Ready Net Go, Inc.

IT Solutions for Businesses ... *Moving Forward*

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■ Excel 2003 Tips

If you like working with numbers, MS Excel probably comes easy for you. If you're like most people though, Excel can seem overwhelming with cell after cell of data and formulas. Although we can't cover every Excel tip in this newsletter, we'll give direction on some of the more common requests.

Excel tips featured in this newsletter

- Sort columns (2 options)
- Set the print area
- Enter zip codes
- Add columns of data
- Name sheets
- Color code sheets
- Adjust row height

■ Tip of the Month

Compatibility Pack for MS Office 2003

Microsoft released Office 2007 in November 2006 and although it is a substantial upgrade offering numerous changes to the design and features, many people are still using Office 2003 or earlier.

The one problem you may be running into though is that many people have upgraded and since Office 2007 is significantly different from earlier versions, when you receive a 2007 file, your computer balks. Thankfully, Microsoft saw this coming and released a Compatibility Pack that allows previous Office users to open Office 2007 files with a free and easy download.

Go to http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/default.aspx and click the link for **Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for Word, Excel ....** (under Popular Downloads).

Click the grey **Download** button, then click **Run** on the next dialog box. Click Open to install when the download completes. Over a DSL/Cable connection, it should take 5 min.

Sort Columns - Option 1

One of the most important features in Excel is the ability to sort data. Sorting columns of data allows you to interpret the information, draw conclusions and provide a context for why you collected the data in the first place.

To sort data in Excel, the one crucial component is to select **ALL** of the data in each row before sorting by individual columns. There are two ways you can sort data.

1) A quick way to highlight everything on a worksheet is to left click the **blank button** in the left uppermost part of the worksheet (to the left of column A and above row 1). When you select this button, the entire worksheet will turn bluish-grey indicating the cells are highlighted.

2) When all of the cells are highlighted, click **Data** on the Main Menu, then scroll down to **Sort** to bring up the Sort dialog box. You can sort the data up to 3 columns. Choose which column(s) you want to sort. Under My data range has ... click the radio button next to **Header row** indicating that the worksheet has headers. If you didn't have headers, you would select **No header row**.

3) Click OK and your data will be sorted. If you don't carry out any other task and you don't want to keep the data sorted in this manner, simply click the undo button. If you carry out additional tasks, repeat the steps above and choose the original column to sort.

■ Website Worth Watching

► www.spookmaster.com - Need some ideas for carving this year's pumpkin? There are hundreds of ideas and patterns listed on this site. Also check out the recipes and party games.

Sort Columns - Option 2

Sometimes worksheets have a lot of information on them and selecting all of the cells may cause more trouble than help. The method above won't necessarily work in all cases. If you only want to sort a part of the data on your worksheet, use this method instead.

1) Put your cursor on the numbered row where your data starts (not on the header row) - gray numbers on the left side of the screen.

2) Left click and drag down the length of this column until you reach the last row of your data that you wish to sort.

3) With the cells highlighted, select **Data** on the main

menu, then **Sort**. When the Sort dialog box appears, you can choose up to 3 columns. Click the drop down box next to each one (or just one) and choose the column that you want to sort by. Make sure that the **My data range has** ... No header row is selected.

4) Click **OK** - your data is now sorted by the column(s) you selected with all of the corresponding data in the right place.

5) To reverse this sort, click the undo button on the main toolbar or select **Edit** - **Undo** on the Main menu. You can also go through the steps above again by sorting on the original column.

Set the Print Area

Oftentimes, there is too much data on a worksheet to quickly find or display the information you want. By setting the print area of the worksheet, you can eliminate extraneous data and view just the rows and columns that hold the important information. To set the print area:

1) Put your cursor in the left uppermost cell of the area you wish to print. Left click and drag down and over the rows and columns until all of the cells you need are highlighted - this action defines the print area.

2) On the main menu, select File ... Print area ... Set Print Area. A dotted line will appear around the cells you just highlighted. If you click Print Preview now, only those cells will appear on the page and will print.

3) If you want to select a different print area, select File ... Print Area ... Clear Print Area. Now you can set a different print area without any conflict.

TIPS

The print area will always be constrained by the size of the paper you use. If you set the print area beyond the maximum margins, the cells outside of this maximum will appear on the second, third, etc. pages.

It's a good practice to clear the print area after you set it and print, especially if other people access the worksheet.

Enter Zip Codes

Not all numbers are equal! Thankfully, Excel provides many options for formatting numbers in each cell. One of the more finicky numbers is zip codes - most notably with New Jersey because many of that state's zip codes lead with a 0 which Excel drops automatically.

You can avoid this "error" by formatting the zip code column as text or by choosing zip code under the format menu.

