

Chapter 1: Getting Acquainted with Excel

In This Chapter

- ✓ Finding out what Excel can do for you
- ✓ Discovering the ways to start Excel
- ✓ Getting familiar with the Excel window
- ✓ Getting around the worksheet and workbook
- ✓ Issuing commands in Excel

Before you go off trying to find out how to do things in Excel, you really need to know what the program is capable of doing. Therefore, I start this chapter with an ever-so-brief overview of the kinds of things that you can do with Excel 2003.

Also, without a sure grasp of the rock-bottom basics of Excel (such as loading the program, entering information in cells, choosing commands — that kind of stuff), moving on and trying to figure out some of the spiffier features in Excel can become not only frustrating, but also just downright counterproductive. To ensure that this doesn't happen as you pick and choose among the many topics in the rest of this book, I have dedicated the first chapter of this first book to a review of Excel fundamentals.

By taking a second to glance over the material in this chapter, you can get yourself in a good position to really go through the exciting stuff found in the rest of the desk reference. By making sure that you're right on the money with your Excel basics, you'll have no trouble taking on new features of this spine-tingling program (and, hopefully, you can even have a lot of fun with them).

What's Up with Excel?

After Word, Microsoft's word-processing powerhouse, Excel is the most popular program (also known as an *application program* or *application*) in the Microsoft Office suite. Excel holds this distinction, no doubt, because it entirely fulfills most people's number-crunching needs, which in modern business, comes right after their word processing needs.

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Excel accomplishes this number crunching by combining sophisticated charting (also known as *graphing*) and data-management capabilities with a sophisticated and powerful spreadsheet program. You're probably aware that, as a *spreadsheet program*, Excel merges the grid layout of an accountant's green sheet with the calculating power of his or her handheld calculator. This means that not only can you use the program's spreadsheet capabilities to lay out spreadsheet applications (such as financial statements, expense reports, and the like) in the row/column grid arrangement, but you can also use the program's built-in calculating ability to compute all the required subtotals, totals, and grand totals.

This combination of abilities makes Excel a natural for any type of application that uses some sort of tabular layout or relies on extensive calculations between the data that the application requires. For example, you may use Excel to create many fill-in-the-blank paper forms that require no calculations at all. (Many people find that designing forms in Excel's grid layout is much easier than using Word's Table feature.) You may also use the program to create business-type forms, such as expense reports and sales and inventory sheets that involve extensive calculations.

The worksheet grid

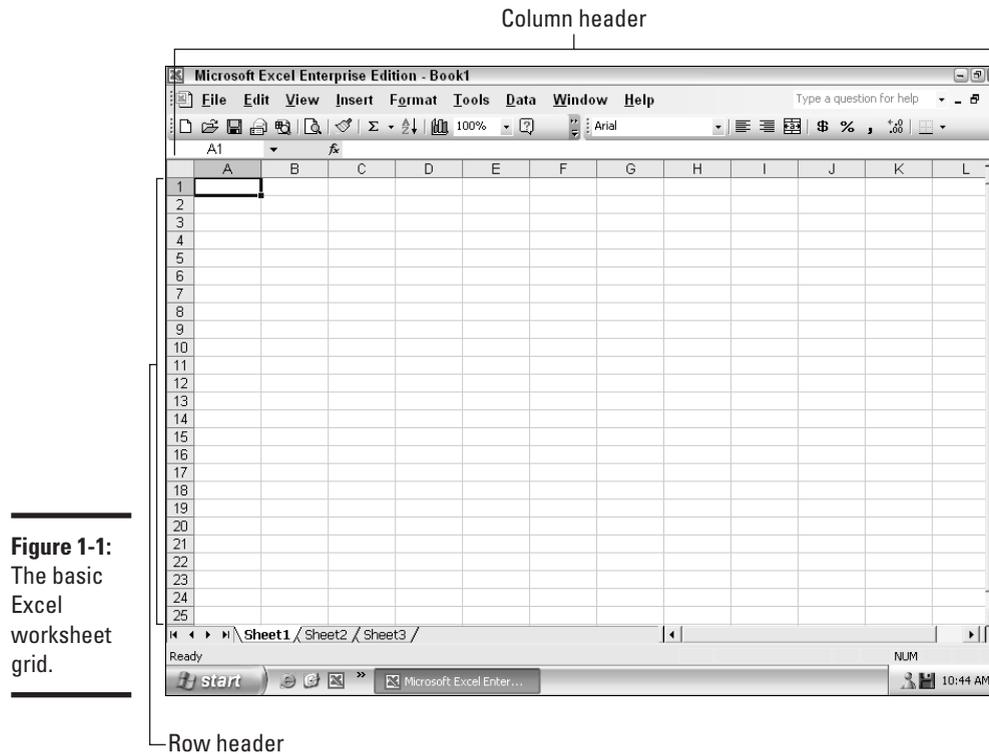
The key to successfully using Excel as a spreadsheet program is in understanding its grid-like nature. Figure 1-1 shows you this grid in all its glory (without most of the program and sheet controls that normally appear when you start the program). By the way, in Excel, you always refer to this type of grid as a *worksheet*.

Note the following items about the grid shown in Figure 1-1:

- ◆ The columns of a worksheet are identified by letters (A, B, C, and so on) that appear across the Column header. When Excel runs out of letters (at column 26), it starts duplicating letters (so that column Z is followed by AA, AB, AC, and so on until it reaches column IV).
- ◆ Numbers (1, 2, 3, and the like) identify the rows of a worksheet, up to row 65,536. The numbers appear down the Row header.
- ◆ The intersecting gridlines of each column and row form a rectangular box known as a *cell*.
- ◆ A totally blank worksheet is a pretty boring affair!



The most important thing to keep in mind about the worksheet is that each cell can hold its own data, depending upon the function and layout of the spreadsheet that you're building.



Getting a cell's address

Cells, by the way, are identified by their position in the grid; their so-called *cell address*. This address is normally noted with the cell's column letter followed by its row number. So the first cell (located at the intersection of the first column and row) in every Excel worksheet has the address A1, the cell in the first row of the second column has the address B1, the cell in the second row of the first column has the address A2, and so forth.

I say that a cell address is “normally” noted as a combination of its column letter and row number only because you can switch to a different style of cell address notation, known affectionately as the *RIC1 reference style*. It has this wonderful appellation because, in this system, RIC1 is the first cell of every worksheet instead of A1. You turn on the RIC1 system by choosing Tools⇨Options and then, on the General tab in the Options dialog box, clicking the RIC1 Reference Style check box.

Note the following two big differences between the normal A1 style cell addresses and the RIC1 style addresses:

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- ◆ R1C1 style addresses don't ever use the column letter. In fact, numbers replace the letters in the column header, as shown in Figure 1-2.
- ◆ R1C1 style addresses always note the row position, and then the column position of each cell. Normal A1 style cell addresses do the opposite by first noting the position of the column position (by letter), and then the row.

The big advantage of the regular A1 style cell addresses is that they're shorter. Therefore, most people find them easier to deal with (especially in formulas), because their addresses don't have to include the R and C abbreviations (letters always designate columns and numbers always designate rows).

The big disadvantage of the A1 style cell address is that the cell addresses must duplicate letters in order to designate any column past 26 (and each worksheet contains a total of 256 columns). When referring to cell addresses hanging out in the wilds of a worksheet, the R1C1 cell address system suddenly doesn't seem so bad. For example, if you're using the R1C1 style address system and the data you want is in cell R1C52 of the worksheet, you have a good idea of the cell's general location relative to the first cell. If, on the other hand, you're using the normal A1 style reference system, and the data you want is in cell AZ1, you probably don't have a clue where that cell is located in relation to the first cell, A1, except that it's somewhere pretty far over in the same row.

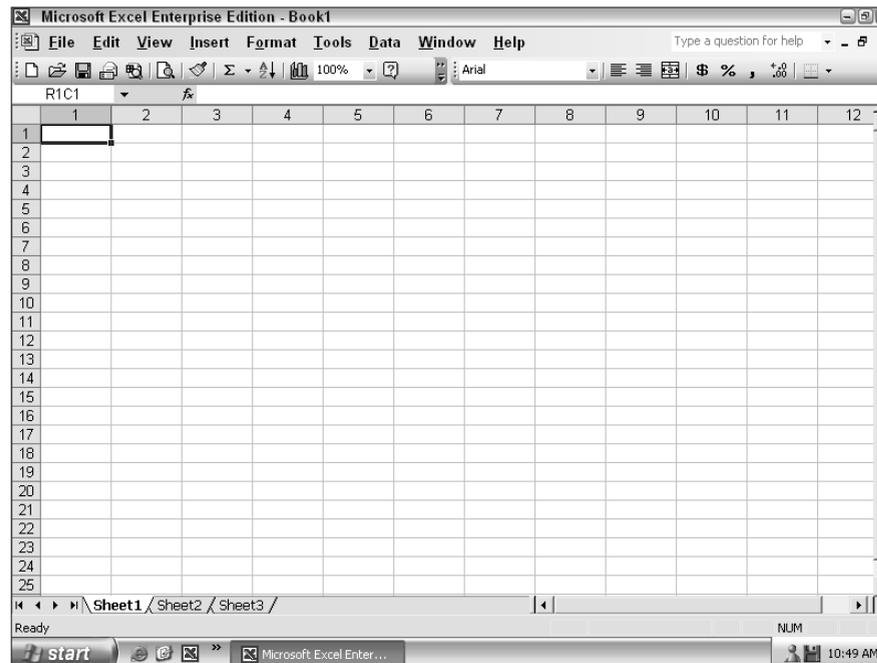


Figure 1-2:
Basic Excel
worksheet
grid using
the R1C1
style
reference.

Identifying the active cell

Regardless of which cell address system you have turned on, Excel indicates which cell you're working with at any given time (known as the *active cell* or *current cell*) in three ways:

- ◆ Listing its cell address at the beginning of the row immediately above the row with the worksheet's Column header (this area is known as the *Name box*)
- ◆ Highlighting in gold the cell's column and row in the Column and Row header, respectively
- ◆ Displaying a heavy black border around the cell in the worksheet grid itself (known as the *cell pointer*)

Figure 1-3 illustrates these three ways of identifying the active cell. In this figure, you can bet your bottom dollar that cell C7 is the active cell in this worksheet because C7 appears in the Name box and the cell pointer is located at the intersection of column C and row 7, which, in turn, are both highlighted in a golden color on the Column and Row borders of the worksheet.

