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The Fastest Way to Draft and Print Correspondence in Microsoft Word: Three Methods Compared

Industry Analysis — Real World Testing of Word LX

By Neil J. Squillante & Warren Christopher Freiberg
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How Much Time Does Word LX Save?

- ☑ Drafting letters involves tedious, low value formatting work.
- ☑ We compared Microsoft Word with and without Word LX.
- ☑ Test #1 compares preparing a letter for drafting.
- ☑ Test #2 compares printing several versions of the letter.
- ☑ Word LX saves 4 minutes 3 seconds per letter.

Let's face it — drafting letters and other documents encompasses a fair amount of grunt work. We spend way too much time navigating Microsoft Word's ribbon and menus rather than actually drafting. The same goes for printing copies of the letter — BCC copy, file copy, signature copy, envelope label, etc. If we could reduce the time spent on this grunt work, we could reallocate it to higher value work. How much time exactly? Good question.

For this *TL Research Learnpaper*, TechnoLawyer conducted a realistic test in which we observed a Word expert prepare a letter using three methods. We timed each method to identify whether one is more efficient than the others and by how large a margin. We also observed and timed how long it took the Word expert to print various copies of the letter and an address label using two methods. We then extrapolated the differential to demonstrate how much time lawyers like you and law firms like yours can potentially save.

Test #1: Formatting a Letter

Even in the email era, lawyers in many practice areas still draft and mail formal letters. For example, I practice Social Security and Disability law. I draft approximately 10 letters per week, as do each of my nine colleagues. That's 100 letters per week. (All first person references in this Learnpaper refer to Chris Freiberg.)

Given this volume, TechnoLawyer teamed up with Infoware to see how much time law firms could save on their letters. Infoware sells the award-winning Word LX, Microsoft Word add-in that automates document formatting and other tasks across a law firm, not only to save time but also ensure consistency.

The test we designed prepares a letter for drafting by an attorney. We did not test drafting time, but rather the formatting and other preparatory tasks, such as adding the name and address of the recipient. Our expert used the Office 365 version of Microsoft Word 2016 for Windows.

See Figure 1 for the completed letter generated by Word LX, which contains the following elements:

- Firm Logo
- Date
- Author Information
- Recipient Name and Full Address
- Attention/Subject Line
- File Number
- Delivery Handling
- Closing
- Signature Line
- One CC Recipient
- One BCC Recipient

We created three scenarios for this test:

1. Start with a blank document.
2. Start with a custom Microsoft Word template.
3. Use the letter template in Word LX.

See Figure 2 for the results.

SCENARIO 1: STARTING WITH A BLANK DOCUMENT (5:31)

It's unlikely you start with a blank Word document each time you draft a letter (we hope), but we thought it important to test this method to create a baseline — the worst way to draft a letter. Having this baseline adds more context to the other, more realistic scenarios.

Our expert clicks in the Header and then clicks Insert to add the firm's logo from a directory. Next, he adds the firm's address to the Footer. This was a bit of a cheat because modern letterhead designs often place both the logo and firm address in the header, which would have required significantly more work adjusting the placement of each.

Even in the email era, lawyers in many practice areas still draft and mail formal letters. For example, I draft approximately 10 letters per week, as do each of my nine colleagues. That's 100 letters per week. Given this volume, TechnoLawyer teamed up with Infoware to see how much time law firms could save on their letters.

He then types the name of the author, and uses Insert to add today's date using the full name of the month and four-digit year as is our fictitious firm's custom. He then uses the tab key to right align the date.

Our expert then accesses Word's Address Book to add the name and address of the recipient. Word enters this information using double spacing, which our expert changes to single spacing.

Turning to the body of the letter, our expert types the subject line, greeting, closing, and signature line.

He then circles back to the Address Book to add the author's email address and telephone number. He again changes the double spacing to single spacing.

Next, our expert adds CC and BCC lines. He needs to hide the BCC line, so he selects the text, right clicks, selects Font, and checks the Hidden box.

Finally, our expert adds a delivery line.

