

MBTS TekJournal

Volume 4, Issue 3

March 2005

Welcome to the latest issue of the MBTS TekJournal, and thank you for reading.

The Welcome section of this newsletter is the only spot where I can formally let everyone know when our offices may be closed. This will happen from the evening of Wednesday March 23 through Thursday March 31 inclusive. I will not be able to access email or voice mail as I am going on a spring holiday and I have forbidden myself to work. I will however do my best to return all calls and emails beginning the morning of April 1 – and that isn't an April Fools joke.

This issue's primary features are an automated method of saving your email and contact information stored in Outlook, and an introduction to Microsoft Excel.

If you use something for a long enough time it does become second nature. I never give a second thought to many applications that I use regularly, so it was refreshing and quite challenging when I was asked to include articles on how to use some of the more common ones. That is where the idea for the F1 section came from, and where this issue's article on Excel started.

Speaking of applications, there are literally millions of

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Backing Up Outlook

Last issue we showed how to back up Outlook Express files, and this issue we will show you how to perform the same task with Microsoft Outlook. If you are using Outlook 2000 or later there is even an easier method.

I have long been an advocate of storing every file I have in the My Documents folder making backup to an optical device very easy. Outlook however has other ideas of where its files should be stored. When you set up Outlook the first time and identify your primary email address, the resulting PST file (using Windows XP) is stored in C:\Documents and Settings\user profile\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook.

To periodically add this file to your My Documents folder you will have to use Windows Explorer to navigate to the above mentioned folder and copy the Outlook.PST file to that directory. This can be a real pain and most of us will never remember to do it on an on going basis. So much for regularly backing up your Outlook email and contact information.

But wait, Microsoft has a solution that many users don't know about. As long as you are using Outlook 2000, 2002, or 2003, you can download and install a utility which automates the backup process and lets you store the back up of your Outlook file wherever you want. When hyperlinks span column widths they don't work properly, so click on the 4 point blue type below to access the download site for Personal Folders Backup.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=8b081f3a-47d0-4b16-88af-5a6322bf601&DisplayLang=en>

Click the download button on the site and save the pfbackup.exe file to your desktop. Double click the file to install it once the download is complete and accept all the default prompts. When you open Outlook after installation you will see a new item on the File menu called Backup. Click this option and you will see a screen similar to Figure A.

Backup continued on page 2

programs available and no one can know something about all of them. But if you have application questions, send them along and I will do my best to provide an answer.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as I enjoy writing it.☺

Backup continued from page 1

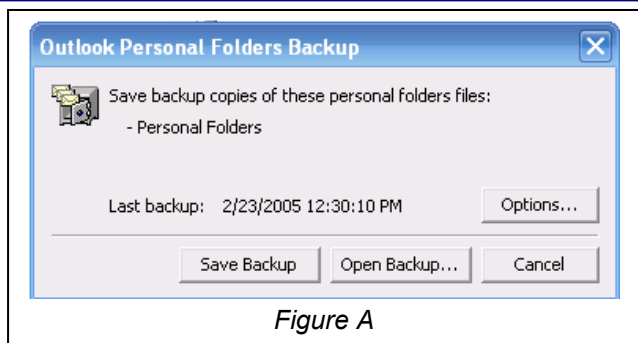


Figure A

The Last Backup: section on a new install will be blank the first time in. Click on the Options button to the right and you will be able to select the frequency of backup reminders, and the default location of where the backup files will reside. I personally have set My Documents\Outlook Backup Files as my default folder for storing these files.

Once set up, this program will automatically backup your Outlook files based on the schedule you requested. However, the backup will only occur after you exit from Outlook. If you click on the Save Backup button shown in Figure A, you will receive a dialog box stating that Outlook will backup the file the next time you exit Outlook. Therefore, install this utility and open/exit Outlook at least once per day, and you Outlook PST file will be backed up on the basis you requested.

