

Short and simple

Emma Gledhill explains some straightforward ways that you can customise your keyboard shortcuts in several different translation memory environments



Emma Gledhill MITI has been translating from German, Swiss German, Dutch and French since 1993. After many years living near Zurich, she now lives up a Swiss alp in a Romansch-speaking village and is enjoying learning the local minority language. Emma is a professional RYA/MCA Yachtmaster Offshore skipper and sailing instructor and, with a degree in German and Music, plays saxophone in a big band.

Keyboard shortcuts are something many translators rely on; and indeed, using them brings ergonomic benefits, because you are moving the mouse around less. However, if you are switching between different translation memory (TM) systems, you'll be very aware that they all have different default keyboard shortcuts – which brings some negative *cognitive* ergonomics.

Having been an early adopter of Trados in 1998, this is something I personally experienced when the keyboard shortcuts were changed as part of the complete redesign from

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Workbench to Studio. I've also recently needed to move to memoQ as a day-to-day TM tool and have used Transit and other proprietary TM systems over the course of my career. I am therefore all too familiar with the issue.

But never fear! If certain keyboard shortcuts from your favourite TM system are burned into your fingers' muscle memory, all is not lost. One feature offered by many TM systems is the ability to customise their keyboard shortcuts. This simple trick can vastly accelerate your learning curve in a new-to-you TM system, improve your cognitive ergonomics

and eliminate any problems when you revert to your usual system.

So, whether you prefer Alt+Add or Ctrl+Enter, here is how to customise your shortcuts in a number of common TM environments.

Easy to customise

Most translation memory systems make it fairly easy to customise your shortcuts. That includes the two market leaders.

Trados Studio 2019

Trados has been around for a very long time and is arguably the most mature (and of course most widespread) translation memory solution on the market. Whether you're a fan or not, it certainly offers the easiest shortcut customisation process of all its competitors.

- 1) Click the **File** menu.
- 2) Click **Options**, then **Keyboard Shortcuts**.

- 3) Click in the shortcut field next to the action for which you want to define or change the shortcut.
 - 4) Press the desired key combination.
 - 5) Click **OK** to save the changes.
- And that's it, job done.

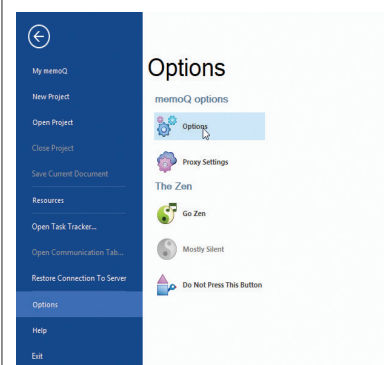
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MemoQ 9.3

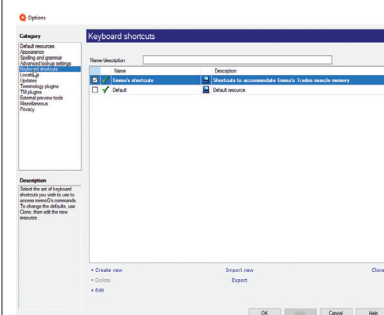
MemoQ is increasingly popular and widespread, both with language service providers or corporates and with freelance translators. Although

it involves a couple more steps than Trados, it is still straightforward to customise your keyboard shortcuts. The **default shortcut set cannot be edited** so you have to clone it, but the advantage is that you will always have a clean set should anything go wrong.

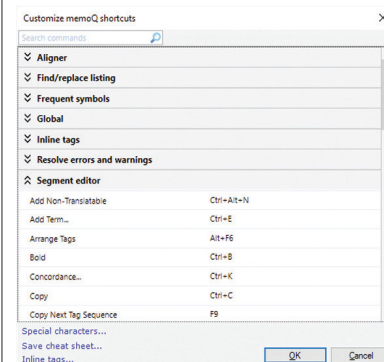
- 1) Select **Options** from the **memoQ** menu.
- 2) Select **Options** followed by **Keyboard shortcuts**.



- 3) Select the default set of shortcuts, click **Clone**, give the clone a name and a description if required, and click **OK**.



- 4) Select your new set of shortcuts, and click **Edit**.
- 5) Select the shortcut you want to change, click on its **Edit** button, press the desired key combination, and then click the green plus sign to save the change.



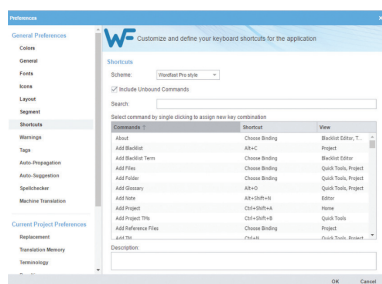
- 6) Once you have made all your changes, click **OK**.

