■ Microsoft Excel 2010

Last month, we reviewed three popular programs Microsoft recently updated; Word, OneNote, and PowerPoint. Each of these programs had significant differences from previous versions especially from Office 2003 or earlier. Microsoft also updated Excel but the changes are less significant. We'll review some of the changes to Excel in this newsletter.

Like the other programs mentioned above, Excel now has a web app. Although the features are not as robust as the desktop version, you can access, edit and share Excel documents online with other users. You can even work simultaneously with others on the same files increasing your ability to complete tasks efficiently.

The best part of storing your documents online is that they are available anywhere and anytime you have web access - even on Windows Phone 7 smartphones; no need to remember to save the documents to a flash drive or disc anymore.

You can use Office Web Applications even if you don't have the Office 2010 suite or individual programs.

Just sign up for a Microsoft Windows Live account and you can access your files online.

To use and/or sign up for Office Web Apps, go to:

http://office.live.com

Format Multiple Sheets

If you need to create multiple worksheets with identical information such as column headers or row leaders, you can do it automatically without having to copy and paste. If you're just starting a new Workbook, create and name your sheets first.

1. Click the Insert Worksheet tab (located at the bottom of the worksheet – last tab).
2. Right click the new worksheet called Sheet 1 and choose Rename from the list.
3. Type a name and click Enter.

Once your worksheets are named, highlight the ones you want to group by clicking on one of the sheets, hold the ctrl key down and select another worksheet. To select all sheets, right click one sheet and choose Select All Sheets. Your worksheets that are grouped will turn white.

Now when you enter information on one worksheet, the same information will appear in the same location on all of your selected worksheets.

If you click away from the active sheet, the group-ing will end so make sure you check to see that the sheets are highlighted before entering information.

■ Tip of the Month

Toggle Easily Between Formulas and Results

Showing formulas is a snap now. Open your worksheet and click ctrl and ~ (tilde symbol) at the same time. All cells that have results will display their formulas.

To reverse this, simply hit ctrl and ~ again. Your results will reappear in those same cells.

Note: When you click ctrl and ~ for the first time, you may notice that the columns expand and certain values like dates may change. Once you show the results again, these values will return to how you entered them.

■ Website Worth Watching

► http://officeimg.vo.msecnd.net/en-us/files/918/662/AF101882555.pdf - Microsoft guide to migrating from Excel 2003 to Excel 2010. Great overview including screen shots.
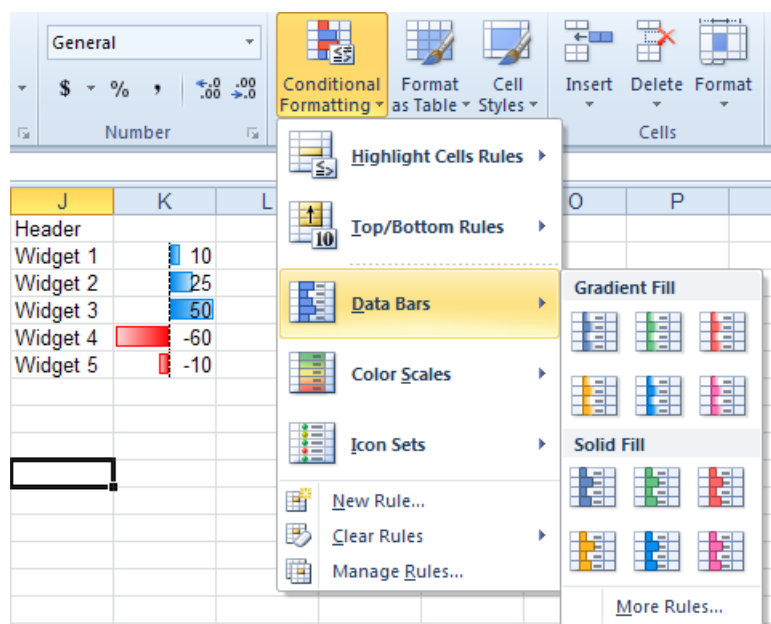
Conditional Formatting

Figure 1. Excel 2010 showing colored data bars in column K. The data bars can now show negative numbers properly - an improvement over Excel 2007 which could not properly show values below zero.

One of the coolest features of Excel 2010 is the expanded graphics for Conditional Formatting. As **Figure 1** shows, you can create color data bars in individual cells which provide a graphical interface for displaying the results (see Sparklines on page 3 for additional options). You can display positive numbers as well as negative numbers. Several color choices are available including solid or gradient fills.

To insert Data Bars for a given range of data:

1. Highlight the column of data.

2. Select the Home tab on the main menu, then under Styles, click the Conditional Formatting button.

3. A drop down menu appears - highlight Data Bars and scroll over and down to choose your color scheme.

4. If desired, you can expand the column so that the data and bars are further separated, increasing legibility and impact.