The three basic spreadsheet tasks

As I see it, you almost always end up doing the following three basic tasks when creating a new spreadsheet table or list:

- ◆ Entering the headings that define the layout of the spreadsheet table or list
- ◆ Entering the data in the table or list
- ◆ Formatting the data that you entered in the table or list

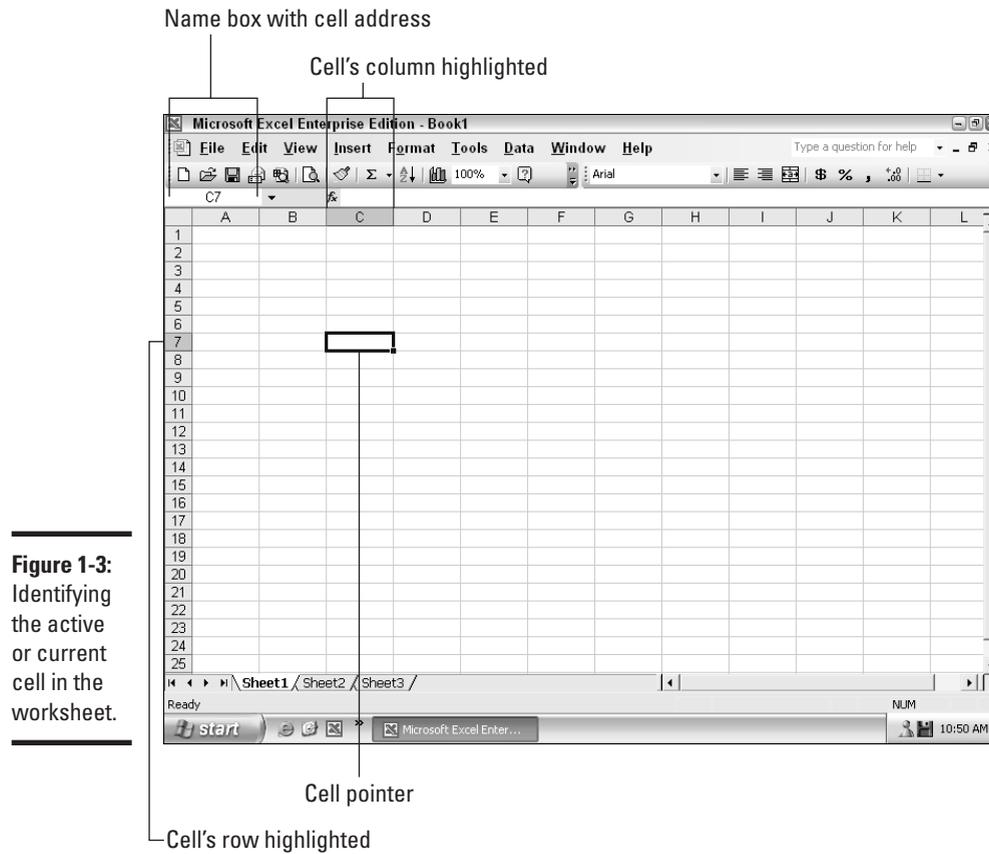


Turning off R1C1 references in a worksheet

Most worksheets that you'll run across use the normal A1 style cell address system (because this is the program's default setting for cell addressing and most people don't even know the R1C1 system exists). Suppose that someone in the know switches to the R1C1 system and saves the Excel file with R1C1 turned on. When you open the file, all cell references in the formulas of its worksheets use that system and the Column header contains numbers just like the

Row header. You can always switch back to the normal cell reference style by choosing Tools⇒Options and then clicking the R1C1 Reference Style check box on the General tab (to remove its check mark). This check box is located at the top of the View tab in the Options dialog box. After you choose OK, all cell references in the formulas change back to the A1 style reference system, and the Column header once again uses letters.

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Note that most spreadsheet tables have both a row of column headings and a column of row headings that identify the different types of data that the tables contain. This stands in contrast to lists (also called *data lists* or *databases* in Excel) that use only a row of column headings at the top to identify their data.

The data that you enter in the cells of your table or list (see Book I, Chapter 2, for details) can consist of text, numbers, or even formulas that perform essential calculations. These calculations may use values or even sometimes text entered in other cells of the table or list.

After you've entered all the data, the formatting of the table or list data is mostly done. In formatting the data, you actually change the formatting of the cells containing the data. In other words, instead of actually making the text that you've entered in a particular cell bold and italic (as you might do

in a Word document), you assign these attributes to the cell that holds this text. This way, the bold and italic attributes remain associated with the cell even after you delete the text or replace it with a number or a formula that returns a calculated value. Because formatting is so important in building a spreadsheet in Excel, I devote an entire chapter to it (see Book II, Chapter 2).

Beyond the spreadsheet

Although working with spreadsheets is definitely Excel's strong suit (thus the worksheet as the underlying document), it is by no means the program's only claim to fame. As an adjunct to its basic spreadsheet abilities, Excel adds sophisticated charting and data analysis capabilities, along with a set of features that offer an uncomplicated approach to database management.

All these extra features make some sort of use of the basic worksheet grid and, in the case of charting and data analysis, actually work with the data entered in spreadsheet applications (for details on charting, see Book V and for details on data analysis, Book VII). In the case of database management, Excel adds the ability to perform routine tasks, such as sorting and filtering, on data that you've actually entered in a worksheet in the form of a data list or have imported from other external sources, such as a dedicated database management program, such as Microsoft Access or the company's corporate database (see Book VI for details on performing these kinds of tasks).

Getting Excel Started

Excel is simply no fun at all if you can't get the blasted thing to run! So I want to begin this portion of the Excel "basics" material with an overview of the many ways you can get Excel up and running (and then I discuss ways that you can catch it!). Starting Excel 2003 under Windows XP gives you no lack of options.

Starting from the Windows taskbar

The steps for starting Excel from the Windows XP taskbar are as follows:

- 1. Click the Start button at the beginning of the taskbar.**

The Start menu appears.

- 2. Position the mouse pointer over the All Programs item at the bottom of the Start menu.**

A submenu appears, showing the oodles and oodles of programs installed on your computer.

- 3. Click the Microsoft Excel item on the Programs menu to fire up Excel.**

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One nice thing about starting Excel from the Windows XP taskbar is that Windows automatically adds Microsoft Excel to the Start menu, as shown in Figure 1-4. So the next time you need to start the program, you can do it even more quickly by simply clicking the Start button and then clicking the Microsoft Excel item on the Start menu. Just keep in mind that Excel's appearance on the Windows XP Start menu is only a temporary advancement. As you continue to launch other programs besides Excel (such as Word, for example), Windows eventually knocks Excel off the Start menu and replaces it with a more recently launched program.

Starting Excel with a desktop or toolbar shortcut

If you use Excel extensively in your work, it probably won't take too long before the procedure for starting Excel using the Windows Start button wears a little thin. In such cases, you need to add a desktop or Quick Launch toolbar shortcut for starting the Program, or you need to start using the built-in Excel button on the Office Shortcut bar (described in the very next section).

To add a desktop shortcut for Excel, you need to find the program file that actually runs the Excel application (a nifty little executable file called `excel.exe`) and then use the file to create a desktop shortcut. Here's how you do that:

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

The Windows Start menu appears, containing a Search item.

2. Click the Search item on the Start menu and then click All Files and Folders in the Search Results dialog box.

3. Type `excel.exe` in the All or Part of File Name text box.

4. Click the Search button.

Windows begins searching your computer's hard disk looking for the `excel.exe` file that starts the program.

5. Click the Stop button when the Excel file, listed as an Application type, appears in the Search Results dialog box.

Now, all you have to do is send a shortcut to this program file to your computer's desktop.

6. Right-click the Excel file, and then position the mouse pointer on Send To on the shortcut menu and click the Desktop (Create Shortcut) on the cascading menu.

Windows responds by creating a Shortcut to Excel on your desktop. You see the shortcut as soon as you close the Search Results dialog box.

7. Click the Close button in the upper-right corner of the Search Results dialog box to get rid of it.

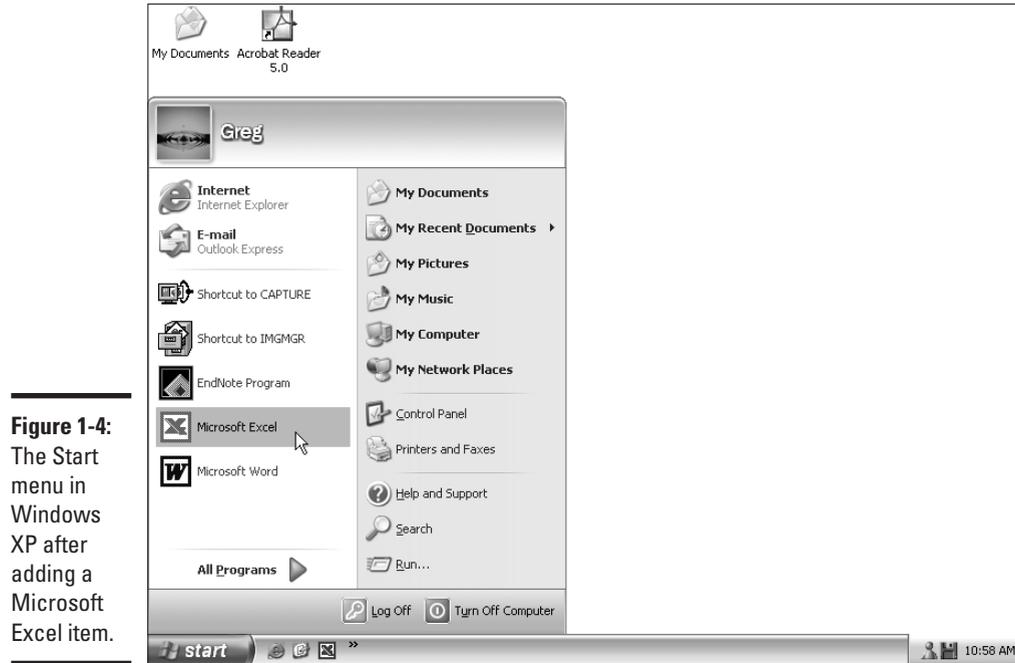


Figure 1-4:
The Start
menu in
Windows
XP after
adding a
Microsoft
Excel item.



