MS-OFFICE TIPS
EXCEL

COUNTING THE DAYS

If you'd like to know how many days left until Christmas, run Excel and type

="12/25/97"-"11/01/97"

(or whatever the current date is) into a cell. Excel will return the number of days (54) between the two dates. The trick here is to remember the quotes. If you don't use quotes, you'll get some very strange results.

GETTING CONVERTED

Since much of the world expresses its temperatures in centigrade (or Celsius) and we in the USA most often use Fahrenheit, having a way to quickly switch between the two can be helpful. Excel 97 comes to the rescue with a command named CONVERT. To see how it works, type 68 into cell A1. Now move to cell A3 and type in

=CONVERT(A1, "F", "C")

and press Enter. This formula converts Fahrenheit (F) to Centigrade (C) and the result should be 20.

If you need to convert from Centigrade to Fahrenheit, type in

=CONVERT (A1, "C", "F")

and press Enter. If you left 68 in A1, the new result should be 154.4.

Note: if the Convert function doesn't work for you, choose Tools|Add-Ins. Make sure the Analysis ToolPak option is turned on and click on OK.

GO THERE NOW

You can enter a hyperlink of any kind into a Microsoft Office 97 document. And it doesn't have to be a link to a Web site. Let's suppose that you'd like to use a hyperlink in a Word document to open a specific Excel file. Choose Insert, Hyperlink. When the Insert Hyperlink dialog box opens, enter the Excel file name. Or click Browse and locate the file. Now click OK to close the dialog box and save your addition. When you click the hyperlink, the Excel document will open.

You can also use the hyperlink to open a specific sheet in the Excel workbook. To do this, right-click your new hyperlink and choose Hyperlink, Edit Hyperlink. Click the text box labeled "Named location in file (Optional)" and enter

Page_2

Now click OK.

At this point, you need to tell Excel what you're doing. So start Excel and open your test worksheet. Navigate to Sheet 2 and choose Insert, Name, Define. When the Define Name dialog box opens, type

Page_2

into the Names in Workbook text entry box. Click Add to add the new name and then click OK to record the change and close the dialog box. Now exit Excel and go back to your Word document. Click the hyperlink, and Excel will open displaying Sheet 2.

A BIG MERGER

Excel 97 allows you to merge the text in one cell with the data in other cells. This feature is especially useful when you need to use a multiline title. Let's try an example.

Go to cell A1 and enter a title. Use Alt-Enter to add each new line so your entry looks like the one shown here.

Simple Simon Pie Company 1998 Annual report

Now select cells A1 through D2 and choose Format, Cells. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Alignment tab. Select the Merge Cells check box and then click OK. Excel will place the text into what appears as a single cell (it isn't a single cell, but there are no cell grids in the merged cells). You can now format the title any way you want--center the text, change the font and font size--all the normal standard formatting.

SWITCHING THE DISPLAY

We recently published a tip on how to get Excel worksheets to display formulas rather than data. We suggested that you choose Tools, Options, click the View tab, and then select the check box labeled Formulas. Click OK and there are the formulas displayed in place of the associated data.
A number of subscribers pointed out that there is a much easier way to accomplish this. All you have to do is press Ctrl-Tilde (~), and Excel will toggle between data display and formula display.

LAST NAME FIRST

Let's pretend that you have an Excel Worksheet that contains a list of employees. They're all entered in the form first name, last name. The problem is that you need to extract the last names only. Let's take a two-day look at the elements needed to do this.
Before you can extract the last name, you need to know how long the string is and where the space is located. So, let's go to cell A1 and type a name, such as
Jean Shepherd
Now go to cell D1 and enter
=len(a1)
Cell D1 should now display
13
Now what about that space between the names? In cell E1, enter
=find(" ",a1)
Cell E1 will display
5
because Jean contains four letters and the space is the fifth character.
Now that we know how to get the string length and locate the space, tomorrow, we'll take a look at how to put it all together.

LAST NAME FIRST 2

In the last tip, we looked at how to find the length of a text string in an Excel cell. We also determined where the space was located. This time, let's look at a complete formula that will extract the last name.
Go to cell A1 and start a list of names, with the first name in cell A1, second name in cell A2, like this:
We know from the last tip that the total length of the name Jean Shepherd is 13 characters and that the space is character 5. This means that the length of the last name is eight characters (13-5). So we could use Excel's Right string command to return the last name. Go to cell D1 and enter
=right(a1,8)
When you do this, cell D1 will display
But, we don't want to calculate each one by hand, so let's get Excel to do the entire job for us. Go to cell D1 and enter
=right(a1,len(a1)-find(" ",a1))
Now grab the little tag at the lower-right corner of cell D1 and drag down through D4. Click somewhere away from column D. Cells D1 through D4 should now read

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Here's a really cool Excel 97 feature. To see how it works, you'll first need to add a pair of AutoShape figures to your worksheet. If your Drawing toolbar isn't available, choose View, Toolbars and select Drawing.
Now click AutoShapes and select one of the shapes. Use the mouse to draw the shape in the worksheet. Repeat the procedure to draw a second shape. With both shapes in place in your worksheet, click AutoShapes again and this time choose Connectors. We suggest that you select one of the curved connectors; these are the ones that look most impressive in this example. Move the mouse cursor over one of the figures. When you see the figure's points appear in blue, press and hold the mouse button while you move to the second figure. When the second figure's points light up in blue, release the mouse button.

At this point, you'll have a curved line running between the two figures. Drag one of the figures to a new location. As you can see, the curved line between the figures will follow every move. You can even get some interesting effects if you move one figure near the other; the line will curve part way around the target figure. This is much easier to do than to explain--give it a try. As you drag the figure, you can see where the line is going.

FILL IT YOUR WAY

Here's a question from A.H. about Fill: "I would like to use Excel's Fill feature to enter a column of numbers. I need to be able to enter 99 in the first cell and then have Excel fill the remainder of the A column with 98 down to 0. Is there a way to fill a column with cells counting down?"
Go to cell A1 and enter
99
Now press Enter and then select cell A1. Choose Edit, Fill, Series. Into the Step Value entry box, type -1 (minus one). Into the Stop Value entry box, enter 0 (zero). Select the Series in Columns radio button and then click OK.
Here's another way, although it may not be a good choice with a long series of numbers. You can enter
99
into cell A1 and then enter
98
into cell A2. Now select both cells and then use the mouse to drag down until all the cells are filled. This works well and very quickly if you have only a few cells in which to enter numbers. For example, if cell A1 contains 1 and cell A2 contains 2, you could select both cells and then drag down to 10 in cell A10. A tool tip shows where you are at all times.

LAST NAME FIRST

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Before you can extract the last name, you need to know how long the string is and where the space is located. So, let's go to cell A1 and type a name, such as
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MAKING THOSE CHARTS MOVE

In the previous tip, we pointed out that you can copy an Excel chart by right-clicking the chart and choosing Copy. Then you can move to PowerPoint and press Ctrl-V to paste the chart onto a PowerPoint slide.
Once the slide is in PowerPoint, you can animate those chart components if you wish. This is possible because you can Ungroup the chart. Try this:
Select the chart and choose Draw, Ungroup. Next, press Ctrl-A to select all the components. Now hold down the Shift key while you deselect all the chart components that you want to animate. Once you've deselected all the necessary components, release the Shift key and choose Draw, Group.

Now you can right-click the chart and choose Custom Animation. Click the Timing tab and select Animate. Select the components to animate and then click the Effects tab. Select the animation effect you want for each component. To see how your animation looks, click Preview. When you're finished, click OK to close the dialog box and save your changes.

LOOK AT THE WHOLE THING

Layout is important when you're designing a complex worksheet. But it's hard to see how the layout looks when you can view only a portion of the worksheet at once. To see how your entire worksheet looks, try this:
Choose View, Full Screen. Next, press Ctrl-End to move to the last cell used by your worksheet. Now press Ctrl-Shift-Home to select the entire worksheet you've worked on, from the last cell to cell A1. Choose View, Zoom and select Fit Selection. Click OK, and there's the entire worksheet. You won't be able to read anything, but you can see how the layout looks.

LET'S CHECK THE CELL

"I am trying to do something you would think is simple, but I cannot figure out how to do it. All I want to do is create a spreadsheet (order form) so that I can put a check mark in the appropriate boxes when ordering. I don't like using X's for this. How is this done?"
There are several ways to add special symbols in Excel cells. You can select a cell or range of cells and choose Format, Cells. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Font tab. Now select the Symbol font and click OK. Select one of the formatted cells and hold down the Alt key while you enter 0214 from the keypad. This enters a check mark in the selected cell.
You can also use AutoCorrect. To do this, follow the procedure already described and then copy the check mark (press Ctrl-C). Next, choose Tools, AutoCorrect and type cm in the Replace entry box. Press Tab to get to the With entry box, and press Ctrl-V to paste the check mark you copied to the Clipboard. Click Add, then OK to close the dialog box and record your new entry. You can now type cm in cells to get a check mark. However, the check mark won't appear until you set the cell's font to Symbol.
Since AutoCorrect isn't a very satisfying way to address the problem, we wrote a short macro to do the job. To apply the macro to all worksheets, you need to put it into AutoStart.xls. Choose Window, Unhide. When the dialog box opens, click AutoStart.xls to select it, then click OK. If you don't have Unhide available, you need to create AutoStart.xls. Open a blank worksheet and choose File, Save As. Name the sheet AutoStart.xls and save it in the Xlstart folder in your Office folder.
With AutoStart.xls in view, press Alt-F11 to open the Visual Basic Editor and enter the following exactly as shown, except that in the line "ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "O" 'enter Alt + 0214 here:" the capital "O" should have an umlaut (that's two little dots above the letter).
Sub Checkmark() With Selection.Font .Name = "Symbol" .FontStyle = "Regular" .Size = 10 .Strikethrough = False .Superscript = False .Subscript = False .OutlineFont = False .Shadow = False .Underline = xlUnderlineStyleNone .ColorIndex = xlAutomatic End With ActiveCell.FormulaR1C1 = "O" 'enter Alt + 0214 here End Sub
Now press Ctrl-S to save AutoStart.xls (along with the new macro). Press Ctrl-Q to exit the Visual Basic Editor. Next, choose Tools, Macro, Macros. When the Macro dialog box opens, click the new macro to select it, then click Options. In the Macro Options dialog box, type a K to set the Shortcut key combination to Ctrl-K, then click OK to close the dialog box and save your selection. Back in Macro, click Cancel to close the dialog box.
To finish up, choose Window, Hide. This hides AutoExec.xls so it won't open each time you run Excel. Close Excel now. When asked if you want to save changes to AutoStart.xls, click Yes.
The next time you run Excel, open a blank worksheet and select a cell. Press Ctrl-K, and the macro runs, inserting a check mark into the selected cell.

A FRACTION OF THE TOTAL

"I need to enter fractions in Excel. This is usually no problem, but sometimes the fraction shows up as a date rather than a fraction. What can I do to make sure a fraction is always a fraction?"

When you enter a fraction in a form Excel understands, you won't have a problem. For example, 1 5/8 or 2 3/16 won't cause any trouble at all. However, if you enter a single fraction that happens to match a date format, you'll get a date entry rather than a fraction. For example, Excel interprets 12/65 as December 1965, and 1/12 becomes January 12.
To make sure Excel sees your entry as a fraction, you can enter 12/65 as 12/65 which Excel interprets as 0.184615384615385 rather than December 1965.

SKIP THE WEEKENDS

"I often use Excel's automatic fill option when developing worksheets. For example, I enter Monday in cell A1 and Tuesday in cell B1, then select cells A1 and B2 and drag to the right to fill the other cells with the rest of the weekdays. This has always worked well for me, but recently I ran into a problem. I entered the following into cells A1 through A6:
6/1/99 6/2/99 6/3/99 6/4/99 6/7/99 6/8/99
When I selected all the cells and dragged downward, all I got was the same dates repeated over and over again. What is happening here? I was expecting Excel to fill the cells with all the weekdays of the month."
Autofill is a great option, and we use it frequently. The problem here is that Excel has no way of knowing you want the weekdays. The way to do the weekdays is to enter a start date--for example, 6/1/99
Then select that date, along with all the other cells you want to fill with dates (A1 through A22 for June), and choose Edit, Fill, Series. When the Series dialog box opens, select the Date and Weekday radio buttons. Click OK to close the dialog box and insert your date selection.

