

**The Holiday Season is Approaching!
Let's Generate our Postcards with Word's Label template and Mail Merge**

By Jerry Liedl

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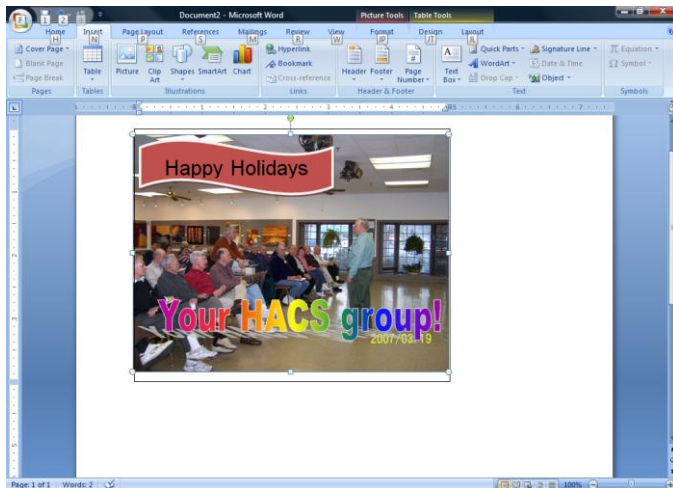
First, we need to look at the overall project. As with most postcards the reverse side is for you to generate the message and/or the images you want to convey to all people. The front of most postcards has two parts, the left half where one typically has a message you wish to convey and the right half for the address and the postage. For purposes of keeping these two separate we will first look at just using the label templates in word to make the image for the reverse side.

The reverse side can be a composite of many things and only your imagination limits you. Typically you can buy postcard templates that have four on a standard 8 ½ by 11 page so each card is 5 ½ by 4 ¼ (Avery 8387 template). Thus, you want to create something for the reverse side that is the size of the card or as I do make it a little smaller. Once you make it you will just copy and paste it onto all four cards on the page and print the number of pages you need for the mailing. You can use whatever software you like to create this side. If you use Photoshop or Print Shop Pro or any drawing software only your imagination is the limit. However, one may use any one of a variety of image software to create what you want. One that I like is IrfanView and it is freeware. You can size an image, crop the image, add text to it, and superimpose other images on parts of the background image (like adding Santa). Another approach is to use Word or any word processing software to create something that is the size for the postcard.

If you use image processing software like IrfanView you can create something like the following. Add text to it by selecting a box and choosing under Edit – Insert Text. You get to choose the font and color as well as placement in the selection box. Now, add something more interesting like a Santa clipart. Note the selection area on the right. Now find your clipart, copy it and put your cursor in the right selection area and paste the art there. By using the select box the pasted image will conform to it.



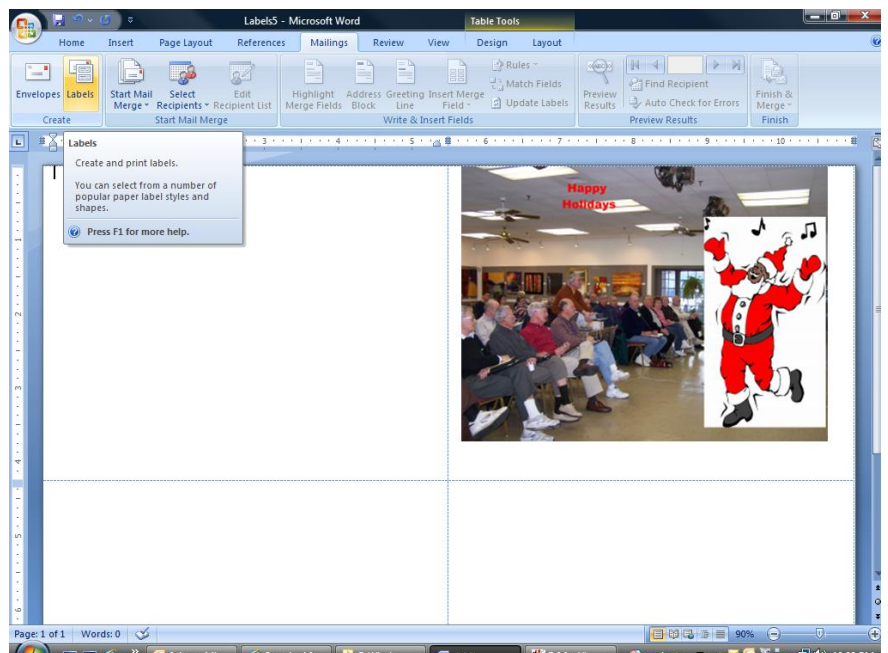
Now reduce the image to fit the postcard, copy it and paste it onto the template sections and print the cards you need. If I wanted to use Word I would setup an area that is the size of a postcard and start working. One way to do it is to use the table function in Word to define the postcard and even to make spaces within it if you choose.