As soon as you close the Search Results dialog box, you should see your Shortcut to Excel icon (just like the one shown in the left margin). To start Excel with this desktop shortcut, you simply double-click the icon or right-click it and then click the Open item on its shortcut menu.



If Microsoft Office Excel shows up on the Frequently Use Programs list when you click the Start button on the Windows XP Start button, you can create a desktop shortcut by clicking the Start button, right-clicking Microsoft Office Excel 2003 and then highlighting Send To on the shortcut menu and clicking Desktop (Create Shortcut) on the submenu.

The only drawbacks to desktop shortcuts are that you need to double-click them or right-click them and then click the Open item on their shortcut menus (which seems like a lot of work to go through for a *shortcut!*). Shortcuts also tend to move around and get lost as you add more and more desktop items (if your desktop is anywhere near as messy as mine, you may never find the blasted thing).

To avoid these kinds of hassles, you can copy the Excel desktop shortcut to your Quick Launch toolbar that appears to the immediate right of the Start button on your Windows taskbar. This way, you can always find your Excel shortcut, and you only have to single-click it (as you do with any other toolbar button in Windows) to get Windows to launch the program.

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To add a copy of the Excel desktop shortcut to the Quick Launch toolbar at the beginning of your Windows taskbar, follow these steps:

1. Drag the Shortcut to Excel icon from the desktop to the place on the Quick Launch toolbar where you want it to appear.

If you want the icon to appear at the very beginning of the bar right after the Start button, drag the icon until it's positioned on the Quick Launch bar, and a thick, black vertical bar that represents where the icon will be inserted appears in front of the first button on the bar.

2. Release the mouse button as soon as the vertical bar appears at the place where you want it.



As soon as you release the mouse button, Windows adds an Excel button (indicated by the Excel program icon shown in the left margin). After you've added this button to the Quick Launch bar, you can start Excel by clicking this button. If you ever need to remove it, simply drag the button off the Quick Launch bar. When you release the mouse button, the Excel button immediately disappears.

Figure 1-5 shows my Windows XP desktop after adding an Excel 2003 shortcut to both the Windows desktop and the Quick Launch toolbar.

Starting Excel by opening one of its document files

The last technique for starting Excel simply involves opening a document file created with the program. Windows, wisely following in the footsteps of the Apple Macintosh, associates each application program's executable file with all files that that program generates. This means that as soon as you try to open an Excel document file (referred to as a *workbook* or *workbook file*), Windows checks to see if Excel is already running. If it is, Windows simply opens the selected workbook file in the application. If, however, Excel is not yet running, Windows automatically starts Excel before opening the selected workbook file in it.



To open a particular workbook file and, if necessary, launch the Excel program at the same time, simply locate and then double-click the workbook's file icon (similar to the one shown in the left margin). Alternatively, you can right-click this icon and then click Open on its shortcut menu.



Don't forget that you can create desktop shortcuts to Excel workbook files that you routinely edit and print just as you do for the programs that routinely run. To create a shortcut icon for an Excel file, locate and open its folder, right-click the workbook file icon, and then highlight Send To on its shortcut menu before you click Desktop (Create Shortcut) on its cascading menu. Then, to open the file and launch Excel all in one stroke, you only have to double-click the Excel workbook desktop shortcut.

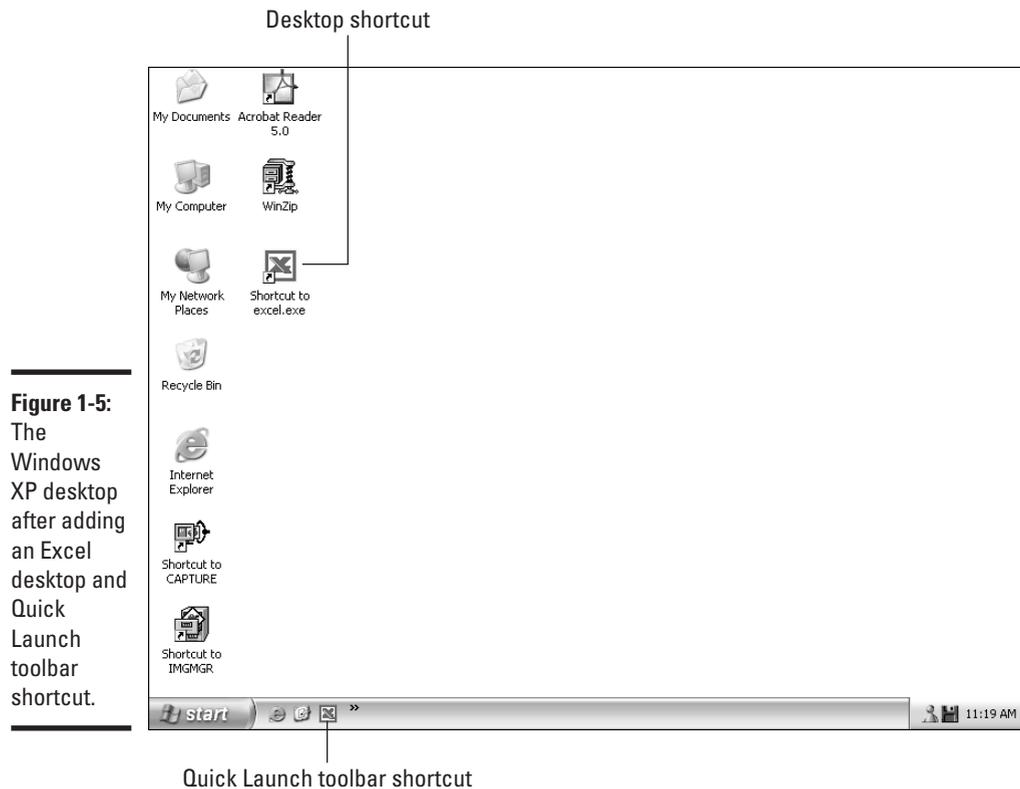


Figure 1-5:
The
Windows
XP desktop
after adding
an Excel
desktop and
Quick
Launch
toolbar
shortcut.

Getting to Know the Excel Window

When you start Excel, the program loads in a full-size program window entitled *Microsoft Excel*. As Figure 1-6 shows, the Excel program window is composed of several distinct areas, each of which contains its own elements. The Excel window is divided into the following areas:

- ◆ **Title bar:** Located in the first row at the top of the screen, it contains a Control menu button (that displays a pop-up menu of options for moving and resizing the screen), the title of the application (Microsoft Excel), a Minimize button, and a Restore Down button.
- ◆ **Menu bar:** Located in the next row, it contains the pull-down menus that enable you to select various Excel commands for use in doing your work in the program. This bar also contains the Type a Question for Help box and the active document window's Minimize Window, Restore Window, and Close Window buttons.

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- ◆ **Standard and Formatting toolbars:** Located side by side on the next row, each of these toolbars contains a series of buttons that, when clicked, perform commonly used Excel commands.
- ◆ **Formula bar:** This bar is comprised of three areas. The Name box is located at the far left and displays the current cell reference. The Cancel and Enter boxes are located in the middle and are for entering or editing data in the current cell, along with the Insert Function button (with the *fx* icon). A third area, located to the right, displays the contents that you're entering or have entered into the current cell.
- ◆ **Excel work area:** This area, located between the Formula and status bars, contains all the document windows with the Excel workbooks that you have open. Normally, Excel displays only the document window with the active worksheet in the active workbook in the middle of the work area.
- ◆ **Task Pane:** Located on the right side of the Excel work area, this pane contains one of many different panes:
 - Getting Started — for opening new or existing workbook files
 - Help — for getting online help
 - Clipboard — for managing data that you store in the Windows clipboard
 - Basic File Search — for finding workbooks that you need to edit
 - Clip Art — for finding and using Windows clip art images in your worksheets
- ◆ **Status bar:** Located at the bottom right of the Excel window, this is divided into two parts. The first part displays messages about the current state of the program or the Excel command that you are about to select. The second part contains five mode indicators that tell you when certain keys — such as the Num Lock, Extend (F8), or Caps Lock keys or modes — are engaged.

The title bar

The title bar for the Excel window displays the name of the application (Microsoft Excel) between the program Control menu button (with the XL icon) on the left and two sizing buttons and the Close button on the far right. When you click the Control menu button, the program displays the Control menu. You can use the options on this menu to resize the Excel window, or to close the Excel window (and subsequently quit Excel).



When you first start Excel, the two sizing buttons located on the right side of the title bar consist of a Minimize and Restore Down button (shown respectively in the left margin). You click the Minimize button to reduce the

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Excel window to a button on the Windows taskbar (this is the equivalent of choosing the Minimize option on the Excel Control menu). You click the Restore Down button to reduce the Excel window down to a midsize window in the middle of the Windows XP desktop (this is the equivalent of selecting the Restore option on the program Control menu). Note that you can then move and resize the midsize windows, reconfiguring your desktop as needed.



When the Excel window is reduced to a button on the Windows XP taskbar, you can restore it to full size by clicking the button. When the Excel window is reduced to a midsize window, the Restore Down button on the title bar changes to a Maximize button (shown in the left margin). You click the Maximize button to restore Excel window to full size (this is the equivalent of selecting the Maximize option on the program Control menu).

