How do DEXembed and WordEmbed work?

DEXembed and WordEmbed are two utility add-ins for Microsoft Word. They are simple to-load macros to the Add-ins tab and exist as .DOT files.

Both utilities are unbelievably powerful in what they do — which is to import index entries into Microsoft Word from CINDEX, MACREX, or Sky Index (C/M/S) programs in one fell swoop.

Why would I want to use them?

Historically, embedded indexes require significantly more time to create because the indexing modules native to these desktop publishing packages are not as fully featured as the big three indexing programs.

On average, depending on the desktop publishing package (FrameMaker, InDesign, etc.), the indexing process could take from 50% to 100% longer due to the limited functionality of indexing modules native to these packages:

- creating/entering index terms
- previewing the index
- editing index terms

Fortunately, indexing fee structures typically reflected that reality and the fee structures were adjusted accordingly. However, that didn't hold true for embedded indexing in Word. Instead, the rate structure for embedded indexing in Word has remained similar to page rates for average trade books. Because of that inconsistency in fee structure and the inherent difficulties in indexing in Word, I didn't accept those projects.

But DEXembed and WordEmbed changed all that. They have truly revolutionized embedded indexing in Microsoft Word because they

- bypass the limitations of Word's indexing module
- take advantage of powerful features in C/M/S dedicated indexing programs
- embed index entries in Word as native XE markers using a very straightforward process

DEXembed and WordEmbed were both released around 2004 and I reviewed them in a Key Words article the following year titled "Digging in for the Long Haul" (link on http://luciehaskins.com/resources.shtml). I was blown away by their functionality and, seven years later, I'm still impressed with the sheer creativity of both utilities.

DEXembed was created and is maintained by Jack Lyon of (http://www.editorium.com/dexembed.html). It's available on a 45-day free trial basis for both MAC and Windows users. Single user purchase price (in 2012) is $79.95. A thorough and helpful user's manual is provided with the product (with an emphasis on Sky Index specifics).

WordEmbed was created and is maintained by James Lamb (http://www.jalamb.com/wordembed.html) in England. A demo version (limited to 10 index headings) is available and supports MAC (Parallels) and Windows users. Single user purchase price (in 2012) is $130. The user manual is helpful and provides short tutorials for all three indexing programs.

DEXEMBED AND WORDEMBED EMBEDDING PROCESS

In the same manner that CINDEX, MACREX, and Sky Index provide similar functionality but interface differently with the indexer in the process, DEXembed and WordEmbed both import existing indexes into Word, but their method in doing so differs.

Unlike C/M/S, there aren't many screens and visible processes to interact with since most of the processing is done behind-the-scenes. So, the most noticeable difference between the two utilities is how they interpret and work with locators. And, as with the big three indexing programs, it's all a matter of taste which of these two utilities an indexer might prefer.

The process steps are the same for both utilities:

1. Index “as usual” in C/M/S software using:
   - Various locator options (DEXembed)
   - Bookmark locators (WordEmbed)
2. Save index file for import as:
   - DAT file (DEXembed)
   - RTF or MBK file (WordEmbed)
3. Import index file into Word documents
4. Remove temporary locators
5. Generate MS Word index

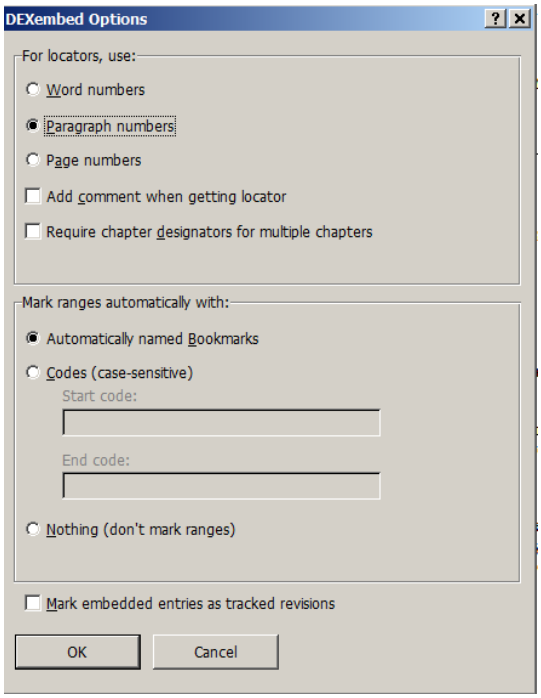
Step 1. Index "as usual" in C/M/S software

Because embedding an index entry means that the index record is actually "inserted" into the document at a specific insertion point, DEXembed and WordEmbed need to know just what insertion point in the document the locator really means.

