Card Tricks

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Applies to: WordPerfect / DOS, version 5.1–details, WordPerfect, all versions–general layout

"Quick! I need a card that says `Merry Christmas!' to the boss's daughter!" Well, the card store probably has that one, buried somewhere between sisters and weddings, but there is probably only one style to choose from, and that card is much too frilly. Better make it yourself.

Greeting card prices are up again, and there's never time to find the right card when you need it. But WordPerfect and nearly any printer that can print graphics can be used to create a card, and no other programs will be needed. The only difficult step in creating a french-fold card on WordPerfect would be lining up the graphics to fill the front and inside of the card. A french-fold greeting card is made from a sheet of 8 " x 11" paper, folded in half the short way, and then again at a 90 degree angle to the first fold. The pictures for both the front and the inside of the card are printed on the same side of the sheet of paper, but the inside picture is printed upside-down at the top left of the page, and the outside is printed right-side-up at the bottom right. A credit line, such as "Designed by Me-1991" or "Printed in USA-$2.50" fits on the back of the card.

We could line up all the parts of the card by aligning graphics boxes with the margins of the paper, but a much easier way to let our computers do the hard work for us would be to use the labels feature of WordPerfect 5.1 to position the graphics, fill the "panels" of the card, and line up everything for folding.

Not all printers can create the upside-down text that would be used for printing a greeting on the front panel of the card. Postscript printers and HP series III laser printers, and a few others, can print upside down if the text is enclosed inside a text box. Most other printers can't print upside down without help. That help could be DrawPerfect, or another drawing program. The text could be printed as a graphic that has been rotated 180 degrees by either WordPerfect or the drawing program. But there is a less obvious way to print the upside-down text for the front of the card on any graphics printer: Print each panel of the card separately, on the same sheet of paper, starting from opposite ends! The outside panel is printed in one pass through the printer, along with a "Designed by..." credit, and then that sheet of paper is turned around 180 degrees, reinserted in the printer, and the inside panel is printed on the card. Besides printing the text upside-down, there are some other benefits to this method--the simpler pages will print faster, and printers that need extra memory for printing graphics, such as most laser printers, will be able to print

more complex designs without running out of memory.

There are just four steps to creating a custom greeting card the first time: 1) Create a WordPerfect Label definition for a page of labels, two across by two down, in your paper size / type listing. 2) Enter the macro CARDS to automate the card-building process. 3) Using the macro CARDS, design, save, and print the layout for the outside panel of the card. 4) Using CARDS again, create and save the inside panel, and print it on the same sheet of paper as the outside panel. For your next card, you'll only need to run the macro and design the card panels.

For your first card, use whatever paper you usually print on. After trying out these cards, you may want a fancier look. Most computer software stores sell computer stationery in pastel colors, bright party colors, and dignified letterhead types, and they also have envelopes sized to fit these quarter-sheet cards.

Creating the Label definition

Do this step only the first time that you create a card. Once you've described the new form to WordPerfect, the program will remember the form the next time you need it. If you change printers, you must create the card form for each printer that you will print cards on.

Begin at the WordPerfect document screen. Press Format (Shift F8), (2) Page, (7) Paper Size / Type, (2) Add, and (9) Other. Type Card and press (Enter), then (8) Labels, (Y) Yes. A new menu will appear for the label definition. Set the choices by entering these numbers for each menu option, following each number with (Enter): (1) Label Size, 4.25" Width, 5.5" Height; (2) Number of Labels, 2 Columns, 2 Rows; (3) Top Left Corner, 0" Top, 0" Left; (4) Distance Between Labels, 0" Column, 0" Row; (5) Label Margins, .2" Left, .2" Right, .2" Top, .2" Bottom.

Press (Enter) again. For some printers, a message, "Label margins increased due to printer's minimum margins," will appear on the bottom line of the screen, and some or all of the label margins may change. Press Exit (F7) enough times to return to the editing screen.

Entering the CARDS macro

You could prepare the card now, but it's tricky to remember all the steps of selecting the form, setting the graphics options, and retrieving and positioning the graphics. Rather than unfolding an old card for each new one, I've found that a macro is a much easier way to plug the pictures and the credit line into the right places.

Here's what the macro CARDS.WPM does. First, it selects the new Card paper type from the Page menu on the Format (Shift F8) key. Next, it sets the graphics options to no borders and no outside border space. It asks for the name of the first graphic for the card panel, retrieves the graphic, and sets it to fill the fourth label. When the macro ends, you will be able to add text or more graphics to the card panel, or add a byline credit on the back of the card.

Begin entering the macro by pressing (Home), Macro Define (Ctrl F10). Enter cards at the Define macro: prompt, and Greeting Card Panel Builder at the request for a description. The screen will change to the macro editor. Press (Delete) once to delete the {DISPLAY OFF} code, and then enter the macro commands from the macro listing. For help entering the commands, see "Inserting Macro Commands," page _____.

