have been trying to find similar posts or anyone who has done
>>> similar thing (I had thought there will be quite a few people who would
have
>>> already done this, when I proposed this functionality) without any result
so
>>> far.
>>>
>

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<http://homepage.swissonline.ch/cindymeister> (last update Jun 8 2004)
<http://www.word.mvps.org>

Re: Using Word Mail Merge feature for custom templates

This reply is posted in the Newsgroup; please post any follow question or reply in the newsgroup and not by e-mail :-)

• **References:**

- ◆ **[Re: Using Word Mail Merge feature for custom templates](#)**
 - ◇ From: Cindy M –WordMVP–
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