
Introduction

Microsoft Corporation's Office products have an installed base of more than 25 million licensed users. More than 90% of the Fortune 500 companies use Microsoft Office. Microsoft completely redesigned the Office interface when it produced Office 2007. Microsoft's goal was to make the Office 2007 interface easier than ever to use, as well as more integrated among other applications and the Internet.

By redesigning the interface, Microsoft in effect did away with menus and toolbars and replaced the interface with an ever-changing ribbon across the top of the Office product screens. To many Office old-timers, the ribbon was a bold move—Microsoft did away with the interface we've been using for what seems like forever. At first, the ribbon might frustrate you. You'll find yourself wondering, "Where's that option I need?" If you look up at the ribbon, you'll probably find it! The ribbon changes depending on what you're doing at the time. If you need a feature that you used to have to hunt through menus to locate, you'll probably find it on the ribbon. Office pros are happily finding that after a session or two with Office 2007, they wonder how they ever worked efficiently with the clunky menus and toolbars that used to be there.

Brand-new Office users may not ever know how well they have it with the new interface. The ribbon makes it far simpler to master Office than the menu system did. In addition, the graphical features of Office 2007, especially when used with a Windows Vista-compatible computer with Aero graphics capabilities, make learning Office 2007 a pleasure—and a quick pleasure at that.

You probably are anxious to get started with Office 2007. Take just a few preliminary moments to acquaint yourself with the design of this book, as described in the next few sections.

Who Should Read This Book?

This book is for both beginning and advanced Office 2007 users. Readers rarely believe that lofty claim, for good reason, but the design of this book and the nature of Office 2007 make it possible for this book to address that wide of an audience. The reason is simple: The book you hold in your hands approaches Office 2007 the way that most users approach Office 2007 in that a task needs to be done and this book shows you how to do it. All major and most minor Office 2007 features are not taught from a theoretical viewpoint; you don't read paragraph after paragraph of background before learning how something works. Instead, you *see* how something works in a step-by-step lesson. For example, if you want to create an Excel graph, you'll jump to the task in this book that walks you through the creation of an Excel graph. Why bother with a background of color palettes when you need a simple pie chart?

Readers unfamiliar with Windows-based environments will find plenty of introductory help here that brings them quickly up to speed. This book shows you how to do work in Office 2007, as well as how to manage many of the Internet-based Office 2007 elements that you need in order to use Office 2007 in today's online, connected world. If you are new to the Internet, this book helps you get started and shows you how to combine the Internet with Office 2007 to gain synergy from both.

Quite simply, this book talks *to* newcomers without talking *down to* them.

This book also brings those who presently use a Microsoft Office product up to speed with Office 2007. You face a mighty dramatic interface change, as the preceding section explained. With the fundamental Office understanding you already have, you will appreciate the new features and added power of Office 2007, and you'll learn how to maximize your use of the Office 2007 ribbon to get your work done quickly and easily.

What This Book Does for You

Although this book is not a complicated reference book, you'll learn almost every aspect of Office 2007 from a task-based, typical user's point of view. Office 2007 includes many advanced technical details that most users never need, and this book does not waste your time with those. You want to get up to speed with Office 2007 *now*, and this book helps you fulfill that goal.

Those of you who are tired of the mass of quick-fix computer titles cluttering today's shelves will find a welcome reprieve here. This book presents both the

background and descriptions that a new Office 2007 user needs without burdening you with a lot of theory. This book is practical and provides a plethora of step-by-step task walk-throughs that you can follow when you need a feature that a task demonstrates while ignoring the tasks you don't need at the time.

This is truly a hands-on book for any Office 2007 user, from novice to pro. These tasks guide you through all the common Office 2007 actions you need to perform to make Office 2007 work for you.

Conventions Used in This Book

Given that this book is task-based, almost everything shown to you is performed in a step-by-step task. When you read a task, you'll learn about other tasks that you should understand first. For example, before learning how to add text to a PowerPoint slide, you need to know how to insert a slide into a new PowerPoint presentation. The cross-reference for that preliminary task is right there for you to review.

Other tasks form a basis or a foundation for subsequent tasks in the book. For example, when you follow the task that shows you how to format Excel cells, the task also lists other tasks that might be beneficial to you after you complete the cell-formatting task.

These cross-references among the tasks form web page–like links to the other tasks so that you're sure to get a rounded walk-through of whatever you want to do. Most hands-on tasks include a “Before You Begin” and “See Also” cross-reference section like this one:

<p>✓ BEFORE YOU BEGIN</p> <hr/> <p>54 Enter Data into a Worksheet</p>	<p>→ SEE ALSO</p> <hr/> <p>75 Set Up Page Formatting</p> <p>77 Conditionally Format Data</p> <p>78 About Excel Styles, Themes, and Templates</p>
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In addition to the step-by-step tasks, you'll find several “About” tasks. These tasks give you necessary background when that background is required to do something else. For example, before learning how to apply a theme to an Excel worksheet, you need to understand how styles, themes, and templates go together to help reduce your work time and increase your productivity. Therefore, the “About Excel Styles, Themes, and Templates” task (task number 78) provides the background necessary—and no more—for you to then tackle the tasks that show you how to apply a style, theme, or template to your work.

As you follow the tasks, you'll run across several Tips such as this one:

► **TIP**

If you want to freeze only the top row, you don't need to select it first. You only need to select **Freeze Top Row** from the **Freeze Panes** drop down list. The same is also true if you want to freeze the leftmost column; you would select **Freeze First Column**.

These Tips give you added insight into the task you're currently learning about and show you ways to improve on something you're doing.

Several Notes are included as well to explain a task in more detail, such as this one:

► **NOTE**

Whatever format you can apply to a cell you can also apply to a range or to your entire worksheet. Select what you want to format and then select the formatting command.

It seems to be the nature of computer software to litter our language with terms that are generally unfamiliar to newcomers, and sometimes to advanced users too. When a new term is introduced, the New Term margin note will explain the term to you like this:

► **NEW TERM**

AutoFit—The capability of Excel to adjust a column's width to accommodate the widest data value in that column.

Your Job Now

With that introduction, it's time that you began learning what Office 2007 has in store for you. Turn the page and begin learning Microsoft's exciting redesigned product.