

Chapter 1

Introducing the New Office

How exciting is this? You've just purchased the latest version of Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac, and you can't wait to jump in and see what you can do! Now what? Turns out, this software package is huge and maybe a little daunting because it features myriad improvements to the overall appearance and functionality of the individual programs. How do you begin learning your way around? That's where this book can help. Whether you're simply upgrading from a previous version of Office for Mac, or you're a brand-new user starting with Office for the first time, this book can assist you as you encounter brand-new program features or old tried-and-true techniques. It can even show you some new tricks to make your work easier than ever before.

This chapter gives you an overview of the Office 2008 programs, what to expect as you open each one, and what to look out for regarding new features and tools. You'll learn all the ways you can use the programs to accomplish your work at home or at the office. So what are you waiting for? Jump in!

What Is Office 2008?

At its very core, Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac is a suite of programs you can use for a variety of situations and projects, at home and at work. Whether you need a word processor to type a letter, a spreadsheet program to juggle number data, a presentation program to create slide show presentations, or a personal information manager to track your schedule and send e-mail, you can find it all in Office 2008 for Mac.

Here are just a few things you can do with Office 2008 for Mac:

- Create reports for work or school
- Track and balance a home budget

IN THIS CHAPTER

Microsoft Office suite explained

Office history in a nutshell

New and improved features to learn

- Log sales figures for an entire department of employees and create productivity charts
- Build slide show presentations for work or school
- E-mail friends, family, and colleagues
- Keep an inventory of home items
- Organize and track a large inventory of products for a company
- Create a flyer or handout
- Present a marketing plan
- Schedule important appointments and calendar dates
- Organize a to-do list for a work project or a home shopping list for the grocery store
- Analyze numerical data and build powerful formulas for manipulating numbers
- Create a Web page

Perhaps this small list is enough to whet your appetite. This tiny list is just the tip of the Office iceberg; I can't begin to list the many things you can do with the programs, and chances are good that you'll find some new things to do with the programs after you've familiarized yourself with each one and set out to use them to get your work done. After all, isn't that why we use computers anyway—to get our work done and to make life easier? Sadly, when it comes to software, the word “easy” isn't necessarily the best adjective for describing anything related to computers. It's certainly not always easy to navigate complex programs and figure out how or where to find the command you need to accomplish a task. Rest assured, after you learn a thing or two about the Office programs, you will indeed find it easier to venture out and create your own list of things to do with your computer. First things first, though.

What is Office 2008 exactly? The four main programs of the suite include Word 2008, Excel 2008, PowerPoint 2008, and Entourage 2008. If you purchased Office 2008 for Mac at the store or online, one of the first things you probably had to figure out was which “flavor” to buy. Office 2008 for Mac comes in three versions for purchase: Office 2008 for Mac (the Standard Edition), Office 2008 for Mac Home and Student Edition, and Office 2008 for Mac Special Media Edition. All three versions include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Entourage. All three also include Messenger for Mac, a free instant-messaging application.

At the lower price end of the spectrum, the Mac Home and Student edition sticks with just the basics: the four main programs, plus Messenger for Mac. The middle price point edition, simply named Office 2008 for Mac, adds Microsoft Exchange Server support and Automator Actions for workflows. At the top end of the price spectrum, the Mac Special Media Edition adds Microsoft Exchange Server support, Automator Actions, and Microsoft Expression Media, a digital asset management program you can use to catalog and organize all the digital media on your computer, such as photo files and video clips. This book covers Office 2008 for Mac Special Media Edition, just to cover the full gamut.

Let's look at each of the main programs individually so you can see what you're up against.

Word 2008

Microsoft Word 2008 is a word-processing program. Figure 1.1 shows you what the Word program window looks like. As its name implies, you use the program to work with words—typing and editing documents. Use Word to create letters, reports, manuscripts, thesis papers, memos, brochures, newsletters, and so on. Word can handle all your text-related projects. However, Word doesn't end with words: You can use it to create media-rich documents with graphics, themes, tables, and more. The new page-layout feature lets you build complex graphical documents. Learn more about using Word in Part II, “Working with Word.”