Now all you have to do is remember to backup you're my Documents folder on a regular basis to an optical drive. But that is for another article.☺

MBTS TekSpecials

We are pleased to offer an alternative to the high cost of replacement ink cartridges for Epson and Canon inkjet printers. Our current price list can be downloaded at

<http://www.mbts.mb.ca/InkCartridges.pdf>

F1 – Help with Excel

If you have ever used a spreadsheet you can probably pick up Excel very quickly. If not, it will probably take about 30 minutes longer.

The basic premise for a spreadsheet is to create rows and columns of numbers that have some meaning to you. For our example we will create a chart for tracking car use for tax purposes, to calculate the percentage of business kilometers driven.

The information required is the date, starting kilometers, ending kilometers, and the number of kilometers that were actually business or personal. But first a few basics are required.

Excel comes bundled with Microsoft Office and is started by clicking on start, All Programs, locating the Microsoft Excel icon and clicking once. The application should always open to a blank sheet. Each little rectangle is called a cell and is referred to by the column and row co-ordinates. Therefore the very top left cell is called A1. When you type text into a cell don't worry if the label you are entering is wider than the cell it is going into, it can be formatted later.

To set up our table we will enter headings in cells B1 through E1 and call them Km. Start, Km. End, Distance Driven, for Business. Once you have entered these column headings your sheet will look similar to Figure 1. However, the labels as entered are not easily read and must be formatted.

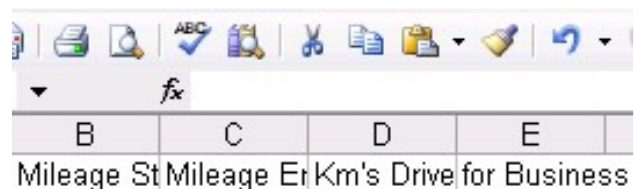


Figure 1

To do this point your cursor to the top left square above the 1 and left of the A, and click once to highlight the entire sheet. Then click Format on the menu, select Column, and choose the option to AutoFit Selection. The result will look similar to Figure 2.

Now that we have column headings, we need row headings. Since we drive our vehicle on a daily basis, we will use the days of the year as the row headings.

F1 continued on page 3

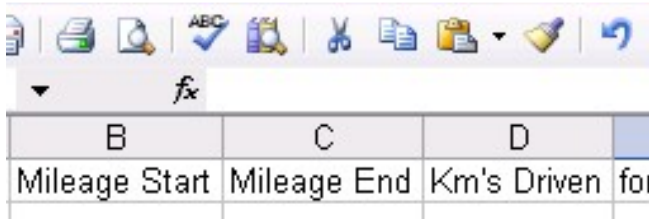


Figure 2

There is a very simple method to entering all 365 dates.

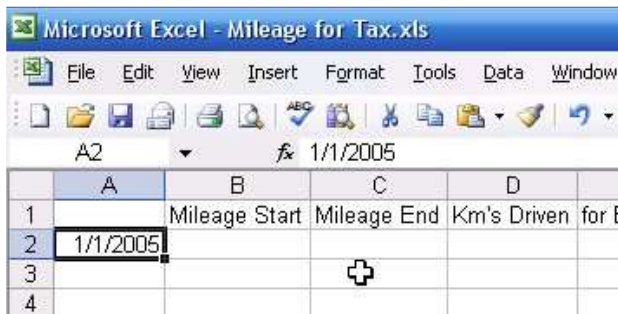


Figure 3

and you should see something similar to *Figure 3*. When you highlight cell A2 by clicking it once, you will notice a thick black frame around the cell and in the bottom right corner there is a black square. Point the cursor to the black square, left click and hold the mouse, and drag it down. What happens is shown in *Figure 4*.

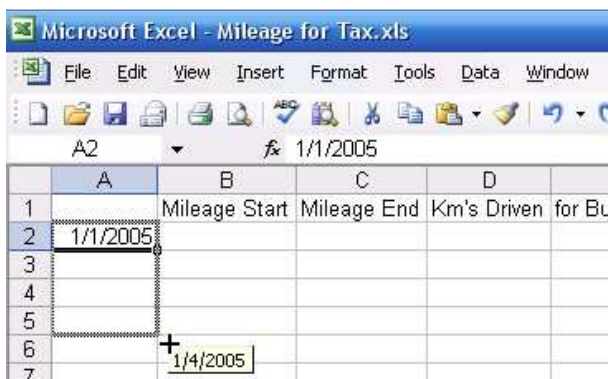


Figure 4

will notice the dates increasing by increments of 1 (as shown in the cream coloured box to the bottom right of the cursor). Continue pulling the mouse down column A until the date reaches 12/31/2005.

