



'Compare The Comparison' Challenge A Review of Document Comparison Tools

Overview

The Event

'Compare the Comparison' Challenge was conducted in an effort to provide our customer-base with a detailed review of the comparison products currently on the market today. The focus of the event was to test each comparison product to determine how well each performed against complex documents, specifically designed to include challenging document elements and well known problem areas which have a long history of resulting in incorrect comparison reporting.

The Challenge

Law firms and corporate law departments' alike need a document comparison tool that is easy for their users to adopt, use on a daily basis, and produces accurate comparison results.

The Solution

A product with better document control and reliable comparison results.

The Benefits

- Using a reliable product
- Creating greater efficiency
- Maximizing on current investment

What really matters when it comes to document comparison to get the job done right?

As many of us have experienced, not all comparison tools were created equally. Each product has its strengths and its weaknesses. Each comparison product has its own way of handling the comparison process and its own interpretation of how to represent the variety of changes made to a document. However, what ultimately matters is the user's expected results, which is an accurate, error free comparison. How the user expects to see the changes represented in a document and whether the representation is easy to comprehend.

Fortunately, there are many players in the comparison tools space to choose from. Some organizations have chosen Workshare®, who has dominated the market over the years, as their tool of choice. While others have chosen up and coming competitors like Litéra® as their tool of choice. However, neither of these fine competitors can tout almost 100% user buy-in, like Microsoft. In this document, we take a closer look at the products and how well each performed.

Microsoft Word has always suffered from the fact that it offers a sort of "good, but not good enough" comparison feature — better suited for most basic documents — especially when pitted against other more popular comparison tools.

With the release of MS Word 2013, we are all wondering whether this theory still holds true. By popular demand, we've put them all to the test to answer the question.

The Challenge

From its inception, Microsoft Word was designed to provide a way for the everyday business person to easily create, and edit his or her documents without having to be an experienced word processor. It wasn't until their second generation release that Microsoft introduced their compare and track changes functionality. The introduction of these features has not been without some controversy and feature gaps that are offered by the other competitors. It is for these reasons why many firms have been a little cautious about making the move over.

"Microsoft Word has always suffered from the fact that it offers a sort of 'good, but not good enough' comparison feature, which is better suited for most basic documents and not the more complex ones. This has been especially true when Word Compare has been pitted against other more popular comparison tools," says Deneen Martinez, Chief Executive Officer of Creative Growth Mindset Technologies. However, through its evolution, Microsoft Word is arguably the most frequently used and essential document production application adopted by most businesses around the world today; running a close second only to email communication with Microsoft Outlook.

With each version of Word that has been released, it has been the CIO/IT Directors' directive to test the compare functionality thoroughly to help determine if there have been any improvements since the last version and whether they were finally ready to make the move over to Office to fulfill their comparison needs. For many years, the number one driver has been to lessen the number of add-ins in Office and therefore the adverse impact and reliance of third party

software. As the head of the technology team at each firm, it is the key objective to (1) reduce the complexities of their current desktop, (2) find a way to maximize their investment in Microsoft Office and (3) make marked improvements towards their risk management initiatives for the firm. The decision to update technology or migrate to a new system is about more than the individual pieces of software and/or hardware; it is about implementing systems that are aligned to the firm's business goals, identifying the opportunities to make improvements to the firm's current processes and enriching the client services and experience.

The Arena

Microsoft Word® 2010/2013

Although, Microsoft suffered a rough patch over the years, it would seem that they have heard the masses and risen to the challenge. Microsoft has made some notable enhancements to the compare functionality in Microsoft Word 2007 and 2010, adding still more in 2013. The claim that Microsoft's compare engine is 'good, but not good enough' or that 'it is not ready for primetime' no longer holds true. Microsoft Word 2010/2013's compare functionality and engine is at least on an equal playing field as all of the current third party solutions on the market today. They have improved on those features that were either poorly designed or non-existent in previous versions and it performs on a level that the law firms have come to expect.

Out of the box, there are still a handful of feature gaps that law firms have come to depend on, such as a reporting feature to show the statistical analysis of revisions,

For total document control – Is it more efficient to implement a solution that allows users to take advantage of their existing knowledge and work safely within Office, or force them to learn a new technology and workflow outside of Office with another third party application?

creation of comparison schemes/rendering sets, and ability to print revised pages only, which are still missing from Office. However, there are several very attractive vendors that dramatically enhance the native architecture of Microsoft Word and work harmoniously together to provide the robust functionality that is required and provide the missing features still not available in the out of the box installation of Office.