To format a cell or column of data:

1) Highlight the cell or column, then choose Format on the Main Menu.

2) Scroll down to Cells ... the Format Cells dialog box opens.

3) Under Category: choose Special. Choose Zip Code or Zip Code + 4.

4) All values in this column will now have to have 5 or 9 numbers. And leading zeros won't be dropped.

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Adding Columns of Data

Most people who use Excel enter numbers in addition to text. Completing calculations, such as adding columns of data, can be overwhelming by hand so use the AutoSum function instead. One of the best features is that you can add multiple columns of data quickly and easily by following these instructions.

1) Use the AutoSum button to add a column of data

- Highlight the column of data (*Make sure that there is a blank row immediately beneath the last row highlighted.*) Click the AutoSum Σ button on the main menu and a total for the column will appear one row below. *(Figure 1)*

If you wish to add two columns the procedure is similar.

- If the columns are next to each other, highlight both columns and click the Σ button. Each column of data will have a total.

2) Add two or more columns next to each other

- Put your cursor in the cell that will show the total for 2 or more columns. In this example, it's cell C7. In the forumla bar, type =SUM(A7:B7) where A7 equals the total of column 1 and B7 equals the total of column 2. Press Enter on your keyboard and a total for both columns will appear *(Figure 2)*. You can use this formula for as many columns as you need. If you have 6 columns of data, you don't need to enter every value, just the first and last cells. Next month's newsletter will show an additional way of completing this.

- **TIP**: Make sure that there are no spaces in the formula.

3) Add two or more columns not adjacent to each other

- The above procedure works great for adjacent columns but what if you want to total two columns that are not next to each other. The procedure is very similar. Instead of using a semicolon between the two cell values, use a comma. Put your cursor in the cell where you want the total to appear. In the forumla bar, type =SUM(A5,C5) just as you see in *Figure 3*. Remember to use your specific values and don't put in any spaces in the formula.

Figure 1. Highlighted cell shows a total for Column A2 through A6. Notice the formula next to *fx:* =SUM(A2:A6)

Figure 2. Highlighted cell is a summation of two columns, A and B.

Figure 3. Totaling non-adjacent columns - use a comma rather than a semicolon. (6 + 6 = 12)

Name the Sheets in the Workbook

Every time you open Excel, three sheets are already prepared (shown at the bottom of the screen). Toggling between the sheets is easy - simply click on the sheet names and start entering data.

Did you know that you can name these sheets? The options are limitless although you may want to keep them short if you have a lot of worksheets in one file.

Some examples include: Marketing, Volunteers, Spring House Party, Financial Report - Spring 09.

Follow these steps to name a sheet:

1) Hover your mouse cursor over any of the sheets such as Sheet1, then right click your mouse. A list of options appears. Choose Rename and Sheet1 is highlighted in black.

2) Type a name for the worksheet using your keyboard and then hit enter or click anywhere on the sheet. That's it - you'll quickly know which sheet to choose now just by scanning the names.

Color Code the Sheets in the Workbook

Using different colors in documents is a great way to differentiate text or draw attention to a particular section. Excel data oftentimes can appear cluttered so using different color text, using bold text or changing fonts and sizes can really help to distinguish the information on each sheet.

You can change the style of text just as you would in a Word document. Highlight the text and then use the buttons on the formatting toolbar to change the font name, font size, color, etc. *(Figure 4)*

In addition to changing the style of text in the body of the document, you can also change the tab color of each sheet. If you have 3 sheets for marketing and 2

sheets for financials, it might be helpful to color code both groups.

To change the color of the tab:

1) Hover your mouse cursor over a sheet tab (bottom of the screen).

2) Right click and choose Tab Color ... from the list.

3) Choose a colored square and then click OK.

4) The color you chose appears as a line under the sheet name. If you click on another sheet, the entire tab becomes this color.

Figure 4. Formatting toolbar in MS Excel 2003

Adjust the Row Height

Another great feature is the ability to adjust the row height. This is especially useful if you need to print and share the worksheet with others.

You can adjust the row height manually by placing your cursor on the line between two row numbers. A double arrow cross appears. Left click and drag up or down to adjust.

If you need a more exact way to adjust the row height, do the following:

1) Select the row by clicking the number on the far left. You can also select a group of rows by left clicking on the number, holding the mouse button down and dragging up or down until you reach the last row number that you want to change.

2) With the row(s) highlighted, select **Format** on the Main Menu. Scroll down to **Row** and over to Row Height.

3) The Row height dialog box appears. The default row height is 12.75. 15 is a good value for row height if you need extra space.

Shortcut: To quickly change the row height, highlight the row number(s) you want, right click your mouse, and choose row height from the list. Enter a value, click OK.

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