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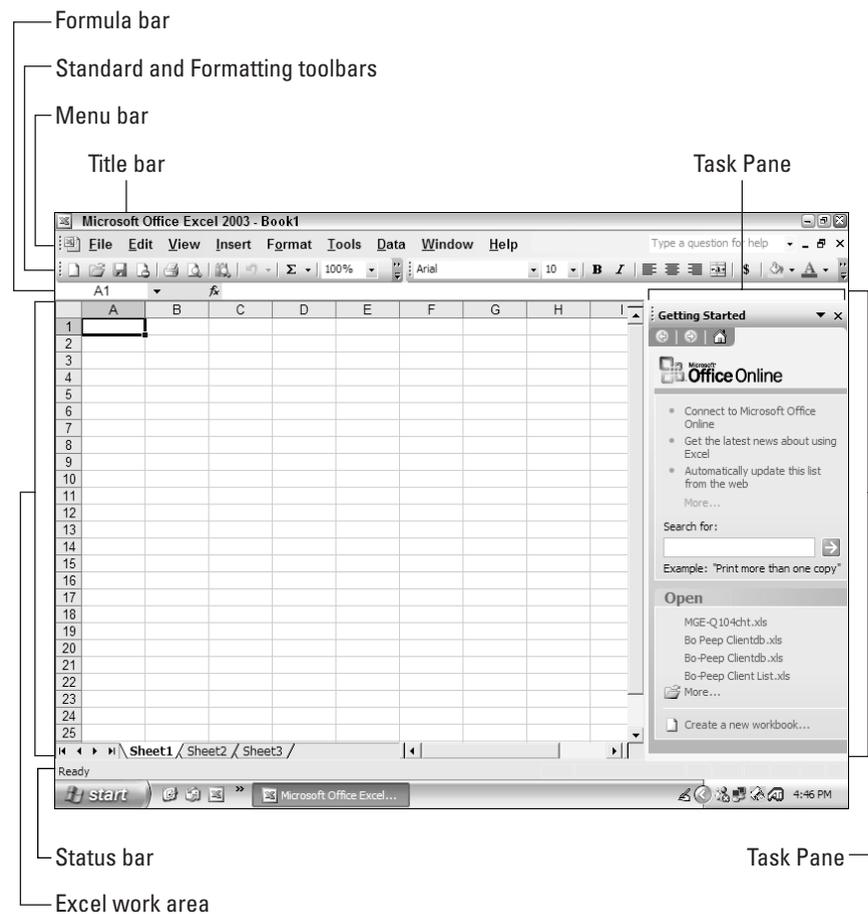


Figure 1-6:
The Excel
Window as
it appears
when you
start the
program.

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The menu bar

The menu bar contains nine pull-down menus (from File to Help) on the left side. You can use these menus to select the Excel commands necessary for creating your worksheets. On the right side of the menu bar, you find the Type a Question for Help text box, which enables you to access the Excel online Help system by typing in a question (see Book I, Chapter 2, for more details). Located to the immediate right of the Type a Question for Help box, you find the Minimize Window, Restore Window, and Close Window buttons.

As with all the other Windows programs you use, you can choose the commands on the pull-down menus with the mouse or the keyboard. For more information on how to do this, see the “Making Menu Requests” section later in this chapter. As with the other applications in the Office 2003 suite, you can also choose menu commands by voice if your computer is equipped with a microphone. For detailed information on how to do this see the “Issuing Voice Commands” section later in this chapter.

The Minimize Window, Restore Window, and Close Window buttons located on the right side of the menu bar use the same icons as the Minimize, Restore Down, and Close buttons located above, on the title bar:

- ◆ Click the Minimize Window button to reduce the active, full-size workbook window to a button at the bottom of the Excel work area.
- ◆ Click the Restore Window button to reduce the active full-size workbook window to a midsize window with a title bar equipped with its own set of Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons.
- ◆ Click the Close Window button to close the active workbook — Excel automatically prompts to save the file if you made changes to it since the last time you saved the workbook.

To restore a workbook that you’ve reduced to a mere button at the bottom of the Excel work area to its previous mid size, click its Restore Up button (using the same icon as the Restore Down button). To restore it to full size, click the Maximize button (you can also choose the Restore or Maximize items on the Control menu; these automatically pop up whenever you click the minimized workbook window button).



One of the easiest ways to restore a minimized workbook button is to use the Alt+Tab keystroke to cycle through all the windows (Excel and otherwise) that you currently have open; these are shown in an unnamed dialog box that appears in the middle of your screen. Continue pressing Alt+Tab until Windows selects the icon for the workbook that you want to restore (indicated by the filename that appears beneath the Excel file icon enclosed in a blue square in this unnamed dialog box).



Note that as soon as you click the Restore Window button, Excel removes the Minimize Window, Restore Window, and Close Window buttons from the menu bar and the Ask a Question text box takes their place on the far right side of the bar. It does this because the newly restored, midsize workbook window has its own set of Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons on its own title bar. If you click the Maximize button on the active workbook window's title bar, the Minimize Window, Restore Window, and Close Window buttons magically reappear on the right side of the menu bar, moving the Ask a Question text box back towards the middle.

The Standard and Formatting toolbars

The next bar in the Excel window contains two of the most basic toolbars in the program: the Standard toolbar on the left and the Formatting toolbar on the right. Because Excel 2003 automatically places both of these toolbars on the same row of the Excel window, you can't actually see all of the buttons on either toolbar.



To display buttons that are currently hidden on either of the two toolbars, you need to click the bar's Toolbar Options button (shown in the left margin) to display a pop-up menu that shows the rest of the buttons on that bar. Note that the two greater than symbols (>>) above the downward-pointing arrow form a continuation icon and indicate that not all the buttons are displayed.



To see the name of any button on any toolbar in Excel, position the mouse on its icon until the name appears in a small box to the side. To display the Standard and Formatting toolbars on separate rows, one above the other, so that you always have access to all buttons on both bars, click the Toolbar Options button on either toolbar and then click the Show Buttons on Two Rows item on the pop-up menu. If you need more screen real estate, you can return the two bars to their original row-sharing arrangement by clicking the Toolbar Options button on either toolbar (it's the last button on each bar whose icon now lacks a continuation icon and simply sports a lone downward-pointing arrow).

To use a Standard or Formatting toolbar button, simply click its icon (no need for you to double-click). If a button has a pop-up button (indicated by a smaller, square button with a downward-pointing arrow icon located to its immediate right), click this button to choose among a list of further options (for example, you can click the Font's pop-up button to select a new font size directly from its pop-up menu).

For information on how to move and size the Excel toolbars, see the "Taking the Toolbars to Task" section later in this chapter.

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The Formula bar

The Formula bar is one of the most important rows in Excel. The first area, called the Name box, displays the address of the active or current cell (this address automatically changes as you move the cell pointer through a worksheet or select a group of cells for editing or formatting). Note that the Name box has its own pop-up button. You use this button in worksheets where you've given groups of cells (called *cell ranges*) common names, such as *sales tax*, *dividend*, and *grand total* (a technique covered in Book III, Chapter 1); you can select the cell range by choosing its range name from the associated pop-up menu.

Located immediately to the right of the Name box, you find an area reserved for the Cancel, Enter, and Insert Function buttons. Note that Excel keeps the Cancel and Enter buttons hidden until you either start entering data in the active cell or start editing it, as shown in Figure 1-7. The Insert Function button (with the *fx* icon), however, is displayed on the Formula bar at all times.

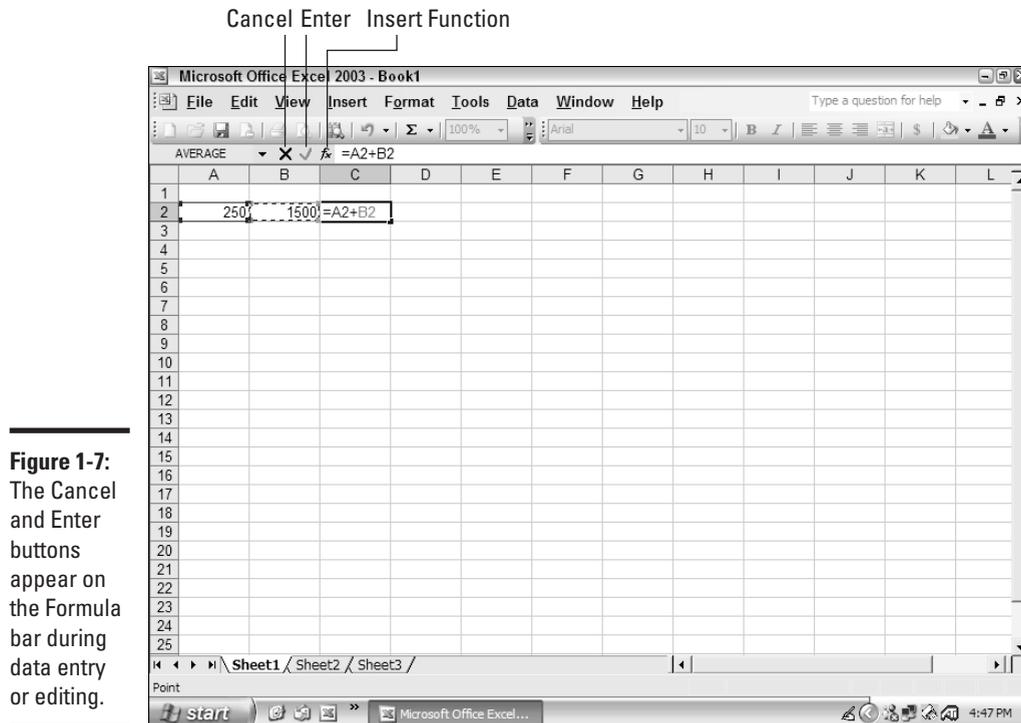


Figure 1-7: The Cancel and Enter buttons appear on the Formula bar during data entry or editing.

You click the Cancel button to abort the data entry or edits that you're making in the active cell. You click the Enter button to complete data entry or editing. (Note that this is by no means the only way to do this. See Book II, Chapter 1, for details.) You click the Insert Function button to insert (or edit) one of Excel's many built-in functions in a formula that you're building. *Functions* are ready-made formulas that perform specialized computations, some of which are quite complex (see Book III for complete information on their usage).

The Excel work area

The work area takes up most of the Excel window. As the name implies, this is the place that holds the workbook document windows where you build and edit your spreadsheets. Normally, only a single, full-sized worksheet appears in this space, although you can make Excel *do* windows, meaning that you can split the work area up into smaller window panes in which parts of other worksheets (in the same or different workbooks) can be displayed. See Book I, Chapter 4, for details on how to do this.

