

Automatic Reference Numbering in Word

This document explains how to add references to a Word document (i.e., create a reference section) and have the citations to the references inside your document be numbered automatically within the document, so that if you add or delete a reference in the reference list, the citation numbers within the document will update automatically. The instructions should work for Word 2007 through Word 2016.

As an example, you may have a reference list at the end of your document that has 100 references. Inside your document you have a statement such as this: “Maxwell’s equations describe the fundamental behavior of electric and magnetic fields [23].” If you add or delete a reference from your list of 100 items at the end of your document, you would like the number 23 in the above sentence to update automatically, so you don’t have to go through the entire document updating the reference numbers.

Keep in mind that there are professional software tools such as Endnote for making and maintaining bibliographies. You can also create and manage bibliographies by using the “References” feature in Word. The instructions here are for adding and citing references in a *very simple* fashion that requires only the numbered list feature of Word.

Instructions:

- 1) Create a list of references at the end of the document, using the feature in Word that allows you to create a numbered list. This is usually found in the “Paragraph” section of the Word toolbar. (This numbered list of instructions is an example of such a list.) This will ensure that each item in the list of references has a number that Word can recognize, and it also ensures that if you add or delete an item from the reference list, the numbers in the reference list will change automatically. A sample reference section is shown below (created as a numbered list).
- 2) Place the cursor in the document where you want to add a citation to a reference (for example, you want to cite reference [2] in the list).
- 3) Click on “Insert” and then “Cross-reference”. For “Reference type” it should say “Numbered item”. For “Insert reference to” it should say “Paragraph number”.
- 4) Select the item that you wish to reference from the list that it shows you and then click on “Insert”.
- 5) To update all of the citations (i.e., all of the fields), click on “Ctrl” and “A” (which selects the entire document). Then click on F9, which will update all of the fields. You can also right

click on any one citation and select the option to update the field, if you only wish to update that one citation.

References

- [1] W. W. Hansen, “Radiating Electromagnetic Waveguide,” U.S. Patent No. 2,402,622, 1940.
- [2] J. N. Hines and J. R. Upson, “A Wide Aperture Tapered-Depth Scanning Antenna,” Ohio State Univ. Res. Found., Report 667-7, Columbus, Ohio, December 1957.
- [3] G. V. Trentini, “Partially reflecting sheet arrays,” *IEEE Transactions on Antennas and Propagation*, vol. 4, pp. 666–671, Oct. 1956.
- [4] C. Mateo-Segura, M. Garcia-Vigueras, G. Goussetis, A. P. Feresidis, and J. L. Gomez-Tornero, “A simple technique for the dispersion analysis of Fabry-Perot cavity leaky-wave antennas,” *IEEE Transactions on Antennas and Propagation*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 803–810, Feb. 2012.
- [5] S. K. Podilchak, S. F. Mahmoud, A. L. P. Freundorfer, and Y. M. M. Antar, “Perturbation analysis of planar periodic leaky-wave antennas fed by cylindrical surface-waves,” *URSI General Assembly and Scientific Symposium*, Aug. 13–20, 2011.
- [6] A. Foroozesh and L. Shafai, “2-D truncated periodic leaky-wave antennas with reactive impedance surface ground planes,” *IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society International Symposium*, pp. 15–18, 9–14 July 2006.
- [7] W. H. Hayt and J. A. Buck, *Engineering Electromagnetics*, 9th Edition, McGraw-Hill, 2019.
- [8] R. F. Harrington, *Time-Harmonic Electromagnetic Fields*, Wiley - IEEE Press, 2001.

Note there is a known bug in Word that applies to the cross-referencing feature, as of 8/2/2024. When you insert a new reference in the reference list as the first one, the citation to it in the text remains [1] instead of advancing to [2] as it should after you update the fields. This issue is discussed on the next page.

Document prepared by David R. Jackson, 08/02/2024.

BUG IN WORD CROSS-REFERENCING FEATURE

Links to Article:

[Cross-reference links do not update to correct heading number - Microsoft 365 Apps | Microsoft Learn](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/office/troubleshoot/word/cross-reference-links-update)

<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/office/troubleshoot/word/cross-reference-links-update>

Article:

Cross-reference links do not update to the correct heading number after you insert a new heading.

Applies to:

Word for Microsoft 365, Word 2019, Word 2016, Word 2013, Word 2010, Word Home and Student 2010.

In this article

1. [Symptoms](#)
2. [Cause](#)
3. [Workaround](#)
4. [Status](#)

Symptoms

Consider the following scenario:

- You create a Microsoft Word document that uses outline numbering for all headings.
- You create a cross-reference link to a heading.
- You create a new heading. To do this, you position the pointer at the beginning of the cross-referenced heading, and then you press Enter.
- After you create the new heading, you update all field codes.

In this scenario, the cross-reference link is not updated to reference the original heading. Instead, the cross-reference link references the new heading.

Cause

This problem occurs because, when you create a cross-reference link, a hidden bookmark is created at the beginning of the heading. When you split the heading, the bookmark does not move. When you update the cross-reference link, the link is not updated.

Workaround

To work around this problem, follow these steps:

1. Select the broken cross-reference, and then press Alt+F9. The field code is displayed for the REF field for the cross-reference. Note the bookmark name for the cross-reference. The bookmark name begins with the following string: _Ref
2. Locate and select the outline numbered heading to which the cross-reference should point.
3. On the **Insert** tab, in the **Links** group, click **Bookmark**.
4. In the **Bookmark** dialog box, click to select the **Hidden bookmarks** check box.
5. Locate and then select the bookmark name that matches the bookmark name that you noted in step 1.
6. Click **Add**. The **Bookmark** dialog box closes.
7. Press Alt+F9 to hide field codes.
8. Locate the broken cross-reference.
9. Right-click the cross-reference link, and then click **Update Field**.

The cross-reference will correctly update the heading number to match the outline-numbered heading that the cross-reference references.

Status

Microsoft has confirmed that this is a problem in the Microsoft products that are listed in the "Applies to" section.