# Chapter 1

# What Is All This Stuff?

### In This Chapter

- Deciding how you can use Excel 2003
- Looking at cell basics
- Starting Excel 2003 from the Start menu or with a desktop shortcut
- Making sense of the Excel 2003 screen
- Getting the lowdown on the Excel 2003 toolbars
- Surfing an Excel 2003 workbook
- Selecting commands from the pull-down menus
- Selecting commands from the shortcut menus
- Getting some help from the Answer Wizard
- Getting the heck out of Excel 2003

Just because electronic spreadsheets like Excel 2003 have become almost as commonplace on today's personal computers as word processors and games doesn't mean that they're either well understood or well used. In fact, I encounter scads of users, even those who are reasonably well versed in the art of writing and editing in Microsoft Word, who have little or no idea of what they could or should do with Excel.

This lack of awareness is really a shame — especially in this day and age when Office 11 seems to be the only software found on the majority of machines (probably because, together, Windows XP or 2000 and Office 11 hog so much hard drive space that no room is left to install anybody else's software). If you're one of the folks who has Office 11 on your computer but doesn't know a spreadsheet from a bedsheet, this means that Excel 2003 is just sitting there, taking up a lot of space. Well, it's high time to change all that.

# What in the World Would I Do with Excel?

Excel is a great organizer for all types of data, be they numeric, textual, or otherwise. Because the program has loads of built-in calculating capabilities, most people turn to Excel when they need to set up financial spreadsheets. These spreadsheets tend to be filled to the gills with formulas for computing stuff, such as total sales, net profits and losses, growth percentages, and those sorts of things.

Also popular are Excel's charting capabilities that enable you to create all types of charts and graphs from the numbers that you crunch in your financial worksheets. Excel makes it really easy to turn columns and rows of boring, black-and-white numbers into colorful and snappy charts and graphs. You can then use these charts to add some pizzazz to written reports (like those created with Word 2003) or to punch up overheads used in formal business presentations (like those created with Microsoft PowerPoint).

Now, even if your job doesn't involve creating worksheets with a lot of fancy-Dan financial calculations or lah-di-dah charts, you probably have plenty of things for which you could and should be using Excel. For instance, you may have to keep lists of information or maybe even put together tables of information for your job. Excel is a great list keeper (even though we tend to refer to such lists as *data lists* or *databases* in Excel) and one heck of a table maker. Therefore, you can use Excel anytime that you need to keep track of products that you sell, clients who you service, employees who you oversee, or you name it.

## Little boxes, little boxes . . .

There's a really good reason why Excel is such a whiz at doing financial calculations by formula and keeping lists and tables of information organized. Look at any blank Excel worksheet (the one in Figure 1-1 will do fine) and just what do you see? Boxes, lots of little boxes, that's what! These little boxes (you can find millions of them in each worksheet that you encounter) are called *cells* in spreadsheet jargon. And each piece of information (such as a name, address, monthly sales figure, or even your Aunt Sally's birth date) goes into its own box (cell) in the worksheet that you're building.

If you're used to word processing, this idea of entering different types of information in little, bitty cells can be somewhat strange to get used to. If you're thinking in word-processing terms, you need to think of the process of building an Excel worksheet as being more like setting up a table of information in a Word document rather than writing a letter or report.

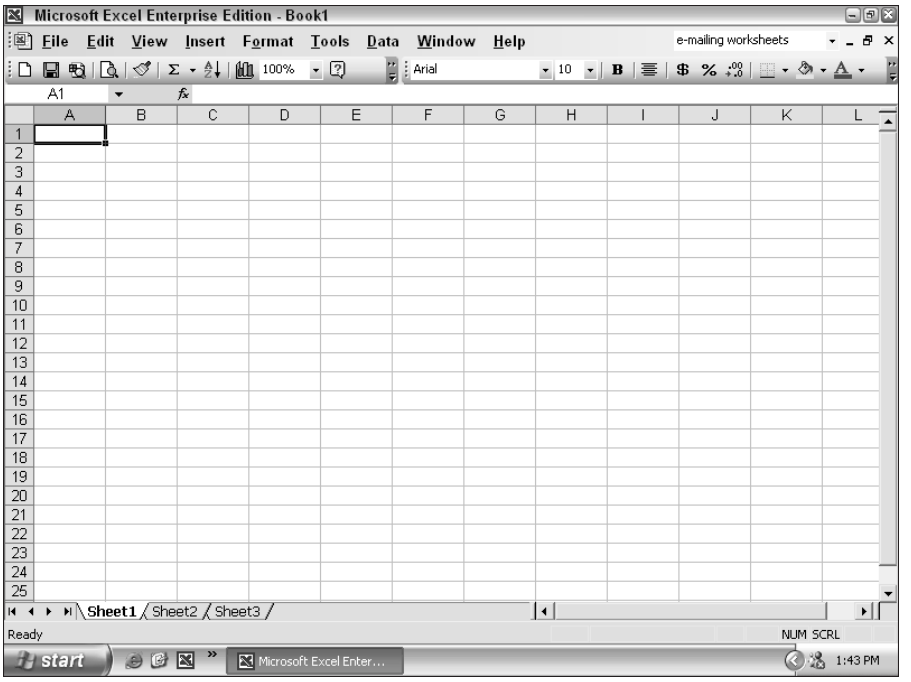



**Figure 1-1:** Little boxes, little boxes, and they all look just the same!

## Send it to my cell address

As you can see in Figure 1-1, the Excel worksheet contains a frame used to label the columns and rows. Columns are given letters of the alphabet, and the rows are numbered. The columns and rows must be labeled because the Excel worksheet is humongous. (Figure 1-1 shows only a tiny part of the total worksheet.) The column and row labels act like street signs in a city — they can help you identify your current location, even if they don't prevent you from becoming lost.


### Why spreadsheet programs produce nothing but worksheets

Spreadsheet programs like Excel 2003 refer to their electronic sheets as worksheets rather than spreadsheets. And, although it is perfectly acceptable (even preferable) to call one of its electronic sheets a worksheet, you never, never refer to Excel as a worksheet program — it's always called a spreadsheet program. So you can think of Excel as a spreadsheet program that produces worksheets, but not as a worksheet program that produces spreadsheets. (On the other hand, I often refer to worksheets as spreadsheets in this book — and so can you.)


## Cells: The building blocks of all worksheets

The cells in an Excel worksheet are formed by the intersection of the column and row grid. Technically, such an arrangement is known as an *array.* An array keeps track of different pieces of information stored in it by referring to its row position and its column position (something you see more clearly when I discuss the R1C1 cell referencing system in the sidebar, "Cell A1, also known as Cell R1C1," elsewhere in this chapter). To display your worksheet data in its grid and tabular format, Excel just reads from the row and column position associated with the data that you enter there.

As shown in Figure 1-2, Excel constantly shows you your current position in the worksheet in three different ways:

- Look at the current cell reference box of Figure 1-2, where it reads G9 (upper-left corner). This box, called the Name box, resides on the Formula bar, which sits atop the worksheet display. Here, Excel lists the current cell location by its column (G) and row (9) reference. (Read more about the so-called A1 cell reference system in the sidebar elsewhere in this chapter, "Cell A1, also known as Cell R1C1.")
- In the worksheet itself, the cell pointer (refer to Figure 1-2), shown by a heavy border, appears in the cell that's currently selected.
- In the frame of the worksheet, the letter of the column and the number of the row containing the cell pointer are shaded in a distinct golden color.

You wonder why Excel makes such a big deal about telling you which cell is current in the worksheet? That's a good question, and the answer is important:


In the worksheet, you can enter or edit information in only the cell that's current.

The repercussions of this seemingly innocuous little statement are enormous. It means that if you're paying more attention to what you need to enter in your spreadsheet than to which cell is current, you can end up replacing something you've already entered. It also means that you'll never be able to edit a particular cell entry if you haven't first selected the cell to make it current.

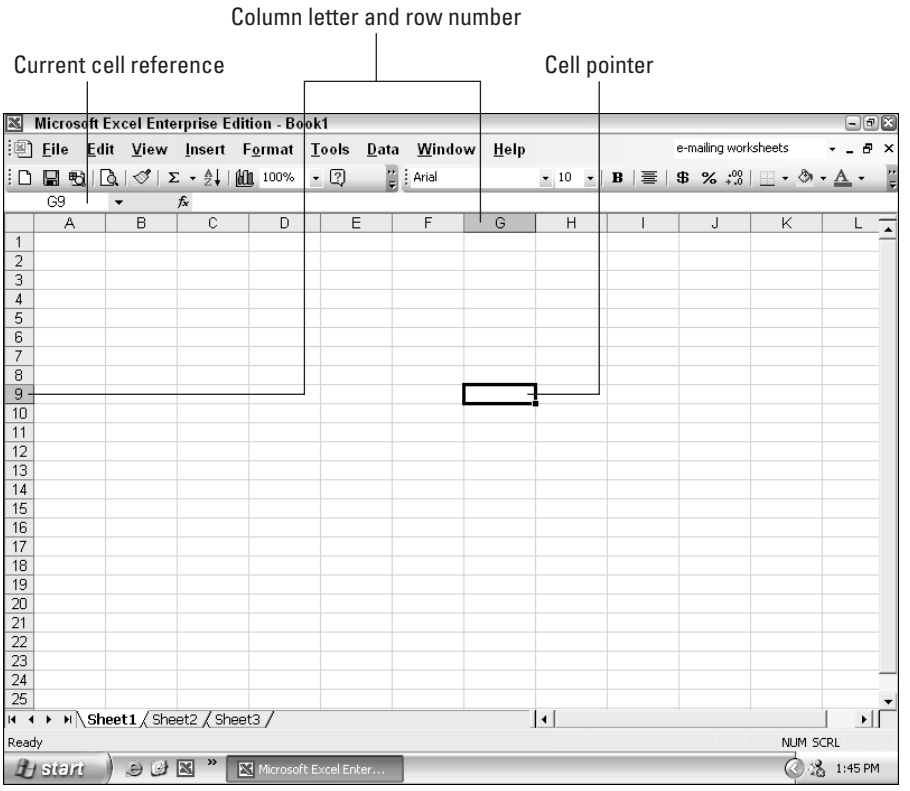



**Figure 1-2:** Excel shows you where you are in the worksheet.

## So just how many cells are we talking about here?

I'm not exaggerating when I say that each worksheet contains millions of cells, any of which can be filled with information. Each worksheet has 256 columns, of which only the first 9 or 12 (letters A through I or L) are normally visible in a new worksheet, and 65,536 rows, of which only the first 15 to 25 are normally visible in a new worksheet. If you multiply 256 by 65,536, you come up with a total of 16,777,216 empty cells in each worksheet you use! (That's over 16 million of those suckers!)

And as if that weren't enough, each new workbook that you start comes equipped with three of these worksheets, each with its own 16,777,216 blank cells. This gives you a grand total of 50,331,648 cells at your disposal in any one Excel file that you happen to have open. And should that number prove to be too few (yeah, right!), you can add more worksheets (each with its 16,777,216 cells) to the workbook.


## Cell A1, also known as cell R1C1

The A1 cell reference system is a holdover from the VisiCalc days. (VisiCalc was the granddaddy of spreadsheet programs for personal computers.) In addition to the A1 system, Excel supports a much older, technically more correct system of cell references: the R1C1 cell reference system. In this system, both the columns and rows in the worksheet are numbered, and the row number precedes the column number. For example, in this system, cell A1 is called R1C1 (row 1, column 1); cell A2 is R2C1 (row 2, column 1); and cell B1 is R1C2 (row 1, column 2). To switch to the R1C1 system, choose Tools➪ Options on the Excel menu bar and then click the General tab followed by the R1C1 Reference Style check box before clicking OK.

# Assigning 26 letters to 256 columns

When it comes to labeling the 256 columns in a worksheet, our alphabet — with its measly 26 letters — is not up to the task. To make up the difference, Excel doubles up the cell letters in the column reference so that column AA immediately follows column Z. This is followed by column AB, AC, and so on to AZ. After column AZ, you find column BA, and then BB, BC, and so on. According to this system for doubling the column letters, the 256th (and last) column of the worksheet is column IV. This, in turn, gives the very last cell of any worksheet the cell reference IV65536.

# What you should know about Excel at this point

Remember the following things about Excel:

- Each Excel file is referred to as a *workbook*.
- Each new workbook that you open contains three blank worksheets.
  - Each of these three blank worksheets contains a whole bunch of cells into which you enter your data.
  - Each cell in each of these three worksheets has its own cell address made up of the letter(s) of its column and the number of its row.


