# ADDING SPELL CHECKER IN *INTERNET EXPLORER* TO ENHANCE WEB-BASED WRITING

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## Introduction

Most people would agree that the basic objective of education is to teach students to read, write, and think. One of the most revolutionary writing aids is word processing, the ability to edit text electronically. It slashes the clerical time to type, revise, make corrections, locate references within a manuscript, and set up tabular material. One of the most practical and beneficial functions is attributed to electronic spell checker housed in the program, which can minimize the mechanical errors and secretarial drudgery of writing.

However, almost all Web tools available including browsers such as the mainstream Internet Explorer and Netscape are not equipped with this indispensable enhancement. The Internet is reshaping the world and the way people work and learn. More people are taking advantage of the Web to do research, write, and retrieve information. Very often they must fill web forms, send web-based messages and whatever word editing based on webpages. A web browser without the enhancement of spellchecking will not provide the user with more convenience, flexibility, productivity, and confidence.

## IE Context Menu Speller

The script program IE Context Menu Speller designed by PC911 team can meet our demands of checking characters entered in Internet Explorer. The script file can be downloaded at:

http://members.cox.net/hanachibi/files/ie_context_menu_speller.zip

http://www.pcnineoneone.com/tweaks/ie_context_menu_speller.zip

or find the relevant links in the following pages:

http://gammatron.novarese.net/2001/10/temparchive.html

http://radio.weblogs.com/0100169/categories/radio/2002/01/24.html

For successfully using this script program, we must have Microsoft Word installed. Additionally, we must have at least version 5.1 of the Windows Scripting Host. To determine which version of Windows Scripting Host you have, you can locate the file wscript.exe in the Windows directory and right click it to check its property. If your version is prior to 5.1, you should visit the following page to select suitable language version to update the Windows Scripting Host:

http://msdn.microsoft.com/downloads/default.asp?url=/downloads/sample.asp?url=/MSDN-FILES/027/001/733/msdncompositedoc.xml&frame=true

After downloading the above ie_context_menu_speller.zip, you may unzip the file and choose to install it to a temporary directory in the same partition on which your Windows installation resides. Double-click Install_Spell_It.vbs in the unzipped file to install the program. When you restart Internet Explorer you'll find a new item in your right-click context menu. Highlight any text and then right-click it. Select Spelling from the context menu. The program will then launch your Microsoft Word's spell checker utility allowing you to make corrections to the text. You simply highlight the text with your cursor and right-click it. This program is very easy to use in Internet Explorer and it can be uninstalled in the normal manner via the Add/Remove Programs applet in the Control Panel.

**What is behind**

This program is designed with the scripting language Visual Basic Scripting Edition (VBScript), which is a simple programming language designed to perform special or limited tasks. Sometimes it is associated with a particular application or function. VBScript is a simplified version of the Visual Basic and Visual Basic for Applications family of programming languages. It is also considered to be closely related to the BASIC programming language. According to *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary Third Edition,* VBScript is a subset of the Visual Basic for Applications programming language, optimized for Web-related programming. As with Javascript, the code for Visual Basic Scripting Edition is embedded in HTML documents.

After we have successfully installed the program, click Start → Run to open a dialogue.

Here we enter "regedit" to open Registry. Locate HKEY_CURRENT_USER→ Software → Microsoft → Internet Explorer → MenuExt → Spelling. In the right column you can see the default value \Windows\web\Spell_It.htm. Find the file Spell_It.htm in the relevant directory and use common plain text editor such as Notepad rather than default htm file open program such as a brower. In the Notepad you can find the following codes (I add some notes in brackets):

```
<!-- saved from url=(0022)http://internet.e-mail -->
<html>
<head>
<script language="VBScript"><!-- { the browser starts to run a VBScript}
Dim myText, oWindow, oDocument, oSelect, oSelectRange { declare variables}
Set oWindow=window.external.menuArguments {set values of the variables, the object and its
attributes such as Selection, Document, Range and etc can be found by clicking the menu item
Tools → Macro → Visual Basic Editor in Ms Word. }
Set oDocument=oWindow.document
Set oSelect=oDocument.selection
Set oSelectRange=oSelect.createRange()
const wdDoNotSaveChanges = 0 {declare a constant}
myText=oSelectRange.text
'
Dim oWD, oDoc, RangeOriginal, RangeCorrected, Cnt, Status
Set oWD = CreateObject("Word.Application") {Create object, here start Ms Word}
oWD.Visible =false {Ms Word window shows or hides, here the window hides}
Set oDoc = oWD.Documents.Add {create a new document}
On Error Resume Next
oWD.Selection.typeText myText {select the text}
'
Set RangeOriginal=oWD.ActiveDocument.Range(0,oWD.Selection.End) {select spell check
range}
If oWD.CheckSpelling(RangeOriginal)=False Then
oWD.ActiveDocument.CheckSpelling {spell check}
Set RangeCorrected = oWD.ActiveDocument.Range(0,oWD.Selection.End)
RangeCorrected.copy {copy checked text}
'
If RangeCorrected.Words.Count>7 Then
Cnt=RangeCorrected.Words.Count
Status= "The text beginning with: "&_
RangeCorrected.Words.Item(1)&" "&RangeCorrected.Words.Item(2)&" "&_
RangeCorrected.Words.Item(3)&"....."&vbCRLF&"and ending with: ....."&_
RangeCorrected.Words.Item(Cnt-2)&" "&RangeCorrected.Words.Item(Cnt-1)&_
" "&RangeCorrected.Words.Item(Cnt)&vbCRLF&"has been checked "&_
```

```
"and corrected version copied to the clipboard"&vbCRLF&_
"Ctrl+V will replace the selection with corrected text" {predetermine what will be shown in the
user interface}
Else
Status= "<< "&RangeCorrected&" >>"&vbCRLF&"has been checked and the"&_
" corrected version was copied to the clipboard"&vbCRLF&_
"Ctrl+V will replace the selection with corrected text" {predetermine what will be shown in the
user interface}

End If
'
Else
Status = "Words in the selected text were all spelled correctly"
If myText="" Then Status = "There wasn't any selected text to check" {again predetermine what
will be shown in the user interface}

End If
'
oWD.Quit wdDoNotSaveChanges {quit Ms Word}
Set oDoc = Nothing
Set oWD = Nothing
Alert Status  {show the information box}
'
--></script>  {end of the VBScript}
</head>
</html>
……
……
```

