

Four hot text tips from Crabby

By [Crabby](#)

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Over the years, I've often been asked—by friends, by family, by Crabby readers—what some of my best Office tips and shortcuts are. Honestly, it's hard to just spout, off the top of my head (which would be rather gruesome anyway), the miscellaneous tricks that I've discovered, unearthed, and come across by accident over the many years I've been writing about Office. So today, instead of spouting I'll type up four that I think are worth your while knowing.

Tip #1 Make F2 your butler

When you want to edit text within a shape in Visio, sometimes double-clicking doesn't get you into text mode. Same with Excel when you want to edit right within a cell.

- In **Visio**, select a shape, press F2, and edit away. Press ESC to exit editing mode.
- In **Excel**, do the same thing except select a cell instead of a shape.

Tip #2 Filters and special characters in Access

When you apply a filter, certain characters, such as *, %, and ?, have a special meaning when specified in a filter text box. To disregard the special meaning of a character, enclose it in square brackets [], like this: [*].

Tip #3 The anti-Format Painter

You know that you can copy, with one swoosh (that word isn't a Nike trademark is it?), all the formatting from one section of text to another with the aptly named **Format Painter** . But did you know that in Word, PowerPoint, and Publisher 2010, you can clear all that formatting? Just select your text, click the **Clear Formatting** button , and all your text is in its undies, ready for you to play dress-up.

Tip #4 I did it my way: Create your own keyboard shortcuts

If a command you use frequently doesn't have a built-in keyboard shortcut (the nerve!), you can create one:

1. Click the **File** and then click **Options**.

2. Click **Customize Ribbon** on the left, and then click **Customize** next to **Keyboard Shortcuts** (at the bottom of that middle pane).

This opens the **Customize Keyboard** dialog box, where you can choose the categories and commands you want and assign keyboard shortcuts.

Note: This works with Word and any other Office program that uses keyboard shortcuts (which is, I believe...all of them).

Want more? Tell me. Talk to me. I'm chock full of...tips.

— Crabby

P.S. Happy 77th, Dad: Violinist, music teacher, librarian, United flight attendant (at age 73!), world traveler, and...all around good Dad (and Papa).