## More worksheet size trivia

If you were to produce the entire worksheet grid on paper, you would need a sheet that was approximately 21 feet wide by 1,365 feet long! On a 14-inch computer screen at a screen resolution of 800 by 600 pixels, you can normally see no more than between 10 and 12 complete columns and between 20 and 25 complete rows of the entire worksheet. With columns being about 1 inch wide and rows about ¼ inch high, 10 columns represent a scant 3.9 percent of the total width of the worksheet, while 20 rows fill only about 0.03 percent of its total length. This should give you some idea of how little of the total worksheet is visible on the screen as well as just how much area is available.

- All spreadsheet information is stored in the individual cells of the worksheet. You can, however, enter information into only the cell that is current (that is, selected with the cell pointer).
- Excel indicates which of the over 16 million cells in the worksheet is the current (active) one by displaying its cell reference on the formula bar and displaying the cell pointer in the worksheet itself. (Refer to Figure 1-2.)
- The system for referencing cells in a worksheet — the A1 cell reference system — combines the column letter(s) with the row number.

# What you still need to know about Excel

You could easily get the mistaken idea that a spreadsheet program like Excel is little more than a quirky word processor with a gridlock that forces you to enter your information in tiny, individual cells instead of offering you the spaciousness of full pages.

Well, I'm here to say that Bill Gates didn't become a billionaire several times over by selling a quirky word processor. (All you Microsoft Word users out there, please hold your tongues!) The big difference between the cell of a worksheet and the pages of a word processor is that each cell offers computing power along with text-editing and formatting capabilities. This computing power takes the form of formulas that you create in various cells of the worksheet.

Quite unlike a paper spreadsheet, which contains only values computed somewhere else, an electronic worksheet can store both the formulas and the computed values returned by these formulas. Even better, your formulas can use values stored in other cells of the worksheet, and, as I explain in Chapter 2, Excel automatically updates the computed answer returned by such a formula anytime that you change these values in the worksheet.

Excel's computational capabilities, combined with its editing and formatting capabilities, make the program perfect for generating any kind of document

that uses textual and numeric entries and requires you to perform calculations on those values. Because you can make your formulas dynamic — so that their calculations are automatically updated when you change referenced values stored in other cells of the worksheet — you will find it much easier to keep the calculated values in a worksheet document both current and correct.

# Getting the Darn Thing Started

If you're at all familiar with using Windows XP or 2000, you won't be shocked to find out that you have about a zillion ways to get Excel up and running after the program's been installed on your hard drive. (Okay, only about half a dozen, and I'm going to talk about almost all of them.) Suffice it to say at this point that all the various and sundry methods for starting Excel require that you have Windows XP or Windows 2000 installed on your personal computer. (Excel 2003 won't run under any older Windows versions, such as Windows 95 and 98.) After that, you have only to turn on the computer before you can use any of the following methods to get Excel 2003 started.

## Starting Excel 2003 from the Windows Start menu

The most common way to launch Excel is by selecting the program from the Windows Start menu just as you can do to start any program installed on your computer. To start Excel 2003 from the Start menu, follow these simple steps:

1. **Click the Start button on the Windows taskbar to open the Windows Start menu.**
2. **Highlight All Programs at the top of the Start menu.**
3. **Click the Microsoft Excel 2003 option on the Programs menu.**

As soon as you complete these steps, Windows opens Excel 2003. As the program loads, you see the opening screen for Microsoft Excel 2003. When Excel finishes loading, you are presented with a screen like the one shown in Figure 1-4, containing a new workbook in which you can begin working.


After launching Excel from the All Programs submenu, Windows goes ahead and adds Microsoft Excel to the left panel of the Windows Start menu. This means that the next time you need to launch Excel, all you have to do is click the Start button on the Windows taskbar and then click Microsoft Excel on the left side of the Start menu.

## Starting Excel 2003 with a desktop shortcut

If you use Excel all the time like I do, you won't want to have to deal with the Start menu each time you need to launch the program. Instead, you can create an Excel desktop shortcut that enables you to start the program simply by double-clicking its icon. If you find that is too much trouble, you can add the desktop shortcut to the Quick Launch toolbar on the Windows taskbar. By doing that, you make it possible to launch the program simply by clicking the Excel button on the Quick Launch toolbar.

To create the Excel desktop shortcut, follow these steps:

1. **Click the Start button on the Windows taskbar.**

   The Start menu opens where you can click the Search item.

2. **Click Search in the lower-right corner of the Start menu.**

   The Search Results dialog box appears.

3. **Click the All Files and Folders link in the panel on the left side of the Search Results dialog box.**

   The Search Companion pane appears on the left side of the Search Results dialog box.

4. **Type** excel.exe **in the All or Part of the File Name text box.**

   `Excel.exe` is the name of the executable program file that runs Excel. After finding this file on your hard disk, you can create a desktop shortcut from it that launches the program.

5. **Click the Search button.**

   Windows now searches your hard disk for the Excel program file. After locating this file, its name appears on the right side of the Search Results dialog box. When this filename appears, you can click the Stop button in the left panel to halt the search

6. **Right-click the file icon for the** `excel.exe` **file and then highlight Send To on the pop-up menu and click Desktop (Create Shortcut) on its continuation menu.**

   A shortcut named Shortcut to excel.exe appears to your desktop.

7. **Click the Close button in the upper-right corner of the Search Results dialog box.**

   After closing the Search Results dialog box, you should see the icon named Shortcut to excel.exe on the desktop. You should probably rename the shortcut to something a little more friendly, such as Excel 2003.

8. **Right-click the Shortcut to excel.exe icon and then click Rename on the pop-up menu.**
9. **Replace the current name by typing a new shortcut name, such as** Excel 2003 **and then click anywhere on the desktop.**

After creating an Excel desktop shortcut on the desktop, from then on, you can launch Excel by double-clicking the shortcut icon.


If you want to be able to launch Excel by clicking a single button, drag the icon for your Excel desktop shortcut to the Quick Launch toolbar to the immediate right of the Start button at the beginning of the Windows taskbar. When you position the icon on this toolbar, Windows indicates where the new Excel button will appear by drawing a black, vertical I-beam in front of or between the existing buttons on this bar. As soon as you release the mouse button, Windows adds an Excel 2003 button to the Quick Launch toolbar that enables you to launch the program by a single-click of its icon.

Figure 1-3 shows my Windows desktop after creating an Excel 2003 desktop shortcut and adding this shortcut as a button to the Quick Launch toolbar. Note that Windows does not remove the desktop shortcut at the time you add it to the Quick Launch toolbar. That way, you have a choice between using the desktop shortcut (with a double-click) or using the Excel 2003 button on the Quick Launch toolbar (with a single-click).

# Mousing Around

Although most of Excel's capabilities are accessible from the keyboard, in most cases the mouse is the most efficient way to select a command or perform a particular procedure. For that reason alone, if you need to use Excel regularly in getting your work done, it is well worth your time to master the program's various mouse techniques.

## Minding your mouse manners

Windows programs, such as Excel, use four basic mouse techniques to select and manipulate various objects in the program and workbook windows:

- **Clicking an object to select it:** Positioning the pointer on something and then pressing and immediately releasing the primary mouse button (the left button unless, as a leftie, you've switched the buttons around).
- **Right-clicking an object to display its shortcut menu:** Positioning the pointer on something and then pressing and immediately releasing the

secondary mouse button (the right button unless, as a leftie, you've switched the buttons around).

- **Double-clicking an object to open it:** Positioning the pointer on something and then pressing and immediately releasing the primary mouse button rapidly twice in a row.
- **Dragging an object to move or copy it:** Positioning the pointer on something and then pressing and holding down the primary mouse button as you move the mouse in the direction you wish to drag the object. When you have positioned the object in the desired location on the screen, you then release the primary mouse button to place it.

When clicking an object to select it, you must make sure that the tip of the mouse pointer is touching the object that you want to select before you click. To avoid moving the pointer slightly before you click, grasp the sides of the mouse between your thumb (on one side) and your ring and little finger (on the other side), and then click the primary button with your index finger. If you run out of room on your desktop for moving the mouse, just pick up the mouse and reposition it on the desk (which does not move the pointer).

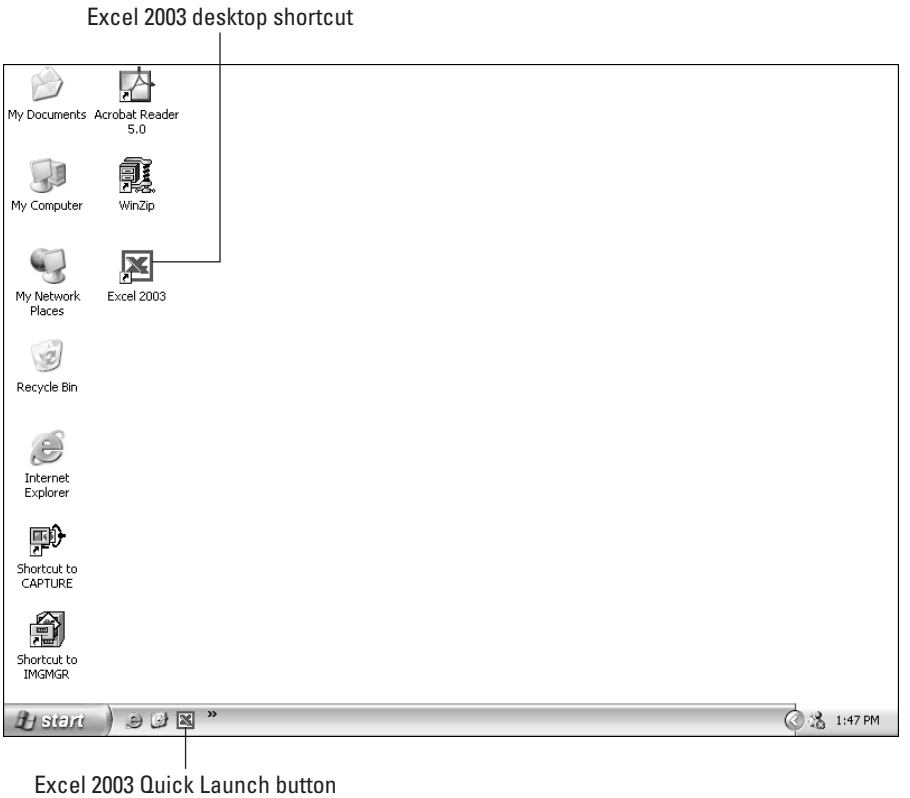



**Figure 1-3:** To start Excel, click the Excel button on the Quick Launch toolbar or double-click its desktop shortcut.


### When a single click is just as good as a double

Keep in mind that when using Windows XP or 2000, you have the ability to modify the way that you open icons on the Windows desktop on the General tab of the Folder Options dialog box (opened by choosing Tools⇨Folder Options on menu bar of a window, such as My Documents and My Computer). If you use a single-click to Open an Item (Point to Select), you can open programs, such as Excel 2003, along with any of its folders and files on the desktop and in the My Computer and Explorer windows by single-clicking their icons. If this is how your computer is set up, your double-clicking days are pretty much over and done!

## Getting your mouse pointer in shape

The shape of the mouse pointer is anything but static in the Excel program. As you move the mouse pointer to different parts of the Excel screen, the pointer changes shape to indicate a change in function.


Don't confuse the mouse pointer with the cell pointer. The *mouse pointer* changes shape as you move it around the screen. The *cell pointer* always maintains its shape as an outline around the current cell or cell selection (whereupon it expands to include all the selected cells). The mouse pointer responds to any movement of your mouse on the desk and always moves independently of the cell pointer. You can use the mouse pointer to reposition the cell pointer, however. You do this by positioning the thick, white cross pointer in the cell that you want to hold the cell pointer and then clicking the primary mouse button.

# So What Do All These Buttons Do?

In Figure 1-4, I identify the different parts of the Excel program window that appear when you first start the program (assuming that you haven't selected an existing workbook to open at the same time the program starts). As you can see, the Excel window, upon opening, is chock-full of all kinds of useful, though potentially confusing, stuff!

## Turning on to the title bar

The first bar in the Excel window is called the *title bar* because it shows you the name of the program that is running in the window (Microsoft Excel).