Evolution Software®

Evolution Software is one of those vendors. Evolution Software offer solutions that not only integrate with Office, but install a light footprint on the desktop while delivering fast and efficient results. Their comparison product, NOVO Compare, helps firms overcome the differences in the comparison output normally delivered by Microsoft Word and fills in the workflow gaps some users have come to heavily rely on, such as document management integration, portable document format (PDF) comparison, Track Change fidelity and a comparison summary report. NOVO Compare has its own beautiful and simple interface, which is fully integrated with Office technology. The solution was created to keep users safely and efficiently working within Microsoft Word and, more importantly, provides companies with a seamlessly viable option with a known technology leader like Microsoft. Because it integrates with Microsoft technology, it allows businesses to maximize their current investment in Office, increase productivity by allowing the user to remain working in Office and not an outside application, and lowers their overall desktop costs.

In line with other comparison vendors, Evolution Software also offers a metadata

cleaning solution, PuR Metadata. It installs as a separate module making it easier on enterprise deployments.

Workshare Professional®

Once CompareRite was king and then there was Workshare. When LexisNexis announced the retirement of CompareRite back in February of 2002 to concentrate development efforts on their legal research tools, legal departments and law firms turned to Workshare's DeltaView software for their comparison needs. Workshare quickly dominated the market. DeltaView was best known for its flashy color and more up-to-date interface than CompareRite. In addition, DeltaView managed tables, rows, columns and cell changes more easily than CompareRite, as well as formatting changes, and font changes.

A few years later, Workshare decided to retire their DeltaView software at the disappointment of many of their customers in lieu of the new and improved Workshare Professional product line. Workshare Professional was more than just a comparison tool; it now included a metadata cleaning system as well as a collaboration/document review module.

Workshare has done a great job keeping up with technology and the key features that firms want and need for business continuity. As with many other software companies, the introduction of new features sometimes bring rise to some challenges and pain points for customers. However, even with a long history of challenges, the comparison engine is solid, and still delivers great results.

Each product was tested using the same materials and equipment to ensure fairness and reliability.

Three key areas were tested:

- Accuracy
- Readability
- Formatting Preservation

With the introduction of WS Professional 7 and then 8, Workshare provided marked improvements over the previous releases that are impressive. Professional has all of the rich features of the previous versions, as well as new features including an updated interface (which doesn't disappoint) and configuration applet. They have done a stellar job at keeping the interfaces with that very polished and professional look and feel.

Litéra ChangePro®

An up and coming challenger, Litéra entered the arena. Since its first release of ChangePro in 2004, Litéra has made strong and steady progress in the comparison arena. Their ChangePro product offers a competitive platform to Workshare and other challengers.

Over the years, Litéra has also done a great job keeping up with technology and the key features that firms want and need for business continuity. As with Workshare, Litéra is not immune to technology challenges; however, they still provide a solid comparison engine and deliver great results.

With the introduction of ChangePro 7, Litéra introduces patented technology they call, Compound Document Comparison, which will compare embedded images and objects at a pixelated level; for those who require this type of complex comparison. Although their interface is the same as their previous version and leaves much to be desired, the product is relatively easy to use, especially to those experienced comparison users. Not to be left out, Litéra offers a metadata cleaning system with their suite of products.

The Event

The 'Compare the Comparison' Challenge was conducted after numerous requests from our customer base to provide them with relevant and compelling details about other competing solutions currently on the market. The goal of the event was to test each comparison product to determine how well it performed using complex documents, specifically designed to include challenging document elements and well known problem areas which have a long history of resulting in incorrect comparison reporting.

The documents used in the challenge are great compacted presentations of simple and complex document formatting that can really showcase how well each comparison product performs as well as how well each product represents the changes in a readable format to the user.

Each of the products was tested using the same materials and equipment to ensure fairness and reliability surrounding three key areas: (1) Comparison Accuracy; (2) Comparison Readability; and (3) Formatting Preservation:

Comparison Accuracy: Unarguably, the comparison report or redlined document given to another user needs to be accurate. The software application comparing the documents must accurately detect any changes made from one document to another and list all of the changes that have been identified. If the software application inaccurately identifies changes made to a modified document or if any detail is missing or not detected, this would naturally decrease the accuracy of the software

Comparison Readability: The second most important aspect of a comparison report or redlined document is readability. The software application comparing the documents must generate a comparison report or redlined document that interprets all of the information within the document that has changes in such a way that it is in an easy readable format for the user to understand.

Formatting Preservation: Equally as important as the first two key areas is formatting preservation. Simple and complex formatting changes, whether it is a simple change to passages of text or a more complex change such as to a drawing or text box, all of the changes to formatting in a document must be preserved in a comparison report or redlined document. The software application comparing the documents must generate a comparison report or redlined document that keeps formatting intact throughout the document to avoid impacting accuracy and readability of the comparison results.

The Results

Unlike other comparison reviews that measure speed, memory usage, and integrity of different integration points, this is a carefully detailed review of each of the comparison reports generated by each of the products, paying particular attention to the three key areas identified above and overall performance.

