

## Re: Using part of a field

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*Source:*

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Word/microsoft.public.word.mailmerge.fields/2007-03/msg00497.html>

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- *From:* "Doug Robbins – Word MVP" <[dkr@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:dkr@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Fri, 30 Mar 2007 20:16:34 +0200
- 

Another way to do this would be to use a Wildcard Find and Replace in Word to look for individual upper case characters that are followed by a period and then delete the period.

See the article "Finding and replacing characters using wildcards" at:

<http://www.word.mvps.org/FAQs/General/UsingWildcards.htm>

This could be done either after the merge operation or you could have an intermediate step to create a catalog merge, then do the replace on that and use it as the data source for you final merge operation. Either way, the process could be pretty much automated.

--  
Hope this helps.

Please reply to the newsgroup unless you wish to avail yourself of my services on a paid consulting basis.

Doug Robbins – Word MVP

"Chris Stammers" <[ChrisStammers@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:ChrisStammers@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in message [news:573BA9CF-8DF9-4BC2-873B-2DF962796869@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:573BA9CF-8DF9-4BC2-873B-2DF962796869@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Thanks ofr all your help Peter. I will have a talk to our AS400 guys and have a play with it all.

Regards,  
Chris

"Peter Jamieson" wrote:

{ MERGEFIELD

Name/R,1 }

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Unfortunately not so easily. Sometimes it's possible to use "tricks" with fields to extract results, but in this case none springs to mind, and I would guess that macropod doesn't have anything up his sleeve on this one either.

IMO the best approach is probably as follows:

If you can work out the necessary AS400 SQL code you can issue it in a VBA OpenDataSource, which will look something like

```
Sub SetUpDataSource()
```

```
ActiveDocument.MailMerge.OpenDataSource _  
Name:="", _  
Connection:="DSN=your_AS400_ODBC_DSN_name;", _  
SQLStatement:="SELECT *,left(your_field_name,1) AS `leftchar` FROM  
AS400TableName"
```

```
End Sub
```

if you are using a "machine" DSN or

```
Sub SetUpDataSource()
```

```
ActiveDocument.MailMerge.OpenDataSource _  
Name:="the full path name of your file DSN", _  
Connection:="FILEDSN=the full path name of your file DSN;", _  
SQLStatement:="SELECT *,left(your_field_name,1) AS `leftchar` FROM  
AS400TableName"
```

```
End Sub
```

if you are using a File DSN. AS400 SQL may have a different way of doing substrings, e.g. substring(your\_field\_name,1,1) or some such. I can't tell

you the precise syntax for these parameters without an AS400 to hand, but you can base what you do on the existing values which you should be able to

get by running the following VBA with your mail merge main document open

and

its data source attached:

```
Sub GetDataSourceParameters()
```

```
With ActiveDocument.MailMerge.DataSource  
Debug.Print .Name  
Debug.Print .ConnectString  
Debug.Print .QueryString
```

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End With

You may need to look at

<http://word.mvps.org/FAQs/MacrosVBA/CreateAMacro.htm>

and enable the Immediate Window in the VB Editor (use ctrl-G) to see the results of those Debug.Print statements.

You should only need to run

Sub SetUpDataSource() once, then save and close the mail merge main document. However,

a. in my experience getting OpenDataSource to work is not always a trivial

exercise

b. if the users are allowed to set sort and filter options, the approach will fall to pieces.

Another approach may be to use a DATABASE field. As long the ODBC desktop

database drivers are installed on the system doing the merge, you can do it

the following way. However, in this case it will only work if there are no '

and probably " characters in the field you are inspecting (and if the field

contains surnames there are likely to be ' characters, e.g. in Irish

surnames starting with O' ). If you can use the DATABASE field with FoxPro

SQL, you might prefer to do it that way. But this is what you need for Jet:

Create a Windows folder – let's call it c:\i

In that folder, create a plain text file (you can edit it with Notepad) called i.dsn , containing the following text:

```
[ODBC]
DRIVER=Microsoft Text Driver (*.txt; *.csv)
FIL=text
DriverId=27
DefaultDir=C:\i
```

(Setting DefaultDir to the folder that the i.dsn file is in ensures the existence of the folder :-))

Insert the following nested fields in your document:

```
{ DATABASE \d "c:\\i\\i.dsn" \c "FILEDSN=c:\\i\\i.dsn" \s "SELECT left({
MERGEFIELD your_field_name },1)" }
```

Execute it and you should see the single character that you want. The reason

this can't work if your data contains ' marks is because the MERGEFIELD

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field would then contain them and left('text with' in it',1) would be invalid syntactically.

Unfortunately, this is probably not quite enough, because the DATABASE field has been changed at some point so that it sometimes inserts a paragraph mark before the results of the SELECT. In this case we can use a horrible kludge:

```
{ SYMBOL { DATABASE \d "c:\\i\\i.dsn" \c "FILEDSN=c:\\i\\i.dsn" \s
"SELECT
asc(left('{ MERGEFIELD your_field_name } ',1))" \#0 }
```

If you only ever want left(something,1) you can just use

```
{ SYMBOL { DATABASE \d "c:\\i\\i.dsn" \c "FILEDSN=c:\\i\\i.dsn" \s
"SELECT
asc('{ MERGEFIELD your_field_name } ')" \#0 }
```

NB,

– the space after { MERGEFIELD your\_field\_name } is deliberate and is there

to deal with the case where the field is empty

– you need to double up the backslashes in the file names, or use single forward slashes: "c:/i/i.dsn"