NAME IT LATER

aming ranges makes your work easier. This is especially true when you're working with large worksheets. However, many of us tend to work on a new sheet without giving much thought to names. When the worksheet begins to get larger than we perhaps expected, we start adding names to the ranges. This is no problem, but the added names won't appear in any formulas you've already entered.
To see how this works, let's use a very simple example. Enter 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 into cells A1 through A5. Move to cell A7 and enter
 =sum(a1:a5)
 and press Enter to get the sum. Now, let's name the range A1 through A5. Select the range and choose Insert, Name, Define. Name the range One, then click Add. Click OK to close the dialog box and save your selection.
Click cell A7 now. You'll still see
 =sum(a1:a5)
With the cell selected, choose Insert, Name, Apply. When the Apply Names dialog box opens, select the name for this range (One) and click OK. Double-click cell A7; the formula will now be
=sum(One)

OPEN WITH NO WORKBOOK

We have often discussed how to open Word without opening a blank document. But we often get mail from readers who would like to open Excel with no workbook, so let's take a look.
For those who missed the Word tip, to open Word with no document you need to modify the shortcut you use to run Word. To do this, right-click the shortcut and choose Properties. When the Properties dialog box opens, click the Shortcut tab. Click the Target text entry box and use the arrow keys to move to the end of the line. Make sure the line is not selected, press Space, and then add
 /n
to the end of the existing line. Click OK to close the dialog box and save your new Word switch.
To open Excel with no document, right-click the Excel shortcut and choose Properties. When the dialog box opens, click the Shortcut tab. Click in the Target text entry box and use the arrow keys to move to the end of the line. Make sure the line is not selected, press Space, and then add
 /e

to the end of the existing line.
In both cases, make sure you click in the Target text entry box before you press Space. Clicking in the Target text entry box deselects the current entry. If you press Space with the current entry selected, you will delete the entire entry.

NAMING RANGES THAT INTERSECT IN EXCEL WORKSHEETS

"Is it OK to assign names to Excel cells that belong to a group of already-named cells? I'm concerned that this might cause me a problem later--after the worksheet has become huge."
There is no problem with assigning names to any combination of cells. Try this: Open a blank worksheet and add some numbers to a few cells. Now, select the cells and drag to the right. Next, select all these cells and drag them downward. This will fill a sizable area with numbers.
Now, select a few rows across the entire group of filled cells and choose Insert, Name, Define. When the Define Name dialog box opens, type a name and click Add. Now, click OK to close the dialog box and save your new name assignment.
Next, select some columns in the same set of data. Make sure your selection includes some of the previously named range. Choose Insert, Name, Define and type a new name. Click Add, and then click OK to close the dialog box and save your new name.
Let's say that you named the first range One and the second range Two. Go to an empty cell and enter
=sum (One)
Next, move to another empty cell and enter
=sum (Two)
You can see that Excel doesn't care that the two named ranges intersect.

SORTING CELLS IN EXCEL

We recently discussed how to sort cells in an Excel worksheet without disturbing the formulas. Reader Richard B. sent in this suggestion:
"If you set the calculation mode in Excel to manual, the formulas will not be disturbed by a sort. When the sort completes, you can set the calculation mode back to automatic."
To do this, open the worksheet you want to sort and choose Tools, Options. When the Options dialog box opens, click the Calculation tab. Now select the Manual radio button and click OK to close the dialog box and apply your change.
To set the calculation mode back to normal, choose Tool, Options again and click the Calculation tab. This time, select the Automatic radio button and click OK.

USING EXCEL'S INFO FUNCTION

"I recently ran across Excel's INFO command and have found it useful. I thought others might like to know about it. I often use it to see how much memory is remaining for use or to find the version of Windows being used on a client's computer."
INFO is an interesting command. As Jan points out, you can find out how much memory is available if you click on an empty cell and enter
=info("memavail")
Our system reported 1048576. If you click an empty cell and enter
=info("osversion")
you'll get some information on the operating system in use. Ours reported Windows (32-bit) 4.10. Here is a list of some other keywords to use with INFO:
"directory"--Displays the current path "memavail"--Displays the available memory (in bytes) "memused"--Displays the number of memory bytes being used for data "numfile"--Displays the number of active worksheets "osversion"--Displays the current operating system version "recalc"--Displays the current recalculation mode (Automatic or Manual)

FORMATTING EXCEL CELLS

"It seems to me you once published a tip on how to use keystrokes to change the number format of an Excel cell (or group of cells). I haven't been able to find any information on this. Am I mistaken about the tip, or are there some keystrokes that will change Excel's number format? I am using Microsoft Office 97."

Yes, there are some keystrokes you can use to set a cell's format. Here they are:

Keys/Format

Ctrl-Shift-tilde (~)/General Ctrl-Shift-exclamation point (!)/0.00 Ctrl-Shift-dollar sign($)/$#,##0.00;($#,#0.00) Ctrl-Shift-percent sign (%)/% Ctrl-Shift-caret (^)/0.00E+00

All you have to do is select the cell (or group of cells) and press the desired key combination.

A Word 97 macro correction

On July 12, we ran a tip describing a macro to convert your current Word 97 file to a text file. As reader Gerard L. points out, we omitted an important line. We left out the line that tells Word to change the formatting. Here is the correct code. Please replace the earlier code with this.

To replace the code, run Word 97 and press Alt-F11. When the Visual Basic editor opens, locate your current SaveText macro and select it all. Press Delete and then enter the following code as shown here:

Sub SaveText() Dim Doc As String Dim Period As Integer Doc = ActiveDocument.Name Period = InStr(Doc, ".") NewDoc = Left$(Doc, Period) + "txt" ActiveDocument.SaveAs FileFormat:=wdFormatText, FileName:=NewDoc MsgBox ("Your New File is " + NewDoc) End Sub

FILL IN DATES

"In one of your tips, you talked about filling a range of cells with 20 Sundays. It's a cinch for Excel to create a string of dates of a constant increment. You might also want to tell your readers that Excel has a few other tricks up its sleeve. How about the last day of every month? It's not always the same number of days apart. But if you enter 6/30/99 (the last day of June) and 7/31/99 (the last day of July) in two cells and then use autofill, Excel understands that you want the last days of each month (including leap days, of course!)."

To check this out, run Excel and open a blank worksheet. Now enter in cells A1 and A2

6/30/99

and

7/31/99

Select both cells and drag downward (using the handle at the lower right corner of cell A2) as many cells as you want. You'll get the last day of each month, depending on how many cells you select, of course. For example, 6/30/99 7/31/99 8/31/99 9/30/99 10/31/99 11/30/99 12/31/99 1/31/00

EUROSIGN ALT 0128

Wat het EURO teken betreft: http://www.microsoft.com/windows/euro.asp Dit is het adres waar u de module (een *.exe) bestand kunt downloaden (+ 2 MB, vraagt dus enige tijd, vooral omdat de microsoft sites traag kunnen zijn). Bewaren onder c:\download bijvoorbeeld (eventueel directory/map/folder aanmaken) en dubbel klikken op de file via filemanager/IE

RUN CALC IN EXCEL

In the last tip, we described a VBA Word macro that opens NotePad by clicking a toolbar button. This time, let's consider an Excel macro that will run the Windows Calculator program from within Excel.

The procedure is much the same as that described in the previous tip. However, we need to do a bit more preparation. In Excel, choose Window, Unhide to unhide XLStart.xls. Click OK. If the command is grayed out, then you probably don't have an XLStart.xls file. So, open a new blank worksheet and choose File, Save As. When the Save As dialog box opens, type in XLStart and then locate the XLStart folder (in the Office folder--the exact location depends on where you installed Microsoft Office). When you find the folder, click Save. Now, press Alt-F11 to open the VBA editor. Click Ctrl-R (or choose View-Project Explorer from the Toolbar). In the left pane of

the editor, click VBAProject (XLStart.xls) and then go to the Toolbar and choose Insert, Module. Next, enter the macro as shown here.

Sub calc() Shell "c:\windows\calc.exe", 1 End Sub
Click Ctrl-S. Choose File, Save XLStart.xls and then press Alt-Q to close the VBA editor.

This time, let's assign a keystroke to the new macro. Choose Tools, Macro, Macros. When the Macro dialog box opens, click Options. In the Shortcut key entry box, hold down the Shift key and type C. Now, click OK and then click Cancel to close the Macro dialog box.
Click Window, Hide to hide XLStart.xls and then open a new worksheet. Press Ctrl-Shift-C and the Windows Calculator will open.

MAKE IT FIT THE CELLS

R. G. asks if there's an easy way to get drawings in Excel worksheets to line up perfectly with the cell borders. There sure is. Let's say you want to make a drawing of a rectangle, and you want it to enclose a cell range of 3 by 3. First, you'll need the Drawing toolbar. If you don't see it, choose View, Toolbars and select Drawing.
Now, click the Rectangle button in the Drawing toolbar. Hold down the Alt key and draw the rectangle with the mouse. As you draw the rectangle, its sides will snap to the cell borders. If you need to move the rectangle to a new location, hold down the Alt key while you make the move and it will snap into position on the cell borders.

SUM IF CORRECT

Let's suppose that you develop worksheets that require someone to enter relatively long columns of numbers. In such a situation, it's easy to miss a cell. When this happens, the sum is, of course, incorrect. The problem is that the error may not be noticed immediately. Susan handles the problem by using Excel's CountBlank function to determine if there are any blank cells in the column.

To try this method, enter a column of numbers beginning with B1. Let's say you enter numbers from B1 through B5 for this example. Now, go to cell B7 and enter the following formula.
=if(countblank(b1:b5)>0,"Blank Cell",sum(b1:b5))
Click Enter.

Since you have numbers entered into all five cells, you'll get the sum of those numbers. Now, go to cell B3 and press Delete. Your sum cell will now display
Blank Cell
to indicate that a cell was missed. Now, the person entering the numbers will have to check the column and locate the missing entry.

CONDITIONAL FORMATTING

"In a recent Microsoft Office 97 Tip of the Day related to Conditional Formatting in Excel, you covered how to format cells based on a range input into the dialog box. Is there a way to format a cell conditional to the value of another cell? For example, can I get all cells in the range A5 to A10 with values less than that in cell A1 to be red, or whatever format I choose?"

Here's an approach to try. Open a blank Excel worksheet and type a number into cell A1. Now, use the mouse to select cells A5 through A10. With the cells selected, choose Format, Conditional Formatting.
When the Conditional Formatting dialog box opens, select (for an example) Less Than. Next, click in the third entry box (on the right side of the dialog box) and click cell A1. Click Format now and choose the type of format you want to apply, setting color, font style, etc. When finished, click OK.
Now, enter 10 into cell A1 and then enter numbers in cells A5 through A10. All the cells in the range that are less than 10 will assume your format selection.

CONDITIONAL FORMATTING - 2

We recently published an Excel macro to keep a formula hidden until the user enters data in the correct cells. Reader Van suggests that it's easier to use conditional formatting instead:

"When the cell has a value of 0, make the text white; if it has any other value, make it black. I use conditional formatting for many things, and it's a simple test that works especially well to turn text a specific color based on the value of an answer. I use green, orange, and red to indicate OK, caution, and danger values.
"If you are unfamiliar with Excel you could have trouble using the worksheet unless you create a Command button on the sheet linked to the macro. Additionally, you have to decide whether to store that macro in that workbook (and not use it elsewhere), or in the Personal worksheet--which means you can't use the workbook on another computer."

Van is correct in that conditional formatting is easier to deal with than a macro. But if 0 is a valid result, then conditional formatting won't do. To check out conditional formatting for yourself, open a blank worksheet and enter
=sum a1:a3
into cell A5. Now, with A5 selected, choose Format, Conditional Formatting. When the dialog box opens, set Condition 1 to Cell Value Is Equal To 0. Then click Format. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the arrow at the right side of the Color list box and select a color. If you want all values other than 0 to appear, select white. Click OK to close the dialog box and record your settings. In Conditional Formatting, click OK to close the dialog box and continue.

To test the formatting, enter a number in cell A1. Cell A5 will now display.

CONDITIONAL FONT FORMATTING IN EXCEL

Suppose you'd like to have people enter a dollar value between $0.01 and $1000.00 in cells A1 through A5. You'd like any values outside this range to appear in red rather than black.
To set up this condition, select cells A1 through A5 and choose Format|Conditional Formatting. When the Conditional Formatting dialog box opens, click the arrow at the right side of the 'Condition 1' list box and select 'Cell Value Is.' Click the next list box and select 'Not Between.' Move to the first entry box (to the right of the 'Not Between' box) and enter 0.01. Press Tab to move to the next entry box and enter 1000.00. Next, click Format. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Font tab (if necessary) and then click the arrow at the right side of the 'Color' list box. Select red from the list and click OK. Back in the Conditional Formatting dialog box, click OK again. Next enter some numbers into cells A1 through A5 and you'll find that any value outside the selected range will appear in red.

CLONE YOUR WORKSHEET'S FORMAT

"Often, when I need to add a worksheet to a workbook, I need it to have the identical format as the existing ones. If you choose Insert, Worksheet, the new sheet will have the default format. An easy way to do this is to right-click the Sheet2 tab (as an example), and select Move or Copy. When the Move or Copy dialog box opens, select the check box labeled Make a Copy. Next, choose (move to end) and then click OK to continue. Your new sheet will be named Sheet2(2). To rename it, right-click the tab and choose Rename from the menu. Type in the new name and press Enter to save it."

OPEN IT BLANK

We've discussed how to open Word without opening a blank document--but we keep getting questions, so we'll run through the procedure again. Also, W. D. wants us to point out that you can also open Excel without a blank worksheet. So, let's look at both.

To open Word with no blank document, you need to work with the shortcut that you use to run Word. Right-click the shortcut and choose Properties. When the dialog box opens, click the Shortcut tab. Click in the Target text entry box and use the arrow keys to move to the end of the line. Make sure the line is not selected and press Space and then add
/n
to the end of the existing line. Click OK to close the dialog box and save your new Word switch.

