FIND & REPLACE – A writer's best friend
By Nikki Logan

A few years back, on the eve of a competition and when I was super new to this whole writing gig, I went through my MS line-by-line manually finding and adjusting every single instance of a double-space after a full stop. Thousands of them. I vowed then to find a better way and—surprise, surprise—Microsoft had beaten me to it.

Find & Replace —CTRL+F or select 'find' on the 'edit' menu—lets MS Word users move quickly through their MS, finding specific text, symbols, passages or inserts and replacing them. But it's <u>so</u> much more.

Here's loosely how *Find & Replace* works…

FIND SPECIFIC TEXT: CTRL+F then type in the text you want to find and click FIND NEXT until you've gone through whole doc manually. Useful for jumping through the MS tweaking all the instances of a known serial repeat word.

HIGHLIGHT ALL INSTANCES OF TEXT: CTRL+F then check HIGHLIGHT ALL This will automatically highlight every instance of particular text for you. Great for identifying repeated words/phrases. Change highlight colour to track multiple words.

> HINT: make sure to put a space before and/or after the word otherwise you'll also pick up every word that has those letters in it (eg: "HE" will pick up "SHE" "HER" "HERO" THE"

REPLACE TEXT: CTRL+H or click on replace tab. Type the word you *don't* want in FIND and the word you *do* want in REPLACE field. Select FIND NEXT (to skip that one and move to next instance), REPLACE (with your selection) or the one-click, broad scale REPLACE ALL

FORMATTING: There are dozens of combinations (and as many shortcuts) to discover. Select MORE if you can't already see the FORMAT option.

Need to replace all your italics with underline in just one click? Move your cursor inside the FIND field, click FORMAT and FONT to select italic (or shortcut CTRL+I). Inside the REPLACE field, click FORMAT and FONT (or shortcut CTRL+U) to select underline. Then just click REPLACE ALL and bingo… all fixed.

> HINT: formatting is togglable. You may need to keep toggling until the field instructions say 'Replace with UNDERLINE, NOT ITALICS' otherwise you'll get underline AND italics.

SPECIAL: Special features like line breaks, white space, em-dashes etc. Same process as above but select SPECIAL instead of FORMAT.

GO TO: A quick way to zoom through your MS. Skip by page number, section, number of lines, to the next bookmark, to comments made by a specific reviewer, or headings and heaps more. CTRL+F, select GO TO tab.

OTHER HANDY USES: By checking FIND ALL WORD FORMS , your computer will find (and offer for replacement) plurals, tenses and different adjective forms of the word. Eg: If you change 'SIT' to 'STAND' throughout it will also find SITS, SAT, STANDS and STOOD.

HINT: although you can run this one with REPLACE ALL it's not recommended. Better to use FIND NEXT to make your own decisions about appropriate replacements.

SOUNDS LIKE: Suspect a character may have transformed midway through your MS from Mike to Mark? Check the SOUNDS LIKE box to find words that are similar spelling (not rhyme)

WILDCARDS: Check the USE WILDCARDS box. If you needed to find any compound phrase, for instance, you would type *-* in the FIND field and then let the computer find/highlight them all for you. There are dozens of wildcard rules, here are some of the simple ones:
1. Wildcard "?" finds just one character but of any kind eg: "p?t" = pat, pet, pit, pot, put.
2. Wildcard "*" represents any number of characters. eg: "p*t = parrot, port, patriot, plant, portent on above example
3. Wildcard < and > find the beginning and end of a word respectively (eg: ">(ing)" will find ming, interesting, bling, darling. But "<(ing)" will find inglorious, ingenious, ingénue.
4. Wildcard @ finds one or more occurrence of the previous character. Great for typos that spellcheck will miss (eg: "so@n" will return son, soon and sooon)