Excel 2008

Microsoft Excel 2008 is a spreadsheet program, which is a fancy way of saying its purpose is handling and crunching numbers. You can use the program to organize number data, create formulas for manipulating the number data, turn number data into exciting charts and graphs, and so on. Excel is perfect for building and tracking inventories, whipping up financial reports, presenting sales reports, figuring out budgets and loans—basically anything related to number juggling. Figure 1.2 shows the Excel program window. Learn more about using Excel in Part III, “Using Excel.”

FIGURE 1.1

Microsoft Word 2008

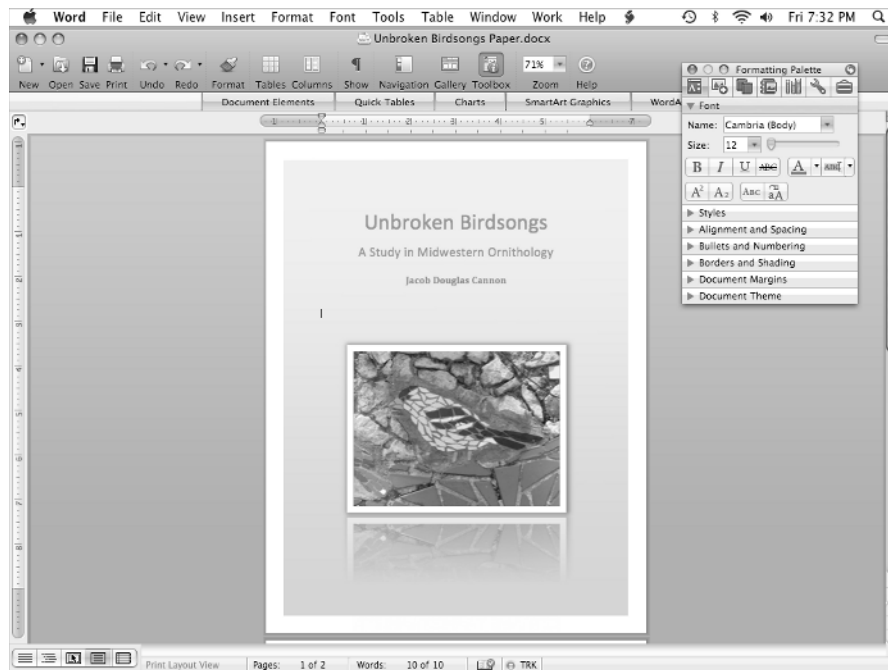
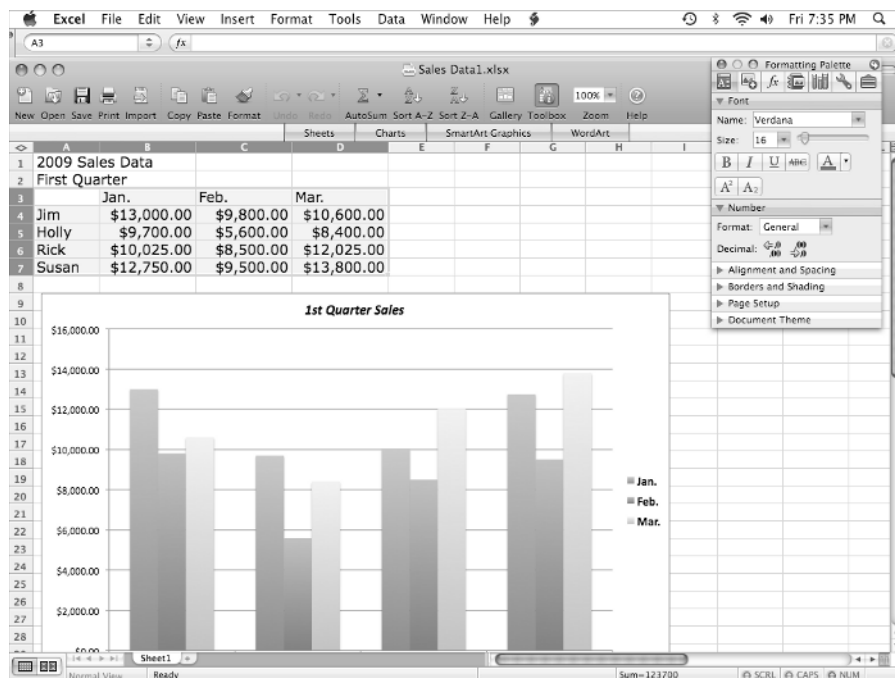