Now you can generate your Avery 8387 template for postcards or any other postcard template. Hint: For labels go to <http://avery.com> and select software to download their wizard. In Word 2007 you go to Mailings and select labels. In options find 8387 and generate a new document (see below to the right). In prior versions of Word you go to Tools and select Letters and Mailings and chose Envelopes and Labels. Now select labels and find Template 8387 or whichever postcard template you are using. Below to the right shows the template in Word 2007 with one card showing an image generated in IrfanView. You can use copy and paste to get the image onto all four cards. Now you just print on the post card forms as many as you wish.



Now, we can focus on the front of the card and use Mail Merge. Mail merge provides a way to create custom documents for you mailing. Merge in its simplicity combines a main document with a data source. For example, you may want to send a letter with the same basic information to several individuals. In this case, you create a basic template file—a letter. In Word, this basic form is called the main document. The parts of the form, which are different, are called fields. Labels and envelopes are other examples of template files.



The complementary file is a data source file, which contains field information to insert into the form. The data source is usually a mailing or address list of names—a database. A data source can be merged with several different main documents **to produce letters, mailing labels, and envelopes**. The unique part of this combination is that the fields can be anything you want. You could have a field for personal comments and integrate that into your letter or mailing or

whatever. The main document and the data source can always be modified and easily merged again if mistakes occur; otherwise, each individual document would have to be individually edited, (not unlike the days when each letter had to be typed individually).

Before we jump into Mail Merge let's discuss briefly what we mean by a database. There are all kinds of databases you can use from very simple ones to full relational ones. We will keep to the simple ones! If you use Outlook or Outlook Express and use Contacts in your address books you have a database with all the fields available in Contacts. These include names and addresses that can be used for your mass mailings with Mail Merge. You can also generate your own database using, for example, Excel. One just uses the first row to give titles to each field you in the database and each row is one record. See below for an Excel and Word data base. In Word just use a table.

1	First Name	Spouse	Last Name	Street	City	State	ZIP
2	Bill	& Barbara	Muller	202 Whooping Crane Rd	Fletcher	NC	28732
3	Brian		Fifield	101 Somewhere	Asheville	NC	28804
4	Fred		Haddad	115 Publicity Rd	Hendersonville	NC	28739
5	Jim	& Sara	Baltes	1512 Treasury Lane	Hendersonville	NC	28792
6	Joy		Capps	No. One President	Saluda	NC	28789
7	Lamar		Miller	236 Program St	Hendersonville	NC	28792
8	Maurice		Sarles	13 Secretarial Ct	Hendersonville	NC	28792

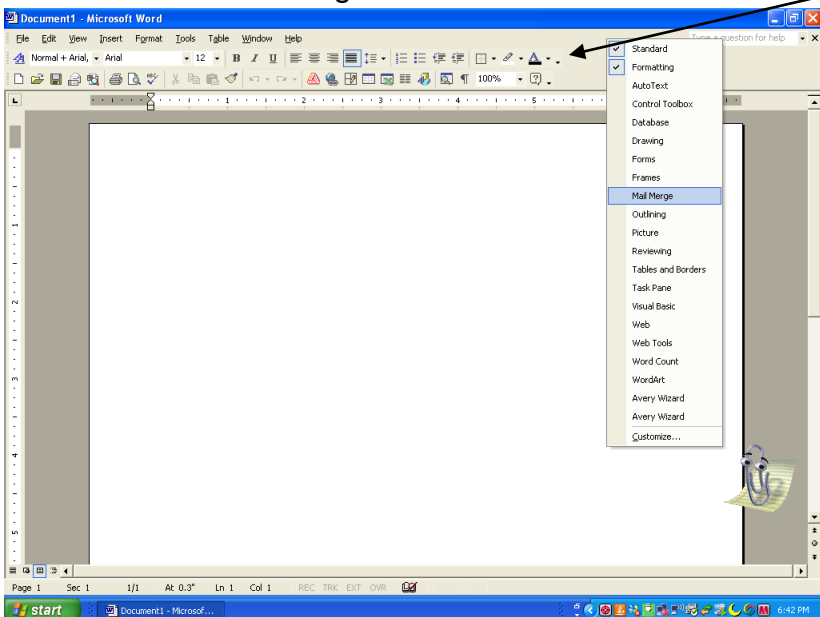
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With a database available we now move to use Mail Merge. A series of steps are outlined below to generate a mail document and couple it with a database.