They need to know if a "2" in the locator field means "page" 2 or if it means "paragraph" 2 or if it means "bookmark" 2. Before indexing begins, "locators" need to be defined.

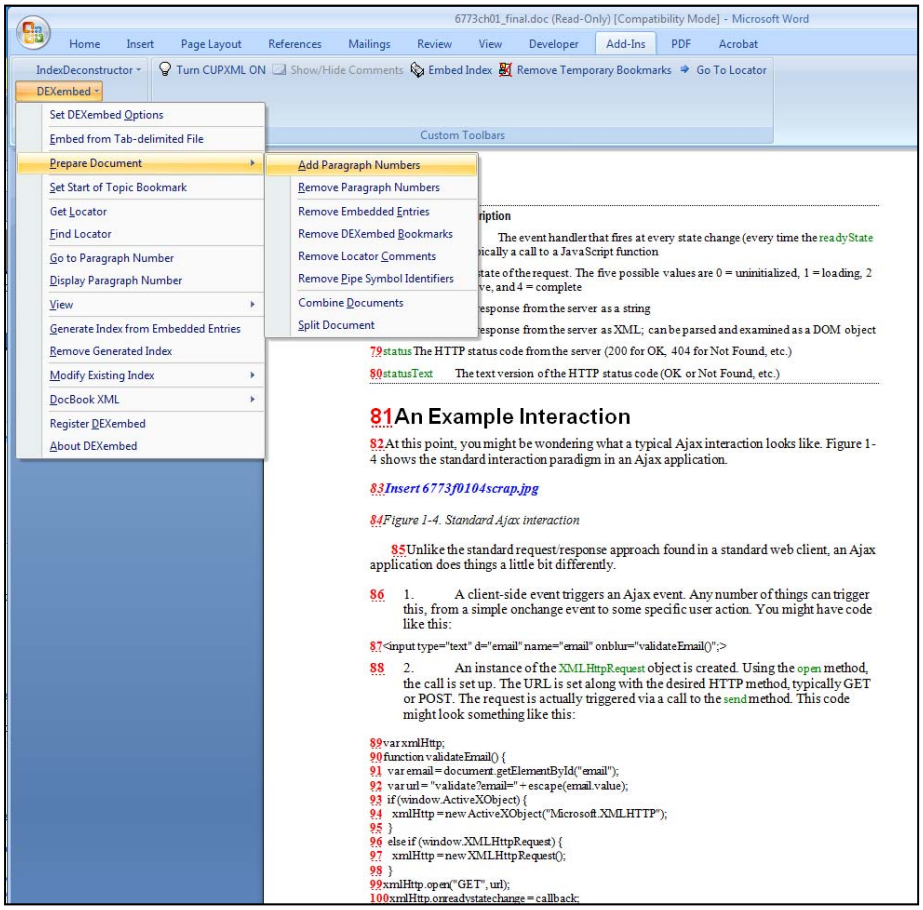
Defining and using "locators" with DEXembed

DEXembed provides a few options for the indexer. Locators can mean any of the options in the DEXembed Options box.



This example shows the result of adding paragraph numbers to the Word document being indexed.

Once these numbers have been added (before indexing begins), the indexer than uses them as the "locator" instead of page numbers that are typically used in back-of-the-book indexing projects.