To open Excel with no blank document, right-click the Excel shortcut and choose Properties. Now, follow the procedure described for Word. This time, add
/e
to the end of the existing line.

In both cases, make sure you click in the Target text entry box before you press Space. Clicking in the Target text entry box will deselect the current entry. If you press Space with the current entry selected, the entry will be deleted.

COMPARING DATA SETS

"I need to get a correlation coefficient for two sets of numbers. I have the Analysis Toolpak installed, but I still don't see how to get a correlation."
You don't really need the Analysis Toolpak for a correlation coefficient. Try this: Type two columns of numbers in cells A1 through A5 and cells B1 through B5. Initially, you can enter the same numbers in both columns.

Click on cell B7 and choose Insert, Function. When the Function dialog box opens, locate Statistical and click it. On the right side of the dialog box, locate CORREL and click it. Now, click OK to continue.

At the right side of the Array1 entry box, click the icon. Use the mouse to select cells A1 through A5 and then press Enter. Click the icon in the Array2 entry box and then select cells B1 through B5 and press enter. Click OK to close the dialog box and finish the job.

At this point, cell B7 will show that the correlation coefficient is 1, which means that the two sets of numbers agree perfectly. Change a few of the numbers slightly now. The correlation coefficient is very good, but no longer a perfect match.

PUT THIS ON ONE SHEET AND THAT ON ANOTHER

Let's say you want to put the monthly revenues on one worksheet and the quarterly summaries on another worksheet. Excel makes this an easy job.

Open a new workbook and let's get started by naming two of the worksheets. Right-click the Sheet1 tab and choose Rename. Name the sheet Monthly. Now, right-click the Sheet2 tab and name it Quarterly.
Now, you can design your new worksheet. On sheet Monthly, place all the monthly information. Move to Quarterly and place all the headings, etc. for the quarterly data.
Suppose you want to add the contents of cells D5 through F5 on the Monthly sheet to place data in the Quarterly sheet. Go to Quarterly and click the cell where the data is to appear. Type in
=SUM(Monthly!D5:Monthly!F5)
and press Enter. This will sum the included cells on the Monthly sheet and place the result in the selected cell on the Quarterly sheet.

A NAVIGATION MACRO

"I like to insert small pictures in my Excel worksheets to use as navigation buttons. For example, I insert a picture of a dollar sign near the top of my data columns. Then I assign a macro to the picture so that when I click it, Excel navigates to the row that contains the totals."

To do this, first record a macro to tell Excel which cell to go to when you click the picture. Choose Tools, Record, Record New Macro. When the Record New Macro dialog box opens, type in a name for your new macro. Now, click the target cell and then stop the recording (click the Stop button on the Record Macro floating toolbar).

Insert the picture now (choose Insert, Picture and select the picture you want to use). Click OK to continue. Right-click the picture and choose Assign Macro. Click your new macro to select it and then click OK.

Now when you move the mouse over the picture, the pointer will turn to the small hand icon. While the small hand is visible over the picture, click the left-mouse button once. Excel will move the insertion point to the cell you selected while you were recording the macro.

IDIOT-PROOFING YOUR WORKSHEETS

When you work with Excel worksheets that you pass along to others, you may want to visually block out cells that require no entry. Doing so will prevent someone from entering data in the wrong cells.

To make sure nobody enters data in an incorrect adjacent cell, you can block out the surrounding cells. Let's work with a blank worksheet and suppose that your data needs to go in cell D5. You want to make sure that some people don't inadvertently enter data in cells C5 or E5.

Click cell C5 and choose Format, Cells. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Patterns tab. Now, click the arrow at the right side of the Pattern list box to expand the list. Select one of the crosshatch patterns and click OK. Cell C5 will now be blocked out by the crosshatch pattern. Although one could still enter data in the cell, it would be illegible and the crosshatch pattern sends a clear signal that data doesn't belong in that cell. Repeat the above procedure for all cells that you want to block out.

WHAT'S THE REAL INTEREST?

Chuck C. asks if there's a quick way to get the actual yearly interest rate. Great news, Chuck--you can use Excel's EFFECT function to determine the effective yearly interest rate.

First, make sure EFFECT is activated. EFFECT is part of the add-in called Analysis Toolpak. Choose Tools, Add-Ins. Analysis Toolpak should be in the list. Select its check box and click OK. (See the end of this tip for information about installing Analysis Toolpak).

Now let's say that you're considering a purchase, and the stated interest rate is 7 percent compounded monthly. Go to a cell A1 and choose Format, Cells. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Number tab. From the Category list, select Percentage. Click OK. Now, type
=effect(7.0%,12)
into cell A1 and press Enter. Excel will display 7.23%
This is the actual yearly rate.

If Analysis Toolpak doesn't appear in your Add-Ins list, you'll need to install it from the MS Office CD. Close Excel (and any other active programs). Put the CD into the CD-ROM drive and click Start, Settings, Control Panel. Next, double-click Add/Remove Programs, then locate and select Microsoft Office 97 on the list. Now, click Add/Remove to open the MS Office Setup program. Click Add/Remove and then select Excel. Click Change Option and then select Add-Ins. Click OK to close the Change Option dialog box. Back in the Setup dialog box, click Continue.

PUT THE HEADER ON EACH WORKSHEET

A short time back, we published a tip discussing how to manipulate the headers and footers in an Excel worksheet (choose View, Header and Footer and select a header and footer). Bonnie R. asks us to point out that Excel won't automatically place headers and footers onto all the worksheets. If you want a header to appear on more than the current worksheet, you'll have to select the tabs of all the worksheets on which you want the header to appear.

Let's say you want a header on sheets 1, 2, and 3. Click the Sheet1 tab (at the bottom of the Excel window) and then hold down Ctrl while you click Sheet2 and Sheet3. Choose View, Header and Footer. The Page Setup dialog box will open with the Header/Footer tab selected. To add a header, click the arrow at the right side of the Header list box to expand the list. Select a header from the list and click OK.

CUSTOM EXCEL CHARTS

"It seems to me that I once saw a tip (or maybe an article) on a way to embed pictures into bar charts. I haven't found a way to get this to work. Can you help?"

Let's start from the beginning. Open an Excel worksheet and type in a few numbers. Select the numbers, choose Insert, Chart, and select one of the Column styles. Draw the chart area using the mouse. When the wizard opens, click Finish.

Now that the chart is available, you need your picture. As an example, let's insert some ClipArt into the worksheet. Choose Insert, Picture, ClipArt. When the ClipArt Gallery opens, select a picture and click Insert. Next, right-click the new ClipArt and choose Copy. Click one of the bars in the chart. This should select all the bars. Now, choose Edit, Paste to paste the picture into the bar.

GET THE DATA FROM EXCEL

Peter S. asks if it's possible to use an Excel worksheet as the source of data for Word Mail Merge.

Let's say you develop a workbook that lists all your names, addresses, etc. When you make the list in Excel, use column headings. For example, your worksheet might contain the headings shown here.
Last Name, First Name, Address, City, State, Zip
Fill in a few rows for test purposes. Choose File, Save As and name your new file. Find a folder in which to save it and click Save. You can close Excel now, if you wish.

Next, run Word and choose Tools, Mail Merge. When the Mail Merge Helper opens, click Create, Form Letters. Click New Main Document. Next, click Get Data and choose Open Data Source. When the Open dialog box appears, click the arrow at the right side of the list box labeled Files of Type and select MS Excel Worksheets (*.xls). Locate your new Excel file and select it. Click Open to open the file. When asked, confirm that you want to open the entire worksheet.

Next, you need to add at least one field to your main document. Type in
Dear Mr.
and then type a space and click Insert Merge Field. Select Last Name and then type a comma. To see how this works, click Merge to New Document (its icon shows a right arrow pointing to a sheet of paper). You should now see the inserted names in the new document.

CREATE YOUR OWN EXCEL SERIES

I like being able to type "Jan" into a cell and then dragging the cell to fill in the other months. Is there a way to tell Excel to automatically fill in other data?

Yes, there is. In fact, you can make up your own Fill list for just about anything. Let's say you have a list of names that you commonly use in your worksheets, "Jim, Sue, Chris, Mike, Sharon, Megan, Casey," for example. To add this list to Excel's Fill list, choose Tools, Options. When the Options dialog box opens, click the Custom Lists tab. Then click in the List Entries box and type in the names as shown above. After you type in all the names, click OK to close the dialog box and save your changes.

With the list in place type
Jim
into cell A1 and press Enter. Now, grab cell A1 by the handle and drag it to the right. The remaining names in your new list will appear in the cells to the right of A1.

You can enter the names vertically just as easily. Enter
Jim
in cell A1 and press Enter. Now, grab cell A1 by the handle and drag downward. The names from your new Fill list will appear in the cells below A1.

SHOW ME THE FORMULAS!

We recently published a tip on how to display formulas rather than data in Excel cells. As helpful subscriber R. McC. points out, there is a very easy way to switch between displaying data and formulas--all you have to do is press Ctrl-~ (tilde). This combination acts as a toggle. The first time you press Ctrl-~ Excel displays formulas rather than data. Press the combination again, and Excel switches back to data.

CHECKPOINT CHARLIE

Rich G. sends this Excel question: "I have a rather large text file that I'd like to import into Excel. Is it practical to import a text file and get the required data into separate columns?"

It's definitely possible; how practical it is depends on your text file and your temperament. The only potential problem lies with how the data is separated in your text file. Excel needs some kind of separator in order to import the data into separate columns. For example, if your text file consists of name and address data separated by tabs or commas, as shown here, you can easily import the file into Excel.

Last Name,First Name,Address,City,State,Zip Smith,John,1112 Smith St.,Aardvark,Kansas,00212

In this case, all the data is separated by commas. Now, let's say the filename is Data.txt. Run Excel and choose File, Open. When the Open dialog box appears, click the arrow at the right side of the Files of Type list box to expand the list. From the list select All Files (*.*). Then select the file you want to import and click Open. When the Text Import Wizard appears, select the Delimited radio button and click Next. Under Delimiters, select the Comma check box and click Next.
The next Wizard page allows you to tell Excel what kind of data is in each column. For this example, click each column and then select the Text radio button. After you set all the columns to Text, click Finish. The data will now appear in your Excel worksheet in separate columns.

Although we discussed only the comma delimiter, you may need to use one of the others for some of your text data. Just select the appropriate radio button and continue as described above.

INSTA-FORMAT

"It seems to me that you once published a tip on how to use keystrokes to change the number format of an Excel cell (or group of cells). I haven't been able to find any information on this. Am I mistaken about the tip, or are there some keystrokes that will change Excel's number format?"

Yes, there are some keystrokes, and we did run a tip on this topic. Here's a recap for Harold and our new subscribers.
Format: Keystrokes
General: Ctrl-Shift-~ (tilde) 0.00: Ctrl-Shift-! (exclamation point) $#,##0.00;($#,#0.00): Ctrl-Shift-$ (dollar sign) %: Ctrl-Shift-% (percent sign) 0.00E+00: Ctrl-Shift-^ (caret)

All you have to do is select the cell and press the desired key combination. If you need to change the format of a group of cells, select the cells and then press the key combination for the desired format.

ROMEINSE CIJFERS GEBRUIKEN - EXCEL 2000

Rare jongens, die Romeinen: ze gaven ons een alfabet om mee te schrijven en ze dachten dat we er ook nog eens mee zouden rekenen. We maken zo weinig gebruik van die mogelijkheid dat we vaak niet eens weten hoe bijvoorbeeld de Romeinse notatie van een jaartal eruit ziet. Excel biedt uitkomst. Typ in een cel =ROMEINS(1998;0) en druk op [Enter]. De 0 na de puntkomma betekent dat je hebt gekozen voor de klassieke stijl, derhalve presenteert Excel MCMXCVIII als antwoord. Voer je in plaats van de 0 een 1 in dan wordt MLMVLIII het antwoord. Je kunt doorgaan tot een 4 na de puntkomma, hetgeen MVMIII oplevert. Maar of een Romein uit het jaar I dat zou herkennen, wagen we te betwijfelen. Voor jaartallen aan het begin van dit nieuwe millennium maakt de notatie niets uit: 2001 is in alle stijlen gewoon MMI.

DAG EN DATUM

Je hebt een datum ingevoerd en je wilt vermelden welke dag van de week dat is. Dat gaat zo: rechtsklik op de cel met daarin de datum. Klik op het tabblad 'Getal'. Onder 'Categorie' selecteer je vervolgens 'Aangepast'. In het venstertje 'Type' vul je "dddd" (zonder de aanhalingstekens) in. Klik op 'OK' en je krijgt de weekdag te zien. Wil je zowel de weekdag als de datum zien, dan moet je onder 'Type' het volgende invullen: "dddd dd-mm-jj". Uiteraard wederom zonder de aanhalingstekens.

TEXTURES FOR EXCEL TABLES

When you need to make tables in an Excel worksheet, you might like to spruce them up a bit with a nice textured background. Try this: run Excel and type in a few numbers. Now, select the numbers and choose Insert>>Chart. When the Chart Wizard opens, click Finish.
Now, right-click the chart background and choose Format Plot Area. When the dialog box opens, click Fill Effects. When the Fill Effects dialog box opens, click the Texture tab. Double-click the texture of your choice. Back in the first dialog box, click OK.