When the workbook window is full size (as it is in Figure 1-4), the name of the workbook file follows Microsoft Excel, as in

```
Microsoft Excel Enterprise Edition - Book1
```

To the left of the program and filename on the title bar, you see the Excel icon (it appears as a green italic *L* crossed to form an X inside a box). When you click this icon, the program Control menu opens with all the commands that enable you to size and move the Excel program window. If you choose the Close command (the large X in the upper-right corner) on this menu (or press the shortcut keys, Alt+F4), you exit from Excel and are returned to the desktop.

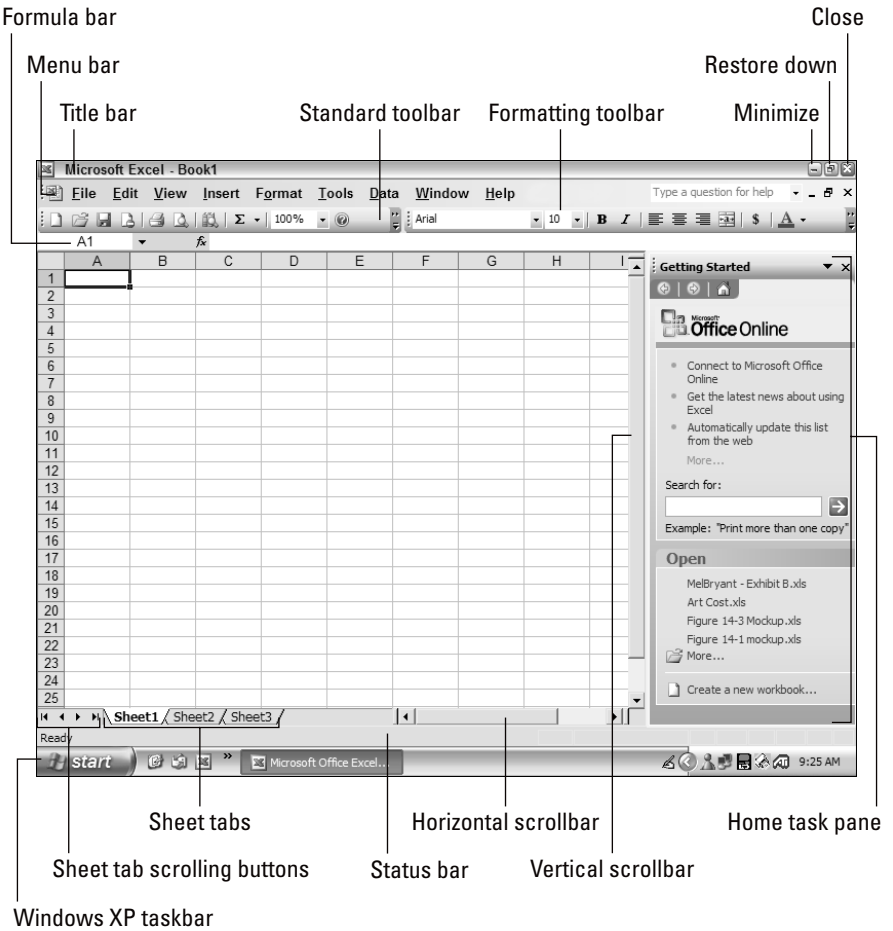



**Figure 1-4:** The Excel program window contains a veritable smorgasbord of buttons, toolbars, and task panes.

The buttons on the right side of the title bar are sizing buttons. Click the Minimize button (the one with the underscore), and the Excel window shrinks down to a button on the Windows taskbar. Click the Restore Down button (the one with the image of two smaller, tiled windows), and the Excel window assumes a somewhat smaller size on the desktop, and the Restore Down button changes to the Maximize button (the one with a single, full-size window), which you can use to restore the window to its original full size. If you click the Close button (the one with an X), you exit Excel (just as if you choose Close on the Control menu or press Alt+F4).

## Messing around with the menu bar

The second bar in the Excel window is the *menu bar.* This bar contains the Excel pull-down menus, File through Help. You use these menus to select the Excel commands that you need to select when creating or editing your worksheets. (Jump ahead to the section "Ordering Directly from the Menus" for more information on how to select commands.)

To the left of the pull-down menus, you see an Excel file icon. When you click this icon, the file Control menu (much like the program Control menu) opens, showing all the commands that enable you to size and move the Excel workbook window (which fits within the Excel program window). Choose the Close command on this menu (or press the shortcut keys, Ctrl+W or Ctrl+F4), and you close the current Excel workbook without exiting the Excel program.

To the right of the pull-down menus, you see the Ask a Question drop-down text box. You can use this box to ask the Excel Answer Wizard any question you have about using Excel 2003. When you enter a new question in the Ask a Question box, Excel displays a list of possibly relevant help topics beneath the text box. Clicking one of these topics automatically opens the Excel Help window (see "Ogling the Online Help," later in this chapter, for details).

The sizing buttons on the right side of the menu bar do the same thing to the current workbook window as the sizing buttons on the title bar do to the Excel program window. Click the Minimize Window button, and the Excel workbook window shrinks down to a tiny workbook title bar at the bottom of the workbook area. Click the Restore Window button, and the current workbook window assumes a somewhat smaller size on the workbook area. The Excel workbook icon, filename, and file-sizing buttons move to the title bar of this somewhat smaller workbook window; and the Restore Window button changes to the Maximize button, which you can use to restore the window to its original full size. If you click the Close button (the one with the X), you close the current workbook file (just as if you choose Close on the file Control menu or press Ctrl+W or Ctrl+F4).

Excel 2003 automatically adds a button to the Windows taskbar for each workbook file that you open in Excel 2003. This nifty new feature makes it

super-easy to switch between workbooks. When you minimize the Excel program with the program's Minimize Window button, a button displaying the name of the current workbook is added to the taskbar.

## Scrutinizing the Standard and Formatting toolbars

The third bar in Excel 2003 stacks the two most popular Excel toolbars, Standard and Formatting, side by side. These two toolbars contain buttons (also known as *tools*) for doing the most common tasks that you perform in Excel. Tools on the Standard toolbar include those for doing really basic file-type stuff such as creating, saving, opening, and printing workbooks. Tools on the Formatting toolbar include those for manipulating appearance-type stuff, such as selecting a new font and font size and adding effects such as **boldface,** underlining, and *italics* to worksheet text.

To identify the function of any of the tools on these two (or any other) toolbars, simply position the arrowhead mouse pointer over the button until a tiny text box (called a *ScreenTip*) appears below the mouse pointer. To have Excel execute the command associated with a particular tool, simply click the button under the mouse pointer.

Because the Standard and Formatting toolbars each contain a whole bunch of tools, not all the buttons in either toolbar can be displayed together on the third bar of the Excel screen. This is why the last tool on each of these two toolbars, the Toolbar Options button (indicated by a downward-pointing black triangle), has the continuation symbol (>>) over it. The presence of this symbol immediately tells you that the toolbar is truncated in some way and that not all of its buttons are displayed.


### Stack 'em up

If you prefer to have immediate access to *all* the buttons on the Standard and Formatting toolbars at *all* times, you can do so easily by stacking the two toolbars one on top of the other, rather than side by side. (This is the way that these two toolbars appeared in all three previous versions of Excel for Windows). To make this change, right-click somewhere on the menu bar or third bar with the two toolbars, and then select the Customize command at the very bottom of the shortcut menu that pops up. Doing this opens the Customize dialog box from which you click the Options tab. Click the first check box option on the Options tab labeled `Show Standard and Formatting Toolbars On Two Rows` to add a check mark. I promise: You'll never have need for the Toolbar Options button again.

When you click the Toolbar Options button, Excel displays a palette with the additional tools that don't fit on the toolbar when it's stacked side-by-side with another toolbar. At the bottom of the palette of additional tools, you find two commands:

- **Show Buttons on Two Rows:** Click this to display the Standard and Formatting toolbars on separate rows.
- **Add or Remove Buttons:** This command comes with a pop-up button that enables you to customize which buttons appear on either the Standard or Formatting toolbars.

When you select the Add or Remove Buttons item on the Toolbar Options pop-up menu, Excel displays another pop-up menu from which you can select the Standard or Formatting toolbar. After selecting Standard or Formatting from this submenu, yet another pop-up menu appears, this one showing all the buttons associated with the particular toolbar (Standard or Formatting) that you selected. All the buttons currently displayed on the particular toolbar have check marks in front of them. To add buttons to the toolbar from this menu, click the tool in question to precede it with a check mark. To temporarily remove one of the buttons on the toolbar, click the button to remove its check mark. (For detailed information on customizing the buttons on these and other Excel toolbars, see Chapter 12.)

In Table 1-1, you can see the name and function of each tool normally found on the Standard toolbar when you first install Excel 2003. In Table 1-2, I list the name and function of each tool usually found on the Formatting toolbar. Rest assured: You will come to know each one intimately as your experience with Excel grows.

**Table 1-1 The Cool Tools on the Standard Toolbar**

| *Tool* | *Tool Name* | *What the Tool Does When You Click It* |
|---|---|---|
|  | New | Opens a new workbook with three blank worksheets. |
|  | Open | Opens an existing Excel workbook. |
|  | Save | Saves changes in the active workbook. |
|  | Permission | Lists the current permission settings on the current workbook and enables you to set or change these permissions. |
|  | E-mail | Opens an e-mail message header for sending the worksheet to someone via the Internet. |

| *Tool* | *Tool Name* | *What the Tool Does When You Click It* |
|---|---|---|
|  | Print | Prints the workbook. |
|  | Print Preview | Previews how the worksheet will appear when printed. |
|  | Spelling | Checks the spelling of spreadsheet text. |
|  | Research | Opens the Research task pane where you can search for online information. |
|  | Cut | Cuts the current selection from the worksheet and places it into the Clipboard as a prelude to pasting it elsewhere. |
|  | Copy | Copies the current selection to the Clipboard. |
|  | Paste | Pastes the current contents of the Clipboard into your worksheet. |
|  | Format Painter | Applies all the formatting used in the current cell to any cell selection that you choose. |
|  | Undo | Undoes your last action. |
|  | Redo | Repeats your last action. |
|  | Insert Hyperlink | Enables you to insert a hypertext link to another file, Internet address (URL), or specific location in another document. (See Chapter 10 for information on using hyperlinks.) |
|  | AutoSum | Adds, averages, counts, or finds the highest or lowest value in the current selection of cells or enables you to select some other Excel function. |
|  | Sort Ascending | Sorts data in a cell selection in alphabetical and/or numerical order, depending upon the type of data in the cells. |
|  | Sort Descending | Sorts data in a cell selection in reverse alphabetical and/or numerical order, depending upon the type of data in the cells. |

*(continued)*

**Table 1-1 *(continued)***

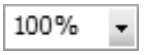
| *Tool* | *Tool Name* | *What the Tool Does When You Click It* |
|---|---|---|
|  | ChartWizard | Walks you through the creation of a new chart in the active worksheet. (See Chapter 8 for details.) |
|  | Drawing | Displays and hides the Drawing toolbar, which enables you to draw various shapes and arrows. (See Chapter 8 for details.) |
|  | Zoom | Changes the screen magnification to zoom in or out on your worksheet data. |
|  | Microsoft Excel Help | Displays the Microsoft Excel task pane on the right side of the screen from which you can use the Answer Wizard to search for help or look up particular topics to get help on using various Excel features. (See "Ogling the Online Help," later in this chapter, for details.) |

**Table 1-2 The Cool Tools on the Formatting Toolbar**

| *Tool* | *Tool Name* | *What the Tool Does When You Click It* |
|---|---|---|
|  | Font | Applies a new font to the entries in the cell selection. |
|  | Font Size | Applies a new font size to the entries in the cell selection. |
|  | Bold | Applies bold to or removes bold from the cell selection. |
|  | Italic | Applies italics to or removes italics from the cell selection. |
|  | Underline | Underlines the entries in the cell selection (not the cells); if the entries are already underlined, clicking this tool removes the underlining. |
|  | Align Left | Left-aligns the entries in the cell selection. |
|  | Center | Centers the entries in the cell selection. |

| *Tool* | *Tool Name* | *What the Tool Does When You Click It* |
|---|---|---|
|  | Align Right | Right-aligns the entries in the cell selection. |
|  | Merge and Center | Centers the entry in the active cell across selected columns by merging their cells into one. |
|  | Currency Style | Applies a Currency number format to the cell selection to display all values with a dollar sign, with commas between thousands, and two decimal places. |
|  | Percent Style | Applies a Percentage number format to the cell selection; the values are multiplied by 100 and displayed with a percent sign and no decimal places. |
|  | Comma Style | Applies a Comma number format to the cell selection to display commas separating thousands and adds two decimal places. |
|  | Increase Decimal | Adds one decimal place to the number format in the cell selection each time that you click the tool; reverses direction and reduces the number of decimal places when you hold down the Shift key while you click this tool. |
|  | Decrease Decimal | Reduces one decimal place from the number format in the cell selection each time that you click the tool; reverses direction and adds one decimal place when you hold down the Shift key as you click this tool. |
|  | Decrease Indent | Outdents the entry in the current cell to the left by one character width of the standard font. |
|  | Increase Indent | Indents the entry in the current cell to the right by one character width of the standard font. |
|  | Borders | Selects a border for the cell selection from the pop-up palette of border styles. |