Formatting this column is even easier. With your

cursor pointed above column A, click once to highlight the entire column. Point your mouse anywhere in the highlighted area and right click to reveal the context menu and select Format Cells... In the Category, select Date, and in the Type select the date format you want to appear. When you click OK, the entire column of dates is automatically formatted to the date type you selected and if necessary the column width is resized as well.

Since the odometer in your vehicle shows travel in tenths, we will now set the format of the columns to reflect a single decimal point. Point your cursor at the top of column B until you see a black arrow pointing down and then click and hold your mouse while dragging it to the right over columns B through E. Point the mouse cursor over the highlighted area and right click the mouse to access the context menu and choose Format Cells... In the Category, select Number, and in the Decimals Places box, change the number to 1. Press OK.

Finally, we want to calculate the daily difference to see how far we have traveled and we want to automatically set the next day beginning mileage to the ending mileage of the previous day.

The kilometers driven for any given day is simply the Ending Mileage subtracted from the Beginning Mileage. Using our spreadsheet this means: Column C less Column B. But the result must be assigned to a cell, so we will use Column D which is labeled Distance Driven. To enter a formula into a cell, start by pressing the equal sign (=). On our sheet the equal sign goes into cell D3. Enter the name of the cell signifying Ending mileage in this case, or C3. Next press the minus sign (-). And finally enter the cell signifying the Beginning mileage, B3. Press the enter key to see what happens. *Figure 5* shows the result.

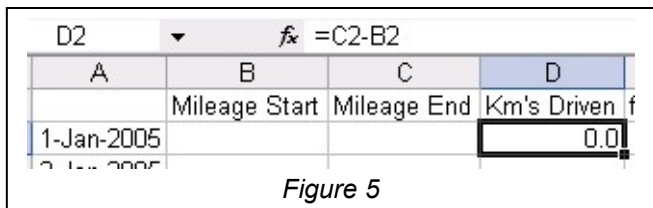


Figure 5

In *Figure 5* will cell D2 highlighted, take note of the area beside the little fx. The contents of the highlighted cell, in this case our formula, will always

appear in this area for easier editing.

If you now enter a value in cell B2, 10000 for example, and a larger value in cell C2, 10100. The difference between the two values, 100.0, will be automatically displayed in cell D2, Figure 6.

	A	B	C	D
1		Mileage Start	Mileage End	Km's Driven
2	1-Jan-2005	10000.0	10100.0	100.0
3	2-Jan-2005	10100.0		
4	3-Jan-2005			

Figure 6

Next on our list will be to make sure that the Ending Mileage of one day becomes the Beginning Mileage of the next day. To accomplish this, click the cell marked B3 and enter the formula =C2 and press the Enter key. Figure 6 also shows this already done for you.

Remember when we entered the dates for the year? We can use the same principle for entering the formula we just created to make sure the Beginning Mileage will always be the Ending Mileage of the day before. Highlight cell B3 as above, click the little black box in the bottom right corner of the cell with your left mouse button and drag your cursor down the column. When you reach the cell beside December 31 2005 you can let go. The formula you entered into cell B3 has now been duplicated in every cell below it, and automatically incremented by 1. So B4 contains the formula =C3, B5 contains the formula =C4, and so on. Can you guess how to duplicate the formula in cell D2 for the remainder of that column?

Highlight cell D2 and point the mouse cursor to the little black square in the bottom right corner of the cell. Left click and hold the mouse button and drag the contents of that cell to the bottom of your sheet. To verify that everything is fine, click on cell D5 and you should see the formula displayed in the fx area as =C5-B5. If you click on cell D26 you should see the formula =C26-B26. And so on down the column.