FIGURE 1.2

Microsoft Excel 2008

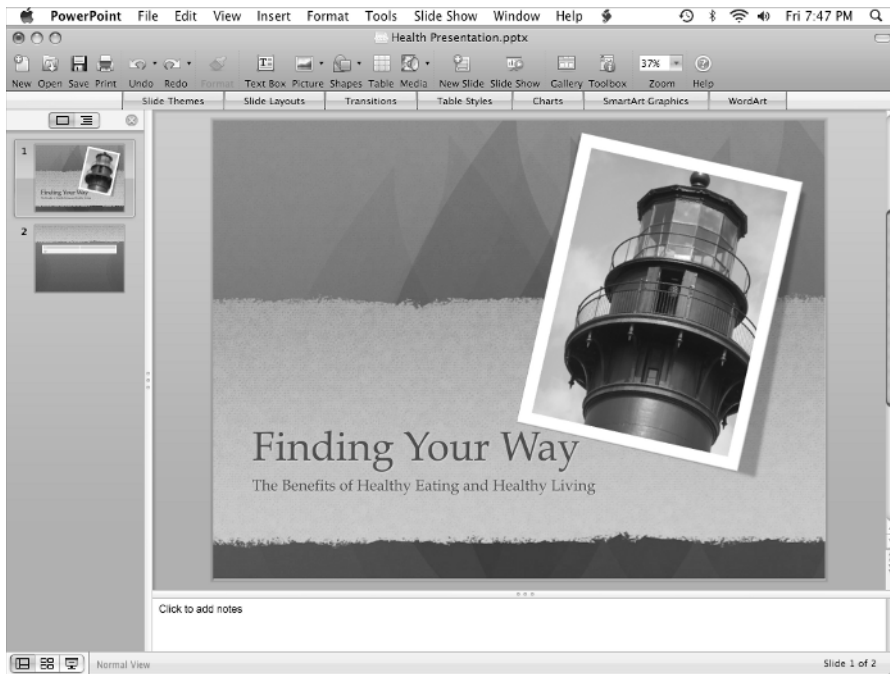


PowerPoint 2008

Microsoft PowerPoint 2008 is a presentation program. You can use it to present information to an audience, whether it's a live audience, an online audience, or a single viewer. You can use PowerPoint to present a marketing campaign, a school book report, a training course, a class lecture—pretty much anything you need to present to an audience on a screen. The screen can be a computer screen, a projection screen, or even a screen in a kiosk. Much like the electronic version of a slide show, you can use PowerPoint to present your audience with text, graphics, and digital media elements (such as video and audio clips) to explain concepts, strategies, content, and more. As a visual medium, PowerPoint is a very powerful way to get a message across and grab the attention of the targeted viewer. Figure 1.3 shows an example of the PowerPoint program window. Learn more about using PowerPoint in Part IV, “Presenting with PowerPoint.”