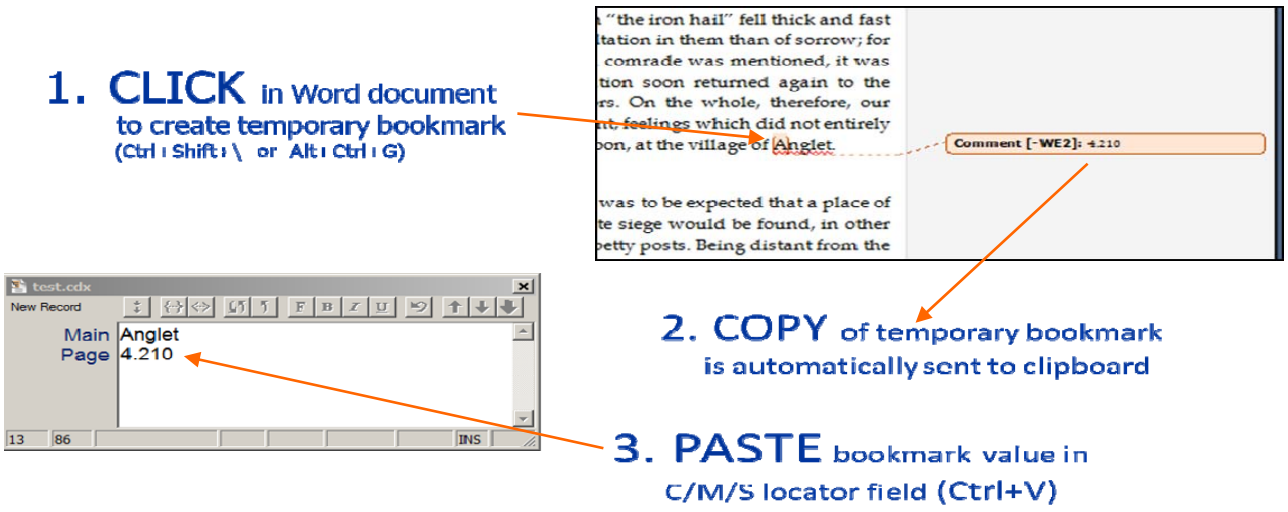


The paragraph numbers are displayed in the document in red.

Defining and using "locators" with WordEmbed

WordEmbed uses a three-part Copy-Click-Paste process when entering each index record.

1. A temporary bookmark is created at the insertion point by using a shortcut (Ctrl+Shift+\) key combination.
2. That temporary bookmark number (example: 4.210) is copied to clipboard.
3. The indexer toggles to the C/M/S program of choice and pastes that temporary bookmark number into the locator field.