Even when a worksheet is displayed in a full-sized workbook window in the work area, you can see only a small fraction of the cells that it contains (each worksheet in every workbook that you open consists of 256 columns and 65,536 rows, giving you a grand total of 16,777,216 cells with which to work). To enable you to bring currently hidden columns and rows into view, the workbook window contains both a vertical and horizontal scroll bar. You use the horizontal bar to scroll back and forth through the columns and the vertical bar to scroll up and down the rows. See the "Getting Around the Worksheet" section later in this chapter for details.

Because each new workbook that you open automatically starts out with three blank worksheets (each with their own 16,777,216 cells arranged on a grid with 256 columns and 65,536 rows), you find sheet scroll button and sheet tabs to the immediate left of the horizontal scroll bar at the bottom of each workbook window. You use these controls to activate different worksheets in the workbook so that you can work with their cells (see the "Navigating the Workbook" section later in this chapter).

The Task Pane

The Task Pane is a great addition to the major productivity applications, such as Excel, Word, and PowerPoint in the Office 11 suite. Whenever the Task Pane is displayed, it appears on the right side of the Excel work area, obscuring part of the open worksheet.

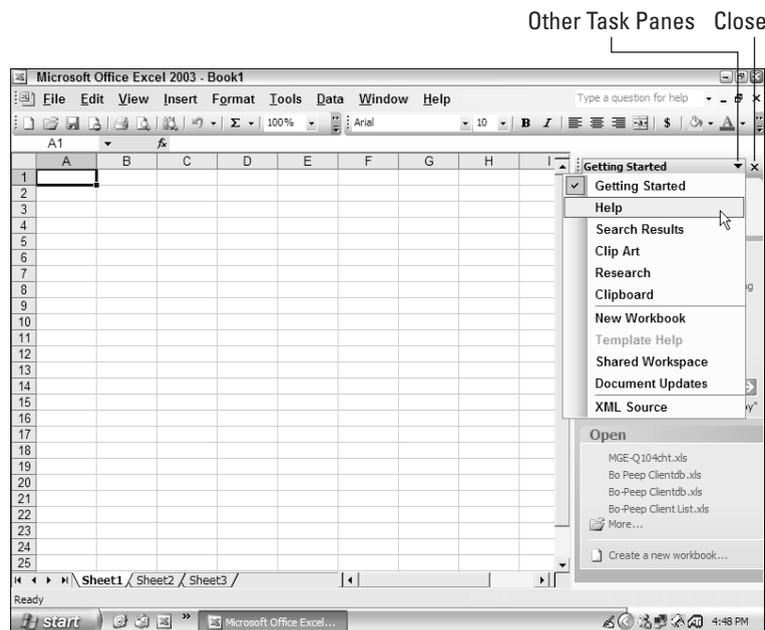
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When you first start Excel, the program automatically opens the Getting Started Task Pane to facilitate opening a new workbook or one that you have recently edited. As soon you select an existing workbook or open a new workbook using the links provided, Excel automatically closes the Getting Started Task Pane for you. To then reopen the Task Pane, you just press **Ctrl+F1** or choose **View**→**Task Pane** from the Excel pull-down menus.

Getting Started is just one of many different Task Panes that you can use. For example, in addition to Getting Started, Excel offers a Help, Search Results, Clip Art, Research, Clipboard, and New Workbook Task Pane. To switch to another task, click the **Other Task Panes** drop-down button, as shown in Figure 1-8, and then click the name of the pane that you want displayed. After you've used this pop-up menu to display a Task Pane other than the default Getting Started, you can then click the **Forward** and **Back** buttons at the top of the Task Pane window (with the left-arrow and right-arrow icons, respectively) to jump back and forth between the one you selected and the original pane.

To return to the Getting Started Pane from any other Task Pane, click the **Home** button. To quickly close the Task Pane so that the entire worksheet area is displayed on-screen, press **Ctrl+F1**.

Figure 1-8:
Selecting a
new Task
Pane to use.



The status bar

Last but not least is the status bar, the final element of the Excel window (the Windows taskbar located immediately beneath the status bar does not, strictly speaking, belong to the Excel program, although it is continuously displayed as you use the application program). The status bar keeps you informed of the current state of the program as you use it. The left side of the status bar displays messages on the current state of the program. Usually, this area contains the Ready indicator, signifying that Excel is now fully prepared to accept new data in the current cell or some type of Excel command. The other important indicator that you often see in this area of the status bar is the Edit indicator, signifying that the program is ready to accept the changes that you want to make to the contents of the current cell.

The right side of the status bar contains five *mode indicators*. These indicators tell you when certain lock keys, such as the Caps Lock, Num Lock, or Scroll Lock, are toggled on. (These keys are called *toggle* keys because you turn them on by pressing the key once, and they stay on until you turn them off by pressing the same key again.) In addition to these keys, this area tells you when three other modes are active in Excel. Table 1-1 explains all the mode indicators that appear in this part of the status bar.

Table 1-1 The Various Modes of the Status Bar

Mode	Key to Turn On/Off	Function
EXT	F8	Extends the current cell range as you select other cells with the arrow keys
ADD	Shift+F8	Adds to the current cell range all cells you select with the arrow keys
CAPS	Caps Lock	Types all letters in uppercase
NUM	Num Lock	Engages and disengages the numeric keypad on your keyboard
SCRL	Scroll Lock	Freezes the cell pointer in its current position as you scroll the worksheet
OVR	Insert	Types over existing text, replacing it with the characters you type
END	End	Combined with one of the four arrow keys (→, ←, ↓, or ↑), moves the cell pointer to the first cell with data that's adjacent to a blank cell in the direction of the arrow
FIX	(none)	Indicates that Excel is ready to automatically add a set number of decimal places to any value that you enter in a cell (turned on and off by choosing Tools→Options and then selecting/deselecting the Fixed Decimal Places check box on the Edit tab of the Options dialog box)

30 *Getting Around the Worksheet*

Getting Around the Worksheet

Regardless of your computer screen size and screen resolution, very little of the total worksheet is displayed at any one time. You may create a few spreadsheets that use only the portion of the sheet that's visible when you open it in Excel. Chances are, however, that most of your spreadsheets will be larger, either in terms of columns and rows of the worksheet, than the area that can be displayed at one time on your screen.

Because your average Excel spreadsheet is going to be too large to all fit on the screen at once, you need to move the cell pointer and scroll new parts into view almost any time you sit down to work with this software. This being the case, I suggest that you take a second to review some of the more important shortcuts for moving the cell pointer and scrolling the worksheet.

Excel 2003 gives you several different basic ways of moving the cell pointer to different parts of the worksheet:

- ◆ Keyboard via the arrow keys and special cursor keys (Home, End, Page Up, and Page Down) alone and in combination with the Ctrl key
- ◆ Mouse by moving new parts of the worksheet into view with the workbook window's scroll bars and then clicking the cell
- ◆ Use the Go To dialog box (which can be opened by pressing Ctrl+G or F5 or choosing Edit→Go To on the menu bar)
- ◆ Voice command using Excel's Speech Recognition feature (see the "Issuing Voice Commands" section later in this chapter)

Keyboarding

Excel offers you plenty of ways to move the cell pointer with the keyboard. The most obvious way is to press the four arrow keys to move the cell pointer one cell at a time in the arrow's direction. Table 1-2 lays out all your options for moving the cell pointer from the keyboard.

<i>Keystroke</i>	<i>Movement</i>
→ or Tab	Next cell to the right
← or Shift+Tab	Next cell to the left
↑	Next cell up
↓	Next cell down
Home	Cell in column A of whatever row contains the cell pointer
Ctrl+Home	First cell (A1) of the worksheet



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<i>Keystroke</i>	<i>Movement</i>
Ctrl+End or End, Home	Last cell in the active area of the worksheet
Page Up	Cell that's one screenful up in the current column
Page Down	Cell that's one screenful down in the current column
Ctrl+→ or End, →	First occupied cell to the right adjacent to a blank cell
Ctrl+← or End, ←	First occupied cell to the left adjacent to a blank cell
Ctrl+↑ or End, ↑	First occupied cell up adjacent to a blank cell
Ctrl+↓ or End, ↓	First occupied cell down adjacent to a blank cell

The keyboard shortcuts shown in Table 1-2 also automatically scroll the worksheet if scrolling is necessary to move to and select the cell. For example, suppose that the cell pointer is currently in the last column visible in the worksheet window. In this case, if you press Tab or the → key, Excel scrolls the worksheet one column to the right when it selects the next cell over. Likewise, if you press the Home key when the cell pointer is located in a column many columns to the right, Excel scrolls the entire screenful of data when it selects the cell in column A of the current row.

Among the many keystrokes for moving the cell pointer, the ones that combine the Ctrl or End key with an arrow key are among the most helpful for navigating large blocks of cells, such as tables, that span more than one screenful, or for moving between tables in a complex worksheet.

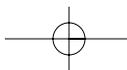


When you use Ctrl and an arrow key to move around a table or between tables in a worksheet, you hold down Ctrl as you press one of the four arrow keys. When you use End and an arrow key, you press and release End before you press the arrow key. Pressing and releasing the End key causes Excel to display the END indicator on the status bar, indicating that the program is waiting for you to press one of the four arrow keys. Because you can keep the Ctrl key depressed as you press different arrow keys, the Ctrl+arrow key method provides a faster, less disjointed means of navigating blocks of cells than the End, arrow key method.

Mousing around

To use the mouse to move the cell pointer around a worksheet, first use the workbook window's scroll bars to move the part of the worksheet with the cell you want to view in the document window and *then* click that cell to make it active.

To scroll the worksheet grid one row at a time, click the scroll arrows on the vertical scroll bar (click the up arrow to scroll up by a row and the down arrow to scroll down). To scroll the worksheet one column at a time, click the scroll arrows on the horizontal scroll bar (the left arrow to scroll left by a column and the right arrow to scroll right).



32 *Getting Around the Worksheet*



Seeing is *not* the same as selecting!

When using the mouse to move the cell pointer, don't forget it's simply not enough to scroll the cell that you want to work with into view. You still have click the cell in order to activate it. If you forget this essential step and start trying to enter data in the blank cell you're now staring

at, Excel will suddenly scroll you back to the cell in the earlier part of the worksheet that does contain the cell pointer, which is where the characters you've been busily typing away appear.