SIMPLE EXCEL CALCULATIONS

Let's say that you run Excel and type
1
2
3
4
5
into cells A1 through A5. Now, you want to go to cell A7 and calculate the sum of cells A1 through A5. You could type in the formula. Or, you could just click in A7 then hold down the Alt key and press = (equal) and then press Enter.

SHARING AN EXCEL WORKBOOK

Did you know that two people can work on an Excel worksheet at the same time? Suppose you're on a LAN (Local Area Network) and you could save some time if you and a co-worker could access the same worksheet simultaneously. Here's what you do. Open the worksheet and choose Tools>>Share Workbook. When the Share Workbook dialog box opens, select the check box labeled "Allow changes by more than one user at the same time. This also allows workbook merging." Click OK to close the dialog box. Now, ask someone on your LAN to open the same workbook. You'll find that sharing a worksheet is easy.

RUNNING THE WINDOWS CALCULATOR FROM EXCEL

As you most likely know, there is a very nice calculator in Windows 9x/Me/2000. When you're working with Excel and need a calculator, you can click Start and choose Programs, etc. But, let's make things a bit cooler than that. Let's put a calculator button in the Excel toolbar. Here's how.

Run Excel and choose View/Toolbars/Customize. When the Customize dialog box opens, click the Commands tab. Now, under "Categories" click on Tools. Scroll down through the "Commands" list and locate the calculator icon (it's labeled "Custom"). Drag the icon to your toolbar and release the mouse button. Now, you can simply click the new toolbar icon to open the calculator.

CONCATENATING EXCEL CELLS

When you need t concatenate the content of two cells into a third cell, you can use
=concatenate(a1,a2)
But here is an easier way. To try this method, type
1
into cell A1
and
2
into cell A2. Now, click in cell A5 and enter
=A1&A2

USING EXCEL'S CLEAN FUNCTION

When you import data into an Excel Worksheet, you may sometimes encounter nonprinting characters. These characters will appear as small rectangles in your cells. To get rid of these useless characters, you can use Excel's CLEAN function.
Let's suppose that you have some nonprinting characters in cell A1. You want to get rid of the nonprinting characters, but you need to keep the data. Try this: go to cell B1, type
clean (a1)
and press Enter. Cell B1 will now display the text or data that you need, but not the nonprinting character.

ENTERING FRACTIONS IN EXCEL WORKSHEETS

Have you ever entered a fraction in an Excel cell and had it appear as a date? This is not a bug. The problem occurs simply because, in some cases, Excel has no way of knowing whether you want to enter a date or a fraction. For example, if you enter a whole number plus a fraction (1 5/8, 2 1/4) Excel knows you want a fraction. But, if you enter 3/64, Excel will think you want to enter March 1964. If you enter 3/6, Excel will display March 6.
To make sure Excel sees your entry as a fraction, you can enter fractions such as 3/64 as
? 3/64
which Excel will interpret as the fraction 3/64 (0.184615384615385) rather than March 1964.

ZOOM IN ON EXCEL

You probably know that you can zoom in on a worksheet to make the cell contents easier to see. But, did you know that you can zoom in on a range and have Excel choose just the right amount of zoom for your selection? Try this: enter some numbers into cells D5 through D9. Now, select the cells and choose View/Zoom. When the Zoom dialog box opens, select the 'Fit selection' radio button and click OK.

After you finish with the zoomed in view, you can simply press Ctrl + Z to undo the zoom. However, this won't work if you made any changes while in the zoomed view--the changes will get undone. In this case, choose View/Zoom again. When the Zoom dialog box opens, select the "100%" radio button and click OK.

HOW TO USE COLLECT AND PASTE IN EXCEL

Office 2000 programs have a new Collect and Paste feature. To see how this works, let's use an Excel worksheet as an example.

Run Excel and enter some numbers into cells B1 through B5. Now, click cell B2 and press Ctrl + C to copy the cell's value to the Clipboard. Now, move to cell B4 and press Ctrl + C again. The Clipboard should now appear. If it doesn't, choose View/Toolbars/Clipboard. When the Clipboard appears it will show two Excel icons. Click in cell D1 and click the first icon on the left side of the Clipboard. This will paste the number from cell B2 into cell D1. Next, click cell E1 and then click the second Excel icon in the Clipboard to paste the contents of cell B4 into cell E1. You can click the X in the upper right corner of the Clipboard to close it.

COPYING CELLS IN EXCEL 2000

When you want to copy a range of cells to a new location, you don't have to paste the cells into an empty range. Instead, try it this way. Select the range of cells you want to copy and press Ctrl + C. Now, move to the location where you want the data to appear and press Ctrl + SHIFT + Plus Sign (+). When the Insert dialog box opens, click the direction you want the surround cells to move in and click OK. This is the approach you should use any time you want to paste data in between two existing columns of data.

EEN SERIE KWADRATEN

Wil je van een serie getallen (in bijvoorbeeld een kolom of een rij) het kwadraat bepalen dan kun je je van het volgende trucje bedienen. Selecteer de getallen en kies 'Bewerken ' Kopiëren'. Als je dat hebt gedaan kies je nogmaals voor 'Bewerken' en nu selecteer je de menu-optie 'Plakken speciaal'. In het dialoogvenster van 'Plakken speciaal' kies je onder het kopje 'Bewerking' voor de mogelijkheid 'Vermenigvuldigen'. De cellen worden nu gevuld met de kwadraten van de getallen die daar oorspronkelijk stonden.

GOED VERBONDEN

Twee figuren die je hebt gemaakt met 'Autovormen' kun je met elkaar verbinden met een lijn. Klik opnieuw op 'Autovormen ' en selecteer 'Verbindingslijnen'. Kies de lijnvorm en beweeg je muis over één van de figuren. Als je in dat figuur blauwe puntjes tevoorschijn ziet komen druk je de muisknop in. Ga aldus naar het andere figuur. Als je daar de blauwe puntjes op ziet lichten laat je de muisknop los. Nu loopt er een lijn tussen de twee figuren. Verplaats je er één, dan zal de lijn volgen.

NOG HOEVEEL NACHTJES SLAPEN?

Kinderen willen vaak precies weten hoeveel nachtjes het slapen is tot hun verjaardag, Sinterklaas of kerstmis. Dat kan Excel voor je uitrekenen. Laten we aannemen dat het vandaag 1 mei is en dat je wilt weten hoeveel dagen er nog te gaan zijn tot kerstmis. In een cel typ je de volgende formule: ="25/12/2001"-"01/05/2001" en vervolgens druk je op [Enter]. Excel schotel je nu het antwoord voor, in dit geval 238.

SNEL EEN WERKBLAD ZOEKEN

In Excel kan een bestand maximaal 255 werkbladen bevatten. Hoewel je dit aantal in de praktijk zelden zult halen zijn enige tientallen werkbladen in een map heel gewoon. Als je een bepaald werkblad wilt vinden kan je natuurlijk scrollen door het bestand. Een handiger methode is: rechtsklik op één van de scroll-pijltjes linksonder in beeld. Je krijgt nu een contextmenu te zien met daarin de namen (of de nummers) van alle werkbladen in je bestand. Klik het werkblad van je keuze aan en dat is dat.

EEN MOOIE ACHTERGROND

Op speciale werkbladen, bijvoorbeeld in een presentatie, wil je misschien iets extra's doen. Zo kun je een achtergrond toevoegen. Iets als een bedrijfslogo kan daarvoor zeer geschikt zijn. Kies 'Opmaak ' Blad ' Achtergrond'. Selecteer een plaatjesbestand uit het dialoogvenster. Bevestig via 'OK' teneinde de achtergrond in te voegen en het dialoogvenster te sluiten. Excel zal het plaatje (desnoods in veelvoud) op het hele werkblad plaatsen. Let op: als je een donker of een druk plaatje gebruikt zal het moeilijk zijn om de inhoud van de cellen te lezen. Het beste achtergrondplaatje is bleek of van het zogeheten watermerktype. Om de achtergrond weer te verwijderen kies je 'Opmaak ' Blad ' Achtergrond'. Nu selecteert je 'Achtergrond verwijderen'.

VAN DATA NAAR FORMULE

Soms wil je weten hoe Excel aan een bepaalde waarde is gekomen. Met behulp van een toetsencombinatie kan je switchen tussen data en formules. Als je de eerste keer op [Ctrl] + [~] drukt toont Excel de formules in plaats van de data. Druk je daarna nog eens op de combinatie dan krijg je de data weer in beeld.

DE RANGORDE BEPALEN

Moet je de rangorde bepalen van data? Gebruik daarvoor de RANG-functie. Stel je hebt een werkblad waarop de verkoopprestaties van vier vertegenwoordigers staan vermeld en je wilt bijhouden wie van hen het beste presteert. Om deze functie te testen voer je vier getallen in een kolom. Laten we aannemen dat je ze plaatst in de cellen A1 tot en met A4. Klik nu in een lege cel (bijv. B1) en typ: =RANG(A1,A1:A4,0) en druk op [Enter]. Hier verschijnt nu het rangnummer van de inhoud van A1. Om andere rangnummers te krijgen ga je naar een nieuwe cel en typ je het volgende in: =RANG(A2,A1:A4,0) in cel B2; =RANG(A3,A1:A4,0) in cel B3; =RANG(A4,A1:A4,0) in cel B4. Op die manier wordt de rangorde van alle vertegenwoordigers vastgelegd.

SELECTING EXCEL DATA

"Using Excel 97, how do I select all the data in a large sheet? For example, if I have a formula I want to apply to an entire column in a large worksheet, how can I do that without clicking and dragging all the way down to the end?"

You can do this with a few keystrokes. To see how the technique works, open a blank worksheet and enter
1 2 3 4 5
in cell A1 through A5. Now click cell A7 and type
=sum(
Next, click cell A1 and press Ctrl-Shift-down arrow. This selects cells A1 through A5. Press Enter to complete the formula.
If you need to select a row, use Ctrl-Shift-right arrow.

SELECT ROWS IN EXCEL

Yes, there is. In fact, there are several ways to select an entire row in an Excel worksheet. One way is to click in the row heading, where you'll find the row identifier. For example, the heading for row 5 is the 5 you see in the gray area at the left side of the Excel window. Click the 5 and Excel will highlight the entire row.

The method we think is easiest is to click in the row you want to select, then press Shift-Space.

GENERATING RANDOM NUMBERS IN EXCEL

"In August, I received a tip for MS Office 97 ('Creating a Random Number in Excel') and was eager to try it. I typed

randbetween(1,99)
pressed Enter, and got
#NAME?

When I grabbed the handle and spread the formula cell out to cell F1, it just gave me more of the same. What have I done incorrectly?"

This works only if you have the Analysis ToolPak add-in installed. We failed to mention this in the original tip. To install the necessary add-in, choose Tools, Add-Ins. When the Add-Ins dialog box opens, select the Analysis ToolPak check box and click OK.

Also, reader Tim P. sent in a fix for this tip. Just enter the following:
=rand() (99-1)+1
This works because the RAND function doesn't require the Analysis ToolPak to run. However, if you want integers, you must change Tim's formula to
=int(rand() (99-1)+1)

CALCULATING GRADES IN EXCEL

Here is an Excel question from reader R. S. "I have been asked many times to create a template for Excel to be used by professors so that they can make sure their average is OK before submitting their grades. No problem with that part. I should know how to do the following, but I just can't recall, and was hoping you could help. I would like to set up the spreadsheet to define A=4.0, A- =3.67, and so on and have the spreadsheet automatically do the calculations based on the letter grades, instead of requiring that someone manually convert the letter grades to their numeric equivalent, and then averaging. Can you suggest how I can set up Excel to define the letter grades to each represent a number, so I can average the letter grades and not have to convert them to numbers manually first?"

We suggest that you use Excel's VLOOKUP function. Try the short example shown below.

Open a blank worksheet and select cells B1 through B5. Choose Format, Cells. When the dialog box opens, click the Numbers tab and select Number. Click OK to close the dialog box and continue. Now select cells E1 through E5 and repeat the above procedure. This sets the selected cells (B1 through B5 and E1 through E5) to display two decimal places.

Next, enter the following in cells A1 through A5:

A A- B C D
Now, in cells B1 through B5, enter:
4.00 3.67 3.00 2.00 1.00
Now, in cells D1 through D5, enter
D A C B A-
Finally, in cell E1, enter
=VLOOKUP(D1,$A$1:$B$5,2,TRUE)

Select cell E1 and move the mouse pointer over the handle at the bottom right side of the selected cell. When the pointer changes to a crosshairs, drag down to cell E5.
Now cells E1 through E5 should display
1.00 4.00 2.00 3.00 3.67

A SIMPLE EXCEL CALCULATION

Reader Kara D. writes: "If you need to sum a row of numbers, all you have to do is hold down the Alt key while you type in the equal sign (=).
"For example, enter the following in cells A1 through A5:
1 2 3 4 5
Then click in cell A7 and press Alt as you type the equal sign to enter the Sum formula. All you have to do now is press Enter to get the sum."

