

ASK THE COMPUTER SURGEON

Word to your mother, Microsoft is complex

Knowing all the tools built into Microsoft Word will help avoid lost data, errors

Char from Wadsworth asks *“When I type a letter into Word and do not save it, is it still being saved somewhere in the computer?”*

Microsoft is a very interesting company. Just about everyone knows something about them and probably uses a product or two created by them. You might find the information at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft> very interesting. This wiki entry does a very good overview of Microsoft's history from 1975.

Microsoft Word first hit the market in 1983 as Word version 1.0. It ran on MSDOS. Microsoft introduced a suite of productivity products for Windows 2.0 called the Microsoft Office in August of 1989. It was the first collection of office productivity software tools on the market. Microsoft Word was included as one of the tools. A stand alone copy of MS Word for Windows version 1.0 cost \$500 in 1989!

Clearly, Microsoft Word is a very mature and comprehensive word processing program. It has a great deal of features.

Char, the answer to your question is both yes and no. Your question is one that many people have had since 1983. Microsoft has tried to fix this problem and I'll discuss how.

When you type in Word, the characters on the screen reside in the volatile memory on your computer, not your hard disk. This information is lost if the computer encounters an electrical or operating system glitch. One of the reasons for Power Protection is to eliminate power problems but operating system glitches just happen without warning. I should add that most of the time, data is lost because of user errors! Microsoft began to include a feature to “automatically” save documents at specific, user defined intervals. I am using Word 2003 which is version 11. Out of the box, it is set to automatically save my documents every 10 minutes. This automatically saved document is available to you if you lose your original. It will contain the information at the moment it automatically saved. In my case it could be 9 minutes 59 seconds prior to my loss. Check your setting by clicking on the **Tools** menu then choose the **Options** menu item then choose the **Save** tab where you will see a setting called Save AutoRecover info every: xx Minutes.

If Word crashes for any reason during the editing of a document and the time of editing has moved beyond the autorecover minutes Word will open the autorecovery file the next time you open Word. If you close Word and do not Save your document, everything you did since the prior save (if any) will be lost! A good habit is to save your work often by pressing and holding the CTRL key then pressing the “S” key; by clicking **File** and **Save**; or by clicking the save icon on the toolbar (blue floppy disc). This saves your work and a great deal of frustration!!

Do you have questions, comments or suggestions? Please address them to questions@compusurgeon.com or browse to <http://www.compusurgeon.com> and click on the submit button.