



+1 (617) 491-7638 • GetItDone@QuickAndDirtyTips.com • www.SteverRobbins.com

# Macros, Abbreviations, and Templates in E-mail

Work Less and Do More by using templates and macros when you have greetings, signatures, or standard text that you use often. **Templates** are form letters you can call up quickly and just add customizations. **Macros** let you substitute long text blocks by typing much shorter text. For example, I use templates to hold standard responses to common questions so I can send them out quickly. I use macros so when I type GIDG it turns into THE GET-IT-DONE GUY. I also use a macro for my URL, turning SURL into HTTP://WWW.STEVERROBBINS.COM. Finally, for email programs that don't in some email programs, you can also set up custom **signatures** that contain the entire text of a message and you can select the form letter to send out by selecting the appropriate signature.

## Eudora (Mac or Windows)

1. Create stationery: Compose the message. Then choose **File | Save As Stationery**
2. Use stationery: Choose **Message | New Message With stationery name**

## Thunderbird (Mac or Windows)

1. Create stationery: Compose the message. Choose **File | Save As | Template**
2. Use stationery: Click on the Templates folder. Highlight the template. Choose **Message | Edit as New**

## Microsoft Outlook 2003 (Windows only)

Outlook doesn't provide templates directly, but you can cheat and use Outlook's signatures to get the same effect.

1. Create a template:
  1. Choose **Tools | Options | Mail Format | Signatures...**
  2. Click **New...**
  3. Enter the name of your template as the signature name. Then click **Next >**
  4. Type your template text and then click OK
  5. Click OK to exit the Create Signature dialog. Click OK to exit the Options dialog.

2. To use a template: when composing an email message, choose **Insert | Signature** and choose the template to insert.

In Outlook, you can also create abbreviations for chunks of text using autocorrect.

1. Create a macro:
  1. Choose **Tools | Options | Spelling | AutoCorrect Options...**
  2. In the **Replace:** column, enter the short text, for example, "endsig"
  3. In the **With:** column, enter the text you want it to turn into, for example, "Sincerely, Stever." You can enter many sentences worth of text, as long as you doesn't include paragraph breaks.
  4. Click **Replace** then **OK** then **OK** to get back to your main Outlook window.
2. Use a macro: when typing a message, type the short text and press the space bar. Outlook will substitute the full text.

## Apple Mail (Mac only)

### OS 10.5

You can use Signatures, as described below for OS 10.4, or you can use Apple's new Stationery feature directly.

1. Create a template: Create the email message as you want it to appear. Choose **File | Save as Stationery...**
2. Use a template: When creating a message, click the **Show Stationery** button in the upper right hand of your message pane. Click on the **Custom** list of stationery and select the stationery you wish to use.

### OS 10.4

Apple Mail doesn't provide templates directly, but you can cheat and use signatures to get the same effect.

1. Create a template:
  1. Choose **Mail | Preferences... | Signatures**
  2. Click **+**
  3. Name the signature and enter the text in the text box. Then close the preferences pane.
2. To use a template: when composing an email message, choose the signature with the text you want from the signature drop-down list in the message pane.

## General-purpose macro programs (Mac)

The only macro program I've used extensively on the Mac is QuicKeys. It isn't the easiest to set up, and you have to have your macro keys be special keys, not text. For example, you can't define ENDSIG as the abbreviation for your signature. Instead, you have to define a special keystroke like Command-E as the abbreviation.

- QuicKeys. <http://www.QuicKeys.com>

## General-purpose macro programs (Windows)

I have used both of these programs extensively at one time or another and recommend both. They aren't necessarily the easiest to use, however. You can Google "macro programs" or "keystroke replacement" to find the right package for you.

- MacroToolworks. <http://www.pitrinec.com>
- MacroExpress, <http://www.MacroExpress.com>