RAP NAAR DE MACRO'S

Macro's zijn bijzonder handig als je vaak dezelfde handeling moet herhalen in een programma. Met een macro kan de software een bepaalde handeling zelf doen. Ook Excel 2000 heeft deze optie in zich, maar wil je in het macro-menu komen dan moet je je door allerlei andere menu's heen werken. Dat is tijdrovend en omslachtig. Het kan veel rapper, met een sneltoets. Als je een macro wilt gebruiken druk je op de combinatie [Alt] + [F8] en het menu komt tevoorschijn.

MEERDERE REGELS IN ÉÉN CEL

Als je veel tekst in een enkele cel invoert kan de breedte van die cel onhandig groot worden. Het kan dus raadzaam zijn om op een nieuwe regel verder te gaan. Dat kan door op [Alt]+[Enter] te drukken. Heb je een tab in een cel nodig dan moet je [Ctrl]+[Alt]+[Tab] indrukken, want als je alleen [Tab] gebruikt spring je automatisch naar een volgende cel.

DATA INVOEREN PER FORMULIER

Werk je met lange lijsten, zoals bijvoorbeeld een adreslijst, dan kan je overwegen gebruik te maken van de 'Formulier'- functie van Excel om je lijst uit te breiden en te onderhouden. Klik in de eerste cel (A1) van je lijst en selecteer de optie 'Data ' Formulier'. Excel opent een dialoogvenster waarin om enige informatie over je lijst wordt gevraagd. Als de eerste rij uit kolomlabels bestaat klik je op 'OK' om door te gaan. Als je eerste rij niet uit kolomlabels bestaat moet je de instructies in het dialoogvenster nauwgezet volgen. Nadat Excel het formulier heeft gemaakt kan je 'Data ' Formulier' gebruiken om door je lijst te bladeren en nieuwe gegevens in te voeren.

EEN NIEUWE REGEL IN EEN CEL – EXCEL 97 & 2000

Als je veel tekst in een enkele cel wilt invoeren kun je de breedte van de cel in de hand houden door via [Alt] + [Enter] op een nieuwe regel te beginnen. Heb je een tab in een cel nodig dan moet je [Ctrl] + [Alt] + [Tab] indrukken. Immers, als je alleen een tab gebruikt spring je automatisch naar een volgende cel.

COUNTING THE DAYS

If you'd like to know how many days left until Christmas, run Excel and type
="12/25/97"-"11/01/97"
(or whatever the current date is) into a cell. Excel will return the number of days (54) between the two dates. The trick here is to remember the quotes. If you don't use quotes, you'll get some very strange results.

USING A PICTURE

"I have a photograph of a special event I want to put into an Excel chart. The problem is that the people in the photograph always look tall and skinny in the chart. What can I do to make the photo look right?"
The reason you're having the problem is that Excel does nothing to adjust the chart to a picture used as Fill. You'll have to adjust the chart to match the picture.
Let's take a look at how you get the picture in the chart as Harry described:

Run Excel and enter a few numbers. Now select your entries and choose Insert, Chart. When the Chart Wizard opens, click Finish. Next right-click inside the chart area and choose Format Chart Area. When the dialog box opens, click Fill Effects. In the Fill Effects dialog box, click the Picture tab. Click Select Picture and double-click the picture you want to use as a background for your chart.
Back in Fill Effects, click OK to close the dialog box and apply your changes. In Format Chart Area, click OK to close the dialog box and apply your picture selection.
Finally, size your chart with the mouse so the picture looks right.

OP HET RANDJE – EXCEL

Je wilt een tekening maken in Excel en de randen ervan moeten exact samenvallen met de celranden. Dat kan. Laten we aannemen dat je een rechthoek wilt maken die precies samenvalt met 3x3 cellen. Daarvoor heb je ten eerste de 'Tekenen'-werkbalk nodig. Als je die niet ziet selecteer je 'Beeld ' Werkbalken ' Tekenen'. Klik nu op de 'Rechthoek'- knop. Houd de [Alt]-toets ingedrukt en teken de rechthoek met de muis. De zijkanten zullen samenvallen met de randen van de cellen. Wil je de rechthoek verplaatsen? Houd wederom de [Alt]-knop ingedrukt terwijl je aan het slepen bent. De randen van de rechthoek zullen dan ook op de nieuwe positie exact samenvallen met de kanten van de cellen.

HOW TO USE EXCEL'S LEFT FUNCTION

We were recently asked if there is any way to automatically extract only the first two digits of a column of numbers in Excel. To do this, use Excel's LEFT function. To see how this works, open a blank worksheet and enter some three-to-five digit numbers in cells A1 through A5. We used the following numbers: 12345 23456 34567 45678 56789

Now, go to cell B1 and enter: =left(a1,2)
Then select cell B1 and use the small handle at the bottom of the cell selection (the handle) and drag down to cell B5. Cells B1 through B5 will now display:
12 23 34 45 56

HYPERLINKS GEBRUIKEN

Je kunt in Office hyperlinks gebruiken. En die behoeven niet noodzakelijkerwijze naar een website te verwijzen. Zo kun je bijvoorbeeld een hyperlink in Word gebruiken om een Excel- document te openen. Dat gaat zo: kies 'Invoegen ' Hyperlink'. Vul vervolgens in het dialoogvenster de naam in van de bewuste Excel-werkmap. Of klik op 'Bladeren' om het document te traceren. Bevestig via 'OK'.

Je kunt de hyperlink ook gebruiken om een bepaald blad uit je Excel-werkmap te openen. Klik met de rechtermuisknop op de nieuwe link en kies 'Hyperlink ' Hyperlink bewerken'. Hier krijg je weer het dialoogvenster te zien. Vul in het tekstvak 'Benoemde locatie in bestand (optioneel)' Blad2 in en bevestig je keuze. Nu moet je aan Excel vertellen waar je mee bezig bent. Start Excel en open de betreffende werkmap. Baan je een weg naar blad 2 en kies 'Invoegen ' Naam ' Definiëren'. Als het dialoogvenster zich heeftgeopend typ je Blad2 in het tekstinvoerveld 'Namen in werkmap'. Klik op 'Toevoegen' en vervolgens op 'OK'. Als je voortaan in het Word-document op deze link klikt, zal blad2 van de Excel- werkmap worden geopend.

GROEN, GROEN EN WIT, WIT

Er waren kettingformulieren voor Dot-matrixprinters in omloop met om en om twee rijen (licht) groen en twee rijen wit. Je kunt dit in Excel nabootsen (alleen maakt Excel de eerste rij van je selectie donkergroen omdat er vanuit gegaan wordt dat daarin je kolomkoppen staan). Selecteer het werkbladgedeelte dat je zo vorm wilt geven. Kies 'Opmaak ' AutoOpmaak'. In de lijst 'Tabelopmaak' maak je de keuze voor 'Lijst 2'. Klik op 'OK'. Probeer deze of een vergelijkbare keuze niet toe te passen op het gehele werkblad. Je loopt dan een gerede kans dat Excel er de brui aan geeft.

EXCEL GRIDLINES IN COLOR

In the last tip, we discussed how to get Excel to print the gridlines. This time let's look at how to view those gridlines in some color other than the default black. To do this, choose Tools/Options. When the Options dialog box opens, click the View tab. Now click the arrow at the right side of the "Color" list box (lower left-hand corner) to open the color palette and select a color. Click OK to close the dialog box and save your color selection.

If you print this on a color printer with gridline printing activated, the worksheet border will print in your selected color. However, the gridlines will still print in black.

CREATING RANDOM NUMBERS IN EXCEL

A reader asked if there is a way to generate random numbers between two limits in Excel without writing a macro. There is, and to see how it works, run Excel and open a blank worksheet. Let's say that you want to generate random numbers between 0 and 9. Click in cell A1, enter

=randbetween(0,9)

and press Enter. Excel will immediately generate a number between 0 and 9. To generate a new number press F9 (recalculate).

If the function doesn't work, then you probably need to load the Analysis ToolPak Add-In. Choose Tools/Add-Ins. When the dialog box appears, select the check box labeled "Analysis ToolPak" and then click OK.

MOVING BETWEEN EXCEL WORKSHEETS & WORKBOOKS

If you're working with more than one worksheet in an Excel workbook, you can move between worksheets very quickly with a few keystrokes. Let's suppose you're working on Sheet 1 and you'd like to move to Sheet 2. Just press Ctrl + PageDown to move to Sheet 2 (the next sheet). To move to the previous sheet (Sheet 1 in this case), press Ctrl + PageUp.
If you have several workbooks open, you can press Ctrl + Tab to move between them.

CREATING AN EXCEL WORDART BUTTON

Although you can use WordArt in Excel by choosing Insert/Picture/WordArt, Excel has no WordArt button as does Word. But, you can add a WordArt button to the Excel toolbar. To do this, choose View/Toolbars/Customize. When the Customize dialog box opens, click the Commands tab. In the "Categories" list, select AutoShapes and then drag the WordArt icon from the dialog box's right pane to the location you want on your toolbar.

CREATING A CHART IN EXCEL

Here is an Excel trick that has been around for a long time--maybe even from the time Excel was born. When you need to create a chart, you can simply use the keyboard (shift + arrow keys) to select your data and then press F11. That's all there is to it. Excel will create your chart with no further ado.

SELECTING A DATA RANGE IN EXCEL

Suppose you have data in cells A1 through D6. If you click in cell A1 and hold down Ctrl + Shift, you can then press the right arrow key to select the row A1 through D1. To select a column, click in cell A1 (as an example) and hold down Ctrl + Shift while you click the down arrow. This will select the column from A1 through A6.

You don't have to stick to the beginning and ending cells, though. For example, you can click in cell B2 and hold down Ctrl + Shift and press the down arrow key to select cells B2 through B6.

There's a very quick way also to select all the contiguous data in an Excel worksheet. All you have to do is click somewhere inside the data range and press Ctrl + Shift + * (asterisk).
To see how this works, enter data into cells A1 through C5 (any data will do). Click in one of the cells that contain data and press Ctrl + Shift + *. Excel will select the entire range of data.

DOING SIMPLE ARITHMETIC IN EXCEL

When you want to simply add, subtract, or divide a few numbers in Excel, you can just type in an equal sign followed by the numbers. For example, if you want to add 96 and 23, you'd type
=96+23
and press Enter.

This is certainly simple enough, but if you'd rather not have to remember to type in that equal sign first, you can get Excel to drop the requirement. Just open a blank worksheet and choose Tools/Options. When the Options dialog box opens click the Transition tab. Select the check box labeled "Transition formula entry" and click OK. Now, you can simply enter
96 + 23
to get the result of 119.

Note that you will now have to enter an apostrophe before a number that you want to enter as text.

USING A MACRO IN ALL EXCEL WORKBOOKS

If you write a macro in Excel, the macro is attached to the current and will not be available in other workbooks. If you want to make a macro available to all workbooks, you can create them in a special workbook named personal.xls.

To do this, enter a macro in a blank workbook. Choose File/Save As and name the workbook 'personal.xls.' Now, still in the Save As dialog box, navigate to C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\XLStart and click Save. Next, choose Window/Hide and then choose File/Exit. When asked if you want to save changes, click Yes.

Your macro will now be available to all workbooks. Since personal.xls is hidden, it won't appear unless you choose Window/Unhide, which is what you'll need to do to add or modify any macros.

NAMING EXCEL RANGES AND HOW TO FOLLOW THE NAMING RULES

When working with a large worksheet, it's a good idea to name the ranges that you will use for your calculation. To see how this works, enter some numbers into a few cells and then choose Insert/Name/Define and type in a name (test is OK for this example). To prove that your named range is working, click somewhere away from the range and press Ctrl + G to open the Go To dialog box. Double-click Test, and Excel will go to the named range.

There are some naming rules that you need to follow:
- A name can contain up to 255 characters.
- You must use a letter or an underscore for the first character.
- After the first character, you can use letters, numbers, periods, or the underscore character.

ADDING A GLOBAL MACRO IN EXCEL

In the past, we have discussed how to make a macro available to all your workbooks by saving the macro in personal.xls. Another way to make a macro available to all workbooks is to create an Add-in. If you save your workbook as an Add-in, only the macros are saved. However, in this case, the macros are hidden so no one can modify them, or even view them.

To do this, write your macro then choose File/Save As. Click the arrow at the right side of the 'Save as type' list

box and select Microsoft Excel Add-In (xla). Name your new Add-In and click Save to save it and close the dialog box. Excel will automatically save the Add-In in the correct folder. To use the Add-In, one must choose Tools/Add-In and select the new name.

ADDING A MAP BUTTON TO THE EXCEL TOOLBAR

If you use Excel's Map very often, you might find it convenient to place a Map button into the toolbar. To do this, choose Tools/Customize. When the Customize dialog box opens, click the Commands tab. Now, under 'Categories,' click on Insert to select it. Under 'Commands,' locate the Map icon and use the mouse to drag it to the toolbar. Click Close to dismiss the dialog box.

TRACKING CHANGES IN EXCEL WORKSHEETS

When you send your Excel worksheet to others for checking, editing, or data addition, it's nice to immediately see what changes they made. To see how this works, use the following example.

