Document Version Control and Tools for Comparing & Merging Documents

Version control is generally intended to prevent ~~three~~ four or more users from altering the same document at the same time while providing an archive of previous versions. Version splitting, conversely, is a means of allow multiple authors a means of working on separate instances of the same document at the same time. **Tools for highlighting the recombinant them into a single document are needed to merge them back into a later or final version of the document. Some word processing programs, notably Microsoft Word, have built-in tools to facilitate this ~~that~~ work very well _indeed_.**

The processes for using the built-in feature with Microsoft Word would involve downloading the two documents to compare by clicking on their icons or titles in DocuShare and saving or opening them at your desktop. Within either document, use Word's menus for Select Tools / Track Changes / Compare Documents and open the other document. You'll see the changes highlighted. You can alter the way changes are highlighted, but by default you'll see the differences highlighted in red with a strikethrough for the imported changes and an underline for the equivalent words or phrases in the open document. Redlining marks will show at the left border. Right-click on the highlighted text and accept or reject the changes one by one. You also have the option of choosing to bring up a dialog window to step through each change or you may accept or reject all of them in one pass. You reject overstrikes wipe-out to retain them and accept underscores to retain them. When finished, close the document and upload it as a new version in DocuShare with comments on the changes made for notation in the history tab of its properties.

If all you're playing with is **Microsoft Word** in this regard, this built-in feature should be sufficient for you. Following is a link to Microsoft's website on the topic of:

The revision cycle in Microsoft Office: Compare and merge documents

http://office.microsoft.com/assistance/preview.aspx?AssetID=HA010347321033&CTT=6&Origin=EC010553071033

Other programs are available at additional cost that provide this capability for multiple document types. Volume licensing and free trials are available for most:

Compare Suite from AKS Labs $60

http://comparesuite.com/solutions/document_comparison_for_ms_word_doc_files.htm

SureMerge from Guiffy Software $75

http://www.guiffy.com/indexgo.html

Diff Doc Professional from Soft Interface $399

http://www.softinterface.com/Compare-File-Programs/Compare-File-Programs.htm

Compare and Merge from Compare and Merge $35

http://www.compareandmerge.com/index.html

For more information on this topic, contact **Criteria First** at 972-492-4428 or visit http://www.criteriafirst.com