FIGURE 1.3

Microsoft PowerPoint 2008

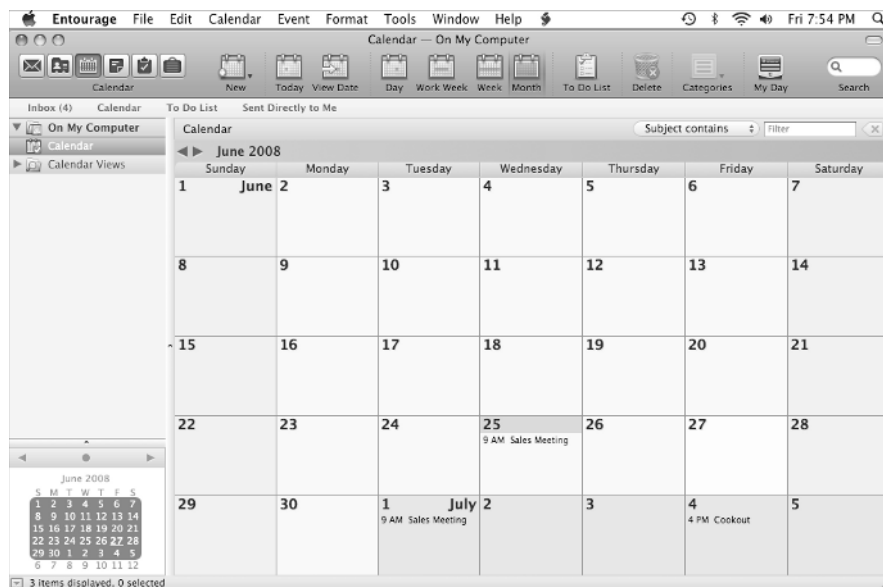


Entourage 2008

Microsoft Entourage 2008 is a personal information manager program, combining both an e-mail client and a project manager application. In layman's terms, it's like an electronic personal organizer that helps you keep track of e-mail, appointments, to-do lists, notes, projects, and your address book, all in one convenient location. You can quickly jump from sending e-mail to a colleague to setting an appointment on your daily calendar to jotting down a note about an upcoming task, all in the same program window. Like an electronic personal assistant, Entourage can help you keep your busy life ordered and on track. Figure 1.4 shows an example of the Entourage program window. Learn more about using Entourage in Part V, "Working with Entourage."

FIGURE 1.4

Microsoft Entourage 2008



Learning a Little Office History

How about a little back story on Microsoft Office? Sometimes it's interesting to see where computer programs have come from in order to appreciate where they are today in terms of technology and advancements. As it turns out, Microsoft Office has a very rich history. Because Microsoft is so synonymous with Windows, you might think the original Office programs were created for Windows PCs, yes? No. The very first Office suite was created for the Apple Macintosh back in 1989. It was later introduced to Windows users in 1990. The Office suite started out as an interrelated set of desktop applications, called a productivity suite. The very first versions bundled Word, Excel, and PowerPoint together, or Windows users could buy a professional version that included Access and Schedule Plus (neither of which were available for Mac users).

Prior to the bundling of the programs, users previously had to purchase the applications separately. Each program has its own rich history, but at the first "suite" bundle, Word was already up to version 4.0, Excel was version 2.20, and PowerPoint was 2.01. Since that time, each program and bundling suite has made massive progress in features, tools, appearance, and integration. As time progressed, the Office suite evolved to include the Internet Explorer browser, Outlook Express (an e-mail application), and finally Entourage (the Mac version of the popular Windows Outlook program). In addition to the evolving core programs, the software evolved along with the ever-changing computer technologies, changing in appearance and behind-the-scenes functionality.

Incredibly enough, Microsoft Office for Mac has undergone a total of ten manifestations over the course of its history. The last big release of the Office suite for Mac was back in 2004, following the Windows version for Office XP. Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac is the latest big release, nearly coinciding with Office 2007 for

Windows, another monumental release date in Office history. The Windows version features a completely new interface and a new Office Open XML-based file format, which results in the new .docx, .xlsx, and .pptx file extensions for saved document, workbook, and presentation files.

Just in case you ever find yourself on TV's *Jeopardy* game show, here are some little known facts about the individual programs that make up Office 2008 for Mac:

- Word began life in the early 80s as a simple word processor called Multi-Tool Word for Xenix systems and then crossed over to the DOS and Macintosh platforms using the name Word. At first, Word lagged behind its nearest competitor, WordPerfect, but when it switched to a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) interface, it soon began leading the pack in the software arena.
- Excel was first initiated as a Microsoft-authored program called Multiplan back in 1982 and was later called Excel. In the beginning, it fought for popularity against Lotus 1-2-3, but when Lotus was slow to release a Windows version of its program, Excel gained the lead in popularity and hasn't stopped yet.
- PowerPoint started out as Presenter in 1987, a black-and-white presentation program for creating overhead transparencies, and then became a full-color program. Presenter was later purchased by Microsoft and dubbed PowerPoint.
- Entourage, the newest member of the Office suite for Mac, came along in 2000 and was added to the suite of Office programs in 2001.