Open a blank worksheet and enter
1
2
3
4
5
into cells A1 through A5. Now, choose File/Save As. Give your workbook a name and click Save. Choose Tools/Track Changes/Highlight Changes. Next, click in cell A2 and change the data to 9, then click somewhere away from cell A2. You will see that cell A2 is now outlined and contains a small triangle in the upper left corner of the cell. Move the mouse pointer over cell A2, and a comment will appear informing you that cell A2 was changed from 2 to 9.

PRINTING MULTIPLE EXCEL WORKBOOKS

Let's say you arrive at work and the first thing you need to do is print a dozen Excel workbooks. You can open each one, then print it. But, you can print them all very quickly as long as all the files you need to print are in the same folder.

To do this, run Excel and choose File/Open. In the Open dialog box, click one of the files you want to print. Next, press and hold down the Ctrl key while you select the other files you want to print. Now, click the Tools button in the upper-right corner of the Open dialog box and then choose Print from the menu. Excel will then open, print, and close each of the selected workbooks

RECORDING A MACRO IN EXCEL

When you need to frequently repeat a series of key strokes or mouse clicks, you may find it convenient to record a macro instead. To do this, run Excel and choose Tools|Macro|Record New Macro. When the dialog box opens, type in a name for your macro (or just accept the default) and click OK.
Now, go through all the mouse clicks and key strokes that you need for the selected operation. When you finish recording your new macro, click the Stop button.

To use your new macro, press Alt + F8 and double-click the macro name.

ADDING A BACKGROUND TO AN EXCEL WORKSHEET

There's nothing that says an Excel worksheet has to have a plain white background. Suppose you have a photograph file on your hard disk that you'd like to use as a worksheet background. Choose Format|Sheet|Background. When the Sheet Background dialog box opens, double-click the picture file that you'd like to use, double-click its icon. If

you want to use a picture as your worksheet background, make sure the picture is not too dark or busy -- you don't want to obscure the worksheet data.

CONCATENATING EXCEL CELLS CONTAINING DATES AND TEXT

Suppose you'd like to combine two Excel cells. Let's say that cell A1 contains the text "Today's Date is," and cell D1 contains the date 12/31/01. Go to cell A4 and enter
=a1&d1
then press Enter. What you'll get in cell A4 is "Today's Date is 37250."

To concatenate a text cell and a date cell, you first have to convert the date to text. So go to cell A4 and type
=a1&text(d1,"mm/dd/yy")
then press Enter. Now cell A4 will display "Today's Date is 12/31/01."

AUTOFILL IN EXCEL

Excel's AutoFill works fine, but it does have a few quirks. For example, if you want to enter a series beginning with 1, you'll end up with nothing but ones, unless you know the trick. Here's the trick: type a 1 into cell A1. Hold down the Ctrl key and grab the cell highlighted by the little handle at the lower-right corner. Drag down and you'll get 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.
If you drag down without using the Ctrl key, you'll get 1, 1, 1, 1

ENTERING COMPOUND FRACTIONS IN EXCEL

We have discussed in previous tips how to enter fractions in Excel: Simply enter a zero and a space before the fraction. If you fail to enter the zero, and enter something such as 7/8, Excel will think you're entering a date. To enter a compound fraction, enter the whole number first, then a space, and then your fraction. For example, you would enter 12 2/3 as 12 space 2/3.

LINKING DATA FROM A WORD DOCUMENT

When you want to use an Excel worksheet inside a Word document, you can simply paste the Excel worksheet into Word. However, if there's a chance that you might want to modify the worksheet in Excel, the best approach is to link the Excel document.
To do this, run Excel and open the worksheet you want to use. Select the worksheet range that you want to link to and press Ctrl + C to copy it to the Clipboard.
In Word, click where you want the worksheet to appear and choose Edit|Paste Special. When the dialog box opens, select the radio button labeled 'Paste link.' Next, select 'Microsoft Excel Worksheet Object' and click OK.
Any changes you make in the worksheet in Excel will now also appear in the Word document. Note that the Excel worksheet must remain in its current folder so Word can locate it.

ADD SPECIAL SYMBOLS IN THE EXCEL HEADER

You can add almost anything to the Excel header so the text will appear on your worksheet printouts. However, if you want to add something that contains an ampersand (&), such as Bob & Ray, your printout will display only Bob Ray.

The problem is that Excel uses the ampersand as a code element. To print an ampersand in the header or footer, you must use a double ampersand. For example, Bob && Ray

UNDO AND AUTOSAVE IN EXCEL

We recently ran across an Excel user who said that Undo wouldn't always work. We struggled for some time to find a reason. What we finally discovered was that she had AutoSave activated. What happens is that Undo will no longer work after you save a worksheet. So, AutoSave would save the worksheet and then Undo would fail.
If you have this problem, you can set your AutoSave to a longer interval, but you'll still lose Undo if you try it after a save.
To check your AutoSave interval, choose Tools|AutoSave. The default is 10 minutes.

ENTERING DATES IN EXCEL

Some people are confused about how Excel 2000 deals with dates. Although it might always be best to enter dates in four-digit year format, there is no real problem with the two digit format as long as you know how Excel will handle them.Excel interprets all two digit dates between 00 and 29 as 2000 to 2029. All dates between 30 and 99 are interpreted as 1930 to 1999.

USING GOAL SEEK IN EXCEL

Excel includes a feature called Goal Seek. Here's how it works.
Suppose you enter into cells A1 through A5 the numbers

1.23
4.58
6.75
3.12
5.01

In cell A7, enter
=sum(a1:a5)
and press Enter. The result should display as 20.69. However, you need (for whatever reason) a result of 20.76. Let's say that you can't change most of the cells, but you could change cell A3. What value is required in A3 to provide a sum of 20.76?

Choose Tools|Goal Seek. When the dialog opens, click in the 'To value' entry box and enter 20.76. Now, click in the 'By changing cell' entry box and enter A3. Click OK and Excel will open a dialog box informing you that it has found a solution. Click OK to close this dialog box and insert the new number (6.82) into cell A3.

TIMESTAMPS FOR EXCEL WORKSHEETS

Suppose you'd like to automatically put the current date and time in a worksheet's header. To do this, open the worksheet and choose View|Header and Footer. When the dialog box opens, click Custom Header. Next click in the "Right section" and then click the Date button followed by the Time button. Click just after [DATE] and before the & sign and press Space. This adds a space between the date and the time.

Click OK to close the dialog box. Click OK in the Page Setup dialog box to close it. Choose File|Print Preview. The current date and time will appear in the upper right corner of the worksheet.

TURNING A CALCULATED VALUE INTO A FIXED VALUE IN EXCEL

Let's imagine that one of your formulas always calculates the same result. You then use this result to make other calculations. But since the calculated value never changes, you can easily convert the formula to a fixed value.
To do this, click the cell that contains the formula and then click in the formula bar (at the bottom of the toolbar). Next press F9 and Excel will convert the formula to the current calculated value.

SINGLE DOCUMENT INTERFACE IN EXCEL

Although Word 2000 uses a true SDI (Single Document Interface) that opens each document in a separate window, Excel actually simulates the SDI. So if you'd rather have Excel open all documents in the same window, just as it used to do, choose Tools|Options. When the Options dialog box opens, click the View tab. Next deselect the check box labeled "Windows in Taskbar" and click OK.

FONT SCALING IN EXCEL CHARTS

Excel uses an Auto Scale feature that automatically scales fonts in a chart upon resizing the chart. The roblem is that making a chart significantly larger will enlarge the text too much.
To disable the feature, right-click anywhere in the white background area of the chart and choose Format Chart Area. When the Format Chart Area dialog box opens, click the Font tab. Next deselect the "Auto scale" check box and then click OK to close the dialog box and accept your new selection.

GREEN LINES FOR EXCEL WORKSHEETS

It's often easier to work with a large worksheet if we borrow from the old green-and-white print-out paper used by line printers. Although AutoFormat offers some designs that contain lines, none do the green-and-white shading that we're looking for.
However, you can add this shading by using the Excel 2000 Conditional Formatting feature. To do this, select the range you want to apply the formatting to and then choose Format|Conditional Formatting. When the Conditional Formatting dialog box opens, click the arrow at the right side of the "Condition 1" list box and select Formula Is. Now press Tab to move to the entry box and type in
=mod(row(); 2)=1
Next click Format. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Patterns tab. Select light green and click OK. Back in the Conditional Formatting dialog box, click OK to close the dialog and save your changes.

COLOR BANDING IN EXCEL

Several months ago, we discussed how to create in Excel the green and white color banding that you see on special computer papers. This time, let's look at how to customize the color banding.
The basic formula for color banding is
=mod(row()-BeginRow, NumberOfRows * 2) + 1 > NumberOfRows
where BeginRow is the first row number that you want to format, and NumberOfRows is the number of rows in each color band.

As an example, if you'd like to start with two white rows beginning at row A, followed by two green rows, you would use
=mod(row()-1; 2 *2) + 1 > 2
To enter the formula, select the range you want to apply the formatting to and then choose Format|Conditional Formatting. When the Conditional Formatting dialog box opens, appears, click the arrow at the right side of the "Condition 1" list box and select Formula Is. Now press Tab to move to the entry box and type in
=mod(row()-1, 2 * 2) + 1 > 2
then click Format. When the dialog box opens, click the Patterns tab. Select light green and click OK. Back in the Conditional Formatting dialog box, click OK to close the dialog and save your changes.

WORKING WITH AUTOSHAPES IN EXCEL

Working with AutoShapes in Excel is different than in PowerPoint or Word. One big difference is that you can't simply select a group of objects with the mouse and then move, size, or delete them.
To do this in Excel, you need to click the Selection Objects tool in the Drawing toolbar (it's just to the right of the Draw button). Once you select the tool, Excel turns off the standard worksheet pointer and allows you to select objects. When you're finished with the Select Objects tools, press Esc to return to the normal worksheet functions.

MACROS FOR MENUS IN EXCEL

Whenever we've discussed macros in Excel (or Word), we've always described how to place macro button in the toolbar. However, you can place a command for a macro in one of your menus if you prefer.
To see how this works, record a simple macro (Tools |Macro | Record New Macro). Once you've recorded a macro (anything will do for this), choose View | Toolbars | Customize. When the Customize dialog box opens, click the Commands tab. In the "Categories" list, click Macro. Click the menu you in which you want to add the new macro to (for example, you could click Tools) and then, under "Commands," grab "Custom Menu Item" and drag it to the desired location in the open menu. Click Modify Selection and name your new menu item.
Click Close to close the Customize dialog box. Select your new menu item, for example, you may have used Tools | Test. When you click the new menu item, the Assign Macro dialog box opens. Double-click the macro name to assign it to your new menu item.

HYPERLINKING EXCEL

One way to navigate a lengthy Excel worksheet is to use hyperlinks. Let's say that you want to first look at interim data 1 (let's say cell A1), then go to interim data 2 (D1), etc. What you can do is click the cell that contains interim data 1 (A1) and press Ctrl + K to create a hyperlink.
When the Insert Hyperlink dialog box opens, type in the cell you want to go to (D1) and click OK. Now when you click in cell A1, Excel will navigate to cell D1.
To remove a hyperlink, right-click the cell and choose Hyperlink | Edit Hyperlink. In the Edit Hyperlink dialog box, click Remove Link

SELECTING A RANGE IN EXCEL

Let's suppose that you're working with a long list of names in Excel and you want to select the entire list of names, but not the entire row. What you should do is click somewhere in the list and press Ctrl + Shift + * (asterisk). This will select only the cells that contain data.

TAKING A PICTURE OF EXCEL

Suppose you'd like to have a photo of an Excel worksheet that you could then paste into a Word document or a PowerPoint slide. To create such a picture, select the range you want to capture and then hold down Shift and choose Edit | Copy Picture.
Now you can move to Word, PowerPoint, or some other application and choose Edit | Paste to paste in the Excel picture.

SOME EXCEL SHORTCUT KEYS

We have discussed a number of Excel shortcut keys in the past. Here is a list that may offer some new shortcuts for you to consider:
Ctrl + Shift + $ applies the Currency format using Dollars
Ctrl + Shift + % applies the Percentage format
Ctrl + Shift + plus sign (+) Inserts a blank cell
Ctrl + 9 hides selected rows
Ctrl + Shift + (shows selected rows
Ctrl + 0 [zero] hides selected columns
Ctrl +Shift +) shows selected columns

SELECTING OBJECTS IN EXCEL WORKSHEETS

Let's suppose that you'd like to select all the cells in a worksheet that contain text. To see how this works, open a blank worksheet and enter some text into cells A1 and B1. Now, move to cells A2 and B2 and enter some numbers.

With both text and numbers in your worksheet, press Ctrl + G to open the Go To dialog box. Click Special and then select the "Constants" radio button. Of the four check boxes (Numbers, Text, Logicals, Errors), leave only "Text" selected. Click OK and Excel will highlight only the Text entries

FILLING EXCEL CELLS

You can fill a cell with any character you want. As an example, let's fill cell A1 with plus signs. To do this, click cell A1 and then choose Format|Cells. When the Format Cells dialog box opens, click the Alignment tab.
Next, click the arrow at the right side of the "Horizontal" list box and select Fill from the list. Click OK to close the dialog box. Now, type a plus sign into the selected cell and press Enter. Excel will fill the entire cell, regardless of its width, with plus signs.
This process will work for any character. You could enter asterisks, minus signs -- anything!