To scroll the worksheet one screen at a time, click the area on the scroll bar between the scroll box and the scroll arrows. To scroll the sheet up or down one screenful at a time, click the vertical scroll bar (above the scroll box to scroll up and below the scroll box to scroll down). To scroll the sheet left or right by one screenful, click the horizontal scroll bar (left of the scroll box to scroll left and right of the scroll box to scroll right).

For faster scrolling through a large worksheet, you can drag the scroll box. The size of the scroll box reflects the relative size of the *active area* of the worksheet. The active area is defined by the cell located at the intersection of the furthest column to the right and the row the furthest down in the worksheet that contains data entries (any cell in this column or row can contain the data entry — the cell at this intersection can, in fact, be empty).

Because the size of the worksheet's active area determines the relative size of the scroll box in both the vertical and horizontal scroll bar, it also indirectly determines how many columns and rows of the worksheet scroll as you drag the scroll box to a new position in the scroll bar. The bigger the active area, the faster you can scroll through it by dragging the scroll boxes in the vertical and horizontal scroll bars.

Go To

The Go To feature provides the most direct way to move to a distant cell or cell range in the worksheet. You can display the Go To dialog box, shown in Figure 1-9, by using any of the following techniques:

- ◆ Press Ctrl+G
- ◆ Press F5
- ◆ Choose Edit→Go To on the Excel menu bar

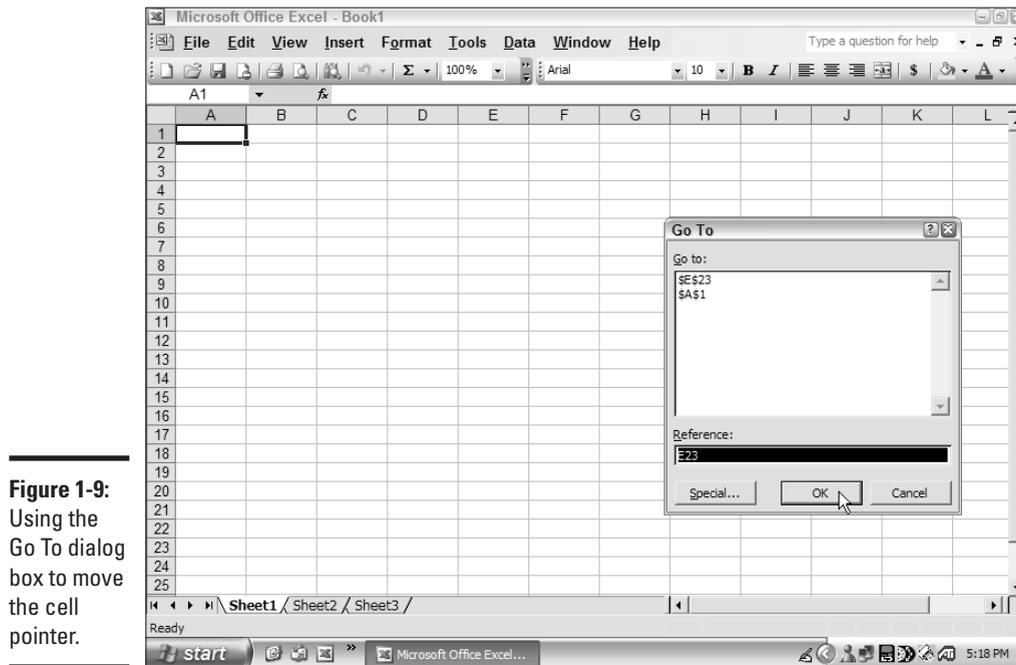


Figure 1-9: Using the Go To dialog box to move the cell pointer.

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To move the cell pointer to a particular cell in the worksheet, type its cell reference in the Reference text box, and then click OK or press Enter. Note that when you enter the cell reference, you can type the column letter(s) in upper- or lowercase.

Excel remembers the cell addresses of the cells that you visit and lists them in the Go To list box. The address of the very last cell that you selected is also automatically entered into the Reference text box. You can therefore quickly return to your previous place in a worksheet by pressing F5 and Enter. To return to another previously visited address in the list box of the Go To dialog box, simply double-click its address, or you can click the address and then click OK.

Navigating the Workbook

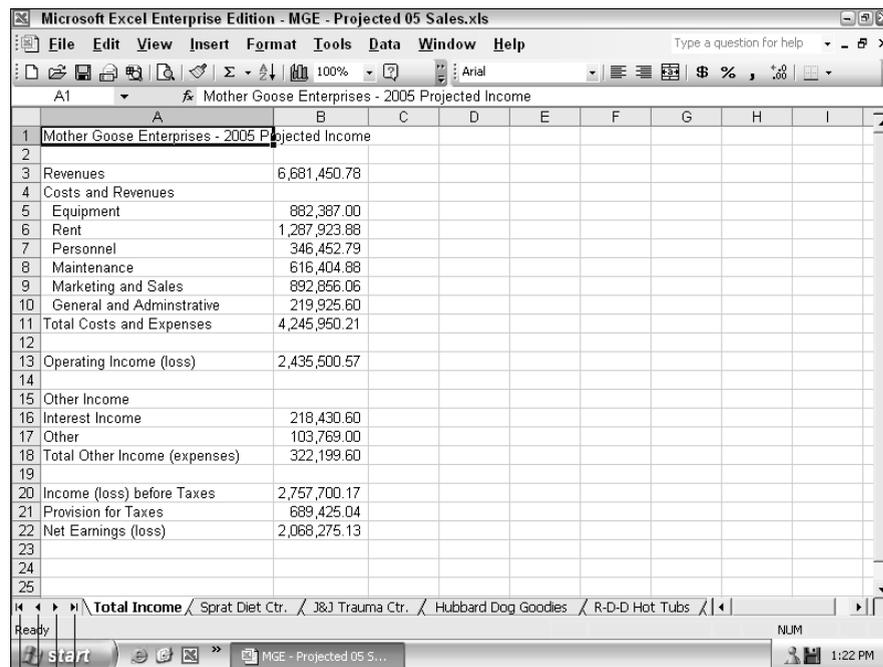
Each new workbook that you open in Excel contains three blank worksheets, which you can use as necessary in building your spreadsheet. Having more than one worksheet at your disposal enables you to separate different parts of a complex spreadsheet on individual worksheets in the

34 Navigating the Workbook

workbook (as you do individual sections of a complex report on different pages of a word-processed document). If you find it necessary, you can also easily insert additional worksheets into the workbook to accommodate new sections of data (see Book II, Chapter 4, for details).

To make it easy to move among the different sheets in a workbook, click the tabs located at the bottom of the workbook document window. Clicking a sheet's tab makes it active (meaning that its data is displayed in the work area as though the sheet were now sitting on top of the others in the workbook). You also find a series of tab scrolling buttons to the immediate left of the sheet tabs, which enable you to scroll through the sheet tabs in workbooks that contain more than the standard three worksheets. Figure 1-10, for example, shows a workbook that contains so many worksheets that not all their sheet tabs are visible at any one time at the bottom of the document window.

Figure 1-10:
Using the
tab scrolling
buttons to
scroll
through a
workbook
with more
than three
worksheets.



Last tab

Next tab

Previous tab

First tab

The following are a couple of ways to move from one worksheet to another within the current workbook:

- ◆ Click the tab for the sheet that you want at the bottom of the workbook's document window. If the sheet tab for the worksheet you want to move to isn't displayed, click the Next tab scroll button until the tab that you're looking for appears, and then click the sheet tab to activate the worksheet and display its data in the workbook document window. To redisplay a previous sheet tab, click the Previous tab instead.
- ◆ From the keyboard, hold down the Ctrl key as you press Page Down and Page Up to move from sheet to sheet. Pressing Ctrl+Page Down moves you to the same cell in the next sheet in the workbook. Pressing Ctrl+Page Up moves back up through the sheets in the workbook.



To scroll the last set of sheet tabs in a workbook into view, click the Last tab scroll button. To scroll the first set of sheet tabs into view, click the First tab button.

Making Menu Requests

Although the pull-down menus in Excel menu bar were specifically designed for using the mouse to select items, you can just as well use the keyboard if you prefer.

- ◆ To open a pull-down menu with the mouse, click the menu name. To display all the items on the menu, click the Continuation button at the bottom (indicated by two downward-pointing greater than symbols) or wait a few seconds. To select an item on the menu, click it. To open a cascading submenu attached to an item (indicated by a right-pointing triangle), highlight the item and then click the desired item on the submenu.
- ◆ To open a pull-down menu with the keyboard, press the Alt key plus the *hot key* (that is the letter that is underlined in the command). For example, pressing Alt+E opens the Edit menu. Alternatively, you can press F10 to activate the menu bar, press → or ← to select the desired menu, and then press ↓ to open the menu. To display all the items on the menu, press ↓ until you highlight the Expand button (the one at the bottom with downward pointing arrows) or wait a few seconds. To select a menu item, press ↓ to highlight it and then press Enter. To open a submenu attached to an item, press ↓ to highlight that item and then press → to open the submenu. To select an item from the cascading submenu, press ↓ to highlight it and then press Enter.

36 *Making Menu Requests*



If you're one of the few remaining Lotus 1-2-3 users on the planet who is finally switching to Excel, you'll be happy to know that you can also press the / (slash) key instead of F10 to activate the pull-down menus.

After you've opened a pull-down menu, you can select any of its menu items by clicking the item with the mouse, typing its hot key, or pressing the ↓ key until the item is highlighted and then pressing the Enter key.

Some Excel commands have shortcut keys assigned to them. The shortcut keys assigned to a command are shown after the item's name on the appropriate pull-down menu. If you prefer, you can use the shortcut keys to select the command instead of using the pull-down menus. For example, to save an Excel document, you can press the shortcut keys Shift+F12 or Ctrl+S instead of choosing the Save option on the File menu.

Can we talk?

When using the Excel pull-down menus, you'll find that the selection of many menu items results in the display of a dialog box offering you oodles of further options from which to choose instead of actually executing a command. You can always tell that selecting a particular menu item results in a dialog box of further options because the item name on the pull-down menu is followed by an *ellipsis* (...), or three periods in a row.

