Save Time With “Track Changes” and “Insert Comment” Functions

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WE LIVE IN A rapidly changing society, with incredible technological growth. As more is expected from each of us, effective time management becomes increasingly important. Airports are crowded with people doing business over cellular phones and sending electronic messages. Commuters are using travel time to complete deals or finish work as they trek to and from work. It is vital to maximize our efforts and minimize the time we spend on certain duties. With this idea in mind, we decided to present two features of Microsoft® Word and Excel that can help those of you who review documents on a regular basis. This article discusses the “Track Changes” and “Insert Comment” options available in Microsoft Office, version 1998 through 2002. It is not an advertisement for Microsoft products, nor does the Microsoft Corporation endorse it. The following material will take you through an example using both program options.

Imagine this scenario: You are in the middle of a project that requires multiple reviews from different project members, but you need to leave for a 5-day trip. You need to review a paper and have the comments to someone in 1 day. Several people will review the document and return it to you with their comments.

This scenario poses problems that require time and effort to overcome. In the past, the only solutions were to carry cumbersome paper documents and send hard copies through the mail or by fax. E-mail has provided new and more efficient alternatives, allowing users to attach documents and send them back and forth very quickly with little effort, greatly reducing turnaround time. The Track Changes and Insert Comment functions can be used with Word documents to reduce confusion when many reviewers are involved and decrease the time associated with modifying and reviewing material.

**Track Changes**

The Track Changes function is a component of Microsoft Office that uses revision marks to show changes made to a document. Additions made to an existing document while the “Track changes while editing” option is chosen
are displayed in a different font color than the original, with the text underlined. Deletions from an existing document appear with a solid line through the text. Holding the mouse pointer over the edited text will cause a pop-up window to appear, which displays the computer-user information, the date and time of the changes, and whether the text was deleted or inserted.

To illustrate this option, type the following paragraph into a new Word document:

I am so busy and still need to review three articles this weekend. My back is beginning to hurt because of all of the paperwork I am lugging around. This project will never come together because I am spending all my time changing and rechanging proposals as different people complete reviews.

Once you have typed this paragraph, select the Tools menu. When the pop-up menu appears, select Track Changes, then Highlight Changes... (Figure 1), and then check the “Track changes while editing” box (Figure 2). Next, delete the first sentence you just typed. The text that you deleted should change color and have a solid line through it, as shown below. Scroll the cursor over the deleted text and wait for the pop-up window.

I am so busy and still need to review three articles this weekend. My back is beginning to hurt because of all of the paperwork I am lugging around. This project will never come together because I am spending all my time changing and rechanging proposals as different people complete reviews.

Next, add the following sentence to the paragraph:

I can bring my computer home with me and use “Track Changes” and “Insert Comment” functions to save time.

This addition should be underlined and in a different color than the original text of the paragraph. Scroll over the new text and a pop-up window should appear with information on the deletion.

I am so busy and still need to review three articles this weekend. My back is beginning to hurt because of all of the paperwork I am lugging around. This project will never come together because I am spending all my time changing and rechanging proposals as different people complete reviews. I can bring my computer home with me and use “Track Changes” and “Insert Comment” functions to save time.

After a document has been edited using the Track Changes option, you can choose whether or not to accept the changes. Click on the Tools menu, then select the Track Changes and Accept or Reject Changes... menu options. A pop-up screen will appear that allows you