

How to...

2

Make

sense of your financial data



A Microsoft Guide for Small Businesses

Microsoft[®]

Introduction

Microsoft® Excel 2003 is an amazingly versatile tool that can be used in all areas of your business. It's not just about numbers either – it's all about managing and analysing your business data. And if you've got a good grip on your business data, then that can really help everything else about your business fall into place.

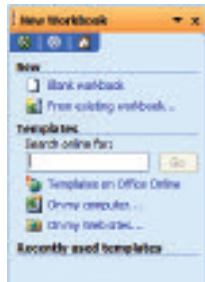
Excel can be as simple or sophisticated as you want it to be, but there is plenty of help available to make sure it provides you with exactly what you need. For example, the many excellent templates to be found on Microsoft® Office Online can save you a lot of time, and give you some great ideas on how to use Excel in your business.



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Automate your invoices

One of the most useful items to set up in Excel is an invoice template to use time and time again. Unlike Word or Publisher, Excel can do the calculations for you, so it's ideal. An easy way to create an invoice template for your business is to start with one of the pre-prepared ones on the Microsoft Office Online website.

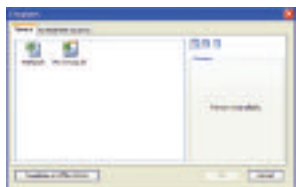


- Choose **New** from the **File** menu.
- Make sure you are connected to the Internet and choose **Templates on Office Online** from the Task Pane.
- In the Office Online website, type **invoice** in the search box at the top right of the screen and press **Enter**.
- Look through the list of templates – noting the Excel ones especially. Click the name of the template to preview it, and then click the **Download Now** button to download it to your machine. A good one to look at first might be **Simple invoice with tax calculation** since this calculates VAT.

Once you have found a template you like, you'll need to make a few customising changes to it and then save the end result as your own personal invoice template.

- Make the changes (such as add your company name).
- Click on the **Save** button and type a name for your invoice template.
- Choose the **Template** option in the **Save as type** box under the file name. This will put your template in the Templates folder on your machine. Click **Save**.

To use your invoice template, choose the **On my computer** option from the **New Workbook** Task Pane, and select your new invoice template.



Create

an effective spreadsheet

Anybody can just click on a cell and start typing, but try some of these ideas to make sure your spreadsheet is set up effectively. The example used is a list of invoices, as shown.

Invoice No.	Invoice Date	Amount	Invoice Reference	Invoice Date	Total
101	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
102	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
103	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
104	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
105	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
106	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
107	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
108	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
109	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
110	12/12/02	100.00		12/12/02	100.00
Total					1000.00

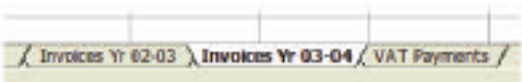
Data entry

- To create the sequential list of invoice numbers, select two steps of the sequence, and then click and drag the Fill Handle (this is the little black square at the bottom right of the selected cells).
- To make sure the numbers are displayed in the way you want, use the number formatting buttons:



Spreadsheet structure

- Consider using multiple pages in your Excel file. You can see sheet options when you right click on the sheet tabs at the bottom of the screen.



- As your list grows, you might want to fix the headings so they don't disappear off the top of the screen when you scroll down. To do this, click on cell A2 and choose **Freeze Panes** from the **Window** menu.

Formulae

To get Excel to do the calculations, you need to enter formulae. In this example:


- Invoice sub-total in cell F2: $=D2+E2$
- VAT calculation in cell G2: $=17.5\%*F2$
- Sum function in cell H9: $=SUM(H2:H8)$

Analyse

your data

Your data will make a lot more sense if you can sort it, filter it and add sub-totals. If you already have a list (for example the list of invoices in the previous step) then this is easy to do.

Sorting

- Click in the column you want to sort by and press the required **Sort** button: 
- For more sorting options, choose **Sort** from the **Data** menu.

Filtering

Filtering enables you to extract data of particular interest. For example, you might only wish to see the invoices for one particular client.

- Go to the **Data** menu, choose **Filter** and then **AutoFilter**. You will now have an arrow at the top of each column.
- Click the arrow of the column you want to filter and choose the required option. To reveal all the data again, return to the **Data** menu, choose **Filter** and **Show All**.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	Invoice No.	Invoice Date	Client	Amount	Expenses	Invoice Sub-Tot	VAT	Total inc VAT
2	132	01/12/00	Sort ascending Sort descending	500.00	45.00	545.00	95.47	640.47
3	133	02/12/00		1900.00	120.00	2020.00	365.01	2385.01
4	134	01/12/00	AO (The 12...) (Custom...)	220.00	8.00	228.00	30.58	258.58
5	135	01/12/00		4500.00	201.12	4701.12	830.45	5531.57
6	136	01/12/00	Booze & Beer LTD	2300.00	140.00	2440.00	443.50	2883.50
7			Booze & Beer LTD					
8			Booze & Beer LTD					
9	Total			8510.00	612.17	10122.17	1771.38	11893.55

Subtotals

The subtotals feature used with this example can give you a total value of invoices for each client in your list.

- Sort your data first by client name.
- Go to the **Data** menu and choose **Subtotals**.
- Choose **Client Name** in the first section and **Sum** in the second. In the third section, tick the boxes which you want to be subtotalled and click **OK**.