Understanding the mechanism of the program, we can create a VBScript to expand the functions of Internet Explorer.

Steps:

1. Open the registry, find HKEY_CURRENT_USER→ Software → Microsoft → Internet Explorer → MenuExt. Create a new key in the directory MenuExt, for example, the created new key is "Start Excel".

2. In the directory MenuExt, click the folder "Start Excel". In the right column right click the default item to select "Modify" menu item. In the following window input "C:\startexcel.htm" in the key value box and click OK. Exit the registry.

3. Start Notepad and click new menu item. Copy the following code to the Notepad and save the file as "startexcel.htm" in C partition root directory (C:\startexcel.htm).

```
<html>
<head>
<Script Language="VBScript"><!--
Dim aexcel
set aexcel= CreateObject("Excel.Application")
aexcel.visible=true
aexcel.workbooks.add
aexcel.Columns(1).ColumnWidth = 55
aexcel.cells(1,1).value="TEACHING ENGLISH WITH TECHNOLOGY"
aexcel.Range("A1:A1").Select
aexcel.Selection.Font.Bold = True
aexcel.Selection.Font.Size = 16
aexcel.Selection.Font.ColorIndex = 3
aexcel.cells(2,1).value="A JOURNAL FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH"
aexcel.cells(3,1).value="ISSN 1642-1027"
aexcel.cells(4,1).value="IATEFL POLAND"
aexcel.cells(5,1).value="COMPUTER SIG"
--></Script>
</head>
</html>
```

When you start Internet Explorer, you will find in the right click context menu the item "Start Excel". Click this item, Ms Excel will start and input the above embedded characters.

**An Example Activity:**

There are countless web-based writings for us to purposefully practise or necessarily complete so that we can  retrieve access to data, post messages, publish articles, apply for jobs, inquire, express ideas and so on. We demonstrate process of using the mentioned spell checker for the very purpose of language learning working on Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab (http://www.esl-lab.com), reviewed in one of the previous issues of *Teaching English with Technology* (Krajka, 2001).

Steps:

1. Ask students to visit http://www.esl-lab.com and practise listening according to difficulty levels.

2. Get students into groups or pairs to discuss topics and content of the site. What are advantages and disadvantages of the site? What should be done for improvement? What are their feelings in comparison with traditional face-to-face language

learning ? …

3. Ask students to get access to http://www.esl-lab.com/form.html to write their comments or suggestions in the column "Message". The following extraction from the review by Jarek Krajka (Krajka, 2000), for example, is typed into the box in that page. Several words are misspelled on purpose to demonstrate the solutions proposed above:

(In Internet Explorer the misspelled words are not underlined in red as in Ms Word.)

> The topics of quizzes enconpass all areas of life, such as for instence telephone recording, flying a plane, riding a taxi, touring a city, renting a car, home repairs or checking in the hotel, and provide real-life interraction, which helps students…

4. Highlight the words in the box and right click the mouse button. Select the popup menu item  "Spelling". The spell checker starts to check spelling. Do according to prompts or suggested replacement of misspelled words  recognized by the checker (here in this case the suggested replaced words are *encompass*, *instance*, and *interaction* which are arranged in order).

5. Press Ctrl+V to replace all the misspelled words with correct ones.

6. Click "Send Message" below in that page.

**Conclusion**

Because of  rapid development of Internet we are in a period of profound social changes. Adjusting to these changes require efficient use of Internet-based browsers and various Web tools. By adding spell checker in Internet Explorer both language learners and teachers can, to the fullest extent, optimize and perfect web-based writing.

**References**

Krajka, J. (2001) "Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab". *Teaching English with Technology*, vol. 1, no. 2, March 2001, http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/j_web2.htm.

Microsoft Corporation. (1997)  *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary Third Edition.* Redmond, Washington: Microsoft Press.