Creating the outside card panel

Ready, now? You've defined the paper style, and entered the macro? Good. Begin from a blank WordPerfect document screen; press Macro (Alt F10), type cards and press (Enter). For the first prompt, type device-2.wpg and press (Enter). The graphics used in this card are from the WordPerfect 5.1 graphics shipped with the program. If your graphic files are not in the default directory for graphic files, type the drive:\path\ before the file name. Sit back and watch the macro work.

When the macro stops, check the layout with page preview by pressing Print (Shift F7), (6) View Document, (3) Full Page. The bottom quarter of the page should show a trumpet with a blank banner hanging from it. The next step will be to add a message to that banner. Press Exit (F7) to return to the document screen, and then press Graphics (Alt F9), (1) Figure, (2) Edit, (1), and (Enter) to edit graphic 1. Press (9) Edit, (2) Scale, press (Enter) to accept 100% for the X (horizontal) size, type 180 and press (Enter) for the Y (vertical) size, and press Exit (F7) twice to return to the document screen.

Next, choose a large font for the greeting by pressing Format (Ctrl F8), (4) Base Font, and then selecting any 24 point font, or a double-height font. If your printer doesn't have any large fonts, you can use the Equation Editor to print text in any size. (See What? No Large Fonts? No Problem!) Press (Enter) five times, type Announcing!, press (Enter) twice, type Another, (Enter), Holiday Season, (Enter), Has Arrived!, and (Enter). That finishes the outside picture and text on the card. Preview the card by pressing Print (Shift F7), (6) View Document, and check the position of each line of text. Depending on the font you chose for the text, you may need to add or remove some hard returns between the text lines so that the greeting is centered in the open space on the card panel. Press Exit (F7) to leave the preview screen.

When you create your next card, you might like to use more than one graphic on each panel. Easy enough--start by telling the CARDS macro the name of a graphic to print full size, and then when CARDS finishes running, add another graphic on the same panel. Be sure to set the (8) Wrap Text Around Box option on the Definition: Figure screen to No for any graphics that fill the panel, or WordPerfect will push part of your card onto the next page. With this option set to No, the graphic box will not be visible from the document screen, but it's still there; you can see it by looking at the Reveal Codes (Alt F3) screen.

Decisions, decisions!

When you design your own cards, you may choose at this point either to use text on both the inside and outside of the card, and run the paper through the printer once for the outside panel, and then again upside-down for the inside panel, or, if the card you design has no text on one of the two panels, simply position the panel with text on the bottom right label, or page four, and position the other panel on label one. If you use label one for a panel, you must rotate the graphics by pressing Graphics (Alt F9), (1) Figure, (2) Edit, type the number of the graphic figure to edit, press (Enter), press (9) Edit, (3) Rotate, type 180, press (Enter), (N) No, and Exit (F7). If you use text on the inside of the card, and so will be printing the outside panel upside down, skip the back-of-the-card byline.

On a Postscript printer, you may also place text on the inverted panel by enclosing it in a user box, and then

rotating the text. Here's how: From page one, enter the text in a user box by pressing Graphics (Alt F9), (1) Create, (9) Edit. Type your text, and then press Graphics (Alt F9), (3) 180°, and press Exit (F7) twice to return to the document. Check to be sure that the text has been rotated properly by previewing the page--press Print (Shift F7), (6) View Document, (1) 100%. If your printer cannot rotate fonts 180 degrees, the fonts will not be visible on the preview screen. Press Exit (F7) to return to the document screen.

Give yourself some credit

If you like, you may give yourself a credit line on the back of the card by pressing Go To (Ctrl Home), (3), (Enter) to go to the back panel of the card. Press Format (Shift F8), (2) Page, (1) Center Page, (Y) Yes, and Exit (F7). Type Custom Creations by ME! or Were you expecting maybe a trademark? and press (Enter).

Save the card panel and then print it, by pressing Save (F10), xmas-crd.out, and pressing (Enter), and then Print (Shift F7), (1) Full Document. Clear the screen for the next document--press Exit (F7), (N) No to not save the document again, and (N) No to not exit WordPerfect.

Creating the inside card panel

This step is easy--you've already done it once. The only difference between the outside panel and the inside panel will be the credit line on the back of the card, which is only used next to the outside panel.

From the empty document screen, press Macro (Alt F10), type cards, and press (Enter). Type mailbag.wpg and press (Enter). When the macro finishes running, press Graphics (Alt F9), (1) Figure, (2) Edit, (1), (Enter), (9) Edit, and press (Up Arrow) four times, and then press Exit (F7) twice to return to the document screen.