USING EXCEL'S EXACT FUNCTION

Although not something you'd need every day, Excel EXACT function is often useful. Suppose you need to make sure that the content of two cells (let's say A1 and A2) always match exactly. To check this, you could enter a 10 into both cells A1 and A2. Now, click in cell A5, type
=exact(a1,a2)
and press Enter. Cell A5 will display TRUE. Change cell A1 to 9 and A5 will display FALSE.

EXCEL'S LEN FUNCTION

What if you need to always know how many characters are in cell A1? In such a case, you would use Excel's LEN function. To see how this works, run Excel and click in cell A1. Type
emazing
and press Enter.
Click in cell B1, type
=len(a1)
and press Enter. Cell B1 will display 7, the number of characters in emazing.

PASTING A RANGE IN EXCEL

One way to save some time and reduce the probability of errors in an Excel worksheet is to let Excel insert range names for you. For example, suppose you've entered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in A1 through A5. Now, you click in A7, type
=sum (
and press F3. Use the mouse to select cells A1 through A5 and then press Enter. Excel will enter the range for you and place =sum (a1:a5) into cell A7.

QUICK EXCEL COLUMN OR ROW DELETION

If you want to delete an entire column or row in an Excel worksheet, click in that column or row and then press Ctrl + - (minus sign) to open the Delete dialog box. You can now select the appropriate radio button to delete an entire column or row. After you make your selection, click OK to continue and perform the deletion

CONVERTING TIME IN EXCEL

Although time is usually expressed in hours and minutes, there are times when we might prefer to express time only in minutes (for example, movie times are usually in minutes). To see how we might convert the time in Excel, type 2:05 into cell A1. Now, click in cell B1 and choose Format|Cells. When the dialog box opens, click the Number tab, then select Number and click OK. Next, type in cell B1
=hour(a1)*60+minute(a1)

and press Enter.
Excel will convert the time in A1 into minutes and display (in this case) 125.00

USING EXCEL'S CHAR FUNCTION

Suppose you need to know what letter of the alphabet a number (0 to 255) represents. As an example, type 65 into cell A1. Click in cell A2, type
=char(a1)
and cell A2 will display A.
Note that number values greater than 255 will not return meaningful characters. Also, many numbers between 0 and 255 will generate characters that do not display. When this happens, the cell with the CHAR function will display a small square.

GLOBAL EXCEL MACROS

When you write an Excel macro, the macro is attached to your current workbook and is not available to other workbooks. However, you can create global macros in Excel. All you have to do is put them into a special workbook named Personal.xls.
To do this, open a blank worksheet. Choose File|Save As and name the worksheet Personal.xls. Go to the folder 'c:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\XLStart' and click Save to save the file and close the Save As dialog. Now, run Excel. It will open with Personal.xls. Choose Window|Hide and then choose File|Save and exit Excel.
Each time you open Excel, Personal.xls will open hidden. To enter a macro into Personal.xls, you must choose Window|Unhide to make the sheet available.

A TEXT WRAPPING MACRO FOR EXCEL

A reader recently sent in the following macro that he uses to turn on text wrapping for a range of cells. You can select the same cells and run the macro again to turn off text wrapping.
To enter the macro, run Excel and press Alt + F8. Type in TextWrap for the macro name and then click Create. Enter the following as shown here.

```
Sub TextWrap()
Dim anyCell As Range
For Each anyCell In Selection
If anyCell.WrapText = True Then
anyCell.WrapText = False
Else
anyCell.WrapText = True
End If
Next
End Sub
```

Now, press Alt + Q to return to Excel. Select a range and press Alt + F8. Double-click TextWrap to run the macro.

COPYING A RANGE IN EXCEL

Let's say you want to copy a selected range of cells to a new location in your Excel worksheet. All you have to do is press Ctrl + C to copy the selected cells and then click where you want the copy to appear. Now, press Ctrl + Shift + + (plus sign). When the dialog box opens, select how you want to shift existing cells and click OK.

REDUCING FRACTIONS IN EXCEL

There are times when one needs to reduce fractions--especially if one is in school and learning how to reduce fractions. Perhaps you shouldn't tell your own young scholars about this, but Excel automatically reduces fractions.

To see how this works, run Excel and click cell A1. Choose Format|Cells. When the dialog box opens, select Fraction under "Category" and then, under "Type", select "Up to three digits (312/943)" and click OK.

Excel will reduce any fraction you enter to its most basic form. If you enter 52/104, for example, Excel will display 1/2. If you enter a fraction that won't reduce any further, Excel will display it as entered. As an example, you could enter 312/943.

HIGHLIGHT TODAY'S DATE IN EXCEL

Let's imagine that you'd like to have a cell appear in a different color when that cell displays the current date. This sounds like a job for Excel's Conditional Formatting Feature.
To set up an example current date indication, click cell A1 and choose Format|Cells. When the dialog box opens, click Date and then select a date format. Now, make sure cell A1 is selected and choose Format|Conditional Formatting.
When the Conditional Formatting dialog opens, under "Condition 1" select Formula Is and enter
=a1-today()
and then click Format. Select black text and click OK. Now, click Add and for "Condition 2" use the following entries:
Cell Value Is Not Equal To 0 (zero)
Click Format and select red text. Click OK to close the dialog and continue.
Enter today's date in cell A1 and the date should appear in red. If you enter any other date, it will appear in black.

SELECTING SPECIAL RANGES IN EXCEL

Suppose you'd like to select only the numbers contained in a range of cells. You don't want to select any formulas or text--only numbers.
To see how this works, enter into cells A1 through A5
1 2 a 3 z
Now select cells A1 through A5 and choose Edit|Go To. When the Go To dialog opens, click Special. Now, select the "Constants" radio button. Next, select the "Numbers" check box and deselect "Text", Logicals", and "Errors". Click OK and Excel will select only the cells that contain numbers.

ANOTHER WAY TO INSERT COMMENTS IN EXCEL

Although you can insert a comment in Excel by choosing Insert|Comment and typing in your note, you can also add comments to your formulas with Excel's N() function.

To see how this works, enter into cells A1 through A3,
1 2 3
and then click in cell A5. In cell A5, type
=sum(a1:a3) + n("This is a note")
and press Enter.
The sum is 6 and that's what will appear in cell A5. However, if you click cell A5 and then look at the formula bar, you'll see your note.

PHONE NUMBERS IN EXCEL

I'm trying to move a column of numbers that were derived by a formula into another column in phone number format. I started with 13 text digits in column A. In column B, I used the formula =LEFT(A2,10) to get the digits in 10-digit format. Now I need to get the numbers in telephone number format ((###) ###-####) in column C. Is there an easy way to accomplish this?

There are two easy ways, and you can quickly try them both. In C2, enter the formula =VALUE(B2) and copy it down the length of column B. Now highlight all of those cells, right-click, and select Format Cells. Choose Special from the Category list on the left- hand side of the window and choose Phone Number from the Type list on the right-hand side. You now have the data stored as 10-digit numbers but displayed as phone numbers.

You can also build a text string with the desired format. In cell D2, enter this formula: ="(" & LEFT(B2,3) & ") " & MID(B2,4,3) & "-" & RIGHT(B2,4). Copy the formula to all of column B. Columns C and D now look the same, but C holds formatted numbers and D contains the data in text form. Use whichever best suits your needs.

SKIPPING ZERO VALUES

How can I format a list of data so that zero-value rows are skipped? Let's say I have quantities in column A, followed by an inventory list of items in column B. Many quantities are blank (or zero). On another worksheet I want to summarize the list, skipping items that have a zero quantity. Is there an Excel function or macro that can accomplish this?

You need to use Excel's data filter feature. Simply highlight the list, including the header row, and select Data | Filter | AutoFilter from the menu. A pull-down arrow will appear next to each header cell. To filter out just the rows with blank quantities, pull down the list for quantity and select (NonBlanks). To filter out rows with blank or zero quantities, pull down the list for quantity and select (Custom...). In the Custom AutoFilter dialog, choose is greater than from the pull-down list and enter 0 in the box to the right of this list. When you click on OK, only rows with nonzero quantities will be displayed.

When you copy the filtered data range and paste it elsewhere, the filtered-out rows will be omitted.

TWO-WAY LOOKUP IN EXCEL

I want to use Microsoft Excel to look up a value in a two-dimensional table, looking down the row headers for a match to the value in an input cell and across the column headers for another match, retrieving the value at the intersection of the designated row and column. Picture column A filled with hotel names and row 1 filled with room types. The rest of the table is filled with prices. I want to retrieve the price knowing the hotel and type of room. I tried using HLOOKUP and VLOOKUP but couldn't make them work.

HLOOKUP and VLOOKUP search the first row or column in a range and return the corresponding value from another row or column. But they don't give any information about the location of the found value. You can't, for example, use HLOOKUP to determine the column for the desired data and then use VLOOKUP to search that column.

The key is to use the MATCH function, which returns the position of an item within an array. In this case, it will be the position of the desired column header in the top row. We can pass this value as the third argument to VLOOKUP—the one that defines which column's data should be returned. Figure 1 shows a simple worksheet demonstrating this function. Cells A2 to A13 contain months of the year, B1 to F1 contain years, and B2 to F13 contain some random dollar values. You enter the desired month and year in cells B15 and B16, and the corresponding value is retrieved by this function:

=VLOOKUP(B15,A2:H13,MATCH(B16,A1:H1),FALSE)

This tells Excel to find the month value matching cell B15 and return the value found in the same row at the column corresponding to the year value from cell B16. The FALSE argument at the end tells VLOOKUP to return only a precise match.

A SELF-TEST SPREADSHEET IN EXCEL

Here's a simple way to create a self-test spreadsheet. Enter all the questions in column A, leaving the first row for column headers. Enter the corresponding correct answers in column B. The cells in column C are the users' input area. Select only the input area, right-click, and choose Format Cells. On the Protection tab, remove the check next to Locked and click on OK. Right-click the cell header of column B and choose Hide from the pop-up menu. Add appropriate column headers in row 1.

In cell D2, enter the formula =IF(C2=B2,"YES",""). Copy that formula down column D for all of the question rows. Below the last question row—still in column D—enter the formula =COUNTIF(D2:D##,"YES"), where ## is the number of the last question row. Finally, choose Tools | Protection | Protect sheet from the menu, uncheck all the boxes except Select unlocked cells, and click on OK. Enter a password when prompted, then save the sheet—and you're done!

You can now give copies of this spreadsheet to others to use as a self-test. As soon as a user enters an answer that matches the hidden correct answer, the adjacent column will display YES. Uppercase and lowercase distinctions don't matter, but a user must enter the precise words or numbers that you defined as correct.

MOVE TO THE LAST CELL (EXCEL 97/2000/2002)

You can quickly move to the last cell in a contiguous block of blank or non-blank cells without leaving the current cell. You simply double-click the current cell's border; the border you choose will determine the direction of the move. For instance, if you're in the middle of a large block of data and you want to move to the top cell within that block of data, simply double-click the top border of the current cell. You'll know you're in the right place to double-click because the cursor will change to a four-headed arrow. If you want to move to the last cell to the right within that same block of data, double-click the current cell's right border. The same is true when moving to the left or down. Double-click the left or the bottom border of the current cell, respectively.
You can get a similar effect by holding Ctrl while pressing an arrow key. If the adjacent cell in the selected direction contains data, you'll move to the last non-blank cell in that direction. If not, you'll move to the next non-blank cell in that direction.

CONDITIONAL FORMATTING IN EXCEL

To highlight alternating rows, first select the area to be formatted or press Ctrl-A to select the entire sheet. Choose Conditional Formatting from the Format menu. In the pull-down menu on the left-hand side, select Formula Is and enter this formula:
=Row()=Odd(Row())
Click on the Format button, then select the Patterns tab and assign a background color. This procedure will format all odd-numbered rows with the background color.

Creating a border under every fifth row is handled in much the same way. The formula in this case is
=MOD(ROW(),5)=0
Instead of setting a background color, click on the Format button, then select the Border tab and choose a border for the cell bottom. In both cases, the formatting is associated with the row position, not the cell contents. The formatting remains consistent even when you insert or delete rows.
To answer your question specifically, here's how to format all cells in a row based on the contents of one cell in that row. Suppose you want special formatting to apply anytime the cell in column A has the value 1. Select cell A1 and open the Conditional Formatting dialog as before. Enter the formula =$A1=1, define your special formatting, and click on OK. Choose the Format Painter button in the standard toolbar and select the entire area that you want to format.
Because you used the absolute column address $A, the copied formula always refers to column A. And because you used a relative row address without the $ prefix, it always refers to the current row.

