

Digital Tip in Action: Creating an Index

[00:00] Indexes make long documents more reader-friendly, and they're easy to create. In Microsoft Word, you can simply mark the entries that should be indexed, and the software will automatically generate an index. Although any automatically generated index will still need careful review and editing, it can save you valuable project time.

[00:30] This tutorial covers how to create an index in Microsoft Word. After thinking about which subjects you want to appear in the index, consider how you would like to reference those subjects. In Word, you can create entries that reference either individual words or phrases in the text, or general subjects covered over a range of pages. Let's start creating an index

[01:00] for this document. To create an entry for an individual word or phrase in the text, highlight the text you wish to use as an index entry. Choose Insert, then Index and Tables. Ensure you're in the Index tab, and click Mark Entry. A dialog box will appear. Name the entry as either a main entry or a subentry. Then, consider the options. To refer

[01:30] readers to the page or pages on which the entry appears, choose Current Page. To refer readers to another index entry, choose Cross-reference, and type in the index entry you wish to cross-reference. To mark the index entry on a single page, click Mark. To mark all occurrences of this text in the document, click Mark All. Continue marking entries, or select Close. After you mark all of the desired entries for your index, you may notice that the text in your document

[02:00] has become cluttered with symbols surrounding each indexed word. To hide these symbols, click the Show All Non-Printing Characters button in the standard toolbar. In addition to marking individual words and phrases, you may want to create index entries for subject matter that spans a range of pages. It's a similar process except that you must first create a bookmark telling

[02:30] Word where the page range will start. You can then create an index entry for the full range. Insert a bookmark by highlighting your text, clicking Insert and Bookmark at the bottom of that menu, naming the bookmark, and selecting Add. We've just created a bookmark associated with the word "visuals." Next, in the document, click the end of the range you'd like to index.

[03:00] Now, as before, choose Insert and Index and Tables. Ensure you're in the Index tab and click Mark Entry. A dialog box will appear. In the Main Entry box, name your entry. Under Options, choose Page Range. In the Bookmark box, type or choose the bookmark name you entered previously. Click Mark. You can continue to mark entries or select Close.

[03:30] We've just created an index entry for subject matter that spans a range of pages. As before, you'll see a number of symbols surrounding the text, and you can hide them by clicking the Show All Non-Printing Characters button in the standard toolbar. Once you have marked and named all of the words, phrases, and sections of your document that require index entries,

[04:00] you're ready to move on to designing and building the index. Click where you'd like the finished index to appear. Then choose Insert and Index and Tables. You can select and preview different format designs or modify your own. Once you're pleased with the format, click OK to insert the index into the document. After your index has been created, you can continue revising, editing, and adding directly

[04:30] to it just as you would any other part of your document. If you need to index a highly complex document, you may want to consider specialized indexing software designed for use by professional indexers and publishers. Indexes make long documents more reader-friendly, and they're easy to create.