As you can guess, marketing, timing, and ever fickle computer users play an important part of the software popularity race. Who knows what the future will bring in the next versions of these programs and bundles? In the meantime, as the latest and greatest version of this widely used set of programs, Office 2008 for Mac has garnered lots of interest and excitement, and it continues to dominate the marketplace today. Are you ready to find out what all the fuss is about? The next section explains what's new and improved in Office 2008 for Mac.

Discovering What's New and Improved in Office

As all good consumers, we're forever wowed by the latest gadgets and technology, and when it comes to our software, we expect new bells and whistles with each new release. The new Office 2008 for Mac is no exception to this commercial rule of thumb, and as you'll soon see, it combines the best of your favorite Office features with the new Mac OS X-style for a very pleasant overhaul of what was already a best-selling suite of programs. So what's new? You're about to find out.

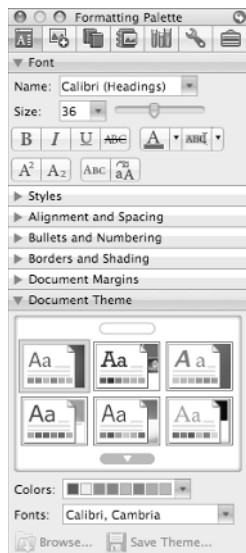
Overall, you'll see a fresh, new appearance in the user interface for all the programs and much less untidiness than in previous versions. The floating toolbars of previous versions that tended to obscure and clutter your view have been replaced with a single toolbox of task-related palettes that you summon with a click. (In case you're worried, all your old familiar toolbars are still available, if you want them.) Basically, the developers have merged the old Toolbox with the Formatting Palette to create a very useful new Toolbox panel that holds more than just formatting tools.

Speaking of the new Toolbox, you'll find improvements to the features within. For example, the Formatting Palette, shown in Figure 1.5, now features a Document Theme pane with easy access to professional-looking color schemes and styles. The Object Palette now offers easier browsing for shapes, clip art, photos from the iPhoto Library, and larger, easier-to-read symbols. The Reference Tools Palette has added an integrated

Encarta Encyclopedia lookup and bilingual dictionaries. The new Citations Palette available in the Word Toolbox helps you make quick work of managing citations and bibliographies in your documents. There are more changes than listed, but many are simply subtle tweaks in appearance and how much real estate is consumed by the box.

FIGURE 1.5

Check out Word's new Toolbox.



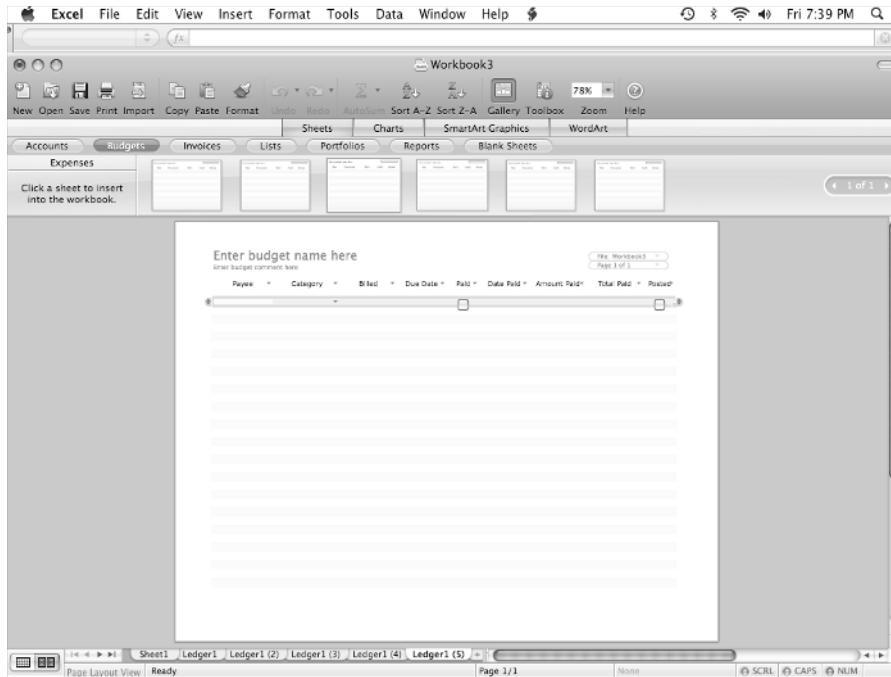
Another new feature available throughout Office (with the exception of Entourage) is the new Elements Gallery, shown in Figure 1.6. It places a unique variety of drop-in elements you can quickly put to use in your files, ranging from charts and tables to WordArt objects, all within easy access below the default toolbar. These preset elements can really help speed up the time you spend creating documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. Some of the elements are program-specific. For example, Word's Elements Gallery offers drop-in elements commonly found in word-processing documents, while Excel's Gallery features elements for budgets, checkbooks, and invoices. Be sure to spend some time checking out the many elements available. Between these and the new templates found in the Office Project Gallery, you may never have to build another document, workbook, or presentation from scratch again.

