Introduction

CLERK has an advanced spell checker that highlights spelling errors as you type. The basic spell check functions are described in Chapter 4 of the **CLERK User's Guide**. This help sheet describes in more detail how to manage custom dictionaries.

As an aside, Terrier Technologies would like to note that while the functionality is basically unchanged, the spell checker has been upgraded in CLERK version 2.2.

How do custom dictionaries help?

Custom dictionaries serve two purposes. First, they contain words that are not in CLERK's main dictionary, including proper nouns or terms specific to your department's jurisdiction. Words that have been added to the custom dictionary are no longer considered to be 'wrong' by the spell checker.

For example, the proper noun 'Waterview' is not in the main CLERK dictionary, so if your department patrols a facility called the 'Waterview Performance Hall', every time the word 'Waterview' is entered in the case report narrative, it is considered misspelled. By adding it to a custom dictionary, CLERK knows that the spelling is legitimate and will not 'catch' the word in future spell checks.

Secondly, the custom dictionary can auto-correct common misspellings of law enforcement terms. For example, 'subpoena' is often typed as 'supoena' or 'paraphernalia' as 'parapharnalia'. If you have read many case reports, you can no doubt think of others!

By adding both the correct and incorrect spelling to the custom dictionary, CLERK can automatically correct the words as they are typed, without even needing the user to run a spell check to catch them.

Custom dictionaries in CLERK

Dictionaries are located in the same directory as the CLERK.EXE file, by default C:\Program Files\Terrier Technologies, Ltd\CLERK. Custom dictionaries have the .adu filename extension. Normally each user has their own personal custom dictionary, named according to their Windows username (so someone with a Windows logon of SMITH would have the custom dictionary file SMITH.ADU).

Of course, the problem with this setup is that you don't want to add a new word to *every* user's dictionary separately. When creating a list of words (such as 'Waterview' in our example), you would like to do it once for all users.

You can do this by creating a **departmental custom dictionary** that is shared by everyone.

Creating a departmental custom dictionary

In CLERK 2.2 (build 040 and higher), we've made the process very easy. A custom dictionary called CLERK2.ADU will be placed on the hard disk during installation.

If your CLERK datafile is called something other than CLERK2.GDB, you should rename this custom dictionary so that it matches the datafile name (but with an .adu extension instead of .gdb). The name of your CLERK datafile is displayed at the bottom of the CLERK client each time you connect:

No further action is required. This custom dictionary will be loaded each time CLERK is started. You are now ready to add words to the custom dictionary.

Modifying the custom dictionary

Changing the contents of the departmental custom dictionary is done within the CLERK client. Start the spelling checker and click the **Options** button.
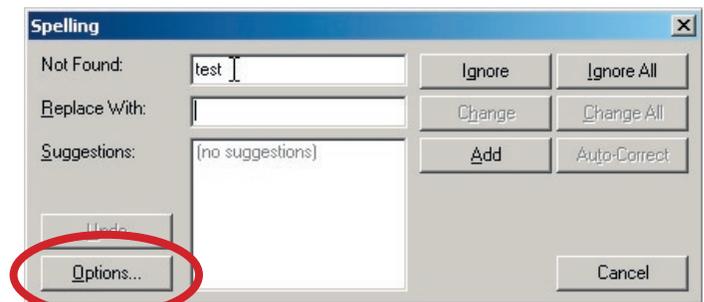
Next click the **Dictionaries** button to open the list of custom

