Sierra & cocoAspell

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1 Introduction

The LaTeX-aware Spell Checker cocoAspell hasn't been updated since 2009 but has, maybe amazingly, continued to operate in spite of multiple updates of OS X over the years. Unfortunately that all came to and end with the introduction of OS X 10.12 (Sierra).

We believe the reason for the failure is presently known and hope it will be corrected in an updated version at some point. However, until that happens, it would be nice to still be able to use the aspell Spell Checker installed by cocoAspell. This package includes a TeXShop Macro, written by Michael Sharpe, and a personal configuration file to aid in the use of the installed aspell.

NOTE: Version 2.5 of cocoAspell installs and works properly under El Capitan and Sierra so the enclosed solution is not necessary (unless you are a Terminal lover). It is available at <http://people.ict.usc.edu/~leuski/cocoaspell/>.

2 How the Macro Works

When you activate the Aspell Spellcheck macro, either clicking on its name in the Macro menu or using its shortcut (Ctl-Cmd-;), TeXShop saves the Source file, Opens Terminal.app and a new window (in case a process is already running) moves to the Source file's directory and runs aspell on the Source file. Aspell displays any mispelled word, gives selection choices and you type a selection after which it goes onto the next mispelling, etc. Once all errors are corrected aspell quits, the extra Terminal window is closed (leaving Terminal running in the backgound) and TeXShop reopens the Source file. You also get a message if things have changed or not in the Source file.

3 Installing cocoAspell

If you haven't already done so you need to install cocoAspell. It doesn't work properly under Sierra but it does properly install things that are needed by the supplied Macro. If you are doing a first time install under Sierra please follow the directions in the 'InstallingCocoAspell.pdf' document found in zipped form at <https://herbs.github.io>.

4 Installing the Macro

The Macro, entitled 'Aspell Spellcheck.plist', is supplied with this document. To load it into TeXShop you should first Click on Macros → Open Macro Editor which does just what it says. Once the Macro Editor is open Click on Macros → Add Macros from File.... With the dialog sheet open drag and drop the Aspell Spellcheck.plist file onto the pane and press Open to add the Macro to the bottom of the list in the Editor. From there you can drag and drop the Macro wherever you wish on the Macro list on the left panel of the Macro Editor. You can also change the default shortcut, (Ctl-Cmd-;), to anything else you wish. Finally click Save and the Macro will get saved and the Macro Editor will be dismissed.

5 Editing and Installing the Configuration File

The enclosed aspell.conf file contains a default configuration for aspell using cocoAspell's dictionary and personal file paths. It assumes the use of the en_US language and dictionary as well as the corresponding personal files. There is also a starting list of LaTeX commands with information about which permanent and optional arguments to skip or check.

If you don't use the en_US dictionary substitute the language_localization code you have used in the past for the en_US values in aspell.conf.

Finally, copy the aspell.conf file into your HOME folder with a leading period, '.', which make it invisible to Finder, by using the Terminal command typed as 'cp ' (note the space following the cp), dragging and dropping the aspell.conf file onto the Terminal window (this enters the path to that file), adding a space and finally ~/.aspell.conf and press Return. E.g., if the aspell.conf file is on your Desktop the full command will look like

cp /Users/username/Desktop/aspell.conf ~/.aspell.conf

where username is your login name.