

Quickly Find and Replace Symbols in Word Documents

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Takeaway:

Replacing all instances of a symbol with another symbol in a Word document sounds like it would be a straightforward task; unfortunately, it's not. Here's a quick way to work around the glitch that makes this exercise problematic.

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You're almost at the end of drafting your new client's contract when you realize that you used the registration symbol (®) throughout the Microsoft Word document instead of the copyright symbol (©). You would think you could simply go to Edit | Find and replace all instances of the ® symbol with the © symbol; unfortunately, it's not that easy.

The problem is that when the Find And Replace dialog box is open, Word's menus and toolbars are unavailable, making it difficult to find and replace symbols in your document. And, you cannot use Insert | Symbol to enter the actual symbols in the Find What: text box.

If a symbol has a shortcut key combination assigned to it, you could enter the symbol's shortcut key in the Find What: text box but not all symbols are assigned a shortcut.

To work around this problem, follow these steps:

1. With the Find And Replace dialog box open, select the Replace tab.
2. Select an instance of the specific symbol in your document and press [Ctrl]C.
3. Put your cursor in the Find What: text box and press [Ctrl]V.
4. Select an instance of the symbol with which you want to replace the current symbol and press [Ctrl]C.
5. Put your cursor in the Replace With: text box and press [Ctrl]V.
6. Press the Replace All button and close the dialog box when all the symbols have been replaced.

This simple trick can save you loads of time when you need to make a change to the symbols in your document.