To calculate how many kilometers were actually driven for business use, you will need totals for the total number of kilometers driven and the total

number of kilometers driven for business. To calculate these values we will use the SUM command.

To enter the formula for summing a column we need to be at the bottom of the column. Use the scroll bars on the right side of your screen to scroll your sheet down until you reach cell D368. Or if you want a faster method, click the Edit menu and select Go To... In the reference box enter the cell you want to Go To, D368, and press the OK button. You will be transported there immediately, and the destination cell will be highlighted.

Previously we used the equal sign (=) to enter a formula for calculating a difference. In cell D368 we will use a built in function for summing an entire group of cells. Just below the menu bar at the top of the screen, locate the sigma icon and press it once. It looks like Σ . You will notice the contents of D368 have been replaced with =SUM(D2:D367). Since this is what we want, press the enter key.

Next we want to copy the formula in cell D368 to cell E368. Highlight cell D368, and right click to access the context menu. Select the Copy option by left clicking the word Copy once. Point your mouse to cell E368, right click and select Paste. The contents of cell E368 are automatically incremented and now contain the formula =SUM(E2:E367). This will give us a total for the number of kilometers we enter into each cell above it.

Now that we have formulae in place for the total kilometers driven, and the total kilometers for business, we can calculate the percentage of the time we drove our vehicle for business. Take the total mileage for business, cell E368, and divide that amount by the total kilometers driven for the year, cell D368, and multiply the result by 100. To make sure that mathematical formulas get calculated in the proper order we use parentheses, so the formula to calculate the percentage of mileage is (E368/D368)*100. Enter this formula in cell D370 and your Tax Mileage spreadsheet will be complete.

Now all you need to do is enter the missing numbers and the totals calculate automatically. ▢

Firefox Revisited

In Volume 4 Issue 2 we previewed Firefox as an alternative browser to Internet Explorer. Many people wrote and told me there were far more “bugs” than the one I listed, but also went on to say that as long as visit the site often and download and install the latest release while you’re there, you shouldn’t have the problems you have with Internet Explorer. I agree with this only in so far as Firefox is still relatively new and hasn’t attracted the full attention of those who exploit Internet Explorer. But it will, and very soon. Whether it can stand up or not is the big question.

My biggest problem is probably with a Windows mentality rather than a particular application. Most applications than can start as a result of another application’s actions always wants to know it is the default. Every time I start Firefox it lets me know it is not the default and wants to know if it can be set as default. Internet Explorer asks the same annoying question. What if I want two default browsers? So far all I have managed to do is turn off that annoying question and hope that the right browser starts for my desired task.

One thing I like about Internet Explorer is I can highlight anything on almost any page and copy it for pasting into another application for later use. I have found this to be a problem with Firefox. I have no trouble copying pictures but on many sites I cannot highlight and copy text. I find that odd.

I really do like the tabbing feature in Firefox and so far have adopted Firefox as the browser of choice on my desktop system. My laptop is still geared toward Internet Explorer but that may change.

I have just added the Forecast Fox extension to Firefox to have the local weather displayed on the status bar at the bottom of the screen. It was very easy to set up, but it understood Winnipeg and not Winnipeg, Manitoba. I can display temperatures in C or F and add features that include wind chill. Neat little tool without getting on another email list.

All in all, I like Firefox more every day. Next issue I will offer my thoughts on how Thunderbird stands up as an email client. ▯

Surf’s Up...

Anything can be found on the Internet even when you don’t know where to look. Have you ever stopped to think about how many web addresses you see in any given week. Probably thousands – start counting all the URL’s at the bottom of TV commercials, on the side of cars and trucks, on billboards, and you will be amazed. But how does that help if you don’t know where to look?

If you know the name of a company offering a product or service start there. I personally want a better way of getting good drinking water without lugging home huge bottles from the store. I also don’t want to lose any floor space from my tiny kitchen. So let’s try World of Water. I’ve seen their banners on stores in Winnipeg. <http://www.worldofwater.com> took me to a chain of stores in Great Britain which is a little to far to travel. So next I substituted .ca for the .com. Try it and you will see where in Winnipeg I am checking options for an alternative to Winnipeg drinking water.

