

Alt-Macro Overload: Increase Your Options with Keyboard Layouts
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Important: The macro discussed below is designed to help you create new keyboards – NOT add macros to an existing keyboard.

"I need a bigger alphabet," Eric told me. "I already have a macro for every single Alt-letter combination on my keyboard, and I need more. Maybe I need a Russian keyboard!"

Have you had this problem? You've created so many Alt-letter macros you've run out of letters to use? The solution? Get acquainted with WordPerfect's Keyboard Layout feature.

The Keyboard Layout feature gives you the luxury of a virtually unlimited number of single-keystroke macros. You can "collect" your macros into a common group or keyboard, then assign a name to that keyboard. For example, you might have a keyboard that contains macros for letter writing and creating forms, and another for performing accounting functions or managing documents and disks.

Keyboards are great for placing macros with similar functions together. For example, you can have all of your letter-writing macros in one place and be able to run them by pressing almost any Ctrl and Alt key combination. This feature lets you change the way your computer reacts when a key is pressed.

Copying your Alt-letter macros to a keyboard gives you the freedom to remove them from your macro directory. You'll then be able to create new Alt-letter macros as the need arises.

Setting up

The first step in moving your macros to a keyboard is to make an inventory of your macro directory. Press List (F5), type the path to your macro directory and press (Enter). You'll probably want to print a list of your macro directory for reference when you create a keyboard. To do this, at the List Files menu press Print (Shift-F7), then press Exit (F7).

To create a new keyboard, press Setup (Shift-F1), (5) Keyboard Layout and (4) Create. At the prompt "Keyboard Filename:," enter the name of this new macro collection, such as Letters, for your letter-writing macros, or Forms, for your form macros. A keyboard file will be created by the name you type, along with the extension .WPK – for example, LETTERS.WPK. The macros you assign to that keyboard are contained in that keyboard file.

With the keyboard name now displayed on the screen, you're ready to begin adding your macros to this keyboard. With the keyboard name highlighted, press (7) Edit to display the Keyboard: Edit screen. At this point, there shouldn't be any keyboard macros listed.

Press (7) Retrieve. At the "Key:" prompt, press the key or keystroke combination you'd like to use to execute the first macro in this group. For example, to assign a macro to Ctrl-K, press (Ctrl-K), or press (Alt-A) to assign a macro to Alt-A. You'll be able to assign most of the Ctrl or Alt key combinations you can think of.

Once the keystroke is chosen, the prompt "Macro:" appears. The List (F5) feature is not available to you at this point, so you'll need to refer to the list that you printed earlier. Type the name of the first macro, such as "alt-a" or "letter" (you don't need to type the .WPM extension), and press (Enter). The keystroke combination and description are placed on the list. An action similar to {Key Macro 1} is also added to the menu.

Repeat the (7) Retrieve process for each of the remaining macros you wish to add to this collection. Assign a unique keystroke and be sure to mark your printed list as each macro is retrieved.

Other options

Other options are available at the Keyboard: Edit menu.

- 1 Action displays the Key: Action screen, which is similar to the macro editing screen. All of the normal functions at the macro editing screen are available at this screen.
- 2 Description can be used to modify the current key description. The description may be up to 39 characters long.
- 3 Original sets the key definition that the cursor is highlighting back to its original function and deletes the key macro from the current keyboard.
- 4 Create allows you to create or assign a new function for a key. Once you specify which key you want to create, you'll be prompted for a description of the key. Then you'll be able to modify the key at the key editing screen.
- 5 Move allows you to change the keystroke assigned to any of the macros on the list. After highlighting the macro you want to move, press (5) Move and press the keystroke to which you want the key's function assigned. The new key definition will then appear in the properly sorted order.
- 6 Save Macro saves a copy of the highlighted keyboard macro as a .WPM macro file in your default macro directory. This option is especially useful when you want to transfer a keyboard macro from one keyboard file to another. Just save the keyboard macro you want to move, then (7) Retrieve that macro in the other keyboard layout.

Using the layout

Once you've placed each of your listed macros within a keyboard, you're ready to try it out. Press Exit (F7) to go to the Setup: Keyboard Layout menu. With your new keyboard highlighted, press (1) Select. The name of your new keyboard will appear next to option (5) Keyboard Layout. Press Exit (F7) to return to your document screen.

As long as this keyboard is selected, you can run the key macros contained in it. If you want to change or add more keys, edit the keyboard by pressing Setup (Shift-F1), (5) Keyboard Layout. Highlight your keyboard and press (7) Edit.

To edit the macro assigned to a key, highlight the key and press (1) Action. To create a new key, press (4) Create and follow the directions given earlier.

When you begin using your keyboard macro, you may hear your macro directory breathe a faint sigh of relief. You'll never again need to search to find the only unused key for a quick macro. Now you know the way to limitless macro creation. You may even find that you have enough macros to create five or six keyboards. Keyboards are a great place to keep together all the macros that you tend to use.

Speeding things up

The process of creating a keyboard may leave you wishing there was a quicker, easier way. The included KEY.WPM macro will rapidly lead you through the creation of one or more keyboards.

The macro moves you between the Keyboard Edit screen and List Files, where the macros are selected and placed in your keyboard.

Using the macro

To use the macro, at a document screen, press Macro (Alt-F10), type "key" and press (Enter).

The macro first prompts you to enter the name of your new keyboard. Once this is done, you're taken to the List Files menu to select the macro you want in your keyboard. When you decide that you don't wish to add more macros to the keyboard, you're given the option to select the newly created keyboard. You'll then be returned to the document screen.

If you find that you've inadvertently remapped vital keystrokes that make program operations difficult, press (Ctrl-6). This temporarily disables the selected keyboard. Pressing (Ctrl-6) twice will reactivate the previously selected keyboard.

Understanding the macro

The macro uses the {TEXT} command (line 3) to display the prompt Enter keyboard name (8 characters or less):. The name you enter is assigned to variable "name." Next, your macro directory is displayed. The {MENU OFF} command on line 5 turns off the menu at the bottom of the screen in List Files so that the prompt highlight the macro you want to add, then press (1) Select: (lines 6 and 7) is displayed. After (1) is pressed, line 8 assigns what the cursor is highlighting to variable 5. It then exits the List Files menu and enters the Keyboard Layout menu (line 9).

A new keyboard is created, then edited with the name you entered. At the Key: prompt, you'll press the key combination that you want the macro assigned to. The macro is then retrieved and the prompt Add or change this description? (Y/N) (line 22) appears. If you answer (Y) Yes to this prompt, you're given the chance to type the desired description. Then the prompt Add another macro to this keyboard? (line 26) appears. If you want to add another macro, you're taken back to the List Files menu to select another macro. When you don't want to add any more macros, the prompt Select new keyboard? (line 31) appears. If you answer (Y) Yes, the newly created keyboard is selected, you're taken back to the document screen and the macro quits. If you answer (N) No, the macro just leaves you at the document screen and quits.

By using this system, you have quick access to a virtually unlimited number of macros. And you get to stay with the alphabet you know and love.