Create

financial reports

Formatting

Creating a financial report may be as simple as turning one of your working spreadsheets into something formatted to make it readable when printed out. Try these ideas:

- *Hide rows or columns which you don't want to show when printed. To do this, right click on the row or column heading and choose **Hide**.*
- *Use borders and fill colours to make a solid mass of figures more meaningful.*
- *Use diagonal text orientation to make long titles fit better into narrow columns. To do this, select the headings, choose **Cells** from the **Format** menu and change the orientation on the **Alignment** tab.*
- *For instant formatting ideas, try one of Excel's AutoFormats. Go to the **Format** menu and choose **AutoFormat**.*



	A	B
1	Name	Department

Financial statement

A traditional financial statement is typically made up of a balance sheet, profit and loss statement and a cash flow statement. These types of reports need not contain complicated Excel formulae, but it can take some time creating the structure and layout to make sure they look right. For this reason, there are many templates on Office Online to help you.

Visit <http://office.microsoft.com/templates/> and browse the Finance and Accounting section.

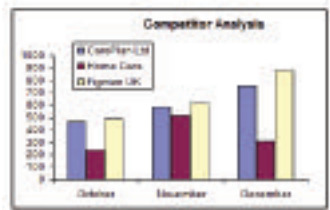
Bring your data


alive with charts

Data is often more meaningful when displayed in a chart because you can see trends at a glance and compare different sets of numbers.

The chart shown here is created from the Excel data shown right.

	A	B	C	D
1				
2		Competitor Analysis		
3				
4		October	November	December
5	ComPlan Ltd	478	550	568
6	Home Care	318	528	318
7	Figman UK	498	628	808
8	TOTAL	1398	1708	1958



- Select the data you want to show on your chart (in this example cells A4 to D7) which typically includes the headings, but not any totals.
- Click the **Chart Wizard** button and step through the Wizard. 

You don't need to modify your chart if your figures change since it will update automatically so it will always show the latest data. However, you can make changes to how your chart looks:

- To change the appearance of something on your chart, click the item to select it, go to the **Format** menu, and choose the first option on the menu.
- To change the type of chart, go to the **Chart** menu and choose **Chart Type...**
- To add other things to your chart (data labels and titles etc), go to the **Chart** menu and choose **Chart Options...**

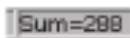
Excel

tips and tricks

AutoCalculate

Excel can quickly show you the sum, or the average of a group of cells without a formula:

- Select the appropriate cells and look at the grey bar at the bottom of the screen.
- To change the function displayed, right click on the same area.



Format painter

The Format Painter is used to copy formatting (text, number and cell) from one cell to another:

- Select the cell with the formatting on that you want repeated.
- Click on the **Format Painter** button (or double click to apply to a number of non-adjacent cells).
- Select the cells where you would like the formatting to be repeated.



Wrapping text

To quickly wrap text (see right), press **Alt Enter** at the point where you want the text to wrap.



Hidden button faces

This is useful if you want to customise your toolbars and cut down on the number of buttons you have showing. Hold down the **Shift** key and click the **Print** button – it will change to the Print Preview button, and vice versa. There are other pairs of buttons too.

Keyboard shortcuts

Clear number formatting	Ctrl Shift #
Move to next sheet	Ctrl Page Down
Convert references to absolute	F4
Fill selection with entry	Ctrl Enter
Insert current date	Ctrl ;
Show formulae	Ctrl ⇧
Insert AutoSum	Alt =
Instant Chart	F11
Select region	Ctrl Shift 8

Find the help and support you need on Microsoft UK's products and services

Software support: There are a number of ways you can get help, advice and support from Microsoft. Microsoft® bCentral™ is a great starting point to guide you to the help and support you need and includes links to the specific areas listed below.

www.bCentral.co.uk/help/support.asp

Technology: This area provides information on how you can get more from your software investments, as well as help with specific tasks you're trying to carry out.

www.bCentral.co.uk/technology

Security: This section covers information and support on protecting your system including anti-virus options, networking systems and secure online purchasing.

www.bCentral.co.uk/technology/security

Unresolved or specific technical support queries: Microsoft has a dedicated website with centralised support resources. Here you can download software, review common issues related to your product, search the technical database (Knowledge Base), join a newsgroup and check the status of an ongoing query.

www.support.microsoft.com

Newsgroups: This page provides access to Newsgroups across a range of topics. Discuss issues with others who use Microsoft Products, including advice from Microsoft® Most Valuable Professionals (MVPs). Read interesting posts, search for specific topics, answer a question, or post your own question to any of the many groups.

www.support.microsoft.com/newsgroups

Free support calls: Retail customers may be eligible for two telephone or online support incidents at no charge. To find out if you are entitled, either telephone us on 0870 60 10 100 (8am – 6pm Mon-Fri), or submit your technical support incident online via the Microsoft UK support site to see if it is validated.

Links to other Microsoft resources from: www.bCentral.co.uk/help/microsoft.asp

Microsoft has a large number of websites designed to help you get more from your software, as well as keep it up-to-date and reliable. From this page you can follow the links to:

- **Microsoft UK home** – the place for everything Microsoft with information and resources on the entire Microsoft product range (including Microsoft® Windows®, Microsoft® Office and Servers) as well as the latest news and community offerings.
- **Office update** – to ensure you have the latest add-ons, security features and other tools on your PC.
- **Windows update** – similar to the Office update site, the section is dedicated to Windows.
- **Office for Macintosh** – find out more about how Microsoft supports the Mac and what's available – from help to the latest products available.
- **Licensing Compliance** – be sure you're using the right software.
- **Technet** – an information and community programme for IT professionals providing valuable free resources packed with technical answers and insights.
- **MSN** – for the latest consumer news and views.

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2. How to... Make sense of your financial data
3. How to... Create a website
4. How to... Create brochures and flyers
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