



OUT BEHIND THE BARN DANS LE FEU DE L'ACTION

An Excel balancing act

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The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet program (part of Microsoft Office, Microsoft, Corp.) is a useful tool for doing calculations and other “number crunching” tasks. This article demonstrates some of Excel’s basic features by showing you how to create a spreadsheet to balance your chequebook. The instructions are based on the Excel 2002 version, but will be similar for other versions.

GETTING STARTED

Start the Excel program. It will automatically display a blank “workbook” with the name “Book1.xls”. Click on the “Save” icon, give the file a new name and then select a folder where the file should be stored.

SPREADSHEETS AND WORKSHEETS

In each new workbook file, Excel displays 3 blank “worksheets” labelled Sheet 1, Sheet 2 and Sheet 3. You can move to a different worksheet by left-clicking on its tab at the bottom of the screen. By right-clicking on the tab, you can rename, copy, move or delete any worksheet.

ROWS, COLUMNS AND CELLS

Each box in a worksheet is called a “cell”. Columns are labelled with letters and rows with numbers, giving each cell a unique address (e.g., A1 or B13). In Figure 1, there are 2 columns (A–B) and 13 rows (1–13). In calculations, a “range” of cells is defined by listing the first and last cell names, separated by a colon. In Figure 1 the range of the first

row is “A1:B1”, the range of the first column is “A1:A13” and the range of the entire table is “A1:B13”.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

To make a worksheet like Figure 1, click inside box A1 and then type the word “Statement” (without quotation marks). The content of the current cell are duplicated in the “Function (fx)” window at the top of the worksheet. To edit the contents of any cell, use the function window. Next, enter “Deposits”, “Subtotal”, “Withdrawals”, “Subtotal” and “Balance” in cells A3, A6, A8, A11 and A13, respectively. Last, enter a zero in cells A4–A5, A9–A10, B1, B6, B11 and B13.

FORMAT THE CELLS

Excel can display a cell’s contents in different formats. In our example, we need to change all cells with a zero to the “Currency” format. Click in cell B1, hold down the left mouse button and then drag the mouse down until cells B1–B13 are highlighted. Release the mouse button then click on “Format” in the main menu bar. In the pop-up window, click on “Cells” then on the “Number” tab. Click on the “Currency” option and then on “OK”. Do the same for cells A4–A5 and A9–A10. This reformats all of the “zero” boxes to display a dollar sign and 2 decimal places.

ENTER YOUR DATA

Click in box B1 and type in \$1000.00 to represent the final balance on your bank statement. In boxes A4 and A5, type in \$50.00 and \$40.00 for 2 deposits

	A	B
1	Statement	0
2		
3	Deposits	
4	0	
5	0	
6	Subtotal	0
7		
8	Withdrawals	
9	0	
10	0	
11	Subtotal	0
12		
13	Balance	0

Fig. 1. Blank Excel worksheet.

not listed on the statement. In boxes A9 and A10, type in \$100.00 and \$200.00 for 2 outstanding withdrawals not listed on the statement.

CREATE FORMULAE

Next, we will create 2 formulae to total the outstanding deposits and withdrawals. Click in cell B6, then enter the formula “=SUM(B4:B5)” (without the quotation marks). The equal sign tells Excel that the cell contains a formula. The “SUM” function totals the amounts in the specified range of cells “(B4:B5)”. Next, click in cell B11 and then enter the formula “=SUM(B9:B10)”.

CALCULATE FINAL BALANCE

Our last task is to calculate the current account bal-

	A	B
1	Statement	\$1000.00
2		
3	Deposits	
4	\$50.00	
5	\$40.00	
6	Subtotal	\$90.00
7		
8	Withdrawals	
9	\$100.00	
10	\$90.00	
11	\$200.00	
12	Subtotal	\$390.00
13		
14	Balance	\$700.00

Fig. 2. Final Excel worksheet.

ance (the statement amount [B1] plus the outstanding deposits [cell B6], less the outstanding withdrawals [B11]). Click in cell B13 and enter the formula “= B1 + B6 - B11”.

ADDING MORE ROWS

Figure 1 only shows 2 outstanding deposits or withdrawals. To make room for more withdrawals, click in cell A10, then on the “Insert” icon in the main toolbar and then on “Rows”. Excel will insert a blank row above row 10, rename the rows below and then recalculate all formulae. Figure 2 shows the final worksheet after adding the extra row and entering a third withdrawal of \$90.00.

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The Editors, *CJRM*