CUSTOMIZED WORD LISTS

Customized word lists allow you to create a list of words and to then use these as part of a search. For example, you could have a list of words referring to a particular emotion (happy, glad, pleased), colors (green, blue, red, yellow, white), parts of a computer (screen, monitor, keyboard), or any other list (Shanghai, London, Cairo, Tokyo). For example, do a sample search with @colors (e.g. blue, white), @colors @clothes (e.g. blue dress, white shirt, brown shoe), @colors @CLOTHES (capitalized = all forms of the words in the "clothes" list, e.g. blue jeans, white shirt, brown shoes), or PLAY the @INSTRUMENT (played the piano, playing the guitar).

To create a customized word list "from scratch", click on the icon to see your profile page, click on the number after "Customized word lists", and then click on "Create New List":

Enter the name of the list. Try to keep the name simple and short – no spaces or non-standard characters.

Then have one word per line for your list. These must be single words (e.g. cellphone or blue), not multiple words (i.e. not cell phone or dark blue). You can copy and paste these from another file, if you’d like.

After creating a list, you can see information [1] about the list (number of words, date last modified), and you can delete the list [2], with the chance to "undelete" it within 48 hours.

You can EDIT the list [3], by adding or removing entries. And of course, you can USE [4] the list as part of a search. It will enter the list name (prefixed by @, for example @clothes) into the search form.

Once you have created a customized word list, you can re-use it in queries at any time in the future – they remain stored in the database on the server. You can type it into the search form directly; the format is:

@listName

You can also use the list as part of a phrase, as in the following:

was quite @beautiful
LIKE_v playing @sports
he|she @hurt *self*
A second way to create a customized word list is by using some of the results from a search. To do so, select OPTIONS / SAVE LISTS = YES in the search form before doing the search. In the list of results, enter the list name [1] (again, no spaces and no "non-standard" characters). Then select the entries that you want to add to your list (and you can use [3] to select all entries).

This will then create a customized word list with these words. And just as with any other list, you can then modify this list in any way that you'd like – adding more entries, deleting entries, etc.

The real advantage of customized word lists (along with the ability to search by synonyms, e.g. =happy or =walk) is that you can search the corpora semantically, rather than just by word form, lemma, part of speech, etc. These searches are very fast (just one or two seconds to search a one billion word corpus like COCA), and they are only available at English-Corpora.org.