Each of the documents contain 16 different simple and challenging document elements and well known problem areas, such as headers/footers, drawings, tables, and various formatting to name a few, which have

a long history of resulting in incorrect comparison reporting.

As a part of this paper, we will provide the reader with a few examples of the correct comparison results as expected from a user's perspective which have been extracted from the redlined documents and/or comparison report and a few examples of the actual comparison results extracted from the redlined document and/or comparison results of each of the products tested using the three key areas as a point of reference.

While we will not reveal which of the products tested generated an incorrect result as part of this paper, we use these examples to show the reader a small sampling of what we mean by a correct and incorrect comparison result from the products tested, as well as provide a clear understanding of how important and essential testing the three key areas are before making any important technology decision.

While comparison accuracy and readability of a comparison report in some cases is in the eye of the beholder for some users, meaning how the changes in a document are interpreted by any software application are viewed as either correct or incorrect, format preservation, will be the ultimate deciding factor of whether a comparison report can be used to send to another user.

Finally, a scorecard was used to rate the overall performance of each product based on the three key areas.

FURTHER, all parties do agree that with valuable consideration, they will negotiate in good and steady faith.

The parties will agree to these terms unconditionally. If said terms are not mutually agreeable, by both ~~parties~~, they agree to remedies as prescribed by the attorneys herein. In addition, parties agree that all decisions made in joint arbitration, should that be required, are binding. There will be no revocation or any changes of the materials facts contained hereinafter.

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Example 1: Formatting example of compromised inverted paragraph.

Example 1

Example 1 is an inverted paragraph: An "inverted" or "upside-down pyramid" can be thought of as a simple triangle with one side drawn horizontally at the top and the body pointing down.

As shown in the formatting example above, the first (top) is an example of a correct interpretation and depiction of how to render the changes to text in an inverted paragraph.

The second (bottom) is an example of an incorrect interpretation and depiction of how to render the changes to text in an inverted paragraph.

In the first (top) example, all of the changes to text are depicted correctly and the formatting of the inverted paragraph was preserved correctly in the comparison report or redlined document.

In the second (bottom) example, one of the products tested performed quite poorly when comparing an inverted paragraph. Although, as you can see, all of the changes to text were depicted correctly, the formatting of the inverted paragraph was not preserved in an acceptable manner in the comparison report or redlined document.

In both the original and modified documents, the inverted paragraph is supported by two triangular AutoShape objects on either side of the paragraph. Each AutoShape object has been formatted using a tight wrapping style layout to maintain the integrity of the paragraph shape.

In the second (bottom) example, the AutoShape object properties were changed during the comparison process, causing not only the inverted paragraph to become compromised, but the preceding paragraph as well.

The wrapping style layout was somehow changed from 'tight' to 'square.' In our testing, we changed the wrapping style back to 'tight' to see if this action resolved the problem. Unfortunately, it did not; the AutoShapes must be deleted and recreated and the document reformatted to resolve the problem.

REVISED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

~~EXCELLENT~~DYNAMIC AND ACCESS CORPORATION

DATED AS OF ~~TODAY'S DATE~~ _____

REVISED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

~~EXCELLENT~~DYNAMIC AND ACCESS CORPORATION

~~DATED AS OF TODAY'S DATE~~

DATED AS OF _____

Example 2: Readability
example of text changes to the
cover page.

Example 2

Example 2 is simple text change to the cover page. The cover page is typically the front page of the document that draws the readers' attention and describes the contents of the document.

As shown in the readability example above, the first (top) is an example of a correct interpretation and depiction of how to render simple text changes to the cover page of the document.

The second (bottom) is an example of an incorrect interpretation and depiction of how to render simple text changes to the cover page of the document.

Typically, comparison software use what is called a 'sliding scale or sliding window' to

determine how to interpret and display the change made within a document. The sliding scale model uses a pre-determined number of consecutive words that will dictate how the program will display the changes made within a sentence or paragraph.

In this example, there were several small text changes made to the cover page of the document. On the first line, the word, 'REVISED' was inserted. On the third line, the word, 'EXCELLENT' has been replaced with 'DYNAMIC'. On the fourth line, the words, 'TODAY'S DATE' has been deleted and an underline has been inserted after the words 'DATED AS OF'

In the first (top) example, all of the simple changes to the text were interpreted and depicted correctly, and the formatting of the cover page was preserved correctly in the comparison report or redlined document.

In the second (bottom) example, one of the products tested performed quite poorly when comparing these simple text changes to the cover page of the document. Although, technically all of the changes have been captured, you will note that it is due to the sliding scale of one of the products tested that causes it to incorrectly interpret the change and causes an additional line of text to be added to the cover page of the document.