A SMALL BUT USEFUL FUNCTION

How to get the average of a series of numbers that excludes the two lowest numbers in that series?
The SMALL function is what you need. Suppose a series of ten numbers falls in the range A1:A10. The formula =SMALL(A$1:A$10,1) returns the smallest, =SMALL(A$1:A$10,2) returns the second-smallest, and so on. As you might expect, the LARGE function returns the specified largest values in a range.
Averaging a series of numbers while omitting one or more of the smallest ones is a fairly common task. For example, teachers frequently discard the lowest one or two scores when grading students.
Start by naming the range containing the values. Select the range, click on the Name box to the left of the Formula box, and type the name (for example, MyRange). This formula will calculate the average of the numbers in the range, omitting the lowest two values:
=(SUM(MyRange)-SMALL(MyRange,1) -SMALL(MyRange,2))/(COUNT(MyRange) -2).
The formula first sums all the values in MyRange and then subtracts the two smallest. It divides the result by the count of items in MyRange minus 2. Of course, you can write this formula using an ordinary cell reference, like A1:A10, rather than a named range, but the range appears four times in the formula, which means you have four chances to mistype it. Naming the range makes writing the formula much easier.

COUNTING WORDS IN EXCEL

I need to count the number of words in a cell in Excel, but I can't seem to find any way to do this. Is there a formula or a function that will perform this task?
What you need is a macro:

```
Sub WordCount()
' The Trim function only removes leading and trailing
' spaces, not linefeeds, so we first replace all the
' linefeeds with spaces
cellContents = Replace(ActiveCell.Value, Chr(10), " ")
cellContents = Trim(cellContents)
' Now count the words by stepping through all
' the characters. A new word starts when the
' current character is a space or linefeed and
' the previous character is not a space or linefeed
cellWordCount = 1
prevCharacter = ""
For i = 1 To Len(cellContents)
   nextCharacter = Mid(cellContents, i, 1)
   If (nextCharacter = " ") And (prevCharacter <> " ") Then
      cellWordCount = cellWordCount + 1
   End If
   prevCharacter = nextCharacter
Next i
If Len(cellContents) = 0 Then
   cellWordCount = 0
End If
MsgBox "Word count is: " + Str(cellWordCount)
End Sub
```

The macro code counts the number of words in the selected cell. (If you have a range selected, it counts the words in the active cell in that range.) The macro counts words by counting spaces in the text (and line-feed characters, if you've pressed Alt-Enter to create a new line) and adjusts for multiple spaces. Like Microsoft Word's Word Count function, the macro treats hyphenated words as one word. Add it to your Personal.xls file and to a toolbar button so it's always handy.

AN ELEGANT TWO-WAY LOOKUP IN EXCEL

In a recent User to User piece titled "Two-Way Lookup in Excel" you suggested using the MATCH function to identify the correct column and the VLOOKUP function to find the correct cell within that column. But this isn't the best solution; it's more efficient to use the intersection of named ranges.
The reader's question specifically involved a matrix of hotel names and room types. Select the entire range of data and labels, and use the series of commands Insert | Name | Create. Accept the default Create names in | Top row and Left column to set up the matrix. Then, in any other cell, simply type in a formula such as =Hyatt Single. This provides the same result as the earlier solution but is much more elegant and easy to comprehend.

The reader's original question mentioned trouble getting VLOOKUP to work. Our earlier solution made VLOOKUP work but overlooked the more effective solution. For those who don't often use named ranges, we'll spell out the instructions. Select all of the data, including the row and column labels, then choose Insert | Name | Create from the menu. The Create Names dialog will appear, with the Top row and Left column boxes checked by default. Just click on OK to accept the defaults. Now each row and column of data is defined as a named range, and you can use the range name in formulas. Of course, all of the row and column labels must be unique.
Watch what happens when you enter the formula =Hyatt Single. As soon as you finish the word Hyatt, Excel displays a box around the range named Hyatt. When you type the e in Single, it draws another box around the range named Single. And when you hit enter, voilà! The value at the intersection of those two ranges appears.

ADD A MONTH IN EXCEL

Is there a formula in Excel for incrementing dates by one month at a time? For example, if I have a cell that contains 1/1/2003, I want the cell below it to be 2/1/2003. But if I change the first cell to 1/21/2003, the second should show 2/21/2003. And if the first cell reads 1/31/2003, the second should show 2/28/2003 (and 2/29 in a leap year).
The two functions that you need are part of the Analysis ToolPak add-in. (Select Tools | Add-Ins | Analysis ToolPak.)
EDATE function returns an input date offset by a specified number of months. Suppose your input date is in cell A1. The formula =EDATE(A1,1) will display the date that's one month later. If the date is past the end of the month (for example, 2/31/2003), Excel uses the last actual date in the month. But if the following month has more days than the current month, the EDATE function will not adjust forward to the actual end of month. So, if A1 holds 2/28/2003, the formula will return 3/28/2003, not 3/31/2003.
If you want to translate the last day of the month into the last day of the next month, you need a more complex formula. The EOMONTH function returns the last day of the input month offset by a set number of months.
In our example, =EOMONTH(A1,0) would return the end of the current month. Thus the following formula will do the job: =IF(A1=EOMONTH(A1,0),EOMONTH(A1,1),EDATE(A1,1)). In plain English, if the value in cell A1 is the same as the last day of the month, use the EOMONTH function to return the last day of the next month. Otherwise, return the same day in the next month, taking into account the possibility that the next month may be shorter.

TRACK LOTTERY WINNERS

I'm trying to organize a lottery pool and track it with a spreadsheet. I have one column listing the names of the players, each of whom picks six numbers from 1 to 49. After the drawing, I enter the six numbers in a separate row at the top of the page. Can I make the spreadsheet highlight any matches in each player's row? Conditional formatting allows only up to three conditions, but I need six. Also, can I display a number in each player's row to indicate how many matches there are?

The trick is to use just one condition in your conditional formatting. Suppose the names are in column A starting at A2, with each player's picks in columns B through H. Then suppose that the current set of correct numbers is in B1 through G1. Select cell B2 and choose Conditional Formatting from the Format menu. Select Formula Is in the drop-down list, and enter the formula =COUNTIF($B$1:$G$1,B2)>0. This formula will return TRUE when the value of the cells appears in the list of winning numbers.

Click on the Format button and define the special formatting you want to use for matches, then click on OK and OK again. Click on the Format Painter button on the toolbar and apply this formatting to the rest of the lotto numbers. Now all matches will use the special formatting you defined.

As for counting the number of hits, this is a great opportunity to use a little-known Excel feature called an array formula. In cell H2, type =SUM(COUNTIF(B2:G2,$B$1:$G$1)), but instead of pressing Enter, press Ctrl-Shift-Enter. Excel will put curly brackets around the formula to indicate that it's an array formula. (And no, you can't get the same effect by entering the curly brackets yourself.) The COUNTIF() function is calculated using each element of the $B$1:$G$1 array (the actual winning numbers), and the SUM() function totals the counts. Now copy this formula down column H into the rest of the player rows.

COUNTING WORDS IN EXCEL

The formula works by taking the length of the text and subtracting the length of that same text minus the spaces between its words. If there is text, it adds one space for the initial word.

=IF(ISBLANK(A1),0,LEN(TRIM(SUBSTITUTE (A1,CHAR(10)," ")))-LEN(SUBSTITUTE (SUBSTITUTE(TRIM(A1),CHAR(10),"")," ",""))+1)

The key point in his formula is the difference between the TRIM worksheet function and the Trim function in a macro. The macro function Trim cuts off leading and trailing spaces from the string passed into it, period.
The TRIM worksheet function removes all spaces except for single spaces between words. The formula TRIM (SUBSTITUTE (A1,CHAR(10)," ")) replaces all line-feed characters with spaces and then trims the result to eliminate leading, trailing, and multiple spaces. The length of this formula's result minus the length of the same string with all spaces removed is the number of word-separating spaces in the input text.
This formula-based solution is more convenient than the original macro solution. To count the words in a cell using the macro, you have to select the cell and then invoke the macro from the menu or with a keyboard shortcut. The result is displayed in a message box and is not accessible for use in other formulas. With this formula-based solution, you have the freedom, for example, to count the words in each cell of a row and sum the counts.

SAVE A CHART AS A GIF FILE

You can save selected charts as GIF files using the following macro:

```
Sub savechart()
If TypeName(Selection) = "ChartArea" Then
userFname = InputBox("Filename of chart" _
& " file?", "Save chart", "excelchart")
If userFname = "" Then Exit Sub
userNameAndPath = ThisWorkbook.Path & "\" & userFname & ".gif"
ActiveChart.Export Filename:=userNameAndPath, FilterName:="GIF"
MsgBox "Chart is saved as" & Chr(13) & userNameAndPath
Else
userReply = MsgBox("Please select a Chart Area, " _
& "then run macro again", vbOKOnly, "Error in selection")
End If
End Sub
```

After you've written the macro, you must save your Excel workbook. Now click on the chart area and run the macro. After you name the file, the chart will be saved to the same folder as the workbook.

SNEL SELECTEREN IN EXCEL

Als je enkel ingevulde cellen wil selecteren in een lange Excel-tabel, dan wil dat wel eens wat duren. Op deze manier gaat het sneller: ga bovenaan links staan in de tabel, en druk dan tegelijkertijd op de Ctrl-toets, de Shift-toets én de toets met het pijltje naar rechts. Daarna druk je nog eens tegelijkertijd op de Ctrl-toets, de Shift-toets én de toets met het pijltje naar onderen, en je zal zien dat de volledige tabel keurig is geselecteerd.

COMBO BOXES IN EXCEL

I want to insert information from a combo box into an Excel spreadsheet. I can create the combo box easily enough, but I don't know how to make it active with a list of options that can be inserted into a cell. Can you help?

Somewhere in your spreadsheet, enter the values that should appear in the combo box's drop-down list. (They can be placed on a separate sheet if you like.) Click the Combo Box button on the Control Toolbox toolbar; if you don't see this toolbar, right-click the main toolbar and check Control Toolbox in the list. Click to place the combo box in the desired location, then right-click it and choose Properties. (If right-clicking the combo box does not bring up a menu, click the Design Mode button at the top of the Control Toolbox and try again.)

In the list of properties, select ListFillRange and enter the range of cells holding the values—for example, Sheet2!A1:A5. Select LinkedCell and enter the cell that should receive the value selected in the combo box. Select the Style property and choose 2 - fmStyleDropDownList. (This ensures that the user can choose only items from the list.) Close the Properties window and click the Exit Design Mode button in the Control Toolbox. When a user makes a selection from the combo box, it appears in the linked cell. But a user can still enter data directly in the linked cell.

There's another way to get the combo-box effect: one that shows the drop-down list right in the cell. Select the cell and choose Validation from the Data menu. On the Settings tab of the resulting dialog, select List from the options under Allow. In the Source field, enter the allowable values separated by commas. As an option, you can enter = followed by the name of a range containing the allowable values.

Uncheck Ignore blank, and check In-cell dropdown. If you wish, click the Input Message tab and enter text for a ToolTip that appears when a user selects the cell. On the Error Alert tab, select the Stop style if you want to forbid users to enter data other than the allowable values, and enter the text you want to be displayed in the error message box. The Warning and Information styles permit users to enter other values. Figure 1 shows both the ToolTip and the error message.

The combo-box control offers one significant advantage over the in-cell drop-down: When users begin typing, it automatically jumps to the first item that matches. In a long list, this can be quite a benefit. Yet, as noted, users can bypass the combo box and enter data (possibly erroneous) directly into the linked cell. By combining the two techniques, you can get the handy auto-completion feature without risking bad data.

Configure the combo box as described above, and set up data validation for the linked cell. In the Data Validation dialog, do not check the In-cell drop-down box. On the Input Message tab of that dialog, enter a message like Please use the combo box below for data entry. Select the Stop style on the Error Alert tab and you're done.

BULLETS IN SPREADSHEETS

Another case in point: bullets. I use bullets all the time in Word, and they're such a pain in Excel. Yes, you can click Insert | Symbol and put a bullet anywhere you like in
a spreadsheet, but bulleting is so easy in Word that I resent having to resort to manual methods. I recently discovered that you can set up Excel 97, 2000, or 2002 to automatically apply a bullet to cells with a specific style, and it's really quite simple. Here's how:

- Click inside a cell where you want a bullet
- Click Format | Style. Excel brings up the Style dialog box, with the Style Name (probably "Normal") highlighted.

- Type the name of your new Style, the one that'll be bulleted. Let's call it Bullet.
- Click Modify.
- Here's the tricky part: in the Category box, first click Text, then click Custom. You have to click both of those entries, in that order. Excel puts a @ sign in the Type box. Click in front of the @ sign. With the cursor in front of the @ sign, hold down the Alt key on the keyboard and type 0149 (that's the key code for a bullet in almost every font). Release the Alt key, then type a space. The Type box should look like this:
- . @
- Click OK twice and you're done.

The cell you selected is now formatted with the Bullet style. The contents of the cell shows up with a bullet and a space in front of the text. Any time you want to put a bullet on any other cell, simply select the cell, click Format | Style, pick Bullet from the drop-down list, hit OK, and your bullet shows up, slick as can be.
By the way, you can use other key codes: 0151 will give you an em-dash, for example, 0187 will give you a right double-chevron.