What's Gone from Office 2008?

Sadly, VBA (Visual Basics for Applications), the scripting system used by many businesses to automate workflow, is no longer available. However, Automator, which was introduced with Mac OS X 10.4 "Tiger," lets you easily build workflows by placing commonly used AppleScript tasks in a graphical user interface, which you can learn more about at www.microsoft.com/mac.

FIGURE 1.6

The new Elements Gallery is found in Excel.



The Office SmartArt graphics feature, shown in Figure 1.7, lets you create spiffy info-based diagrams, charts, and other graphic elements to help you show the relationship between items. You can quickly insert a graphic to show a cycle, process flow, or hierarchy. Pick a diagram style, and fill in the placeholder text with your own text to create a tailored info graphic.

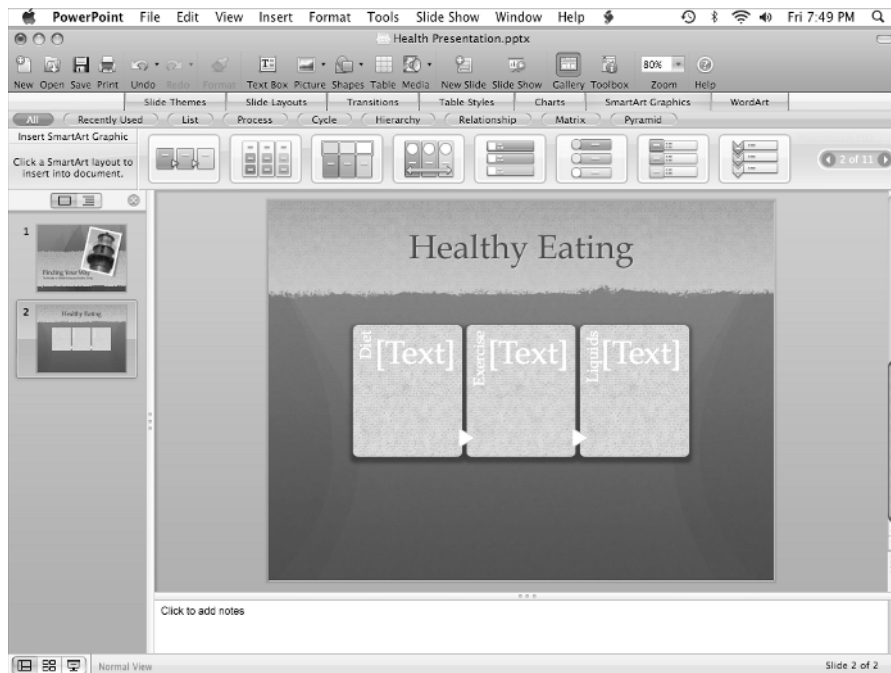
Microsoft has made radical improvements to the Office Help system. You can now connect to the online Help files for the latest information, or toggle between online and offline help with a click of a button. You'll find the Help system easy to navigate and exceedingly fast. Learn more about using the Office Help system in Chapter 4.

