These notes – in the form of questions and answers – are the fruit of three years experience in using Intellicomplete on a fairly regular basis. They are intended as a complement to the very comprehensive Help file provided with the software and assume a basic knowledge of the application's various features. If you are new to Intellicomplete, I suggest that you read the Flash Start component in the Help file and then spend a little time experimenting and familiarising yourself with the various options and settings. Above all, when reading these notes please remember at all times that I am writing from the point of view of a translator: what works for me may not be so useful for others. To take just one example: I myself do not often use the Shorthand Expansion component but this is probably a key component for, say, programmers, medical transcriptionists and lawyers. Similarly, a touch typist whose eyes are focused on the screen will certainly adopt a different approach from someone like me who, while typing pretty fast, is typically concentrating more on the keyboard. In short, how you use Intellicomplete will to a certain degree depend on your "profile" and your typing skills. Having said that, I hope that at least some of what I have to say will prove useful to everyone. I hope, too, that my remarks will encourage others to report their own experiences with Intellicomplete. I myself am keenly aware that I am perhaps not always using the software in the most effective way and I would be very interested to hear about your preferences, tips, etc.

These notes are in no particular order of importance; they include general considerations and more specific points.

1. In your opinion, what is the single most important thing to remember when using Intellicomplete?

The single most important thing to remember is that Intellicomplete is designed to SAVE TIME. I know that sounds an obvious thing to say but it is the litmus test against which everything you do should be measured. If you are not saving time, you are not using Intellicomplete in the right way. It's as simple as that! What does that mean in practical terms? At the simplest level, it means that the longer the word or phrase the bigger the payoff. For example is it worth using Intellicomplete to complete a word like "product"? Probably not. You will almost certainly spend more time in glancing at the prompt window, possibly selecting the word from the list, pressing the autocomplete Hot Key and returning to the keyboard than you would in just typing in the word. On the other hand, typing in even a short word can slow you down if you are not sure of its spelling, if it contains accents a mixture of upper and lower case letters, or a mixture of letters and numbers. At the other extreme, there may even be cases when it is better to switch off Intellicomplete completely – when writing a letter to a friend, for example.

2. In your opinion, which is the single most important feature of Intellicomplete?

Without a doubt, the **User Library**. At first I was worried about cluttering up its base with too many words/phrases, but I have come to appreciate that this powerful, flexible and accessible tool cannot be used often enough. This is based on an analysis of how we actually use the prompt window. What exactly is the purpose of the prompt window? It is not, as I originally supposed, to give a list of words/phrases which you entered a long time ago and have probably forgotten. If that were the case, you would spend too much time making the right selection from the list. No, the purpose of this window is to act as a check – a "crutch" if you like – for words/phrases *which you expect to find in the list*. Ideally, in fact, you would not want to look at the prompt window at all! In short, in my opinion and for my purposes, the User Library is best used on a *short-term, temporary, document-specific* level. For example, in writing these notes I have entered words/phrases such as Intellicomplete, User Library and Prompt Window into the library using the Quick Add Words Phrases & Shorthands window.

The chances of my wanting to use these words again in the near future are pretty remote, and even if I did, I would almost certainly have forgotten that I had saved them!
To sum up: the prompt window is just that – a prompt.

3. OK. Suppose you have a text to translate. What exactly do you do?
I open a new document and spend a few minutes going through the text, entering the words/phrases which I want Intellicomplete to learn. It doesn't matter if the list isn't complete, I can always add to it on the fly.

4. Do you use the language libraries?
Not very often. I never use the English library because, as a native English speaker trying to earn my living as a translator, I would be in the wrong job if I needed this particular library!
On the other hand, when I write in French (a language which I speak fluently and understand perfectly but which I do not always spell correctly) I find that the French library is useful for the spelling of certain words.

5. What about the professional and shorthand libraries?
As I mentioned in the introduction, I personally do not use the shorthand libraries. After a certain amount of trial and error, and for the reasons referred to in **2.** above, I have also abandoned using the professional libraries. But that is just my personal choice based on the sort of work I do, and I would be very interested to learn how and in what circumstances other people use these libraries.

6. Do you use the Auto-Learn features?
Again, no. I much prefer to tell Intellicomplete which words/phrases to remember.

7. Doesn't Intellicomplete make the clipboard obsolete?
Not all! They really serve two different functions. The autocomplete tool should, as I say, mostly be used for completing words/phrases which are in the forefront of your memory and for which the prompt window is really no more than a "crutch". As such, it is a much faster and more convenient tool than the clipboard. But the clipboard comes into its own when you want to copy larger chunks of text on a one-off basis, etc.

8. Which Hot Key do you prefer for autocompletion?
I find that the RETURN key is the fastest and most convenient, and it doesn't seem to cause any conflicts.

9. Do you prefer to have the prompt window close to the cursor or at the bottom the screen?
I've tried both positions and I'm still not quite sure. On balance, I think I prefer to have the window near the cursor.

10. How many characters do you type before the prompt window pops up?
Two characters is a good compromise for me.

11. What is your setting for the number of entries in the prompt window?
Two or three. I used to select more but for the reasons I have given in **2.** above, I now prefer to have a limited number of entries.

12. Intellicomplete sometimes seems to react rather slowly. How can I rectify this problem?

If you are a little short of memory (RAM) and if you are working in Word, you can speed up things by switching off the "Check spelling as you type" option in Word (Tools/Options/Spelling & Grammar). That should help.

13. Can Intellicomplete be used as a translation tool?

Intellicomplete is an extremely useful tool for people like translators who have to type a lot of text but it is not a **translation tool**. In theory, the Shorthand Expansion feature could be adapted for this purpose: the shorthand is used for the source language and the expansion as the target language. I have in fact tried this but the problem is that a) it is very painstaking to build up a large data base, b) you soon forget which words you have entered, c) the shorthand tends to get mixed up with the autocompletion and d) you cannot import glossaries. So it's really a non starter. If you are looking for a fast, semi-automatic way of pasting in translations (without going to the expense of costly and complicated computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools) I would suggest you take a look at FlashText (also available from **www.flashpeak.com**) This application is extremely easy to use. Working in Word (or whatever), you just press a hot key to call up FlashText, immediately start typing in the source word (depending on the size of your glossary the first few letters will probably suffice), quickly check the corresponding translation, press Enter and you are returned to Word (or whatever) with the translation pasted in. It is also very easy to import glossaries into FlashText. I this application a lot and am very pleased with it.

I hope these notes are of some use to you and would be very interested to find out how you use Intellicomplete. If you would like to contact me directly my e-mail is: hessey23@aol.com

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