Time: 5:31 (5 minutes 31 seconds)

SCENARIO 2: CUSTOM WORD TEMPLATE (3:21)

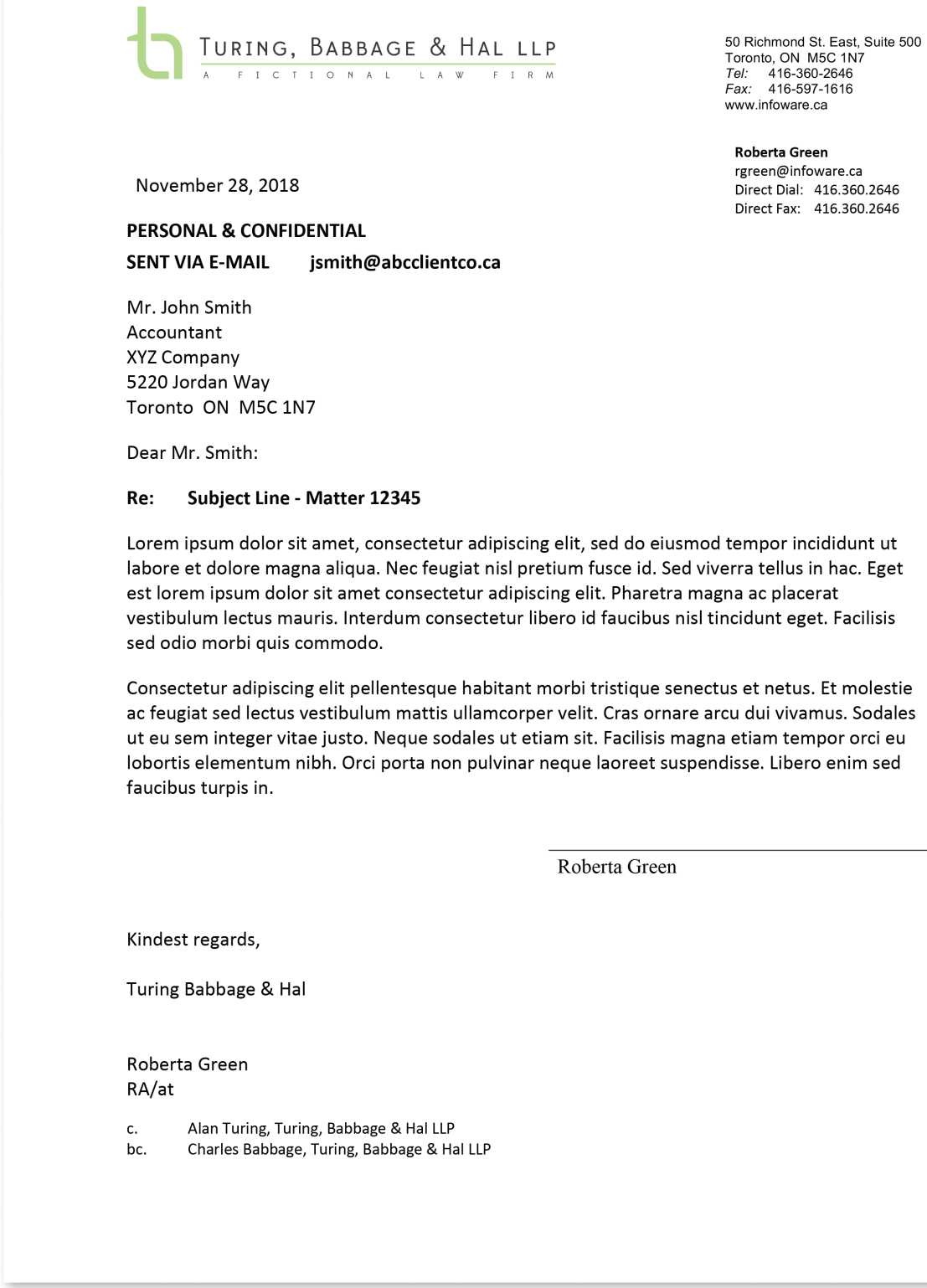
Scenario 2 is likely the starting point for most law firms — a custom Word template with the firm's logo and address already in the header, and today's date inserted at the top.

Our expert still has to perform all the other steps from Scenario 1, as they involve information that changes in each letter. The premade template ends up saving 2:10 (2 minutes 10 seconds).