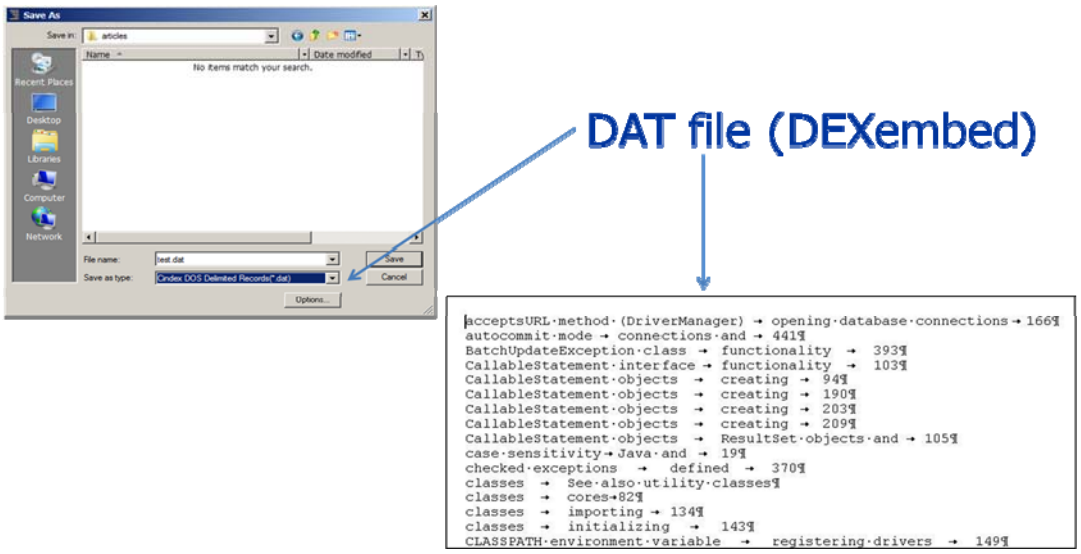
Differences between the two approaches

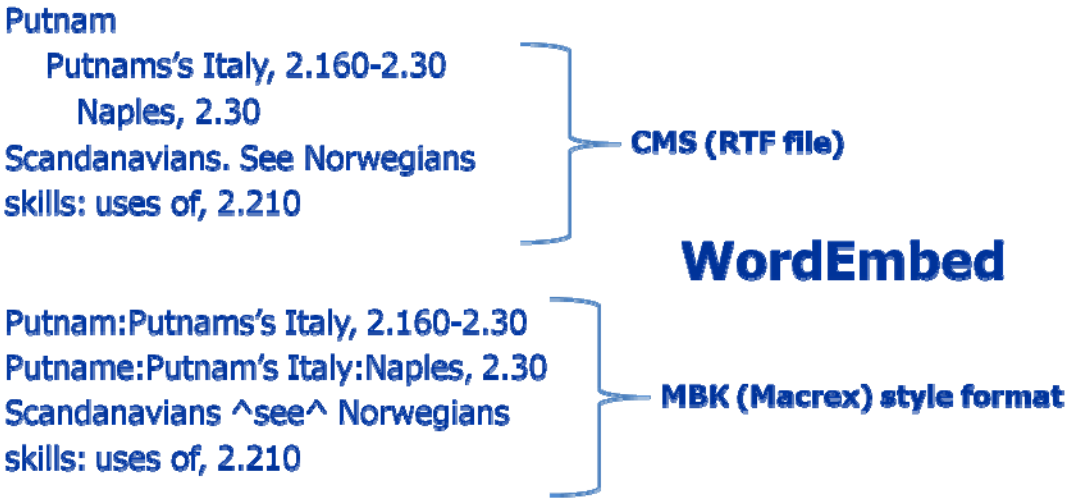
With DEXembed, all the locators are temporarily added to the Word document before indexing begins. Then, when the index entry starts in earnest, the (typically) paragraph numbers are on display and easy to spot.

With WordEmbed, the locator creation is a continuous (and, to some, disruptive) process. While similar locations can reuse the same bookmark number, each new location in the Word document requires the Click-Copy-Paste process. As with C/M/S programs, to each their own taste.

Other than this major difference in locator philosophy, the remaining process steps are similar for both utilities.

