

Microsoft Word's Toolbar Tweaks for All

Use Microsoft Word every day? Millions do simply taking the way its developers designed the program's menus as the way it has to be. With a few customizations, you can make changes that better suit the way you use the program.

A toolbar is an area in Word (and other Microsoft Office programs) that contains buttons or menus or a combination of both. Generally the toolbars are located just below your menu options (File, Edit, View, Insert, etc.). The buttons and menus displayed allow you to perform certain actions called commands.

You are probably most familiar with the Standard and Formatting toolbars. The Standard toolbar lists the icons to save a document, print a document, spell check and more. The Formatting toolbar is the area for changing the font, font size, left or right justify, to name a few.

You may not know that you can change these toolbars to display only the buttons of the commands you use most often. This helps clear out clutter and makes the precise action easier to find.

For example, over two-dozen buttons can be assigned to the Standard toolbar. Many of those commands, such as Document Map (a separate pane that displays a list of headings in the document), you'll probably never use.

To remove Document Map from the Standard toolbar, click **Tools>>Customize**. Click the **Toolbars** tab and make sure **Standard** is highlighted. Left-click the icon for Document Map and drag the button off the toolbar. In the **Customize** dialog box, click **Close**.

Or, click the **Toolbar Options** (this is the little arrow on the far-right side of the Standard toolbar) and place your mouse over **Add or Remove Buttons**. Clear the checkmarks next to any type of command you don't use regularly. Alternatively, you can add buttons to the toolbar by placing a checkmark next to the command.

You can also add commands to a toolbar that aren't listed in **Toolbar Options**. For example, I use the **Word Count** command often when writing my columns. Instead of clicking **Tools>>Word Count**, I can add that command to a toolbar.

To do this, click **Tools>>Customize**. Click the **Commands Tab**. Scroll to **Tools** in the **Categories** pane. In the **Commands** pane, scroll down until you find **Word Count**. Left-click on **Word Count** and drag it up to a toolbar (you can drag it to any toolbar).

Once the commands that you want in the toolbars are displayed, make it easier on yourself by displaying the name of the command along with the icon. For example, the icon used for the command to “paste” is a picture of a clipboard with a tiny document over it. You can see that icon every day for years and still have a hard time associating it with the command “paste.”

To change the icon, click **Tools>>Customize**. Place your cursor over the icon and right-click on the button. Here you can select a different button image, select **Text Only** or **Image and Text**.

There are more than the **Standard** and **Formatting** toolbars. Click **View>>Toolbars** to access them. You’ll probably never need many of the toolbars. But some are worth exploring. If you track changes of documents, the **Review** toolbar will come in handy. You’ll also find toolbars for **Drawing**, **Forms** and more.

Finally, understand that you can change the location of toolbars. You might find it useful to dock one toolbar at the top of the screen and another at the bottom or the left side of the screen. To move a toolbar, place your cursor on the leftmost side of the toolbar. The cursor will turn into four arrows. Left-click the mouse and drag the toolbar to the area you want it.