Time: 3:21 (3 minutes 21 seconds)

SCENARIO 3: WORD LX LETTER TEMPLATE (1:05)

FIGURE 1



TURING, BABBAGE & HAL LLP
A FICTIONAL LAW FIRM

50 Richmond St. East, Suite 500
Toronto, ON M5C 1N7
Tel: 416-360-2646
Fax: 416-597-1616
www.infoware.ca

Roberta Green
rgreen@infoware.ca
Direct Dial: 416.360.2646
Direct Fax: 416.360.2646

November 28, 2018

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

SENT VIA E-MAIL **jsmith@abcclientco.ca**

Mr. John Smith
Accountant
XYZ Company
5220 Jordan Way
Toronto ON M5C 1N7

Dear Mr. Smith:

Re: Subject Line - Matter 12345

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Nec feugiat nisl pretium fusce id. Sed viverra tellus in hac. Eget est lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipiscing elit. Pharetra magna ac placerat vestibulum lectus mauris. Interdum consectetur libero id faucibus nisl tincidunt eget. Facilisis sed odio morbi quis commodo.

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Roberta Green

Kindest regards,

Turing Babbage & Hal

Roberta Green
RA/at

c. Alan Turing, Turing, Babbage & Hal LLP
bc. Charles Babbage, Turing, Babbage & Hal LLP

The final version of the letter generated by Word LX.

For the final scenario, our expert creates the letter using Word LX.

Word LX adds a toolbar to Word's ribbon. Our expert clicks on this toolbar, and then selects New Docs. This presents the Word LX dialog listing document templates and related settings. He configures the following settings entirely within this dialog:

- Selects Letter template.
- Searches for and selects recipient.
- Types the subject line
- Chooses delivery method from a menu of choices.
- Selects the author.
- Selects the closing.
- Selects CC and searches for and selects recipient.
- Selects BCC and searches for and selects recipient.

When finished, Word LX generates a professionally designed letter in Word that's much more attractive than what our expert created in the other two scenarios. Both the firm's logo and address are in the header, for example. See Figure 1.

Our expert then adds a signature line using the function in the Word LX toolbar, completing all the tasks other than drafting the letter.

Total Time: 1:05 (1 minute 5 seconds)

The two tests described in this Learnpaper only scratch the surface of Word LX's functionality. Law firms have reported to Infoware that on average Word LX saves lawyers 39 minutes per day and assistants 58 minutes per day. Word LX has additional benefits beyond saving time such as generating more professional looking letters, and ensuring document consistency.

Test #2: Printing Multiple Copies and an Envelope Label

Like those cooking shows that transition to the finished meal, imagine that a lawyer drafts the letter. Now he has to:

- Print a copy stamped "File Copy."
- Print a copy for the BCC recipient.
- Print two final copies for signature.
- Print an address label for the envelope.

This test pits old-fashioned printing in Windows against Word LX's MultiPrint feature, which processes multiple printing tasks simultaneously. See Figure 3 for the results.

SCENARIO #1: OLD-FASHIONED WINDOWS PRINTING (2:43)

Our expert clicks on Word's Design tab, selects Watermark, selects Custom Watermark, and types "File Copy." He then prints this version for the file copy before removing the watermark.

Next, our expert selects Options from the File menu, and checks the box to print hidden text. He then prints a copy of the letter for the BCC recipient.

Our expert then prints two final copies for signature.

Finally, he clicks on Word's Mailings tab, selects Labels, chooses to print a single label, and prints the label.

Total Time: 2:43 (2 minutes 43 seconds)

SCENARIO #2: WORD LX'S MULTIPRINT (0:56)

Word LX doesn't only automate document creation but also printing via its MultiPrint function on the toolbar. Our expert clicks this button, bringing up the MultiPrint dialog box.

He then configures the following settings:

- Selects Final Copy and enters a value of 2 to print two copies for signature.