Average, Sum and Count

We've mentioned this tip in a previous newsletter but it's worth repeating. This is a very quick and efficient way to get a snapshot of your data without having to create a formula.

To quickly see an average, sum and/or count of a group of cells, simply highlight the cells you need by left clicking and dragging your mouse either down, up or over.

If the highlighted cells contain numbers, the average, sum and count for those cells appears automatically in the Status Bar (**Figure 2**). If your cells only contain text, you will only see a count.

To make any adjustments to the Status Bar, simply right click anywhere on the bar and select or deselect any option listed on the Customize Status Bar box that appears.
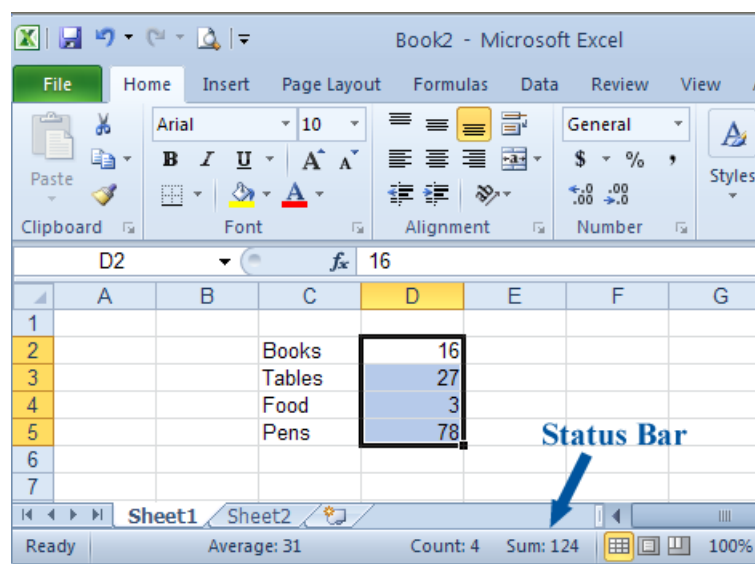

Figure 2. Excel worksheet showing the Average, Count and Sum of selected data.

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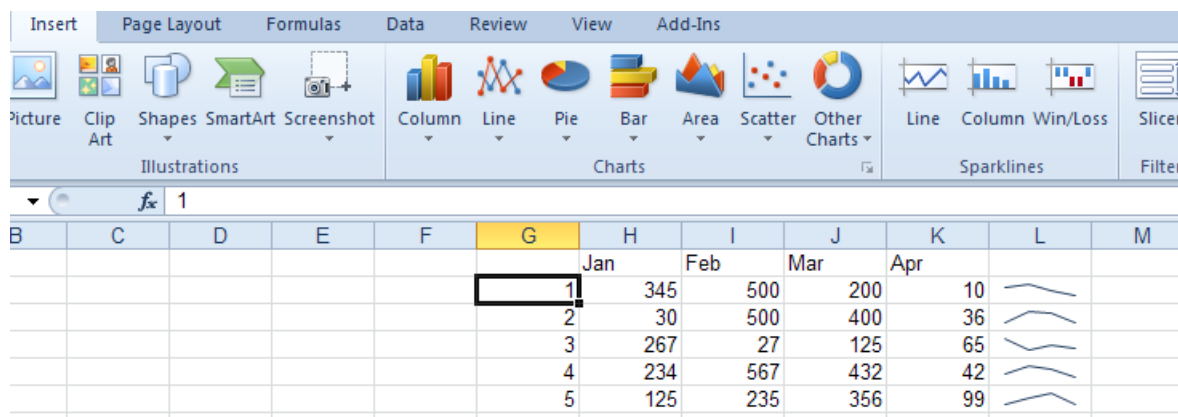www.readynetgo.net/newsletter.htm

Sparklines

Figure 3. Excel 2010 worksheet showing the Sparklines feature in Column L. Choose Sparklines from the Insert menu.

Sparklines isn't new. Microsoft introduced this feature in Excel 2007 and there have been third party add-ins available for many years (usable for Excel 2003 and earlier). Microsoft has made some significant improvements in the functionality however, and given that it is embedded in the software, this feature alone makes it a worthy upgrade especially if you chart a lot of data.

The basic premise to Sparklines is the ability to create graphical displays of data within a single cell (**Figure 3**).

Creating a sparkline is simple:

1. Select the data you want to analyze.

2. On the Insert menu, choose a Sparkline - Line, Column, or Win/Loss.

3. A dialog box pops up asking for the range (which should be populated if you highlighted your data already) and where you want the graphs to appear. Enter in the cell ranges manually or left click and drag across the cells (column or row) you wish to use.