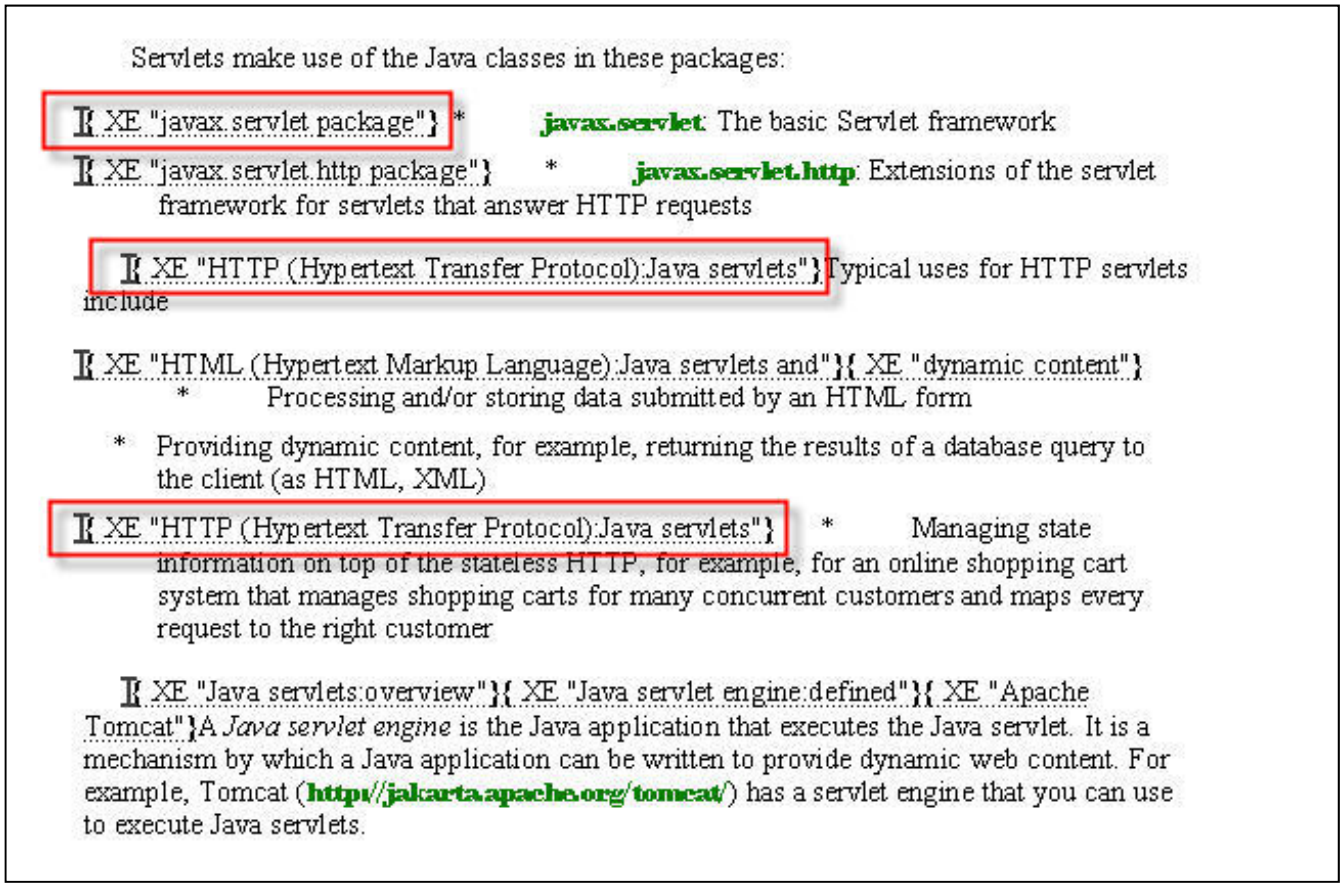
Step 2. Save index file for import





STEP 3. IMPORT INDEX INTO WORD DOCUMENTS

This is the magical part of the process as far as I'm concerned. Once you invoke the "embed" option, all processing occurs quickly (within minutes) behind-the-scenes and you have XE markers embedded in the document.



Servlets make use of the Java classes in these packages:

{ XE "javax.servlet package"} * **javax.servlet**: The basic Servlet framework

{ XE "javax.servlet.http package"} * **javax.servlet.http**: Extensions of the servlet framework for servlets that answer HTTP requests

{ XE "HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol):Java servlets"}Typical uses for HTTP servlets include

{ XE "HTML (Hypertext Markup Language):Java servlets and"}{ XE "dynamic content"}

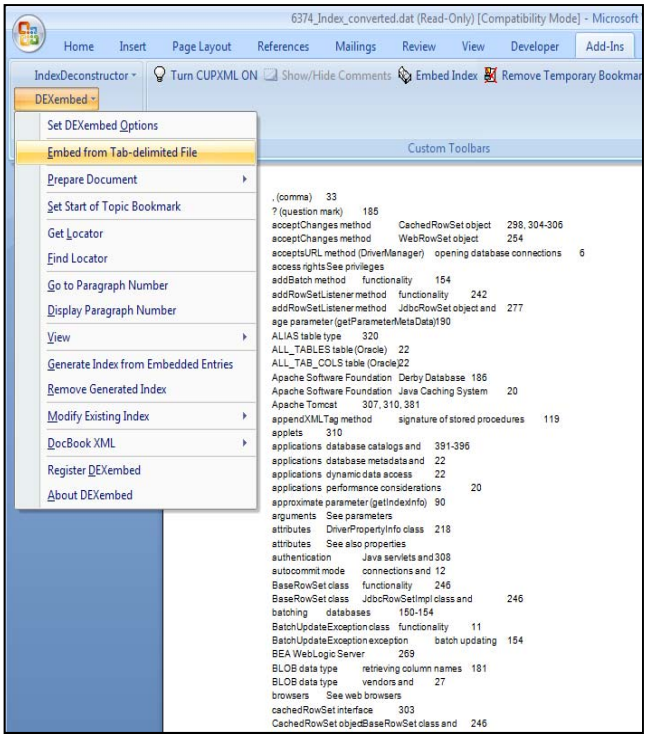
* Processing and/or storing data submitted by an HTML form
* Providing dynamic content, for example, returning the results of a database query to the client (as HTML, XML)

{ XE "HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol):Java servlets"} * Managing state information on top of the stateless HTTP, for example, for an online shopping cart system that manages shopping carts for many concurrent customers and maps every request to the right customer

