



## AT THE LIBRARY

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***“What are shortcut keys? You can quickly accomplish tasks you perform frequently by using shortcut keys — one or more keys you press on the keyboard to complete a task.”***

-From the Microsoft Word Help menu

I recently found myself yet again demonstrating keyboard shortcuts for a frustrated computer user at the library.

“Control” (I held down the control key) “plus A” (I held down the A) “gives you ‘select all’” I told her and I pointed to the screen, where everything was now highlighted. “See?” She nodded. “Okay, now, control” (I pointed to the control key, which she dutifully held down) “and C” (she held that down, too) “gives you copy.” She did it, but since nothing visible happens at that point, I could see there was some confusion. “Okay, now let’s go to Word.”

I opened a blank Microsoft Word document and clicked on the screen. “See the cursor, that vibrating bar?” Nod. “Okay, that’s where you are going to paste. Hold down the control key again” I directed. She did, almost comfortable with the idea now. “Now hold down the V key.” She did that, too, and magically (well, it

seems like magic) everything she had just selected was copied onto the screen in front of her. I could see astonishment and even a little bit of comprehension on her face. “So,” I reviewed, “control plus A gives you select all. Control plus C gives you copy. And,” I paused, “control plus...” I looked at her. “V?” she said. “Yes, control plus V gives you paste.” I quickly jotted down all three on scratch paper and went back to the reference desk.

Within seconds, another patron came up to me. “Could you please write that down for me, too?” he asked. I did and he went back to the computer to practice.

As I was contemplating whether I should type it up and tape it on all the computers, another person came to the desk to ask about websites. As I was answering her, I made a reference to blogs, which – I explained in case she didn’t know – is short for weblog and is sort of like an online journal.

"Oh," she told me, "I felt like I should know that and I have been afraid to ask anyone."

This really made me think. How many people, I wondered, are confused about these not very complicated topics? Just in case, here are a few more tips for those of you who have hesitated to ask.

The left-click button on a mouse is the one you use all the time, whenever you are supposed to click on something. But the right-click gives you some choices - it provides shortcuts to many of those items at the top of the screen, like paragraph or font. You also use the right-click when Word underlines something in green or red, telling you there's a problem. Right-click anywhere on the colored line and you will see suggestions for how to make it better or spell a word correctly. If you don't like any of the suggestions, you can click on "ignore" and the under-

lining will disappear. To get out of right-click, left click.

Besides cut-and-paste, which I use all the time, the other handy shortcuts include control-b for bold, control-i for italics and control-u for underline. Highlight the word or phrase and then use the shortcut. And then there is the wonderful "undo." If you have ever been afraid to change something in case you won't be able to get back to where you were, this is the shortcut for you: control-z, which will undo your last action. And if you change your mind again? Control-y will bring it right back.