

## [How to create a default template in Microsoft Word](#)

May 5th, 2009, 5:20 pm · [Post a Comment](#) · posted by [Ed Schwartz, NOCCC](#)

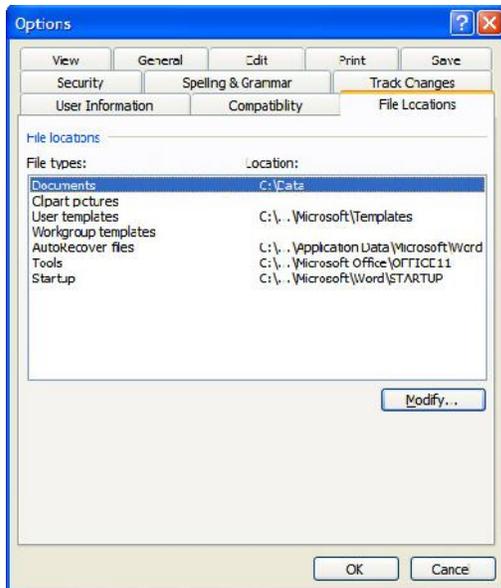


*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at [noccc.org](http://noccc.org). And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at [ocregister.com/link/pcclub](http://ocregister.com/link/pcclub), to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

**QUESTION:** I am using Microsoft Word and I have created stationery or a letterhead template. Whenever I open Microsoft Word I want this template to open so I can immediately start typing a new document. Right now when I open Word, it opens to The Project Gallery then I have to click on My Templates and then on My Stationery. How can I bypass this and get my Stationery Template to open when I open Word? ~ Thanks, Bob

**PC Club:** Having Word start with a particular template loaded is easy but I suspect that you want the text and formatting that it contains to show up also. Word is typical of most Microsoft programs, Bob, in that there are several ways to accomplish the same thing and this is true here.

I can't tell from your question whether you're using a Mac or a Windows PC or which version of Word you're using. However, since most versions of Word behave the same whether on a Mac or Windows PC, this answer should cover your situation.



To have Word load a specific template when it starts you can place the template in Word's Startup folder which is usually located in the following location on your computer:

C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\Application Data\Microsoft\Word\Startup

To verify where Word stores your user templates, click "Tools," "Options" and select the "File Locations" tab (see image on right), then select the "User templates" item. You won't be able to see the full location unless you click the "Modify" button and the drop-down box.

Now to make a template the default document, you must modify the Normal.dot template. To do this, perform the following steps:

- Open Word
- Open the Normal.dot template from the location listed above
- Make any changes that you want including text and formatting and save the template and close it.

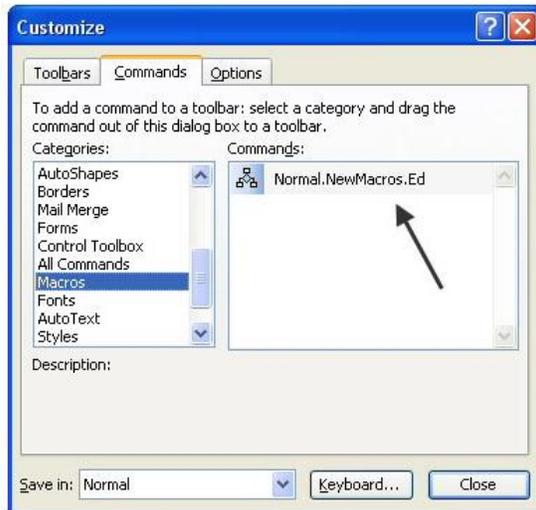
From now on, any new document will be based on this template and contain any text or formatting that you added.

One disadvantage to this is if you want to create a plain document, you will have to remove the changes that you added to the Normal template. One suggestion is to save a copy of the original template and rename it to Normal.dotOld. This allows you to switch templates by renaming them. You must rename them with Word closed, however.

To gain access to the location where your templates are stored you will have to instruct Windows to show Hidden Files and Folders. You can do this by opening "My

Computer,” and selecting “Tools,” and “Folder Options.” Select the “View” tab and place a check in “Show hidden files and folders.” From this location you can backup your templates to a safe location should you need to restore them.

Another option is to create a Word document containing your stationery content and then put a shortcut to it on your desktop. This method eliminates the need to fuss with the templates. It’s not as exotic but it gets the job done.



One other way is to create a Macro, which automatically adds the text and formatting you need for your Stationery with a single click of a button. Should you choose this approach, you only have to open Word, run the Macro and you will have your stationery.

To place a button for the macro on your Word Toolbar for easy access, just select “Tools,” “Customize” and select the “Commands” tab. Scroll down and locate Macros. You will see any macros that you created on the right. Just click and drag your newly created macro to a convenient location on your toolbar. You now have one-button access to your stationery. Close the Customize window and you’re done. For more information than you ever wanted to know about Word templates visit TecTrax’s article “[Normal.dot template explained.](#)” -Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his blog at [www.edwardns.com/blog](http://www.edwardns.com/blog).