*(continued)*

**Table 1-2 *(continued)***

| *Tool* | *Tool Name* | *What the Tool Does When You Click It* |
|---|---|---|
|  | Fill Color | Selects a new color for the background of the cells in the cell selection from the pop-up color palette. |
|  | Font Color | Selects a new color for the text in the cells in the cell selection from the pop-up color palette. |
|  | Toolbar Options | Displays a pop-up menu with a menu item that enables you to show the Standard and Formatting toolbars on two rows (if they currently share one) or one row (if they currently inhabit a single row each) and an item for adding and removing buttons. If the toolbar is truncated (indicated by the addition of >> to this button), this pop-up menu contains a palette with all the tools that can't currently be displayed on the toolbar. |

## Fumbling around the Formula bar

The Formula bar displays the cell address and the contents of the current cell. This bar is divided into three sections:

- **Name box:** The left-most section that displays the address of the current cell address
- **Formula bar buttons:** The second, middle section that is shaded and contains the Name box drop-down button on the left and the Insert Function button (labeled *fx*) on the right
- **Cell contents:** The third, right-most white area that takes up the rest of the bar

If the current cell is empty, the third cell contents section of the formula bar is blank. As soon as you begin typing an entry or building a worksheet formula, the second and third sections of the formula bar come alive. As soon as you type a character, the Cancel and Enter buttons appear in the shaded Formula bar buttons section (see Figure 1-5). These buttons appear in between the Name box drop-down button (which automatically changes into a Functions drop-down button whenever you edit a cell containing a formula) and the Insert Function button. (See Chapter 2 for information on using these buttons.)

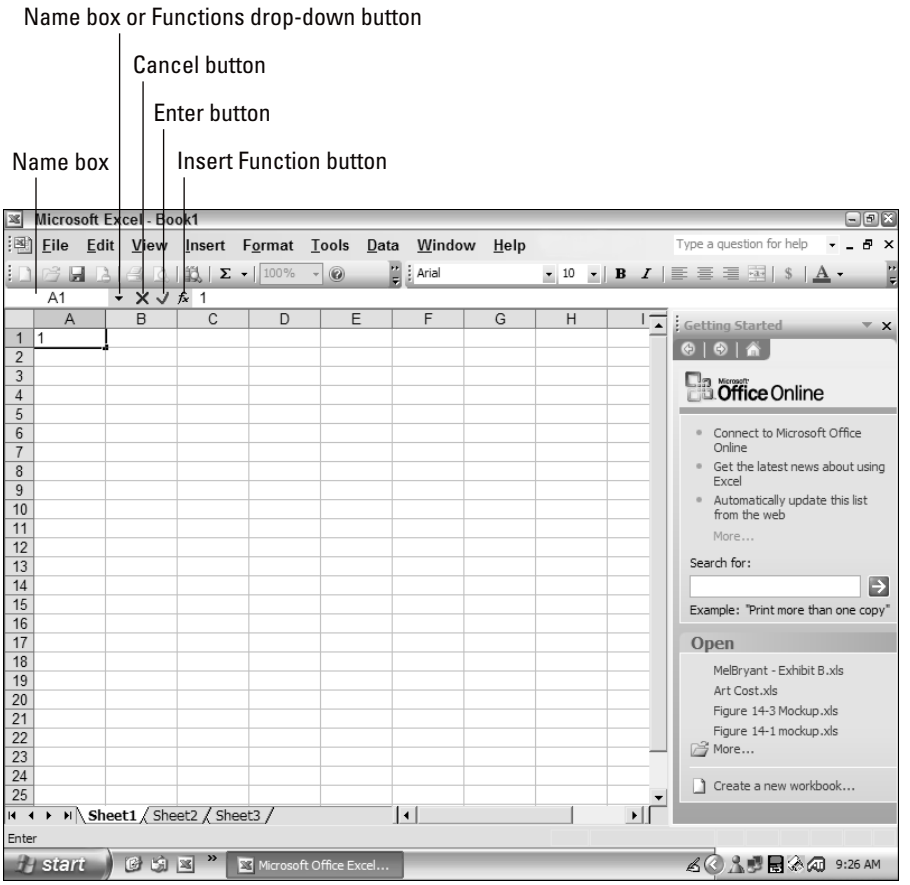



**Figure 1-5:** Cancel and Enter buttons appear on the Formula bar between the Name box drop-down button and the Insert Function button when you type a cell entry.

After the Insert Function button, you see the characters that you typed in the cell contents section of the Formula bar, mirroring the characters that appear in the worksheet cell itself. After you complete the entry in the cell — by clicking the Enter button — Excel displays the entire entry or formula in the Formula bar, and the Enter and Cancel buttons disappear from the Formula bar buttons section. The contents that you enter into any cell thereafter always appear in the Formula bar whenever you position the cell pointer in that cell of the worksheet.

## Winding your way through the workbook window

A blank Excel workbook appears in a workbook window right below the Formula bar when you first start the program (assuming that you don't start it by double-clicking an Excel workbook icon) accompanied by the New

Workbook task pane to its right. As you can see in Figure 1-6, when you click the Restore Window button to make the workbook window less than full size, the workbook appears in its own space to the left of the Home task pane. This workbook window also has its own Control menu (accessed by clicking the Excel file icon), title bar, and sizing buttons. Its title bar also displays the workbook filename. (This appears as a temporary filename, such as Book1, and then Book2 when you open your next new workbook, and so on, until you save the file the first time.)

On the bottom of the workbook window, you see sheet tab scrolling buttons, then the sheet tabs for activating the various worksheets in your workbook (remember that each new Excel workbook has three new sheets to start), followed by the horizontal scroll bar that you can use to bring new columns of the current worksheet into view. On the right side of the workbook window, you see a vertical scroll bar that you can use to bring new rows of the current worksheet into view (keeping in mind that you're only viewing a small percentage of the total columns and rows in each worksheet). At the intersection of the horizontal and vertical scroll bars, in the lower-right corner, you find a size box, which you can use to manually modify the size and shape of the less-than-maximized workbook window.

When you start Excel, you can immediately begin creating a new spreadsheet in Sheet1 of the Book1 workbook that appears in the maximized workbook window. To separate the workbook's title bar as well as the Control menu, and sizing buttons from the Excel menu bar, you click the Restore Window button on the menu bar. Doing this reduces the workbook window just enough to get all this stuff on its own workbook title bar as shown in Figure 1-6.

### *Manually manipulating the workbook window*

When you're working with a less-than-maximized workbook window (like the one shown in Figure 1-6), you can manually size and move the window with the sizing box that appears in the lower-right corner at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical scroll bars.

To manipulate the size of a workbook window, position the mouse pointer on this sizing box, and then, when the mouse pointer changes shape to a double-headed arrow, drag the mouse as needed to adjust the size of the side or sides of the window. Note that the mouse pointer does not change to a double-headed arrow unless you position it on the edge of the window (that is, somewhere on the corner). While the pointer is positioned within the box, it retains its arrowhead shape.

- If you position the pointer on the bottom side of the window and then drag the pointer straight up, the workbook window becomes shorter. If you drag the pointer straight down, the window becomes longer.
- If you position the pointer on the right side of the window and then drag the pointer straight to the left, the workbook window becomes narrower; if you drag straight to the right, the window becomes wider.

- If you position the pointer on the lower-right corner of the window and then drag the pointer diagonally toward the upper-left corner, the workbook window becomes both shorter and narrower; if you drag diagonally away from the upper-left corner, it becomes longer and wider.

When the outline of the workbook window reaches the desired size, you then release the primary mouse button, and Excel redraws the workbook window to your new size.


After using the size button to change the size and shape of a workbook window, you must use the size button again and manually restore the window to its original shape and dimensions. Unfortunately, Excel has no magic Restore button available that you can click to automatically restore the workbook window that you changed.

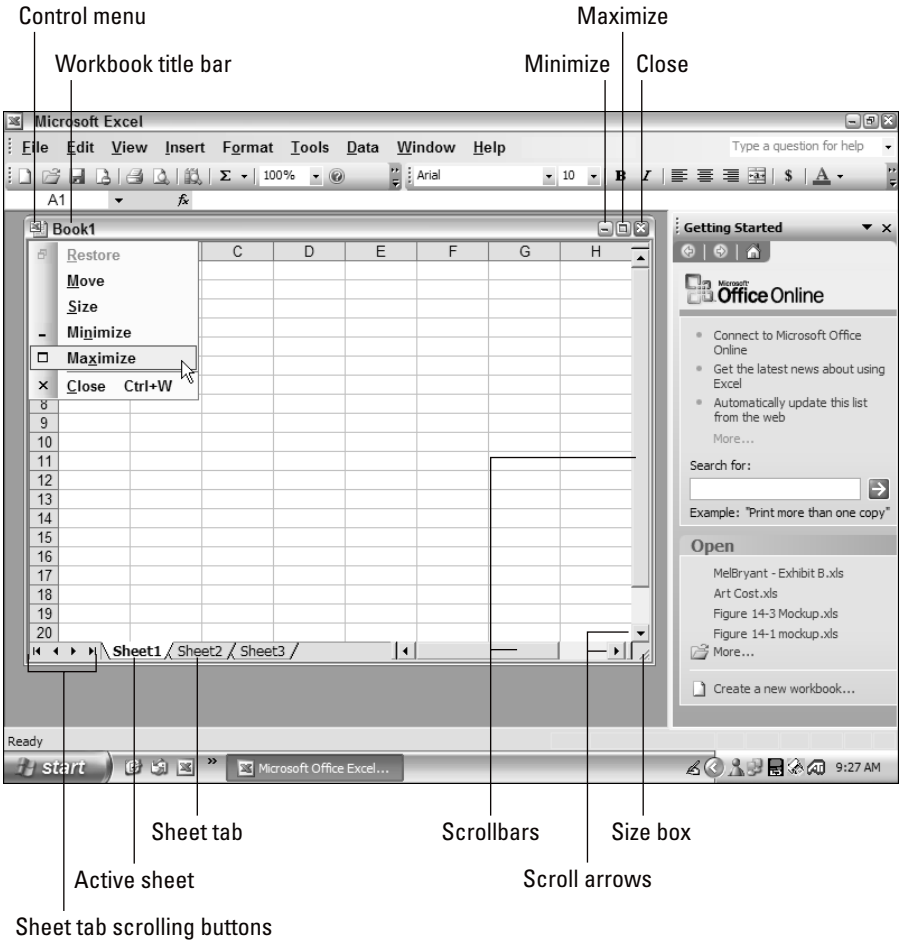



**Figure 1-6:** Each Excel workbook contains its own Control menu and scrolling and sizing buttons.


## Musical toolbars!

Don't get too used to the button arrangement that you experience when first using the Standard or Formatting toolbars. Excel 2003 uses the intelli-(non)-sense feature whereby the program automatically keeps promoting the button that you last used to a higher position on the toolbar. For instance, if you use a button on the Toolbar Options palette, the button is immediately added to the regularly displayed portion of the toolbar. Excel 2003 banishes one of the unused buttons that appears near the end of the toolbar onto the Toolbar Options palette. The end result is musical toolbars wherein you can never be sure where a needed button will appear (or not appear if it happens to be exiled temporarily to the Toolbar Options palette)!

Unfortunately, Excel 2003 doesn't give you an option for fixing the position of the buttons on the toolbars so that you can always tell where a needed button appears. You can, however, restore the original arrangement of the buttons on the toolbars (as well as the commands on the menus) by right-clicking somewhere on the menu bar or the bar with the Standard and Formatting toolbars and then selecting the Customize command on the shortcut menu that appears. Doing this opens the Customize dialog box from which you select the Options tab. Click the Reset Menu and Toolbar Usage Data button on the Options tab. Excel then displays an alert box indicating that the record of the commands you've selected in Excel is about to be deleted. Click the Yes button, and the program restores the buttons on your toolbars (and the commands on your menus) to their previous order.