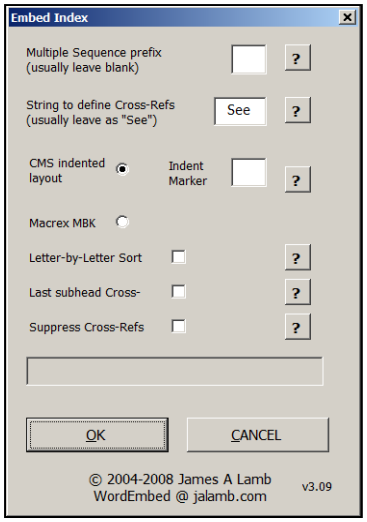
{ XE "Java servlets:overview"}{ XE "Java servlet engine:defined"}{ XE "Apache Tomcat"}A *Java servlet engine* is the Java application that executes the Java servlet. It is a mechanism by which a Java application can be written to provide dynamic web content. For example, Tomcat (**http://jakarta.apache.org/tomcat/**) has a servlet engine that you can use to execute Java servlets.

With DEXembed

1. Open Word document.
2. Open DAT file.
3. Select Embed from Tab-delimited File option.
4. Import process completes.



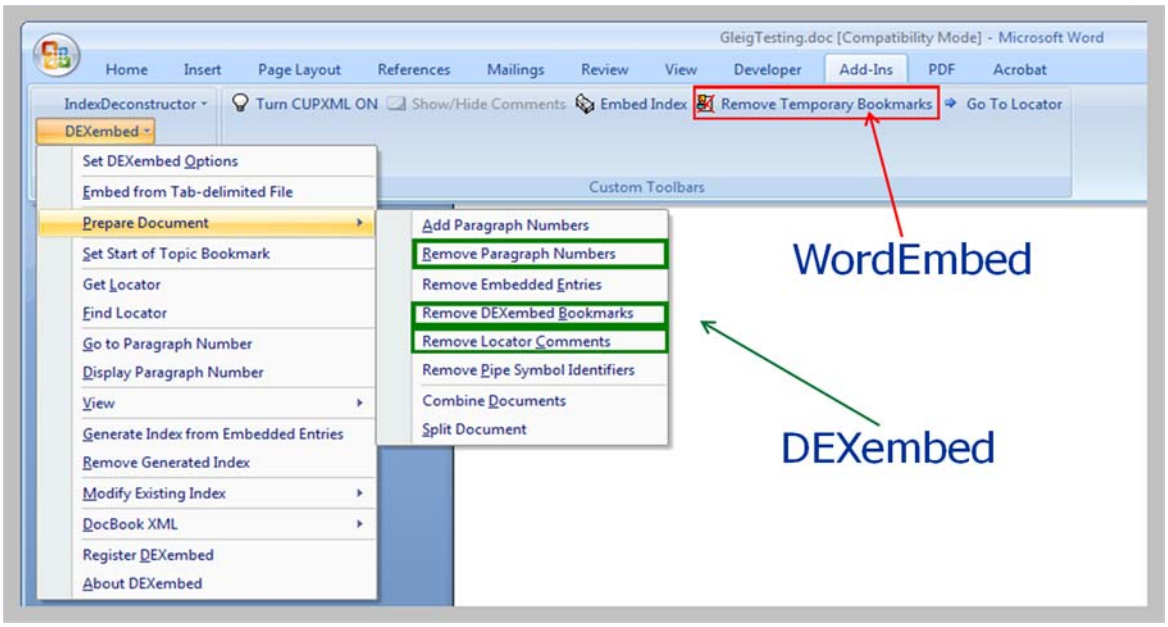
With WordEmbed



1. Select the Embed Index button from the WordEmbed menu bar.
2. The Embed Index dialog box displays.
3. Select the format desired.
4. WordEmbed import process completes.
5. After the Index has been embedded, press the Remove Temporary Bookmarks button (WordEmbed menu bar) to remove the temporary locators created earlier.

