

Easy data-posting to the Web

If your organization is using an intranet to share public data—and whose organization isn't these days—your users will want an easy way to post this information. Excel 97 offers an easy, wizard-driven system to walk even the most apprehensive users through this process:

1. Select the cell range that contains the data to be published.
2. Select Save As HTML from the File menu.
3. Answer the questions posed by the Internet Assistant Wizard.

The wizard walks users through four steps that define how information will be converted for Web display. Various options include:

- Inserting the resulting HTML tables into an existing HTML page or creating an entirely new page.
- Specifying formatting options, such as rules between data.
- Saving the new HTML page as a freestanding file or inserting it directly into a FrontPage Web.

Open Web pages right in Excel

If your users need to analyze data found on a Web site, they might be in for a bunch of tedious retyping. Under the right circumstances, however, Excel 97 can save them a lot of time by letting them open an HTML page in Excel directly from the Web.

The procedure is just a slight modification of the standard file-opening procedure:

1. Choose Open from the File menu.
2. In the File Name text box, type the URL of the Web file to open. Note: Be sure to include the prefix `http://`.
3. From the Files Of Type drop-down list, select HTML Documents (*.html, *.htm).
4. Click Open.

Excel opens HTML pages based on the HTML table structure of the page, so some Web design treatments may lead to some weird results in Excel. For pages that cleanly present data in a table format, however, this approach can be a real time-saver.

Detect And Repair

Microsoft Office 2000 programs, including Excel, contain a command line called Detect And Repair, which checks and fixes problems with Office program files, DLLs, and registry settings. (This utility does not affect worksheets or other document files.)

Detect And Repair, which you access as a command line option of the Setup utility, performs the following actions:

- Reinstalls Office .exe and .dll files if missing, out-of-date, or corrupt
- Reinstalls all Windows Installer shortcuts, overwriting any existing shortcuts
- Rewrites all required local machine registry values
- Rewrites all required user registry values

You can run Detect And Repair from within Office, but that won't do much good if a serious error is preventing your user from even launching an Office application. Fortunately, you can run the utility from the Run dialog box with the following entry:

```
drive:\setup.exe /focums install.msi
```

User-level prevention is a magic cure

Every support pro knows that most of their problems could be avoided if their users would just follow a few simple, common sense precautions. If you keep getting calls on corrupted Excel documents, pass around this list of Microsoft-endorsed tips to help users keep their data safe and make your days a little less stressful:

- Move radios, fax machines, televisions, stereos, speakers, and other sources of electromagnetic radiation away from computers.
- If your users are still using floppies, make sure they are not putting them on top of their monitors.
- Regularly run Norton AntiVirus or another utility to scan for viruses.
- Store floppy disks in a disk storage container.
- Don't be a slob—prevent dust from building up around your computer.
- And, most important, exit Windows before restarting or shutting down a client system.

Opening multiple windows

One of the most frustrating problems for Excel users is viewing all the information they need, especially because it often lives in different worksheets. Let your users know about this simple way to view multiple sheets, and they'll love you forever.

1. Click on the tab of the worksheet you want to view.
2. Choose New Window from the Window menu.
3. Repeat this process for each of the worksheets you want to display. (Excel opens each sheet in a window that sits on top of the previous one.)
4. To see them all at one time, choose Arrange from the Window menu.
5. Select Tiled, Horizontal, or Vertical.
6. Select the Windows Of Active Workbook check box.
7. Click OK.

Creating custom lists

Here's another timesaving tip to pass on to your users. If they often make use of the same lists of data, you can teach them to create a custom list instead of typing the same information repeatedly.

For all versions of Excel, if the data is already in a worksheet, follow these steps:

1. Select all of the cells containing the information you want to copy.
2. Select Options from the Tools menu.
3. Click the Custom Lists tab.
4. Click Import.

If you want to create a list from scratch in Excel 97, follow these steps:

1. Go to the Tools menu and choose Custom Lists.
2. Click in the List Entries box.
3. Type each item for your list, pressing [Enter] after each item.
4. When you're finished, click OK to create the list.

To create a list from scratch in Excel 2000/XP, follow these steps:

1. Select Options from the Tools menu.
2. Click the Custom Lists tab.
3. Type each item in the List Entries box, pressing [Enter] after each one.
4. Click Add.

To use a custom list, type the first entry of the list. Use the fill handle at the bottom right corner of the cell to drag the whole list across adjacent cells.