Besides resizing workbook windows, you can also move them around within the area between the Formula bar and status bar in the Excel program window.

To move a workbook window:

1. **Simply pick it up by the scruff of its neck — which, in this case, corresponds to the workbook window's title bar.**
2. **After you have it by the title bar, drag it to the desired position and release the primary mouse button.**

If you are experiencing difficulty in dragging objects with the mouse, you can also move a workbook window by following these steps:

1. **Click the Excel file icon on the workbook window's title bar to open its Control menu and then select the Move command or press Ctrl+F7.**

   The mouse pointer changes shape from the normal thick, white-cross pointer to a pointer with crossed, double-headed arrows.
2. **Drag the window with the arrowheads cross-hair pointer or press the arrow keys on the cursor keypad (←, ↑, →, or ↓) to move the workbook window into the desired position.**

3. **Press Enter to set the workbook window into position.**

   The mouse pointer returns to its normal thick, white-cross shape.

### Slipping through the sheets

At the very bottom of the Excel workbook window that contains the horizontal scroll bar, you see the sheet tab scrolling buttons followed by the sheet tabs for the three worksheets in the workbook. Excel shows which worksheet is active by displaying its sheet tab on top in white as part of the displayed worksheet (rather than belonging to unseen worksheets below) with its sheet name in boldface type. To activate a new worksheet (thus bringing it to the top and displaying its information in the workbook window), you click its sheet tab.

If you add more sheet tabs to your workbook (see Chapter 7 for details on how to add more worksheets to your workbook) and the sheet tab for the worksheet that you want is not displayed, use the sheet tab scrolling buttons to bring the worksheet into view. Click the buttons with the black triangles pointing left and right to scroll one worksheet at a time in either direction (left to scroll left, and right to scroll right). Click the buttons with the black triangles pointing left and right to the vertical lines to scroll the sheets so that the tabs for the very first or very last worksheets display at the bottom.

## Scoping out the status bar

The bar at the very bottom of the Excel program window is called the *status bar* because it displays information that keeps you informed of the current state of Excel. The left part of the status bar displays messages indicating the state of the current activity you're undertaking in the program. When you first start Excel, the message `Ready` (far lower-left corner) displays in this area (as shown in Figure 1-7), telling you that the program is ready to accept your next entry or command.

The right side of the status bar contains various boxes that display different indicators telling you when you've placed Excel in a particular state that somehow affects how you work with the program. For example, normally, when you first start Excel, the Num Lock indicator shows NUM in this part of the status bar. If you press the Caps Lock key to enter text in all uppercase letters, CAPS appears to the left of NUM. Press the Scroll Lock key (so as to be able to scroll through the worksheet with the arrow keys), and SCRL appears to its right.

### You AutoCalculate my totals

The widest box (the second one from the left) in the status bar contains the AutoCalculate indicator. You can use the AutoCalculate indicator to get a running total of any group of values in your worksheet. (See the beginning of Chapter 3 if you need information on how to select groups of cells in a worksheet.) For example, in Figure 1-7 you see a typical spreadsheet after

selecting part of a column of cells, many of which contain values. The total of all the values in the cells that are currently selected in this worksheet automatically appears in the AutoCalculate indicator on the status bar.

Not only does the AutoCalculate indicator on the status bar give you the sum of the values in the cells you currently have selected, but the indicator can also give you other statistics, such as the count or the average of these values. All you have to do is right-click the AutoCalculate indicator to display its shortcut menu and then choose from among the following options:

- To get the average of the values in the current cell selection, you select Average from this indicator's shortcut menu.
- To get the count of all the cells that contain values (cells containing text entries are not counted), select Count Nums from this indicator's shortcut menu.
- To get the count of all the cells that are selected regardless of what type of data they contain, select Count from the indicator's shortcut menu.
- To have the highest value in the cell selection displayed in the AutoCalculate indicator, choose Max from the indicator's shortcut menu. To have the lowest value displayed, choose Min.
- To have no calculations appear in this area of the status bar, choose None at the top of this shortcut menu.
- To return the AutoCalculate indicator to its normal totaling function, choose Sum on the indicator's shortcut menu.

### *The Num Lock indicator and the numeric keypad*

The NUM in the Num Lock indicator tells you that you can use the numbers on the numeric keypad to enter values in the worksheet. When you press the Num Lock key, NUM disappears from the Num Lock indicator. This is your signal that the cursor-movement functions that also are assigned to this keypad are now in effect. This means, for instance, that pressing 6 moves the cell pointer one cell to the right instead of entering this value in the formula bar!

## Taming the Excel 2003 task panes

When you first launch Excel with a blank workbook, Excel 2003 automatically opens the Getting Started task pane to the immediate right of the workbook (as shown earlier in Figure 1-4). You can use this task pane to edit recently opened workbooks or to create other new workbooks (see Chapter 2 for details). Along with the Getting Started task pane, Excel 2003 supports a fair number of other task panes including a Help, Search Results, Clip Art, Research, Clipboard, and New Workbook along with more specialized task panes such as the Template Help, Shared Workspace, Document Actions, Document Updates, and XML Structure task panes.

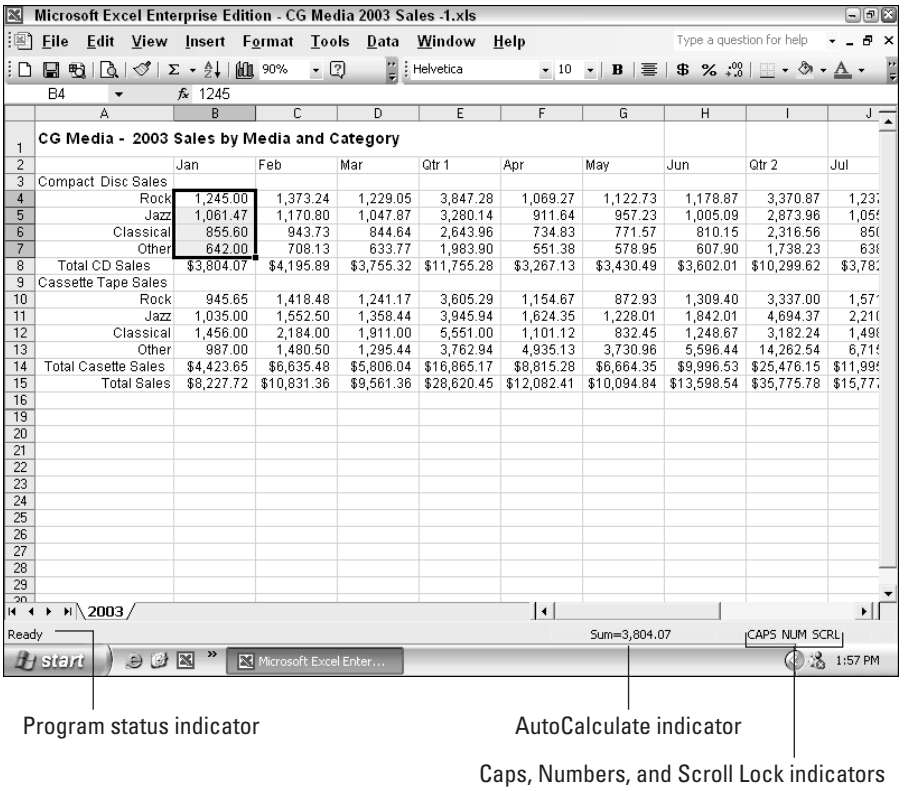



**Figure 1-7:** The sum of the values in the cells currently selected automatically appears in AutoCalculate indicator on the status bar.

You can turn off the display of any Excel task pane by pressing Ctrl+F1 or by clicking its Close box located in the upper right-hand corner of its window. If you close the Task pane when working in Excel (so as to maximize the number of cells displayed on your computer screen), it remains closed until you press Ctrl+F1 again or choose the View➪Task Pane or View➪Toolbars➪Task Pane command on the Excel menu bar.

When a task pane is displayed, you can select the type of task pane that you want open by clicking the drop-down button on to the immediate left of the task pane Close box and then selecting the type of pane to use. After selecting a new type of task pane, you can scroll between the different task pane choices by clicking the Previous and Next buttons (marked by a left and right arrow icon, respectively). To immediately return to the Getting Started task pane, click the Home button (the one with house icon).


If you decide that you don't want the Getting Started task pane to automatically be displayed each time that you start up Excel, you can turn off this feature by removing (deselecting) the check mark in the Startup Task Pane check box on the View tab of the Options dialog box that you open by choosing Tools➪Options from the Excel menu bar.

# You Gotta Get Me out of This Cell!

Excel provides several methods for getting around each of the huge worksheets in your workbook. One of the easiest ways is to click the tab for the sheet that you want to work with, and then use the scroll bars in the workbook window to bring new parts of this worksheet into view. In addition, the program provides a wide range of keystrokes that you can use not only to move a new part of the worksheet into view but also to make a new cell active by placing the cell pointer in it.

## The secrets of scrolling

To understand how scrolling works in Excel, imagine the worksheet as a humongous papyrus scroll attached to rollers on the left and right. To bring into view a new section of a papyrus worksheet that is hidden on the right, you crank the left roller until the section with the cells that you want to see appears. Likewise, to scroll into view a new section of the worksheet that is hidden on the left, you would crank the right roller until that section of cells appears.

### Calling up new columns with the horizontal scroll bar

You can use the *horizontal scroll bar* to scroll back and forth through the columns of a worksheet. To scroll new columns into view from the right, you click the right-arrow scroll button on the horizontal scroll bar. To scroll new columns into view from the left (anytime except when column A is the first column displayed), you click the left-arrow scroll button.

To scroll very quickly through columns in one direction or the other, you click the appropriate arrow scroll button in the scroll bar and continue to hold down the mouse button until the columns that you want to see display on the screen. As you scroll to the right in this manner, the *horizontal scroll box* (that big shaded box between the left- and right-arrow scroll buttons in the scroll bar) becomes increasingly smaller — it gets really teeny if you scroll really far right to columns in the hinterland, such as column BA. If you then click and hold down the left-arrow scroll button to scroll quickly back through columns to the left, notice that the horizontal scroll box becomes increasingly larger, until it takes up most of the scroll bar when you finally display column A again.

You can use the scroll box in the horizontal scroll bar to make big jumps to the left and right in the columns of the worksheet. Simply drag the scroll box in the appropriate direction along the bar.

### Raising up new rows with the vertical scroll bar


Use the *vertical scroll bar* to scroll up and down through the rows of a worksheet. To scroll to new rows below those currently in view, you click the down-arrow scroll button on the vertical scroll bar. To scroll back up to rows above that are no longer in view (anytime except when row 1 is the first one displayed), you click the up-arrow scroll button.

To scroll very quickly through rows in one direction or the other, you click and hold down the appropriate arrow scroll button in the vertical scroll bar just as you do in the horizontal scroll bar. As you scroll down the rows with the down-arrow scroll button, the *vertical scroll box* (that big shaded box between the up- and down-arrow scroll buttons in the scroll bar) becomes increasingly smaller and smaller — it gets really teeny if you scroll way down to rows 100 and higher. If you then click and hold down the up-arrow scroll button to scroll quickly back up through the rows, notice that the vertical scroll box becomes increasingly larger, until it takes up most of the scroll bar when you finally display row 1 again.

You can use the vertical scroll box to make big jumps up and down the rows of the worksheet by dragging the vertical scroll box in the appropriate direction along the bar.

### Scrolling from screen to screen

You can use the horizontal and vertical scroll bars to scroll through the columns and rows of your worksheet one screen at a time. To do this, you click the light gray area of the scroll bar *not* occupied by the scroll box or the arrow scroll buttons. For example, to scroll to the right by one screen of columns when the scroll box is snug against the left-arrow scroll button, you simply click the light gray area of the scroll bar behind the scroll box, between it and the right-arrow scroll button. Then, to scroll back to the left by one screen of columns, you click the light gray area in front of the scroll box, between it and the left-arrow scroll button.

Likewise, to scroll up and down the rows of the worksheet one screen at a time, you click the light gray area either above or below the vertical scroll box, between it and the appropriate arrow scroll button.