The controls found in the Excel dialog boxes comprise all the standard bells and whistles (actually buttons and boxes are more like it) that you find in any other Windows application (especially those in the Office 2003 suite). Complex dialog boxes, such as the Format Cells and the Options dialog box, offer so many options that they don't all fit in a single box. Therefore, these dialog boxes contain separate tabs that, after they are clicked, display a new slate of related options.

You can activate and/or select options in Excel's dialog boxes by clicking them, but don't forget that you can also do this by pressing the Tab key. If the options on a particular tab of a dialog box have hot keys (underlined letters), you can also select them by pressing the Alt key plus the letter key (note that you can't always just type the hot key letter because many dialog box options accept or respond to text entry).

When a menu item is off-limits

If a menu item appears in light gray on the menu (also referred to as being *dimmed*), this means that the item isn't currently available for selection because the conditions under which it operates are not yet in effect. For

example, the Paste item on the Edit menu remains dimmed as long as the Windows Clipboard is empty. As soon as you cut or copy some data to the Clipboard (with the Cut or Copy items on the Edit menu), the Paste menu item appears in normal bold type when you open the Edit menu, which lets you know that Paste is now ready to use.

When not all menu items are displayed

As Excel has become more and more sophisticated, the list of menu items on some of its pull-down menus has grown until they hang down almost to the bottom of the screen. In an attempt to tighten up the menus without dropping needed commands, Excel 2003 doesn't immediately display all the items on a given menu. You can always tell that you're looking at an abbreviated menu because a Continuation button (with two downward-pointing greater than symbols, one on top of the other) appears immediately beneath the very last menu item.

To display all the items on an abbreviated menu, you can either wait a few seconds or click this Continuation button. Note that, after you've expanded one menu to its full size, Excel automatically displays all items on any subsequent menus that you open (that is, until the next time you activate the menu bar). If you prefer having all the menu items displayed whenever you open any pull-down menu (which is a very good idea when you're first becoming familiar with its commands), you can switch from abbreviated to a full-menu setting.



When deciding whether you want to work with these abbreviated menus, remember that Excel doesn't always display the same items on the abbreviated menu each time you open it. Because Excel watches which of the items you choose most often on any given menu, it always tries to make sure that these items are displayed on the abbreviated menu. This means that menu items you seldom use will most certainly be hidden until you expand the menu to its full form. Take it from me — this can make it very difficult to find an occasionally used item when you're not 100 percent sure which menu it's on. It's so much easier to track down a wayward menu item when you know that you're looking at the full menus.

To switch to full menus so that Excel shows you all the menu items each and every time you open any of its menus, follow these few steps:

- 1. Right-click the menu bar (or somewhere on the Standard/Formatting toolbar).**

A long shortcut menu appears.

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2. **Choose the Customize item at the very bottom of the shortcut menu by clicking it or pressing C.**

The Customize dialog box appears with the Options tab selected.

3. **Click the Always Show Full Menus check box on the Options tab.**

This action automatically deselects and deactivates the Show Full Menus After a Short Delay check box (which now becomes dimmed).

4. **Click the Close button to close the Customize dialog box.**

Shortcut menus

In addition to the full-blown pull-down menus you find on the Excel menu bar, the program offers a variety of specialized menus, called *shortcut menus*. Shortcut menus are attached to individual screen objects that you routinely encounter in the Excel window, such as the toolbars, worksheet cells, column and row headers, and sheet tabs.

To open an object's shortcut menu, simply right-click the object. An object's shortcut menu contains only menu items that are relevant to that object. For example, if you right-click one of the toolbars, the shortcut menu that appears contains only menu items for viewing and hiding and customizing the various Excel toolbars. Likewise, if you right-click one of the worksheet tabs, the shortcut menu that appears contains only menu items for doing stuff with sheet tabs, such as inserting and deleting tabs, renaming tabs, moving and copying tabs, and so on.

Figure 1-11 shows the shortcut menu that's attached to every cell in the worksheet. You can view the menu by right-clicking a cell or pressing Shift+F10. In the figure, you can see that items on shortcut menus often have hot keys (such as the m in the Insert Comment item). You can press the hot key letter (such as M) on your keyboard to select that item. Just be aware that you still need to press Enter to actually invoke the command attached to that item.



Shortcut menus are invaluable when working with hyperlinks and graphic objects that are embedded in a worksheet, such as charts, comments, Clip Art, and other types of pictures. This is because shortcut menus give you fast, direct access to just the menu options you need in order to edit that particular kind of object. See Book VIII, Chapter 2, for details on using links and Book V, Chapters 1 and 2, for information on adding charts and graphics to the worksheet.

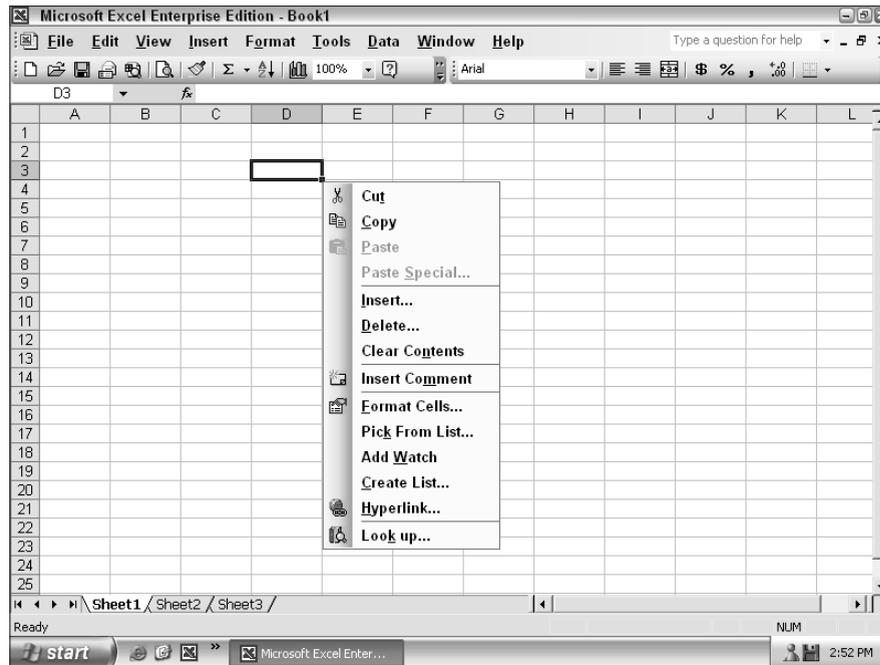


Figure 1-11: Right-clicking a cell to open its shortcut menu.

Issuing Voice Commands

Excel 2003 supports a Speech Recognition feature, which enables you to issue voice commands that allow you to choose menu items, dialog box options, or even toolbar buttons by simply saying their names. According to Microsoft, to use speech recognition in Excel, your computer must be at least a Pentium II running at a minimum speed of 300 MHz with a minimum of 128MB of RAM.

You also need a top-quality microphone, preferably one that's attached to a headset (like the kind office receptionists typically use). The giveaway microphones that come with today's PCs are just not sensitive enough for speech recognition. These mics tend to pick up stray sounds that make it impossible to correctly process your voice commands.

For information on how to use the Dictation portion of the Speech Recognition feature to do data entry in your worksheet, see Book II, Chapter 1. While you're there, you can look up information on how to use the Text To Speech feature (a separate, but related new speech feature unique to Excel 2003) to validate the data entries that you make in a worksheet.

40 *Issuing Voice Commands*

Installing and training the Speech Recognition feature

If you or the person who installed Office 11 on your computer performed a Standard installation, then Speech Recognition won't be installed until you first try to use the feature in Excel 2003 (or one of the other Office programs such as Word or PowerPoint). To install Speech Recognition, have your Office 11 CD-ROM handy and follow these steps:

1. Choose Tools⇨Speech⇨Speech Recognition on the Excel menu bar.

An Alert dialog box displays, indicating that this feature isn't currently installed and asking if you want to install it now.

2. Click the Yes button in the Alert dialog box.

Excel displays an Installing Components for Microsoft Excel dialog box, which is then replaced by a Microsoft Office 2003 dialog box, telling you to insert the Microsoft Office 2003 disk.

3. Insert the CD with your Microsoft Office 2003 programs in the CD-ROM drive and then click OK.

Excel installs the Speech Recognition components while displaying its progress in an Installing Components for Excel dialog box.

Upon completion of this installation, a Welcome to Speech Recognition dialog box appears, indicating that you must adjust your microphone and train Office for speech recognition.

4. To do this adjustment and training, you need to have your microphone and speakers properly hooked up. You also need about 15 minutes of uninterrupted time and a fairly quiet environment.

5. If you already have Speech Recognition installed, you can do this training by clicking the Tools button on the Language bar (Tools⇨Speech⇨Speech Recognition) and then clicking the Training option on its pop-up menu.

6. Click the Next button and then follow the on-screen instructions displayed in the Microphone and Voice Training Wizards.

After you complete this initial microphone adjustment and speech recognition training, a new window appears with a brief multimedia presentation explaining how to make the best use of the Office 2003 Speech Recognition features. After that finishes playing, you're ready to begin using speech recognition for both entering data and issuing Excel voice commands.



If you're serious about using speech recognition to do data entry or to choose Excel commands, you should complete more than just the initial voice training because the more training you do, the higher the recognition accuracy rate. You can do more training sessions by clicking the More Training button that appears in the final Voice Training dialog box at the end of your initial training session. You can also do this at any later time by choosing **Tools**⇨**Speech**⇨**Speech Recognition** to display the Language bar, and then clicking the Tools button on this bar and Training on its pop-up menu. In the Training dialog box, you can select the passage that you want to read. By eventually reading all the training sessions, you can really increase your accuracy rate, especially when dictating the data that you want entered in your spreadsheet.

Saying commands

After you've completed basic voice training, you can start using the Speech Recognition feature to issue your menu, toolbar, and dialog box selections verbally. To issue voice commands, you only need to display the Language bar and then put Speech Recognition into Voice Command mode. When you display the Language bar, it remains a floating toolbar on the Excel window at all times (see the next section, "Taking the Toolbars to Task," for details) unless you minimize the bar. When you do this, Excel adds the buttons on the Language bar to the Windows XP taskbar (immediately to the left of the Notifications area that contains the clock and icons for other items that are running). By minimizing the Language bar on the Windows taskbar, you ensure that its buttons are always out of the way of the Excel screen so that you don't ever have to interrupt your speaking to move the floating Language bar out of the way.