This idea works with lots of sites. If you try the .com extension and the location you’re looking for has a Canadian counterpart there will generally be a link directing you to the right site. Try it with Best Buy to see what I mean.

MSN Toolbar was released prior to XP SP2 and included a pop up blocker that was very effective. Most users uninstalled the Toolbar after the release and installation of SP2. Now Microsoft has released a Beta version of the MSN Toolbar Suite and it is available at <http://toolbar.msn.com>

According to Micosoft the “MSN Toolbar Suite features three different toolbars to help you search the Web and your computer from Microsoft Internet Explorer or Windows Explorer, the Windows taskbar, and Microsoft Outlook.”

The MSN Toolbar is appended to Internet Explorer and can easily be added to Windows Explorer to explore your system completely. Outlook must be running to include email in the target search. The Toolbar is fully customizable, within the limits that Microsoft has deemed allowable, and contains links to Hotmail, MSN Messenger, a Popup blocker that can be replaced by the blocker built into Windows XP, etc.

This toolbar is worth a look.▯

The Last Word...

This is usually where the Tips and Tweaks would go, and in years gone past this is also where Virus warnings and Updates would appear. But I may not have enough content to fill two complete columns, so read on and we will see how far we get.

There don't seem to be a lot of new viruses appearing, but that has usually been when they jump up and bite us. Make sure your Anti Virus software is current and updated regularly. If you need an upgrade or a new product, call us to arrange an appointment.

The major virus threat now is *W32.Beagle.BK@mm* which is a mass-mailing worm that uses its own SMTP engine to send out copies of Trojan.Tooso.E. The worm also opens a back door on the compromised computer through TCP port 80.

The other "virus like" attacks being made right now come via email and are classified as phishing threats. However, the phishing email is in itself non threatening and quite unremarkable. The only real demand is that you "**must act now**" to avoid dire consequences. Generally these threats warn the recipient that new security measures are being implemented at his or her Bank, Cable Company, Phone Company, etc. and they need you to verify your access codes, accounts, and passwords by filling out an on line form. **NEVER ACT ON A REQUEST OF THIS TYPE FROM AN EMAIL OR ANY OTHER SOURCE!!!!**

Institutions and companies that provide you with 24/7 access via a secret identity and PIN or password will NEVER ask for verification of this supplied information. If changes are to be made they must be done in person at the institution or company that provided the security information in the first place. This is to protect you as much as them.

If you ever receive this type of request it is always best to pick up the telephone and call the sender and make sure it is a bona fide request. And then make an appointment to provide any information in person, just to be sure.

Microsoft is even helping to make sure that no malicious software resides on your computer. They have released a Malicious Software Removal Tool

you can load and run on your system periodically to make sure you are clean. You can find out more info and download the tool here: (Again, these links span the column width so they have been shrunk to unreadable 4 pt type so they will work.)

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=a9724ae0-e72d-4f54-9ab3-75b8eb148356&displaylang=en>

I am really terrible at video games, so needless to say I don't play them. Maybe if I did I would get better. Nah! But Microsoft has released a Trial version of Halo for anyone who wants to give it a go. Here is the link:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=1c2678b1-90a1-4ca7-af68-883ac2dce1c&displaylang=en>

There are a couple of updates that Microsoft would like everyone to be aware of. The first is an update for XP users where a program they may use may require two versions of the comctl32 DLL. Here is the link for the fix and you may want to install it just in case.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=d141ba54-ca8c-403-86ce-96123ac9251&displaylang=en&Hash=TYWVF9B>

The final update is to fix the Zoom feature in Windows XP MCE 2005 which may not always work as expected when watching live or recorded TV. Here is the link:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=c3ca556b-2906-4d69-a456-ae0b92ad57a&displaylang=en&Hash=TYWVF9B>

Our website has now been updated and all past issues of the MBTS TekJournal have now been added to the site. If you are using Firefox you can read them online, or if you use IE you can either read them online or right click and download them for later. ☺