This is a very simple example of how the sliding scale of any comparison product can affect the readability of your comparison report. The importance of readability of the comparison report cannot be expressed enough. Ultimately, it affects your users, business continuity, and more importantly the collaboration process of all parties that depend on correctly interpreting and understanding the changes that have been made to the evolving document.

DISCOVERY DATA.

Products	Jan	Feb	Mar
Discovery	\$ 150.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 300.00
Pleadings	\$ 200.00	\$ 195.00	\$ 225.00
Other	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 3,000.00
Total	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 2,895.00	\$ 3,525.00

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If any provision of this Agreement or the application of any such provision to any

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The second (bottom) is an example of an incorrect interpretation and depiction of how to render the changes of adding an embedded Excel spreadsheet into the Microsoft Word document.

In the first (top) example, all of the changes were interpreted correctly and the formatting preserved.

In the second (bottom) example, one of the products tested performed quite poorly when comparing the insertion of the table title and embedded Excel spreadsheet within the document. Although, it appears that the product did correctly depict that an Excel spreadsheet was inserted into the document, it is in the interpretation and depiction of the second example which renders it incorrectly. The interpretation compromises not only the font size and characteristics of the table title, but also the alignment of the table itself, in addition to improperly converting the Excel spreadsheet to a Microsoft Word table. It is also interesting to note that the change marker does not appear in the second example although it is obvious the program interpreted this as an insertion with double underlined and blue font.

In this example, not only is accuracy important, but readability and formatting preservation are also important factors. The comparison report or redlined document must provide users with results they can interpret correctly and consistently rely on. Another important factor is that the product tested improperly converted the Excel spreadsheet to a Microsoft Word table, thereby prohibiting the user from future edits.

Example 3: Accuracy example of an embedded Excel spreadsheet.













Example 3

Example 3 is an embedded Excel spreadsheet. As a function of Microsoft Word, an Excel spreadsheet can be inserted into a Word document as a live link so that the spreadsheet can be easily edited in its native application without first exiting Word. Typically, the Excel spreadsheet and all of the data and formulas are embedded in the document in a table structured format and is not converted into a Word table.

As shown in the accuracy example above, the first (top) is an example of a correct interpretation and depiction of how to render the changes of adding an embedded Excel spreadsheet into the Microsoft Word document.

Scorecard:

Overall performance based on three key areas. Rating System is:

	GOOD 	FAIR 	POOR 
KEY AREAS	NOVO COMPARE	LITÉRA CHANGEPRO	WORKSHARE PROFESSIONAL
Comparison Accuracy			
Comparison Readability			
Formatting Preservation			

Scorecard: Overall performance based on Key Areas of testing.

Drum Roll The Scorecard

The scorecard above was used to evaluate the overall performance of each of the products tested and designed to display a graphical representation geared to visually convey the success and/or failure against the performance targets. A rating system of Green for Good, Orange for Fair, and Red for Poor was used to determine overall performance during testing.

The overall performance scoring was determined by how well each product performed against 16 different simple and challenging document elements and problem areas, such as headers/footers, drawings, tables, contained within each document that have a long history of resulting in incorrect comparison reporting.

After a careful review of the comparison report or redlined document from each of the products tested, we believe all of the

comparison products performed quite well, as was to be expected. However, we were delightfully surprised at the front runner, NOVO Compare, and how well it performed.

NOVO Compare outperformed against its leading competitors and in our opinion, definitely deserves a thorough review and in-house testing to help companies determine whether they are currently using the best solution that fits their current business needs

If your business is currently using any other comparison product, including the products we have tested, we recommend that you test a trial version of NOVO Compare.

NOVO Compare with its nicely designed interface and user friendly features was designed to seamlessly integrate with Microsoft technology and fills in the workflow gaps of the out of the box installation of Microsoft Word's compare engine. The NOVO Compare product allows businesses to maximize their current investment in Office, increase productivity by allowing the user to remain working in Office and not an outside application, and lowers their overall desktop costs.

Creative Growth Mindset Technologies welcomes the challenge of assisting any firm interested in putting NOVO Compare to the test or for any other professional services needs.

For More Information

For more information about Creative Growth Mindset Technologies, email us at info@cgmstech.com or visit our website at: www.cgmstech.com. We can assist companies in finding the right solution and help with evaluation, testing and implementation.

For more information about Evolution Software® products and services, visit the website at:

www.evsoftware.com

Technical Details Document

As a supplement to this paper, we have also made available the complete technical details results for this challenge. To obtain a copy of the technical details of the comparison evaluation results, please contact us at info@cgmstech.com.

About Creative Growth Mindset

Creative Growth Mindset Technologies is a full service professional consulting firm. We are committed to customer satisfaction and your company's success. Our team is comprised of smart and savvy professionals with extensive industry knowledge working with Legal and Fortune 500 companies.