To open the Language bar, minimize it on the Windows XP taskbar, and then get it into Voice Command mode, follow these steps:

1. Choose **Tools⇨**Speech**⇨**Speech Recognition** to display the Language bar.**

Excel opens the floating Language bar in the middle of the Excel window.

2. Click the Minimize button (the one with the minus sign icon) at the right end of the floating Language bar.

Excel adds all the buttons currently displayed on the Language toolbar to the right side of the Windows taskbar.

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3. Click the Voice Command button on the Language bar that now appears on the Windows XP taskbar, shown in Figure 1-12.

Note that you can also say, “voice command,” to select this button. You can tell that the Language bar is in Voice Command mode because the words *Voice Command* replace *Starting Speech* or *Listening* in the Language bar’s Mode Indicator (the button with the balloon almost midway in the bar).

After Speech Recognition is selected, you’re ready to command your little heart out.

Choosing menu items, dialog box options, and toolbar buttons

To choose pull-down menus or to select buttons on an open toolbar (such as the Standard or Formatting toolbar), say the menu and item name or the toolbar’s button name. For example, to choose File→Save on the pull-down menus to save changes to the current workbook, you say “file,” and then when Excel opens the File menu, you say “save” to choose the Save menu item. Alternately, you can just say, “save,” if you want Excel to simply select the Save button on the Standard toolbar.

If you say a menu command that opens a dialog box, you can select its tabs or options by saying their names. For example, if you say, “format,” and then say, “cells,” the Format Cells dialog box opens. You can select the Font tab in this dialog box by saying, “font,” and then you can select the Strikethrough check box option by saying, “strikethrough.” To then close the Format Cells dialog box and apply the strikethrough attribute to the entry in the currently selected cell(s), say, “Okay.” To close a dialog box without putting into effect any of the options that you changed, say, “cancel,” instead (you can also say, “escape,” to close a dialog box without making changes).

Keep in mind that you can use Voice Command to select the dialog box option that you want to change. Say, “tab,” to have Excel advance through each of the options displayed on the current tab of a dialog box, selecting each option as it goes. When the dialog box option that you want to change is selected (indicated by highlighting in the case of text boxes and combo boxes, and dotted outlining in the case of radio buttons and check boxes), you can then say the new value or suspend Voice Command and enter the new value manually.

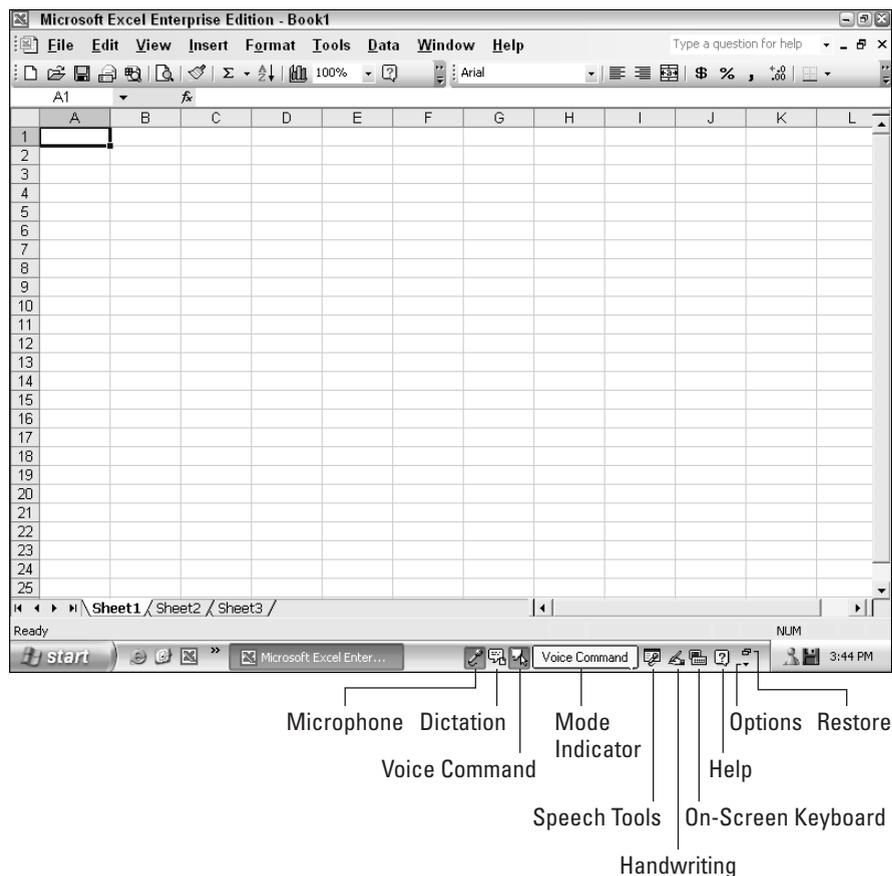
If you need to enter a new value in one of the text boxes in a dialog box (or select a value in a pop-up list when you don’t already know its name), you must first turn off Voice Command temporarily and then enter or select the new value with the keyboard or mouse. To turn off Voice Command, simply click the Microphone button on the Language bar, thus causing the bar to

hide the Dictation and Voice Recognition buttons. To resume giving voice commands after you have entered or selected the new value, click the Microphone button on the Language bar a second time.



Don't forget to turn off Voice Command before you start clicking objects in the Excel window with the mouse or typing something from the keyboard, because if you do — mark my words — you stand a good chance of having Voice Command decide that your mouse clicks or typing sounds like some Excel menu command or toolbar button. Having Excel choose a harmless command that you're not expecting can be bad enough, but having the program choose one that alters your worksheet can be devastating (usually when I forget to first turn off Voice Command, it responds by having Excel open up a new, blank worksheet, which totally throws me off because the worksheet with all my data is suddenly no longer on-screen!).

Figure 1-12:
Click the Voice Command button on the Language bar to speak Excel commands.



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Note that the effects of many of the Excel commands that you choose (whether you do this by voice, keyboard or mouse) are reversible by immediately using the program's Undo command. (Some commands, such as saving changes in a document, are not reversible, however.) If Speech Recognition ever messes up and chooses the wrong menu command, toolbar button, or dialog box option, immediately say, "undo." Because Excel supports multiple levels of undo, you may have to repeat the word several times to get your worksheet back to the desired state.

Telling the cell pointer where to go

You can use Voice Command to move the cell pointer to new cells in the worksheet by saying the following words and phrases:

- ◆ "Right" or "right arrow" to move the cell pointer one column to the right
- ◆ "Left" or "left arrow" to move the cell pointer one column to the left
- ◆ "Up" or "up arrow" to move the cell pointer one row up
- ◆ "Down" or "down arrow" to move the cell pointer one row down
- ◆ "Home" to move the cell pointer to the beginning of the line
- ◆ "End," and then pause before you say the name of an arrow key ("up," "down," "left," or "right") to move the cell pointer to the edge of the next data region or worksheet boundary in that direction



You have a much better chance of having Excel's Speech Recognition feature understand your meaning if you say a phrase such as "left arrow" and "up arrow" rather than just saying solitary words such as "left" and "up."

Taking the Toolbars to Task

The Standard and Formatting toolbars that share the second row of the Excel window are by no means the only toolbars with which you'll be working. The program comes with a whole carload of ready-made toolbars that you can display or hide at any time while using the program. The easiest way to display a hidden toolbar is to right-click somewhere on the menu bar or on one of the already displayed toolbars (such as the Standard or Formatting toolbar), and then click the toolbar's name on the shortcut menu that appears. You can also display a toolbar by choosing View⇨Toolbars and then choosing the toolbar's name on the cascading menu that appears.

In Excel, as with the Office programs, the toolbars that you display in the Excel window can be docked or free-floating. A *docked toolbar* is positioned either above the formula bar or on the left, right, or below the active document window (the Standard and Formatting toolbars are both docked side

by side on the row below the menu bar). A *floating toolbar* is displayed in its own window complete with title bar and Control menu button. Unlike a docked toolbar that remains stationary at the perimeter of the worksheet window, you can move and resize a floating toolbar as you want within the active document window.

To undock a docked toolbar, simply position the mouse pointer on the dotted vertical bar in front of the very first button, and when the pointer changes into a four-headed arrow, drag the toolbar toward the center of the work area. As soon as the title bar appears, you can release the mouse button.

To dock a floating toolbar, simply position the mouse pointer somewhere on its title bar, and when the pointer changes to a four-headed arrow, drag the toolbar to one of the four edges of the screen. As soon as the toolbar's title bar disappears, you can release the mouse button. When docking a floater in an area that already contains other docked toolbars (such as the top area that already contains the Standard and Formatting toolbar on the same row), you can then reposition it on a new row by dragging it by the light gray vertical bar in front of the first button.

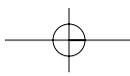
After you've undocked a toolbar, you can then move the newly floating toolbar around the Excel work area by dragging the title bar. You can also modify the shape of the toolbar window. To do this, position the pointer on either the right edge or the bottom edge of the toolbar window. When the pointer changes to a double-headed arrow, you then drag the mouse to change the shape of the toolbar.

If you've positioned the pointer on the right edge of the toolbar window, drag to the left to make the window narrower and longer or to the right to make the window wider and shorter. If you've positioned the pointer on the bottom edge of the window, you can accomplish the same thing by dragging the mouse down or up. Excel increases or decreases the number of rows of tools in the toolbar window to accommodate the change in shape.

To return a floating toolbar window to its previously docked position, simply double-click the toolbar. If you have modified the shape of a toolbar before you return the toolbar to its docked position, the toolbar automatically resumes this shape the next time you undock the toolbar. If you want to remove a toolbar window from the work area without docking it, click the Close button on the toolbar window. If you close a toolbar window without docking it, the toolbar resumes its previous position and shape in the work area the next time you display the toolbar.



In addition to moving and reshaping a toolbar, you can also customize the tools that it contains and even create your own toolbars. For complete information on how to customize Excel toolbars, refer to Book I, Chapter 3.



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