Let's get setup

1. Open Word
2. Start Mail Merge

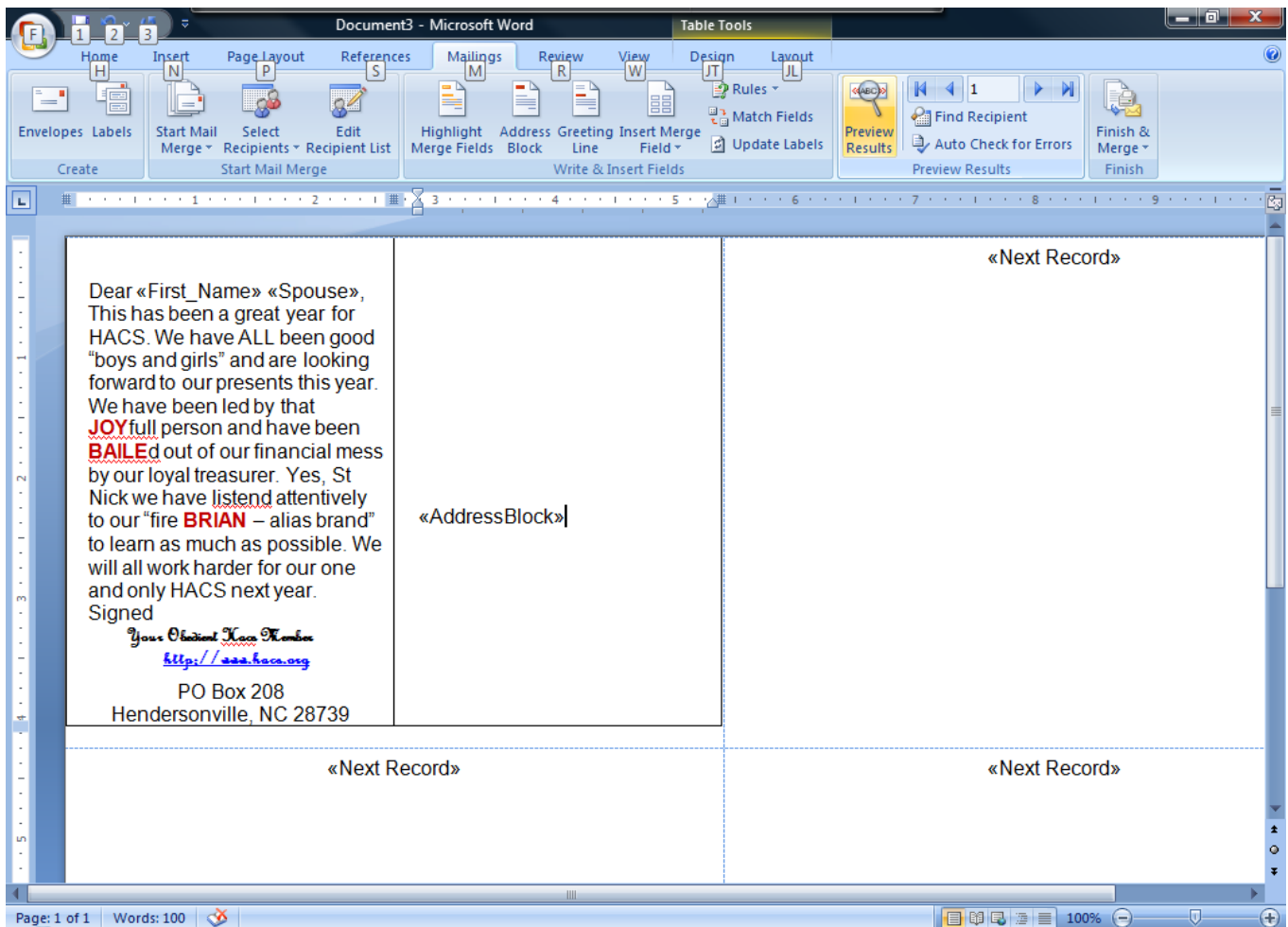
2000-2003 right click in top header of Word and add Mail Merge Toolbar