FIGURE 2

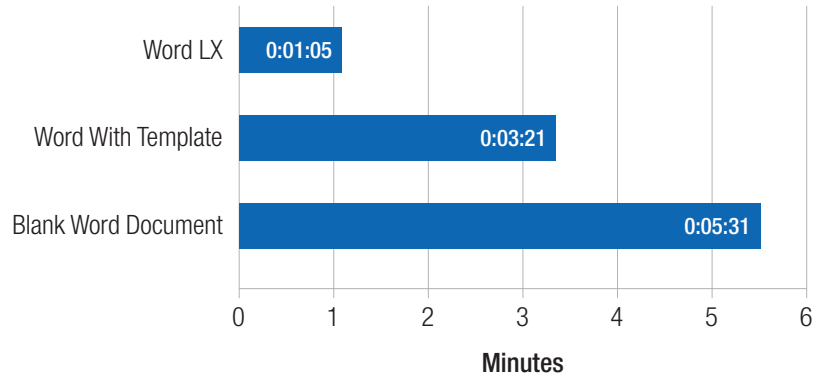


FIGURE 3

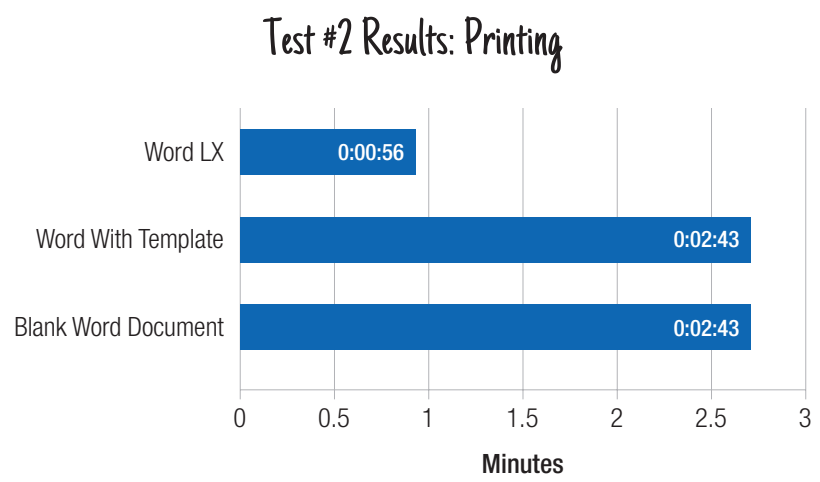
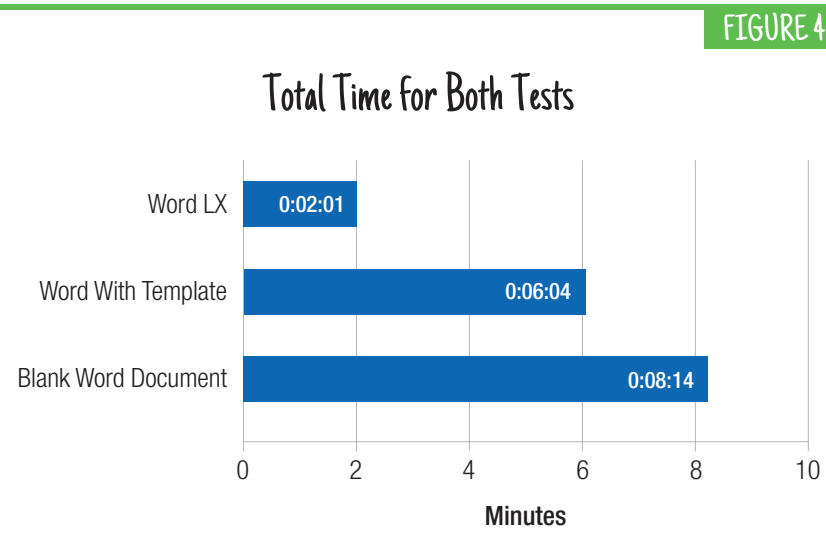


FIGURE 4



In my practice, Word LX would save me 4:03 per letter (4 minutes 3 seconds). Assuming an eight-hour workday, Word LX collectively frees up more than 4 workdays per lawyer per year solely for letter drafting. In my firm of 10 lawyers, that's more than 40 workdays freed up for more productive use (or time off and wellness).

- Selects Letterhead on Plain to print to the tray with plain paper.
- Selects File Copy and the File Copy stamp to print the file copy.
- Selects DocID to add a document ID to the letter.
- Selects Address Label and chooses which label position to print.

All these printing instructions then get carried out. Printing the BCC copy requires using MultiPrint a second time.

Total Time: 0:56 (56 seconds)

Word LX Would Save My Firm More Than 4 Workdays Per Year Per Lawyer

In my practice, Word LX would save me 4:03 per letter (4 minutes 3 seconds). See Figure 4. As I noted above, I draft approximately 10 letters per week. Doing the math, that's 40 minutes saved per week, 2 hours 42 minutes saved per month, and 32 hours 24 minutes saved per year, assuming four weeks of vacation.