## The keys to moving the cell pointer

The only disadvantage to using the scroll bars to move around is that the scroll bars bring only new parts of the worksheet into view — they don't actually change the position of the cell pointer. If you want to start making entries in the cells in a new area of the worksheet, you still have to remember to select the cell (by clicking it) or the group of cells (by dragging through them) where you want the data to appear before you begin entering the data.

Excel offers a wide variety of keystrokes for moving the cell pointer to a new cell. When you use one of these keystrokes, the program automatically scrolls a new part of the worksheet into view, if this is required to move the cell pointer. In Table 1-3, I summarize these keystrokes and how far each one moves the cell pointer from its starting position.


***Note:*** In the case of those keystrokes listed in Table 1-3 that use arrow keys, you must either use the arrows on the cursor keypad or else have the Num Lock disengaged on the numeric keypad of your keyboard. If you try to use these arrow keys to move around the worksheet when Num Lock is on (indicated by the appearance of NUM on the status bar), you either get numbers in the current cell or nothing happens at all (and then you'll blame me)!

**Table 1-3 Keystrokes for Moving the Cell Pointer**

| *Keystroke in Question* | *Where the Cell Pointer Moves* |
|---|---|
| → or Tab | Cell to the immediate right. |
| ← or Shift+Tab | Cell to the immediate left. |
| ↑ | Cell up one row. |
| ↓ | Cell down one row. |
| Home | Cell in Column A of the current row. |
| Ctrl+Home | First cell (A1) of the worksheet. |
| Ctrl+End or End, Home | Cell in the worksheet at the intersection of the last column that has any data in it and the last row that has any data in it (that is, the last cell of the so-called active area of the worksheet). |
| PgUp | Cell one screenful up in the same column. |
| PgDn | Cell one screenful down in the same column. |
| Ctrl+→ or End, → | First occupied cell to the right in the same row that is either preceded or followed by a blank cell. If no cell is occupied, the pointer goes to the cell at the very end of the row. |
| Ctrl+← or End, ← | First occupied cell to the left in the same row that is either preceded or followed by a blank cell. If no cell is occupied, the pointer goes to the cell at the very beginning of the row. |
| Ctrl+↑ or End, ↑ | First occupied cell above in the same column that is either preceded or followed by a blank cell. If no cell is occupied, the pointer goes to the cell at the very top of the column. |

| *Keystroke in Question* | *Where the Cell Pointer Moves* |
|---|---|
| Ctrl+↓ or End, ↓ | First occupied cell below in the same column that is either preceded or followed by a blank cell. If no cell is occupied, the pointer goes to the cell at the very bottom of the column. |
| Ctrl+PgDn | Last occupied cell in the next worksheet of that workbook. |
| Ctrl+PgUp | Last occupied cell in the previous worksheet of that workbook. |

## Block moves

The keystrokes that combine the Ctrl or End key with an arrow key listed in Table 1-3 are among the most helpful for moving quickly from one edge to the other in large tables of cell entries or in moving from table to table in a section of the worksheet that contains many blocks of cells.

- If the cell pointer is positioned on a blank cell somewhere to the left of a table of cell entries that you want to view, pressing Ctrl+→ moves the cell pointer to the first cell entry at the leftmost edge of the table (in the same row, of course).
- When you then press Ctrl+→ a second time, the cell pointer moves to the last cell entry at the rightmost edge (assuming that no blank cells are in that row of the table).
- If you switch direction and press Ctrl+↑, Excel moves right to the last cell entry at the bottom edge of the table (again assuming that there are no blank cells below in that column of the table).
- If, when the cell pointer is at the bottom of the table, you press Ctrl+↑ again, Excel moves the pointer to the first entry at the top of the next table located below (assuming that no other cell entries are above this table in the same column).
- If you press Ctrl or End and arrow key combinations and there are no more occupied cells in the direction of the arrow key you select, Excel advances the cell pointer right to the cell at the very edge of the worksheet in that direction.
- If the cell pointer is located in cell C15 and no more occupied cells are in row 15, when you press Ctrl+→, Excel moves the cell pointer to cell IV15 at the rightmost edge of the worksheet.
- If you are in cell C15, there are no more entries below in Column C, and you press Ctrl+↑, Excel moves the pointer to cell C65536 at the very bottom edge of the worksheet.

When you use Ctrl and an arrow key to move from edge to edge in a table or between tables in a worksheet, you hold down Ctrl while you press one of the four arrow keys (indicated by the + symbol in keystrokes, such as Ctrl+→).

When you use End and an arrow-key alternative, you must press and then release the End key *before* you press the arrow key (indicated by the comma in keystrokes, such as End, →). Pressing and releasing the End key causes the END indicator to appear on the status bar. This is your sign that Excel is ready for you to press one of the four arrow keys.


Because you can keep the Ctrl key depressed as you press the different arrow keys that you need to use, the Ctrl-plus-arrow-key method provides a more fluid method for navigating blocks of cells than the End-then-arrow-key method.

## When you gotta go to that cell right now!

Excel's Go To feature provides an easy method for moving directly to a distant cell in the worksheet. To use this feature, you display the Go To dialog box by choosing Edit➪Go To from the Excel menu bar or by pressing Ctrl+G or the function key, F5. Then, in the Go To dialog box, you type the address of the cell that you want to go to in the Reference text box and click OK or press Enter. When typing in the cell address in the Reference text box, you can type the column letter or letters in uppercase or lowercase letters.

When you use the Go To feature to move the cell pointer, Excel remembers the references of the last four cells that you visited. These cell references then appear in the Go To list box. Notice that the address of the cell you last visited is also listed in the Reference box. This makes it possible to move quickly from your present location to your previous location in a worksheet by pressing F5 and Enter (provided that you used the Go To feature to move to your present position).

## Lotsa luck with Scroll Lock

You can use the Scroll Lock key to "freeze" the position of the cell pointer in the worksheet so that you can scroll new areas of the worksheet in view with keystrokes such as PgUp (Page Up) and PgDn (Page Down) without changing the cell pointer's original position (in essence, making these keystrokes work in the same manner as the scroll bars).

After engaging Scroll Lock, when you scroll the worksheet with the keyboard, Excel does not select a new cell while it brings a new section of the worksheet into view. To "unfreeze" the cell pointer when scrolling the worksheet via the keyboard, you just press the Scroll Lock key again.

# Ordering Directly from the Menus

For those occasions when the Excel Standard and Formatting toolbars don't provide you with a ready-made tool for getting a particular task done, you have to turn to the program's system of menu commands. Excel exhibits a little bit of menu overkill because, in addition to the regular pull-down menus found on the menu bar of nearly all Windows applications, the program also offers a secondary system of *shortcut* (also sometimes known as *context*) *menus*.

Shortcut menus offer fast access to just those menu commands normally used to manipulate the particular screen object that the menu is attached to (such as a toolbar, workbook window, or worksheet cell). As a result, shortcut menus often bring together commands that are otherwise found on several individual pull-down menus on the menu bar.

## Penetrating the pull-down menus

Like when moving the cell pointer in the worksheet, Excel offers you a choice of using the mouse or the keyboard to select commands from the menu bar. To open a pull-down menu with the mouse, you simply click the menu name on the command bar. To open a pull-down menu with the keyboard, you hold down the Alt key while you type the letter that is underlined in the menu name (also known as the *command letter*). For instance, if you press Alt and, as you hold it down, then press E (abbreviated Alt+E), Excel opens the *E*dit menu because the *E* is underlined.

Alternatively, you can press and release the Alt key or function key F10 to access the menu bar, and then press the → key until you highlight the menu that you want to open. Then, to open the menu, you press the ↓ key.

After you open your pull-down menu, you can select any of its commands by clicking the command with the mouse; pressing the underlined letter in the command name; or by pressing the ↓ key until you highlight the command, and then pressing the Enter key.

As you learn the Excel commands, you can combine opening a menu and selecting one of its menu commands. Click the menu and drag the pointer down the open menu until you highlight the desired command; then you release the mouse button. You can accomplish the same thing with the keyboard by holding down the Alt key while you type the command letters for both the pull-down menu and its command. To close the active workbook window by choosing the Close command on the File menu, you simply press Alt, and then type **FC**.

Some commands on the Excel pull-down menus have shortcut keystrokes assigned to them (shown after the command on the pull-down menu). You

can use the shortcut keystrokes to select the desired command instead of having to access the pull-down menus. For example, to save changes to your workbook, you press the shortcut keys Ctrl+S instead of having to select the Save command from the File pull-down menu.

Many commands on the pull-down menus lead to the display of a dialog box, which contains further commands and options (see "Digging Those Dialog Boxes," later in this chapter). You can tell which commands on a pull-down menu lead to dialog boxes because the command name is followed by three periods (known as an *ellipsis*). For example, you know that selecting the File➪Save As command from the pull-down menu opens a dialog box because the command is listed as *Save As...* on the File menu.

Also, note that pull-down menu commands are not always available. You can tell when a command is not currently available because the command name is in light gray (or *dimmed*) on the pull-down menu. A command on a pull-down menu remains dimmed until the conditions under which it operates exist in your document. For example, the Paste command on the Edit menu remains dimmed as long as the Clipboard is empty. But as soon as you move or copy some information into the Clipboard with the Cut or Copy commands on the Edit menu, the Paste option is no longer dimmed and appears in normal bold type when you open the Edit menu — indicating, of course, that this command is now available for your use.

## Now you see 'em, now you don't

The pull-down menus in Excel 2003 don't always appear the same way each time you access them. Thanks to another Microsoft intelli-(non)-sense feature, normally when you first open a menu, it appears in a truncated form with some of its commands missing. This "short" form of the menu is supposed to contain just those commands that you recently used, leaving out those that you haven't used in a while. Note that you can always tell when a menu has been shortened by the appearance of a continuation button (marked by two Vs, one on top of the other, creating a kind of downward-pointing arrow) at the very bottom.

If you have the time and patience to do nothing for a few seconds other than continue to display a shortened menu, Excel automatically replaces the shortened menu with the complete (unexpurgated) version. If you have neither the time nor the patience to wait, you can force Excel to display the entire menu's offerings by clicking the Expand button that appears with two downward pointing arrows one on top of the other at the bottom of the menu list.


When the full menu appears, the left border (where icons for some of the commands appear) for the previously missing menu items appear on the complete menu in a darker shade of gray than is applied to the previously

displayed items. This lets you tell at a glance which menu items were newly added to the full-blown menu. It does not, however, help you in locating the new positions of the menu items that show up on both the "short" and "long" versions of the menu because many items are displaced by the addition of the newly displayed items!

If you, like me, have no desire to play hide-and-seek with the Excel pull-down menus, you can turn off this "nifty" new feature by taking the following steps:

1. **Right-click somewhere on the menu bar or the bar with the Standard and Formatting toolbars to open the shortcut menu.**
2. **Select the Customize command on the shortcut menu to open the Customize dialog box.**

   The Customize dialog box opens.
3. **Select the Options tab of the Customize dialog box.**

   On the Options tab, the check box reading `Always Show Full Menus` is not checked (the `Show Full Menus after a Short Delay` box is checked by default).
4. **Select the `Always Show Full Menus` check box.**

   As soon as you select the `Always Show Full Menus` check box, Excel automatically removes the check mark from the `Show Full Menus After a Short Delay` check box below and dims it to make it currently unavailable.
5. **Click the Close button in the Customize dialog box to close it.**


When you're really new to Excel, I highly suggest turning on the `Always Show Full Menus` option so that you don't keep losing the menu items you do use because the ones you don't use are not displayed until after a short wait.

***Note:*** If you like playing hide-and-seek with the pull-down menus but care nothing for having the full menus automatically appear after a few seconds pause, you can disable this feature by removing the check mark from the check box labeled `Show Full Menus After a Short Delay`. This check box is located immediately below the `Always Show Full Menus` check box and is operational only when the `Always Show Full Menus` box is unchecked.


When changing these types of Personalized Menus and Toolbars settings on the Options tab of the Customize dialog box in Excel 2003, keep in mind that your changes equally affect the toolbars and pull-down menus in every Office 11 program installed on your computer, such as Word 2003 and PowerPoint 2003.