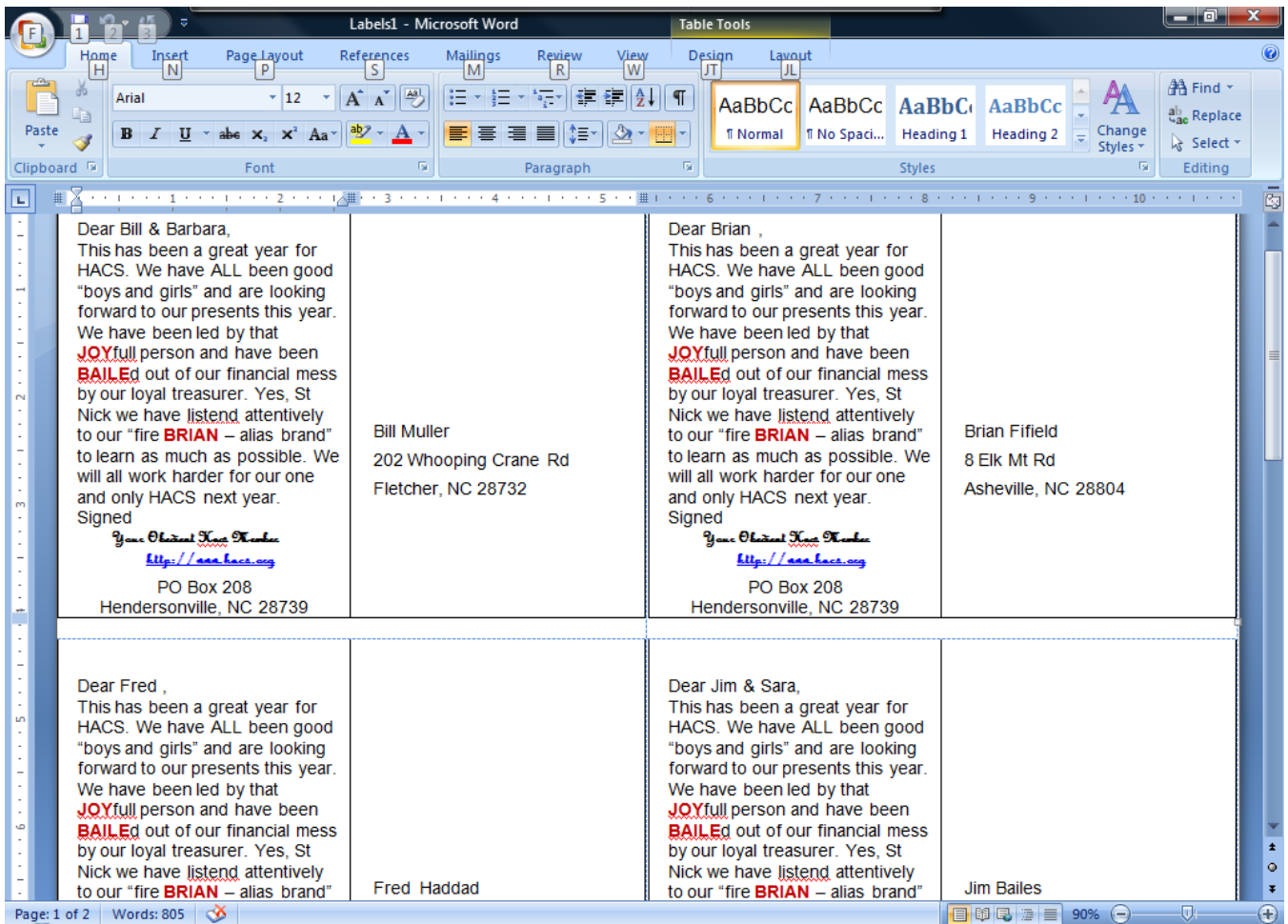
- a. 2000-2003 right click in top header of Word and add Mail Merge Toolbar
- b. 2007 Select Mailings – click on Start Mail Merge

Mail Merge – Address side

1. Choose Labels and select the one you want to use -8387 is one of the Postcard templates
2. Insert a Table to separate left (text) from right (address)
3. Type in Text on left column (don't go to far as there is a card below)
4. Go to second column and type enter to get where you want address (note you can also put on postage if you have added the software and paid you know who)
5. Select Database of addresses. Can use a Word table document, an Excel spreadsheet, and even the Contacts in Outlook
6. Enter the “Address Block” or use the “Enter Merge Field”
7. Note you may have named your fields differently – so click on Match Fields to let “Address Block” correlate its fields to yours.
8. Note on left side after “Dear” you can enter the name fields - «First_Name» «Spouse». This will result in personalizing each card with the names from the database.
9. Click on “Preview Results” in 2007 or “ABC” in 2003 to see the actual address
10. Now I would highlight the two columns and remove the borders or leave whatever you want.



11. Click on “Update Labels” and you get all propagated
12. Click “Finish & Merge” – can just merge to printer but I would go to “Edit Individual Documents” in 2007 or “Merge to New Document” in 2003 to get the entire group in a separate document.



13. Now print the NEW document with all the cards (or edit them as you wish).