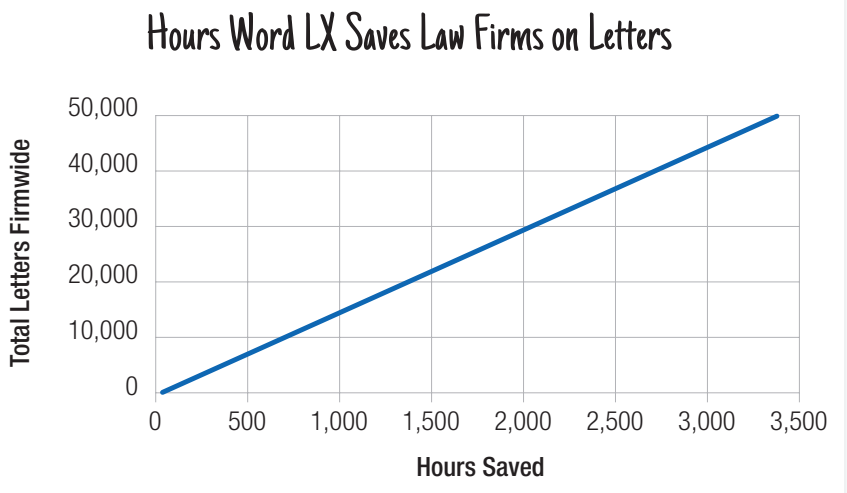
Recall that 10 lawyers work in my firm (including me) and we all have similar workloads. With everyone using Word LX, our firm would collectively save 6 hours 45 minutes per week, 27 hours per month, and 13 days 12 hours per year.

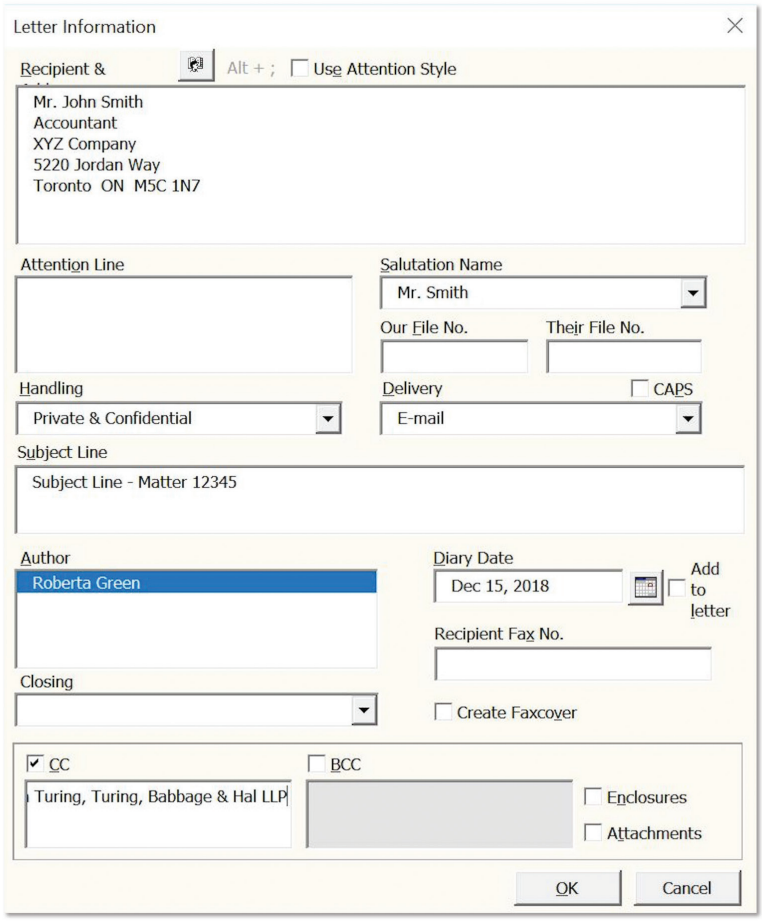
No one works 24 hours a day. Assuming an eight-hour workday, Word LX collectively frees up more than 4 workdays per lawyer per year solely for letter drafting. In my firm of 10 lawyers, that's more than 40 workdays freed up for more productive use (or time off and wellness).