## Comprehending shortcut menus

Unlike the pull-down menus, which you can access either with the mouse or the keyboard, you must use the mouse to open shortcut menus and select their commands. Because shortcut menus are attached to particular objects on the screen — such as a workbook window, toolbar, or worksheet cell — Excel uses the *secondary* mouse button (that is, the right button for right-handers and the left button for lefties) to open shortcut menus. (And because you right-handers far outnumber us lefties, this mouse technique has come to be known as *right-clicking an object.*)

In Figure 1-8, you can see the shortcut menu attached to the Excel toolbars. To open this menu, position the mouse pointer somewhere on the toolbar and click the secondary mouse button. Be sure that you don't click the primary button, or you'll end up activating the tool that the pointer is on!

After you open the Toolbar shortcut menu, you can use its commands to display or hide any of the built-in toolbars or to customize the toolbars. (See Chapter 12 for details.)

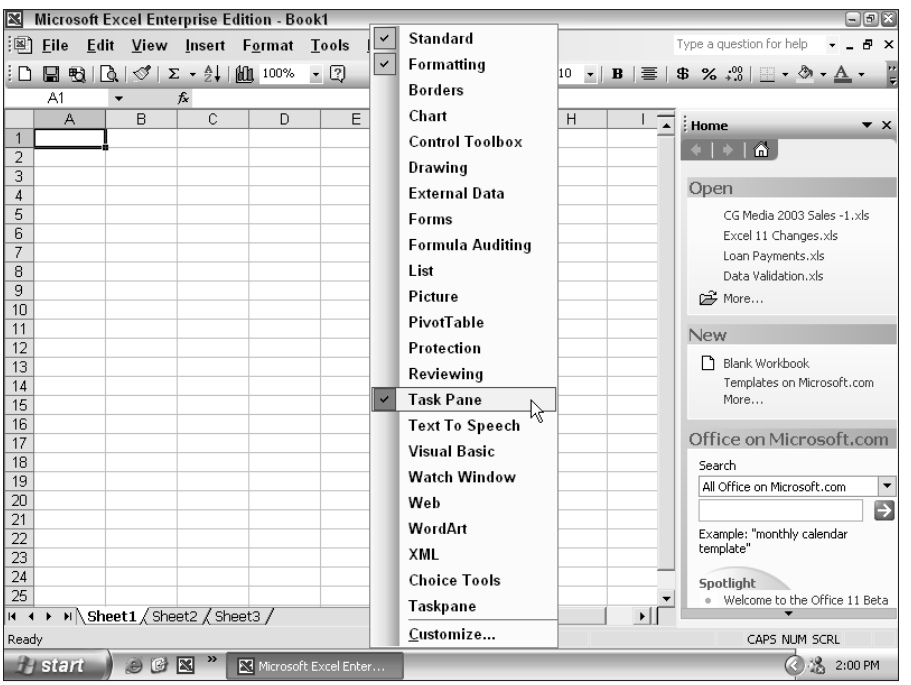



**Figure 1-8:** The toolbar shortcut menu appears when you right-click a toolbar.

In Figure 1-9, check out the shortcut menu attached to any of the cells in a worksheet. To open this menu, position the pointer on any one of the cells and click the secondary mouse button. ***Note:*** You can also open this shortcut menu and apply its commands to the group of cells that you have selected. (You find out how to make cell selections in Chapter 3.)

Because the commands on shortcut menus contain command letters, you can select one of their commands either by dragging down to the command and then clicking it either with the primary or secondary mouse button or by typing the underlined letter to select it. Otherwise, you can press the ↓ or ↑ key until you highlight the command; then press Enter to select it.


The one shortcut menu that you can open with the keyboard is the shortcut menu attached to cells in a worksheet. To open this shortcut menu in the very upper-right corner of the current cell, you press Shift+F10. Note that this keystroke works for any type of Excel sheet except a chart, which doesn't have this type of shortcut menu attached to it.

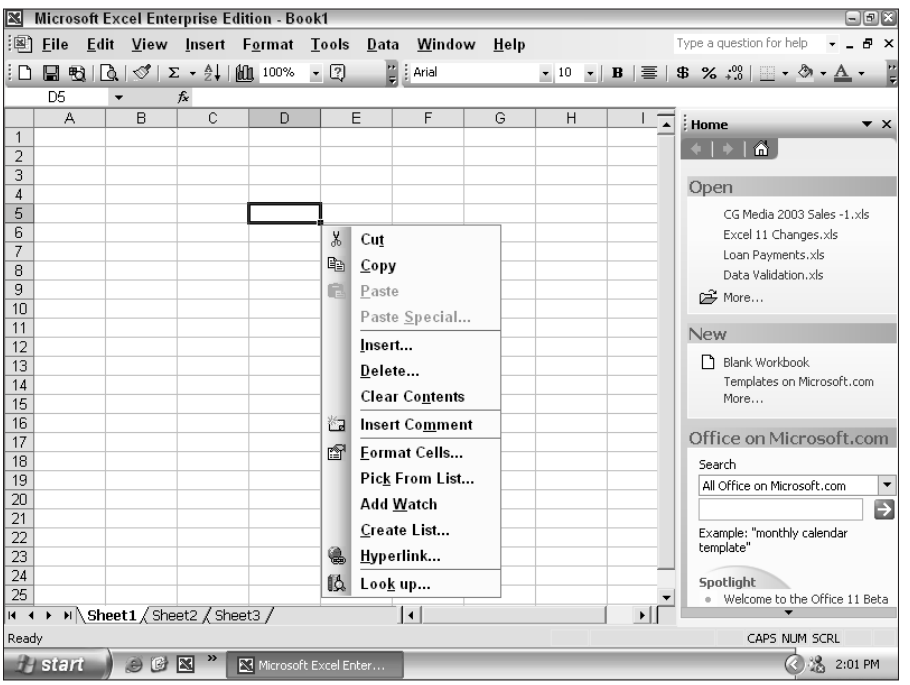



**Figure 1-9:** The worksheet cell shortcut menu appears when you press Shift+10 or right-click a cell.

# Digging Those Dialog Boxes

Many an Excel command is attached to a dialog box that presents you with a variety of options that you can apply to the command. View the Save As and Options dialog boxes in Figures 1-10 and 1-11. Between these two dialog boxes, you can find almost all the different types of buttons, tabs, and boxes used by Excel in Table 1-4.

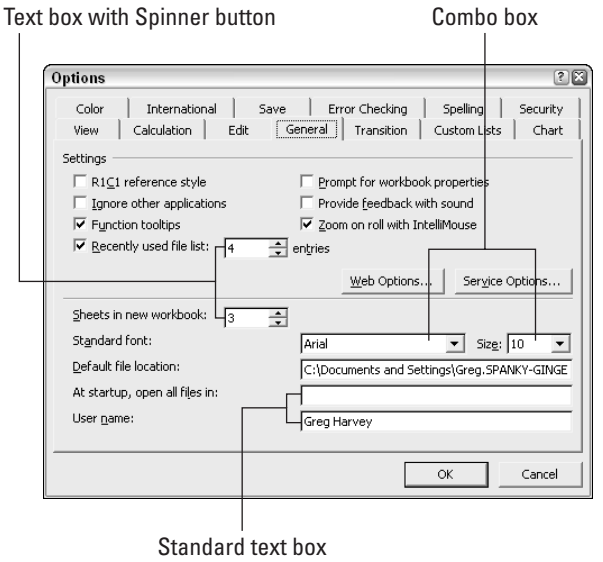



**Figure 1-10:** The General tab of the Options dialog box contains standard text boxes, text boxes with spinner buttons, along with a couple of combo boxes.

**Table 1-4 The Parts of a Dialog Box**

| *Button or Box in Question* | *What It's Good For* |
|---|---|
| Tab | Provides a means of displaying a certain set of options in a complex dialog box like the Options dialog box (shown in Figure 1-11), bringing together a whole mess of different types of program settings that you can change. |
| Text box (or Edit box) | Provides a place for typing a new entry. Many edit boxes contain default entries that you can alter or replace entirely. |

| *Button or Box in Question* | *What It's Good For* |
|---|---|
| List box | Provides a list of options from which you choose. If the list box contains more options than can be displayed in its box, the list box contains a scroll bar that you can use to bring new options into view. Some list boxes are attached to a text box, enabling you to make a new entry in the text box either by typing it or by selecting it in the related list box. |
| Combo box (or drop-down list box) | Provides a condensed version of a standard list box that, instead of displaying several options in its list, shows only the current option (which originally is also the default option). To open the combo box and display the other options, you click the drop-down button that accompanies the box. After the list is displayed, you can select a new option from it as you would in any standard list box. |
| Check box | Presents a dialog box option that you can turn on or off. When the check box has a check mark in it, you know that its option is selected. When a check box is blank, you know that its option is not selected. |
| Radio (or Option) button | Presents items that have mutually exclusive options. The radio or option button consists of a circle followed by the named option. These buttons are always arranged in groups, and only one of the buttons in the group can be selected at one time. Excel lets you know which option is currently selected by placing a dot in the middle of its circle. (When an option button is selected, it looks like a knob on an old-fashioned radio, thus the name *radio button*.) |
| Spinner buttons | Spinner buttons appear as a pair of small boxes one atop the other. The spinner button on the top has an upward-pointing arrowhead on it, whereas the spinner button on the bottom has a downward-pointing arrowhead on it. You use the spinner buttons to scroll up and down through a series of preset options as you select the one you want. |
| Command button | Initiates an action. The command button is rectangular in shape, and the name of the command displays within the button. If a name in a command button is followed by an ellipsis (...), Excel displays another dialog box containing even more options when you select the button. |

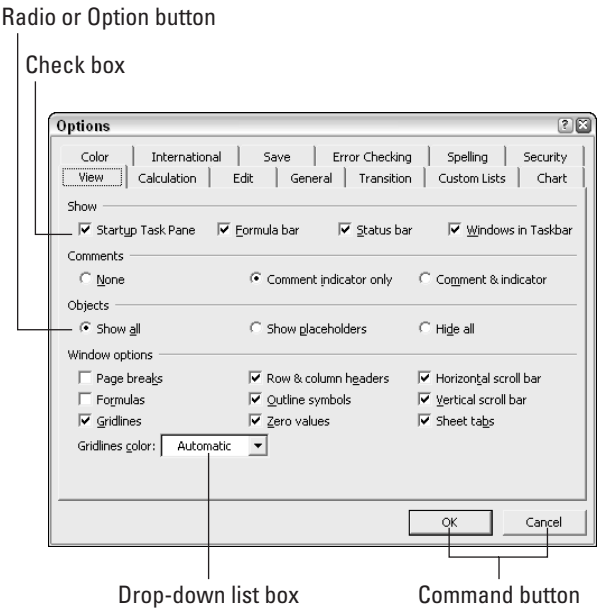



**Figure 1-11:** The View tab of the Options dialog box offers a wide array of check boxes, radio buttons, and command buttons.

***Note:*** Although you can move a dialog box out of the way of some data in your worksheet, you cannot change the box's size or shape — these dimensions are permanently fixed by the program.

Many dialog boxes contain default options or entries that are automatically selected unless you make new choices before you close the dialog box.

- To close a dialog box and put your selections into effect, click the OK button or the Close button (some boxes lack an OK button).
- If the OK button is surrounded by a dark border, which is very often the case, you can also press Enter to put your selections into effect.
- To close a dialog box without putting your selections into effect, you can either click the Cancel or Close button (the one with the X) in the dialog box, or simply press Esc.

Most dialog boxes group related options together as an item. (Often, this is done by placing a box around the options.) When making selections in a dialog box with the mouse, you simply click the selection that you want to use or, in the case of text entries, click the pointer in the entry to set the insertion point and then modify the entry.

When making selections with the keyboard, however, you must sometimes first activate the item before you can select any of its options.

- Press the Tab key until you activate one of the options in the item. (Shift+Tab activates the previous item.)
- When you press Tab (or Shift+Tab), Excel indicates which option is activated either by highlighting the default entry or by placing a dotted line around the name of the option.
- After activating an option, you can change its setting either by pressing ↑ or ↓ (this works with sets of radio buttons or options in a list or drop-down list boxes), pressing the space bar (this works to select and deselect check boxes), or by typing a new entry (used in text boxes).

You can also select an option by pressing Alt and then typing the underlined (command) letter in the option or item name.

- By pressing Alt and typing the command letter of a text box option, you select the entry in that text box (which you can then replace by typing the new entry).
- By pressing Alt and typing the command letter of a check box option, you can select or deselect the option (by adding or removing its check mark).
- By pressing Alt and typing the command letter of a radio button, you can select the option while at the same time deselecting whatever radio button was previously current.
- By pressing Alt and typing the command letter of a command button, you either initiate the command or display another dialog box.