7) Click the checkbox next to your new set of shortcuts to select the set for use, and then click **OK**.

Wordfast

As one of the only TM systems to run natively on a Mac, Wordfast extends its broad church to keyboard shortcuts as it already includes four default sets of shortcut styles, namely Wordfast Classic style, Wordfast Pro style, Trados style and SDLX style. If any of these is not exactly as you would like it, you can easily edit each 'binding', as they are known in Wordfast.

- 1) Select **Preferences** from the **Wordfast** drop-down menu.
- 2) On the **Preferences** dialog box, click **Shortcuts** under **General Preferences**.



- 3) Select a **Style** scheme from the drop-down list.

When changing or creating new shortcut key sequences, the sequence must either begin with a **Ctrl**, **Alt**, or **Shift**, must use a function key, or use a combination.

- 4) Select a **Command** from the command list and enter a new sequence of keys in the **Shortcut** column, and then click **OK**.

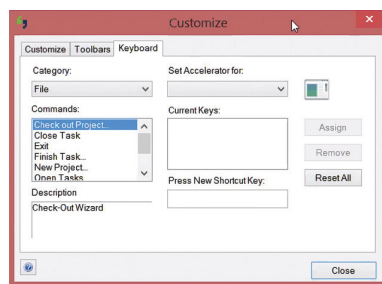
- 5) (Optional) If you choose a shortcut key sequence already in use, a warning message notifies you that it will override the prior key sequence.
- 6) Click **Yes** to save the new shortcut for a command.

The new shortcut key sequence is saved.

Across and Déjà Vu have similar processes for customising your shortcuts once you have accessed their **Customize** dialog box.

Across

- 1) Right-click on any toolbar of the crossDesk.
- 2) Select **Customize** from the context menu.

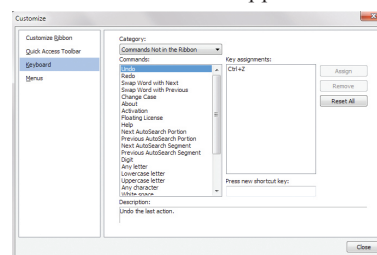


- 3) Select the **Keyboard** tab in the **Customize** dialog box.
- 4) Under **Category**, select the **Search** option.
- 5) Under **Commands**, select **Start concordance search**.

- 6) In the **Press New Shortcut Key** box, enter the desired keyboard shortcut, and press **Assign**.
- 7) Finally, click **Close**.

Déjà vu X3

- 1) Right-click on the ribbon, and select **Customize Quick Access Toolbar**.
- 2) Click on **Keyboard** in the **Customize** box that appears.



- 3) In the **Category** drop-down box, select the category of command for which you want to change the shortcut.
- 4) The **Commands** box contains the commands available for that category.
- 5) The **Key assignments** box shows the shortcut currently assigned to the command (if any).
- 6) In the **Press new shortcut key** box, enter the desired keyboard shortcut, and click on **Assign**.
- 7) If you want to remove a shortcut, click on **Remove**.
- 8) If you want to reset all the shortcuts to their default values, click on **Reset All**.
- 9) Finally, click **Close**.

Difficult to customise

Two TM systems do not have an easy way to customise keyboard shortcuts. It's not impossible, but the process is more complicated and time-consuming, and will put off many users.

Transit NXT

Unlike most other translation memory systems – and surprisingly as it's competing with Trados and memoQ – Transit does not have any options to directly change the predefined default keyboard shortcuts. There is, however, a workaround using the macro function; as keyboard shortcuts are, by definition, repeated functionality, it is possible to record macros so that

you can use your favourite shortcuts to execute the default keystrokes. Whilst it works, it's rather laborious to set up. For more information, see chapter 3 'Automating tasks using macros' in the *Transit/TermStar NXT Reference Guide*.

OmegaT

Like Transit, OmegaT doesn't have an easy-access route to customising its keyboard shortcuts. That's not to say it's impossible, but it involves writing a shortcut definition file and putting it in the OmegaT preferences folder (accessible by the **Options** → **Access Configuration Folder** menu). For many translators, this may be much too close to

programming for comfort, and it's much harder work than in other systems. But then, unlike other TM tools, OmegaT is completely free and open-source, so a bit of legwork is only to be expected.

If you are up for the challenge, full instructions can be found here: <https://omegat.sourceforge.io/manual-standard/en/appendix.shortcut.custom.html>.

Obviously there are other TM systems out there, but I've aimed to cover the most common ones on the market. If you know of a better way to customise keyboard shortcuts in these or other systems (or if you've found an easier way in Transit or OmegaT), do let us know!