Choose a large font again, by pressing Font (Ctrl F8), (4) Base Font, and selecting a 24 point font or a double-height font. Use the advance feature to move down past the picture by pressing Format (Shift F8), (4) Other, (1) Advance, (3) Line, 2.5", (Enter), and Exit (F7). Type So, did you mail, (Enter), my card yet?, (Enter) twice, Season's Greetings, (Enter), and, (Enter), Happy New Year! Preview the card panel to be sure that the text is centered in the blank space below the mailbag picture, by pressing Print (Shift F7), (6) View Document, (1) 100%. Press Exit (F7) to return to the document screen.

Before printing the inside of the card, save the card panel, by pressing Save (F10), type xmas-crd.in, and pressing (Enter). Finally, press Print (Shift F7) to reach the print menu. Feed the printed copy of the outside panel of the card back into the printer, turned around 180 degrees from its original direction, but positioned to print on the same side of the paper as the first pass. Choose (1) Full Document. The card will be ready soon, in much less time than it takes to drive to the mall for an old-fashioned 25¢ card, on sale now for only $1.95.

What? No Large Fonts?

No Problem!

Even if your printer doesn't have any large fonts built in, and you don't have any special font software, you can still create large text for cards, or for headlines in newsletters, or for a big name line on a letterhead. How? WordPerfect 5.1 has a very powerful new feature called the Equation Editor, and the equations it creates are usually used for papers and letters about mathematics. But with a little help from a macro, we can use the equation editor to print text in any size.

To enter the macro, press (Home), Macro Define (Ctrl F10). Type "headline" at the "Define macro:" prompt, and "Provides large text lines" at the request for a description. The screen will change to the macro editor. Press (Right Arrow) once to move past the {DISPLAY OFF} code, and then enter the macro commands from the macro listing. For help entering the commands, see "Inserting Macro Commands," page _____.

When you run the HEADLINE macro, it will ask for the text to print, and the point size to print the text in. It will move temporarily to the other document screen, and make some changes in your text. In the Equation Editor, spaces must be entered as tildes (~), so HEADLINE replaces the spaces with tildes, copies the text line to the Equation Editor, and encloses the text inside func{}. Without that command and set of brackets, the text would print in italics. Finally, HEADLINE sets the point size for the equation and sets the equation options.

Here's how to use HEADLINE for the outside panel of the card. Instead of choosing a 24 point font, start the macro by pressing Macro (Alt F10), typing HEADLINE, and pressing (Enter). Type Announcing!, press (Enter), type 24, and press (Enter). The macro will work for several moments. When it finishes, press (Enter) twice, and then continue entering the text for the front of the card. For each line, run the macro, type the text, enter 24 for the point size, and press (Enter) to move the cursor to the next line after the macro has finished working.

If the text for a large print line contains any words that mean anything in an equation, like and, from, not, or, and to, the words will print as symbols rather than words. To force the Equation Editor to spell out these words, type a (\) backslash before these words wherever they appear, so for the and line on the inside card, type \and.

If you would like large text printed in italics, use HEADLINE normally, and then edit the equation to remove the func{} codes, by pressing Graphics (Alt F9), (6) Equation, (2) Edit, (1) for the first equation, (9) Edit, (Delete) five times, (Home), (Right Arrow), (Backspace), and Exit (F7) twice. Repeat these steps for each equation to be converted to italics.

When you use equations and HEADLINE in other projects, always be sure to preview the large text before printing. If you set the point size larger than will fit in the available space, the end of the text line will disappear. If this happens, just delete the [Equ Box:1;;] code, and run the macro again, using a smaller point size.

{;}CARDS--GreetingACardAPanelABuilder~
{Format}27ncard{Enter}{Enter}{Exit}
{Format}132{Exit}
{Graphics}141111120{Enter}0{Enter}0{Enter}0{Enter}{Exit}
{TEXT}pict~Full-panelAgraphicAforAcard?AA~
{HPg}{HPg}{HPg}
{Graphics}1142{Enter}516141{VARIABLE}pict~{Enter}8N{Exit}

{;}HEADLINE--largeAtextAbuilder~
{TEXT}text~EnterATextAtoAEnlargeAA~ {;}getAline~
{TEXT}size~EnterAPointASizeAofATextAA~
{Switch}{Home}{Home}{Down}{Enter}{VARIABLE}text~{Home}{Left}
{ON NOT FOUND}{GO}cont~~
{Replace}nA{Search}~{Search} {;}replaceAspaces~
{LABEL}cont~
{Home}{Left}{Block}{Home}{Right}{Macro Commands}31{Enter}
{Block}{Goto}{Goto}{Backspace}y{Backspace}{Switch}
{Format}32{Graphics}641111130{Enter} {;}documentAinitialAcodes~
0{Enter}0{Enter}0{Enter} {;}equationAborderAspace~
{Exit}{Exit}{Exit}
{Graphics}617443 {;}equationAsetup~
9func{{VAR 1}} {;}equationAtext~
{Setup}1y22{VARIABLE}size~{Enter} {;}setApointAsize~
3242{Exit}{Exit}{Exit} {;}setApositionAoptions~

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