In addition to the more elaborate dialog boxes shown in Figures 1-10 and 1-11, you also encounter a simpler type of dialog box used to display messages and warnings. These dialog boxes are appropriately known as *alert boxes.* Many dialog boxes of this type contain just an OK button that you must click to close the dialog box after reading the message.

# Ogling the Online Help

You can get online help with Excel 2003 anytime that you need it while using the program. The only problem with the traditional online Help system is that it is only truly helpful when you are familiar with the Excel jargon. If you don't know what Excel calls a particular feature, you'll have trouble locating it in the Help topics (just like trying to look up in a dictionary a word that you

have no idea how to spell). To help alleviate this problem, Excel makes use of the Answer Wizard to enable you to search for information on Microsoft's Web site. In your own words, you can type in a question about how to do something in Excel. The Answer Wizard then attempts to translate your question, phrased in perfectly good English, into its horrible Excel techno-babble so that it can then display the Help topics that give you the information you need.

## Ask Mr. Answer Wizard

The Answer Wizard enables you to ask questions in plain English about using Excel. You can access the Answer Wizard in the Ask a Question combo box on the right side of the menu bar or in the Search text box in the Microsoft Excel Help task pane (opened by pressing F1).

For example, to search for information on printing a worksheet, you can type the question **How do I print a worksheet?** in the Search text box in the Microsoft Excel Help task pane and then click the Start Searching button (the green button with the right arrow to the immediate right) as shown in Figure 1-12. The Answer Wizard responds by displaying a list of printing-related topics similar to those shown in Figure 1-13.

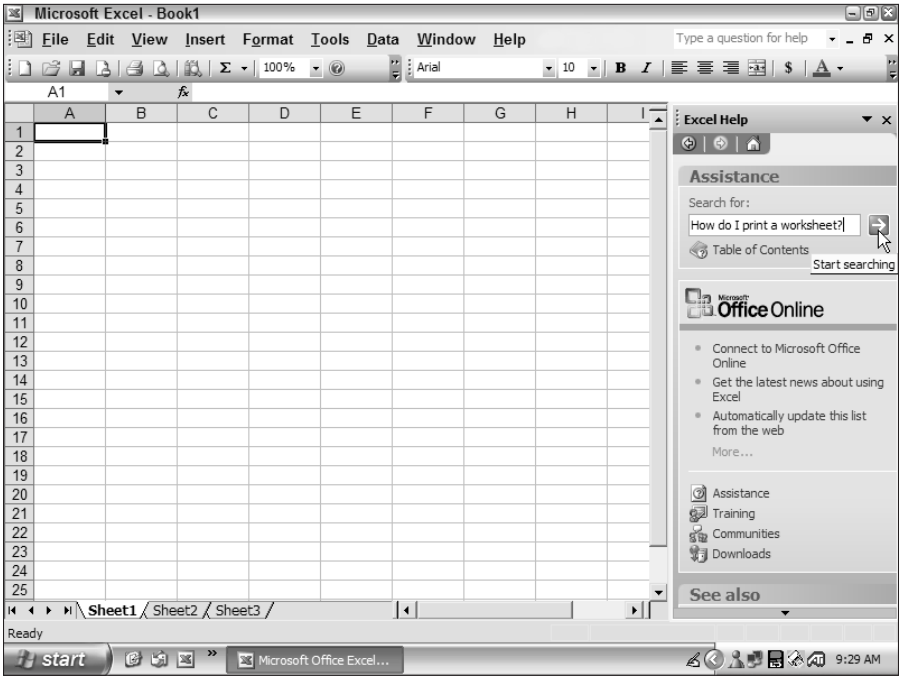



**Figure 1-12:** To get help on a topic, enter your question in the Search text box in the Help task pane and then click the Start Searching button.

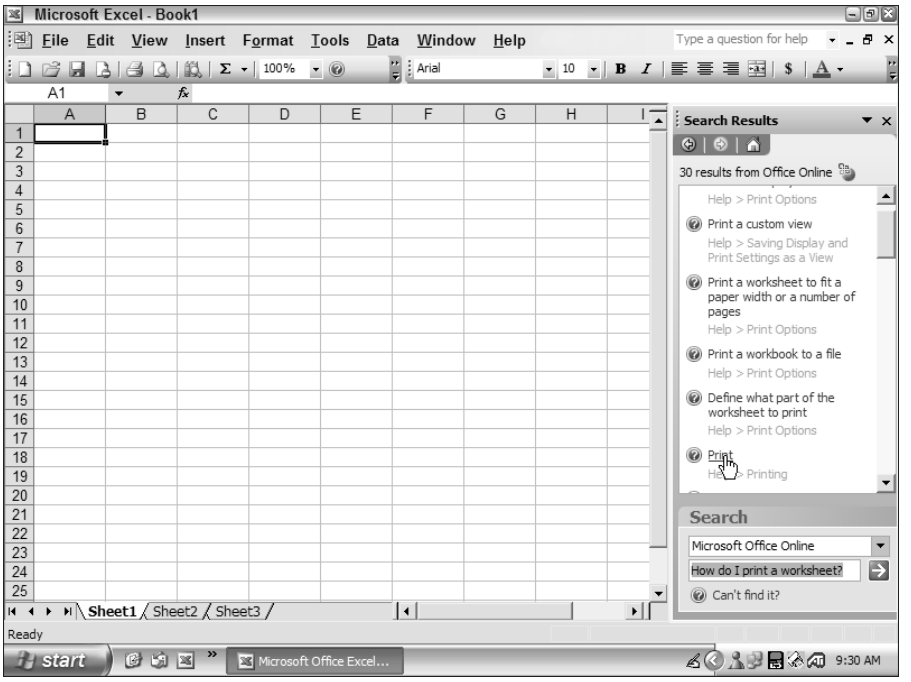



**Figure 1-13:** Click a topic in the Search Results, and the Answer Wizard opens the Microsoft Help window.

To explore one of the listed topics, click its Page-with-a-Question-Mark icon or its descriptive text (note that it becomes underlined, like a Web hyperlink, as soon as you position the mouse pointer anywhere over its text). The Answer Wizard then opens the Microsoft Excel Help window similar to the one shown in Figure 1-14. This Help window contains a number of bulleted headings related to the topic that you select (the bullets appearing in the form of right-pointing triangles). You can expand each heading to displays its information by clicking the topic heading or its triangular bullet.

As soon as you click a heading or its bullet, its information displays below the heading (and the triangular bullet that precedes the heading points downward instead of to the right). As you read through the help text, you may come across other bulleted subheadings. To expand these and display their information, click their bullets or their heading text.


To expand all headings with a particular help topic, click the Show All link near the top of the Microsoft Excel Help window. To display all the text displayed beneath expanded headings across the entire computer screen, click the Microsoft Excel Help window's Maximize button. To obtain a print-out of the help information that you're viewing, click the Print button (the one bearing the printer icon) beneath the window's title bar.

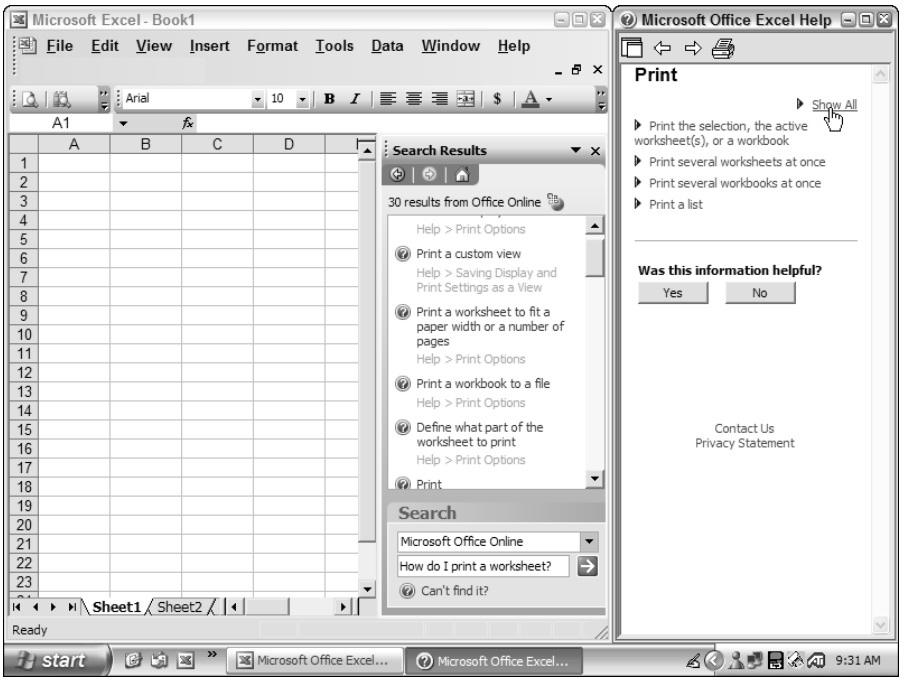



**Figure 1-14:** Viewing the selected help topic in the Microsoft Help window.

After you're done exploring the help topics in the Microsoft Excel Help window, click the Help window's Close button. As soon as you close the Help window, Excel 2003 automatically expands to fill up the space previously taken by this window. You can then close the Microsoft Excel Help task pane by pressing Ctrl+F1.

## Talking to Clippit

You can personalize the Answer Wizard in the form of Clippit, the animated paperclip. To make Clippit appear, choose Help➪Show the Office Assistant.

Once visible, you can activate Clippit to ask it a question about using Excel by clicking its icon. Doing this displays a cartoon bubble above Clippit's head, containing a text box where you type your question.

You then type your keywords or question in this text box and then press Enter or click his Search button, Excel then opens the Search Results task pane with a list of possibly relevant topics (just like the list that appears when you use the Ask a Question text box on the menu bar or the Search

text box in the Microsoft Excel Help task pane). As soon as you click a topic in Search Results list, the Microsoft Help window appears to the immediate right of the Microsoft Excel Help task pane.

Even after you close the Help window after perusing the relevant help topics, Clippit remains on the screen. Note that the biggest problem with using Clippit is that it often obscures the Excel Help task pane and Help window if you keep it anywhere on the right side of the Excel screen, requiring you to drag its sorry paperclip out of the way before you can actually get to the help that you so dearly seek.

To get rid of Clippit, you have to choose Help➪Hide Office Assistant on the Excel menu bar or right-click his icon and then choose Hide on the shortcut menu. (If I were you, I would stick to the Ask a Question or Search text box and skip Clippit altogether.)

## Using the Table of Contents

If you have access to the Internet as you work in Excel, you can also look up help information topically in the Table of Contents. To download this information and make use of it, follow these steps:

1. **Press F1.**

   Excel opens the Microsoft Excel Help task pane.

2. **Click the Table of Contents link immediately below the Search text box.**

   Excel connects you to the Microsoft Web site and downloads the Table of Contents for Excel 2003.

3. **Click the book icon for the main topic you want to explore.**

   Excel expands the topic by downloading pages of information related to the main topic.

4. **Click the link for the page of information you want to view.**

   Excel downloads the help information into the Microsoft Help window that appears to the immediate right of the Microsoft Excel Help task pane.

5. **(Optional) To display all of the information on the selected topic, click the Maximize button in the Help window and, if necessary, the Show All button.**

6. **(Optional) To print the help topic, click the Print button on the Help window's toolbar.**

When you finish reading or printing the information in the Help window, you select another topic in the Excel Help task pane or close the Help window.

7. **To close the Help window, click the Close button in its upper-right corner.**

   Excel resizes its own window to take up the missing space. You can then close the Microsoft Excel Help task pane by pressing Ctrl+F1.

# When It's Time to Make Your Exit

When you're ready to call it a day and quit Excel, you have several choices for shutting down the program:

- Click the Close button on the Excel program window.
- Choose the File➪Exit command from the pull-down menus.
- Double-click the Control menu button on the Excel program window (the green icon with the italic *L* crossed to form an X in a box that is the very first thing that appears on the title bar in the very upper-left corner of the screen).
- Press Alt+F4.

If you try to exit Excel after working on a workbook and you haven't saved your latest changes, the program beeps at you and displays an alert box querying whether you want to save your changes. To save your changes before exiting, click the Yes command button. (For detailed information on saving documents, see Chapter 2.) If you've just been playing around in the worksheet and don't want to save your changes, you can abandon the document by clicking the No button.