You can also now save your work in PDF format, making it even easier to share your files across platforms and across the Internet. While we're on the subject of saving files, another big improvement in Office 2008 is that it supports the new Office Open XML format, a free and open international standard document format for word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation documents. Essentially, this means the specs behind document creation make it easier for all programs to extract information about the document, or to put it more plainly—it is file compatible with Microsoft Office 2007 for Windows. This is very good news, indeed. The XML format is based on the eXtensible Markup Language, which Web pages use. For the end user, this means you'll see new file extensions for the files you save in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and you'll be able to swap files with Windows Office users without effort.

You'll find plenty of more new features to get excited about, so let's keep going and look at the major ones for each program.

FIGURE 1.7

The SmartArt graphics feature is found in PowerPoint.



Word

One of the biggest changes to Microsoft Word is the new Publishing Layout tool. Comparable to Microsoft Publisher for Windows, this new view mode in Word actually switches you over to a built-in desktop publishing application. Here you can choose from a library of publication templates and create professional-looking newsletters, brochures, flyers, invitations, programs, business cards, postcards, catalogs, awards, and menus. With a few quick clicks, you're on your way to filling in the template's placeholder text with your own and producing a polished document on par with anything produced by a professional agency or printing company. You can learn more about this new feature in Chapter 6.

As mentioned previously, another new feature is the drop-in document elements you can add to your Word documents. You can quickly insert a cover page, a table of contents page, a snazzy header or footer, or a bibliography. In previous versions of Word, you had to labor over inserting these elements and getting them to appear just right in your document. Now, they're preset and ready to go through the Elements Gallery. Learn more about using document elements in Chapter 6.

Among the Office Project Gallery's tabs, you can find dozens of professionally designed templates to create all kinds of business and home-use documents. As with any template, you can customize it to suit your needs.

Excel

You can now insert preformatted ledger sheets, found in the new Elements Gallery, to handle common Excel tasks. For example, you can find sheets for inventory lists, checkbook registers, budgets, stock tracking reports, and more. In the past, users painstakingly built such documents on their own; now they're available with a quick click. No doubt, you'll find them a big time-saver.

Excel also sports a new Formula Builder tool to help you whip up formulas without needing to memorize functions and proper syntax. It's now easier than ever before to find the function you want to apply using a combination help system/wizard.

Related to the new Formula Builder, Excel also now offers a function-based AutoComplete tip box when typing formulas. As you start typing, Excel displays a list of possible matching functions. The Formula AutoComplete feature is a much-needed element to the Excel feature list.

PowerPoint

Like the other two programs, PowerPoint's new Elements Gallery offers lots of slide themes and custom slide layouts that you can apply, giving you greater versatility and design choice than ever before. PowerPoint also embraces improvements to the Toolbox and the slide show Presenter tools. You can utilize the new Custom Animation tool in the Toolbox to quickly animate slide elements. You can use the Presenter tools for dual-screen setups now, plus the navigation arrows are side by side to save you mouse movements onscreen. If your computer has an Apple Remote, you can use it to navigate a slide show without having to click the mouse.

You also can now send slides to iPhoto using the Save as Pictures command. From iPhoto, you can easily move the pictures to a video iPod for presenting on a video projector or television.

Entourage

Microsoft has tweaked Entourage to include a much-improved search feature, better junk e-mail filters, an improved Calendar interface, enhanced To Do list, and customizable toolbars. A real bright spot in Entourage is the new My Day feature. It gives you an at-a-glance reference to your appointments and tasks for the day, even if the Entourage program is closed.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned about the individual components that make up the Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac suite. You also learned a little history about the Office suite and the major changes that occurred prior to the current version covered by this book. Finally, you took a quick look at the various new and improved features and tools available across the Office suite as well as in individual programs. The whole Office world now awaits you, so you'd better get started.