4. Click OK and your sparkline graphs will appear. You can modify the color, show high and low markers, and change the type of Sparkline by highlighting the Sparkline Data on the worksheet. This action automatically brings up the Sparkline Tools Design toolbar below the main menu. You can now select any of the features you need.

Sparklines in Excel 2010 is a robust tool and is unfortunately not compatible with earlier versions of Excel (even Excel 2007 may have difficulty displaying certain types of data). If you frequently share files with users of earlier versions of Excel, just be aware that not all features will be available to them.

If you mainly create reports or share data amongst co-workers with the same program, Sparklines in Excel 2010 can be a great performance tool.

Select All (or Some)

Again, not new but here are three ways to select data on a worksheet. The first two options for Selecting All are quick if you want to change the font style or size of the text on the entire worksheet:

1. To select all of the information on the page, click the button in the uppermost left corner of the worksheet, to the left of column A and above Row 1. Your worksheet will turn blue (or grey) signifying all of the cells are selected. Edit as much as you want and then click any individual cell to turn off the highlighting.

2. Depending on what data is included on your worksheet, if you click Ctrl-A you may just highlight a certain block of data. Keep clicking Ctrl-A to select more data until all of the worksheet is selected or the groups of data you need are selected.

3. If these options don't work, you can always left click a cell and drag over and down to highlight the cells you need. If you want an entire row or column formatted the same way, click and drag the row numbers or column letters rather than individual cells.
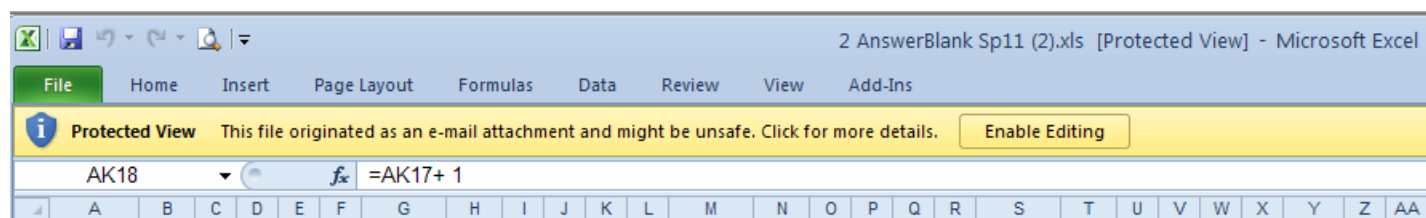
Protected View

Excel has some great features including the ability to create macros or automated tasks through the use of Microsoft's Visual Basic code. But whereas creating a macro can be a timesaver (for instance creating a keystroke that will change the font, size, and color of highlighted text at the same time), it is also a way of introducing malicious code into a document.

To ward off these rogue files, Excel 2010 now comes with a Protected View, sandboxing macros and add-ins until you enable editing (**Figure 4**). If the email attachment you open from a co-worker isn't what you're expecting afterall, you can close and delete it averting a possible infection. Once you enable editing, you have full access to the file and any macros and add-ins associated will be functionable.

You can enable protection yourself by clicking File on the Main Menu and scrolling down to Info (if it's not already highlighted). With Info selected, click on the Protect Workbook button in the Permissions section. When you click this button, a drop down list appears where you can set a password before opening, mark the file as read-only, set a digital signature, and more.

By default though, any Excel 2010 user that downloads a spreadsheet from the Internet or receives a spreadsheet as an email attachment will open the file in Protected View. One more layer of security is always a good thing.

Figure 4. Excel 2010 showing a document in Protected View. When you open the file, you will have to click the button "Enable Editing" and save the file before making any changes to the document.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Although not new, keyboard shortcuts are worthy timesavers. Here are some of the best:

1. If you want to insert a new line in the same cell, click Alt + Enter. The cell and row height automatically adjusts. Click Enter when you finish typing.

2. If you want to edit a cell without having to put your cursor in the formula bar, click F2. The cursor will appear directly in the cell. To add a comment to a cell, click Shift + F2.

3. To insert a hyperlink, click Ctrl + K, then manually type or copy and paste the web address in the dialog box that appears (at the bottom). Click OK.

4. To insert the current date, click Ctrl + ; (semicolon)

5. To instantly create a chart from a range of data, highlight the data and click F11 (the function key). This action creates a new page of just the data graphically displayed in chart form. Great for printing and easy as pie!

Handy Excel Shortcut Chart

Insert a new line in same cell	Alt + Enter
Place cursor in cell for editing	F2
Add/edit comment in a cell	Shift + F2
Insert a hyperlink	Ctrl + K
Insert current date	Ctrl + ;
Create chart from data range	F11 key

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