Each firm differs of course. Figure 5 gives you an idea of how much time Word LX would save at various volumes of letters produced.

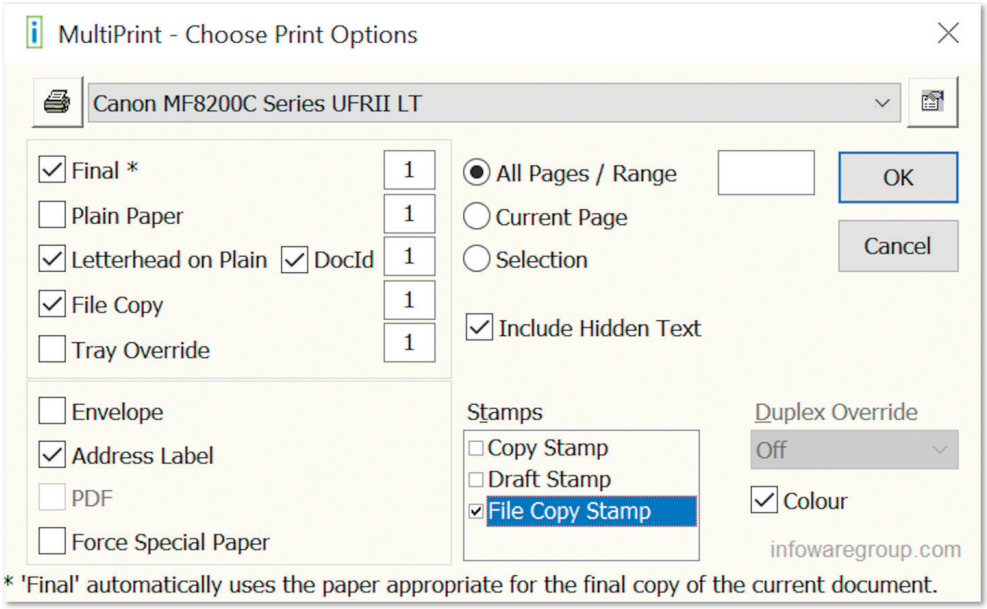
We suspect your firm can find a better use for all this time than formatting and printing Word documents!

FIGURE 5





Word LX groups all the formatting options for the letter.



Word LX's MultiPrint lives up to its name.

Putting Word LX in Context

The two tests described in this *Learnpaper* only scratch the surface of Word LX's functionality. For example, our expert showed us how Word LX can change the author of a letter in seconds, whereas this would require a manual process in Microsoft Word without Word LX.

Law firms have reported to Infoware that on average Word LX saves lawyers 39 minutes per day and assistants 58 minutes per day.

This time saved stems from all of Word LX's functions, including:

- Grouping all legal-specific features into the Word LX tab on Word's ribbon, which eliminates having to hunt through menus and toolbars.
- Generating documents based on professionally-designed and where appropriate branded templates (such as a letter).
- Formatting tools that adhere to the firm's requirements and which automate tasks such as paragraph numbering, tables of authorities and tables of contents, signature lines and watermarks, and pasted material from external sources.
- Document drafting automation (document assembly).
- Integration with third-party software, including accounting, customer relationship management, and document management.

Word LX has additional benefits beyond saving time such as generating more professional looking letters, and ensuring document consistency across every lawyer in your firm.

Word LX ranked in the top 10 in our TL NewsWire Top 25 Products of 2017 Awards. The results we observed in this *Learnpaper* and the data reported by law firms explain its appeal.

Michael Barrons
Vice President, Marketing & Operations
Infoware
50 Richmond Street East
Suite 500
Toronto, ON, M5C 1N7
(855) 660-2446
michael.barrons@infowaregroup.com
www.infowaregroup.com

Neil J. Squillante is the founder and publisher of TechnoLawyer, an award-winning network of free email newsletters for lawyers and law office administrators. Many consider TechnoLawyer the only email subscription they need. Previously, Neil practiced commercial litigation at Am Law 100 firm Willkie Farr & Gallagher. He received his J.D. from UCLA School of Law and his B.A. from Duke University.

Warren Christopher Freiberg spent more than a decade working for newspapers around the country before starting law school. After graduating cum laude from Valparaiso University Law School where he was a member of both law review and moot court, Freiberg was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2015. He continues to write for a variety of websites, and is an associate attorney with the firm of Midwest Disability.

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