If you need to extract other items from the field for example the first word, you typically have to use constructions using instr, e.g.

```
SELECT left('{ MERGEFIELD your_field_name } ', instr('{ MERGEFIELD
your_field_name } ','')-1)
```

Best I can do,

Peter Jamieson

"Chris Stammers" <ChrisStammers@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message [news:4B10A857-3756-49C5-BE76-45D31118DF0B@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:4B10A857-3756-49C5-BE76-45D31118DF0B@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Thanks Peter. I was hoping that you could use something like a { MERGEFIELD Name/R,1 } – in other words, take the first character on the right (or left) – or similar just to get the first letter and leave out anything else in the

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string. I'm used to SQL code (FoxPro in particular) where you can do that sort of thing in a query.

"Peter Jamieson" wrote:

The problem, I think, with using each letter of the alphabet as a search criteria is that in some cases there may be more than one initial so the query wouldn't work in that case would it?

Correct. The thing is to find out what the possible contents are and what exactly you need to extract. I don't know what facilities AS400 SQL has for extracting text from strings but if it doesn't have the necessary then there are other possible ways to do it.

Peter Jamieson

"Chris Stammers"  
<ChrisStammers@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>  
wrote in  
message  
[news:3ED537B3-B088-4319-A18B-8621157CCFF9@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:3ED537B3-B088-4319-A18B-8621157CCFF9@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Dear Peter,

The data source is an AS400 system. The letter template is set up just to

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bring in the relevant fields,  
with some switching or  
formatting  
where  
necessary. I believe the  
name field in question is a  
'label' field  
so  
contains both firstname and  
surname. The problem, I  
think, with  
using  
each  
letter of the alphabet as a  
search criteria is that in  
some cases  
there  
may  
be more than one initial so  
the query wouldn't work in  
that case  
would  
it?  
I'm not familiar with MS  
Query or Word VBA. I will  
see if the fields  
are  
broken down anywhere first  
as I am sure that it is just  
that label  
field  
that  
is the problem.

Thanks for your help.

Regards,  
Chris

"Peter Jamieson" wrote:

Since you  
are  
probably  
connecting  
via MS  
Query and  
sending a  
SQL  
query

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to  
the  
database,  
you ought  
to be able to  
modify the  
SQL that  
MS Query  
generates  
to remove  
any trailing  
".", as long  
as the SQL  
dialect  
being used  
can  
do  
it.

You can do  
that either  
while you  
are working  
in SQL  
Query, or  
directly  
using  
Word VBA  
and the  
OpenDataSource  
method – if  
so, I can  
give you  
some  
more  
hints but it  
would be  
helpful to  
know  
a. which  
database  
you're using  
and whether  
you're  
familiar  
with  
its  
dialect  
of SQL  
b. whether  
you are

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familiar  
with either  
MS Query  
or Word  
VBA

If you  
would  
prefer to use  
Word fields,  
then you  
could use a  
lengthy  
set  
of  
IF fields as  
follows, but  
the exact  
fields would  
depend on  
exactly  
what  
the  
initial field  
can contain,  
e.g., which  
of the  
following  
can it  
contain:

- a. <blank>
- b. lowercase  
unaccented  
latin initial  
(a-z)
- c. uppercase  
unaccented  
latin initial  
(A-Z)
- d. (a), (b) or  
(c) followed  
by a  
period/full  
stop
- e. other  
characters,  
one or  
many, either  
followed by  
a full stop  
or

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not  
f. and so  
on...

But  
assuming  
it's (c)  
followed by  
a period,  
you could  
try the  
following  
fields – all  
the {} need  
to be the  
special field  
braces you  
can  
insert  
using  
ctrl-F9, and  
you would  
need to  
substitute  
the name of  
your initial  
field  
where I've  
used  
myinitialfield

```
{ SET I {  
MERGEFIELD  
myinitialfield  
}  
}{ IF "{ I }"  
= "A*" "A"  
""  
}{ IF "{ I }"  
= "B*" "B"  
""  
}{ IF "{ I }"  
= "C*" "C"  
""  
}  
and so on  
until  
}{ IF "{ I }"  
= "Z*" "Z"  
""  
}
```

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Once you've created the pack of fields you need, you can save them

to

an

Autotext (or another file)

for re-use.

I've used

the wildcard

"\*"

which

matches

multiple

characters

rather than

"?"

(matches

one) or "."

simple

for

flexibility.

If the

Database

field could

contain

lower case

but you

actually

want

uppercase

in your

letter, you

can use

{

MERGEFIELD

myinitialfield

\\*Upper }

in each

comparison.

There are

other

possible

approaches...

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Peter  
Jamieson

"Chris  
Stammers"

<ChrisStammers@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>

wrote in

message

news:2CD4621A-E7DE-47FF-8DB1-F56125D06058@xxxxxxxxxx

Hello,

I  
have  
to  
prepare  
a  
letter  
and  
the  
client  
has  
requested  
that  
the  
full  
stop  
after  
a  
person's  
initial  
be  
removed.

This  
is  
in  
our  
mainframe  
database  
like  
this  
and  
as  
such  
can't  
be  
removed  
from  
there.  
Is

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there  
a  
way  
to  
use  
part  
of  
a  
field  
or  
tell  
it  
to  
remove  
punctuation?  
I  
am  
using  
word  
2000.

Thanks,  
Chris