dictionaries. Choose CLERK2.ADU, and click the **Edit** button. Be sure not to clear the check box to the left of the dictionary name, or else it will not load automatically when the CLERK client starts.
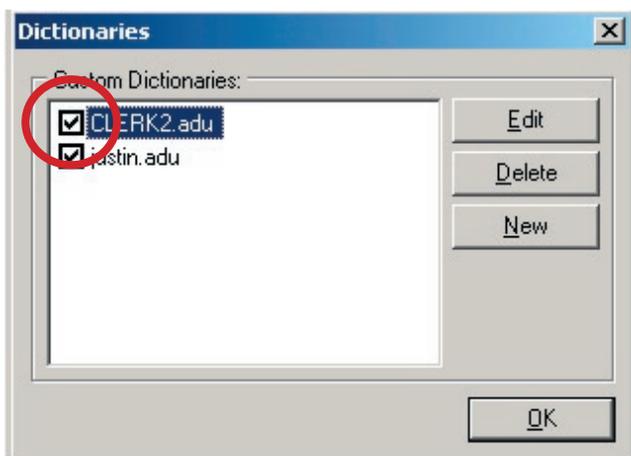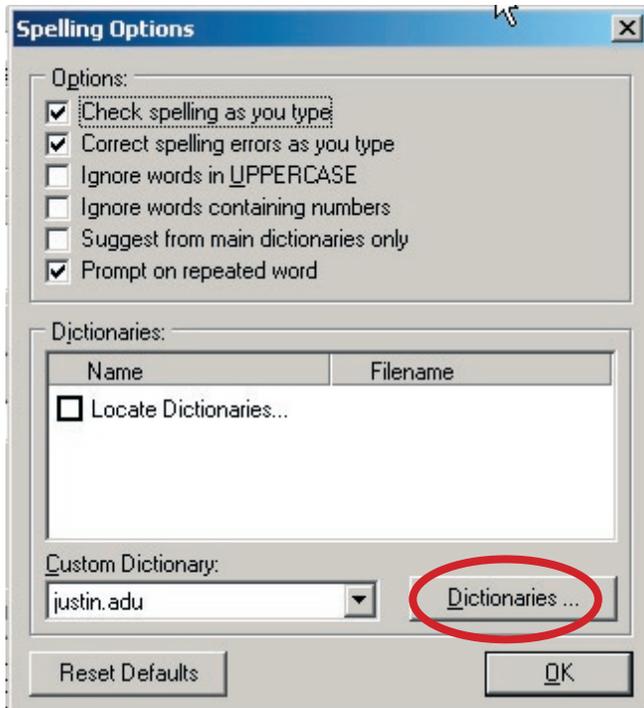
The remaining setup is fairly self explanatory; add new department-specific words, such as proper nouns, under the **Added Words** tab.

You can similarly add auto-corrections under the **Auto-Correct Pairs** tab.
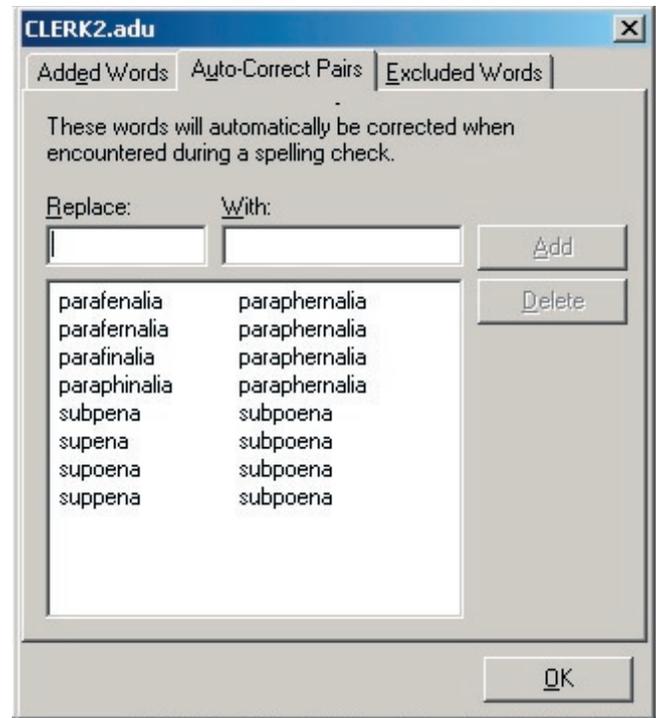
Once you've finished editing the dictionary, click **OK** until you're back to the spell check process. Your dictionary is now ready for use.

While it is shared between all users on a specific computer, it is not automatically made available to users on other computers. You will need to copy the CLERK2.ADU file to the other computers manually.

Restricting modifications

While users have their own custom dictionaries, you may wish to restrict their ability to modify the departmental dictionary. You can do this by denying them write access using Windows Explorer, or more simply, by right-clicking the file, choosing **Properties**, and making it read-only.

Conclusion

CLERK's spell checker has many powerful features, and custom dictionaries can improve its capabilities still further.