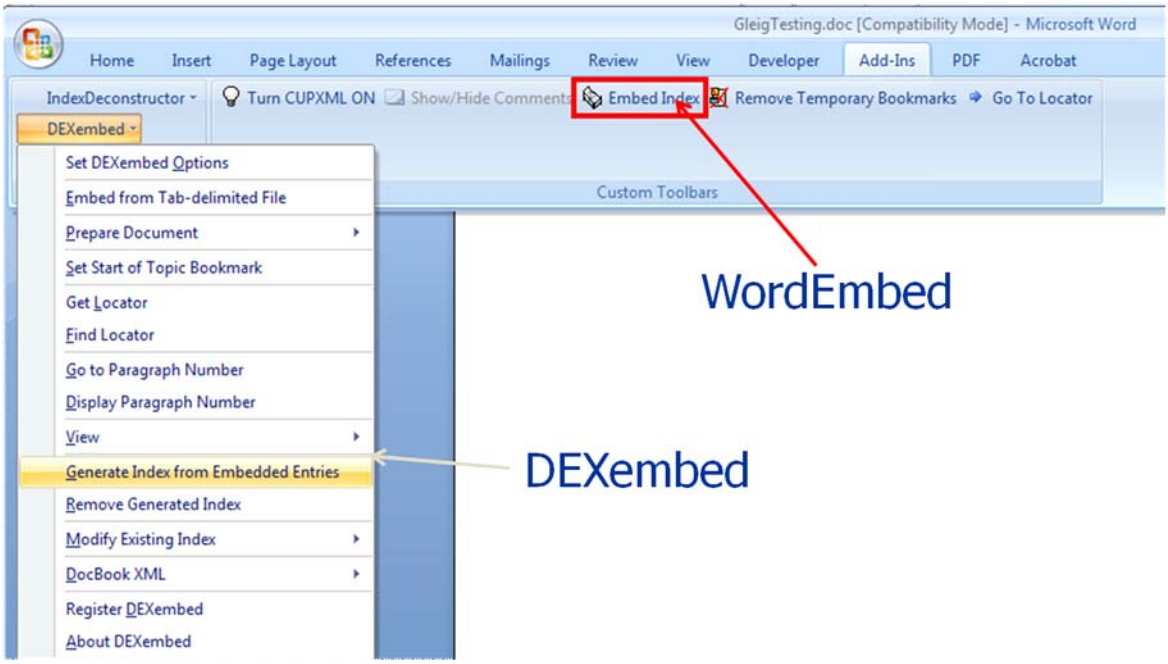
Step 4. Remove temporary locators

Use the highlighted options to remove temporary locators in DEXembed and in WordEmbed.



Step 5. Generate MS Word index

If desired, generate the MS Word index, by using the highlighted options.



Learning Curve

An important factor to consider is to understand the learning curve that comes with these two utilities. In addition to the time investment needed to learn the utilities, which is obvious, there is a related learning curve regarding the client processes that dictate using these utilities. Unlike most back-of-the-book indexing projects where the indexer doesn't submit the index until all the manuscript pages have been indexed, my experience with these utilities has been for clients who want one chapter indexed, embedded in the Word document, and returned at a time, often over a period of a day or so, with the final index returned at the end of the process (for a day or so) so the final (and significant) editing can be applied.

Quick turnarounds and having to deal with largely unedited and an uncohesive index structure, can make these projects rather unattractive for some indexers.

So, it's important to recognize what process flow you work with best.

Do you love those short and snappy turnarounds? Do you like small, manageable tasks — one chapter at a time?

Or do you like to index the entire book at once and not deal with final editing of already-turned-in chapters later down the road?

I enjoyed this process for quite a while until my caregiver role precluded me from the flexibility needed for quick turnarounds. Where, previously two-day turnarounds had been no big deal, I found that I could not respond to the tight timeframes that my clients needed and I sadly had to decline projects from them. They understand but it was still a sad parting of the ways.

Real World Clients

The majority of my embedded indexing clients have specialized in publishing computer books. And that's held true for the 12+ years I've been indexing. However, with the growing popularity of digital publishing and e-books, I can foresee other specialty areas growing interested in what embedded indexing has to offer.

Embedded indexing has always provided the ability for indexers to work from draft pages. Final pagination doesn't matter because, as the pages reflow, the index entries (embedded right in the documents) reflow with them. And it isn't just the computer industry whose time is more compressed.

I think it's imperative for today's indexers, those who plan to remain in this field for many years to come, to get a good working knowledge and experience with embedded indexing.

And working with DEXembed and WordEmbed provides a new entrant into this subfield with a less expensive entry point and shorter learning curve than working with the major desktop publishing packages. I can see using learning these two utilities as a springboard to more complex and involved embedded indexing packages (such as FrameMaker and InDesign).