Excel Tips and Tricks

References

- Excel Annoyances Curtis Frye
- Excel Hacks O'Reilly
- http://www.exceltip.com (Joseph Rubin)
- http://exceltips.vitalnews.com/ (Allen Wyatt)
- Some Excel Basics as well as formula basics <u>http://jura.wi.mit.edu/bio/education/bioinfo2005/</u> <u>amays/Excel_help.html</u>

Mac vs. PC

- If you use a Mac there are a few difference from the PC.
- For instance, Preferences is under the menu Excel.
- Different key strokes may be necessary to do the same trick in a PC.
- The tricks I present here should work on both PC and Macs.

Reading Line by Line

- If you have a large Excel file you way want to highlight a whole row, not just the cell.
 - Press the down arrow and then press Shift and Spacebar
 - If you do this often enough you can write a macro or go here:

http://www.cpearson.com/excel/RowLiner.htm

Moving Cells with your Mouse

- Moving cells with your mouse instead of key strokes can be convenient, here's how.
 - Select the range of cells you want to move by highlighting the range with the mouse.
 - Position the mouse pointer over the heavy border that surrounds the selected range. The pointer should turn into an arrow(PC) or hand(mac).
 - Click and drag the range to a new location. As you move the mouse, the outline of the range moves.
 - When you are satisfied with the new location, release the mouse pointer. The cells are moved.

Selecting a Range of Cells

- Selecting a long range of cells can be a pain. Here's one trick that could help.
 - Move the cell pointer to the starting cell.
 - Press F8 to activate extend.
 - Either use your arrow keys or mouse to click on the ending row/column.
 - All cells will be highlighted.
 - Press Esc to end extend.

Keep Column Names Visible as You Scroll

- Many Worksheets have Headers for each column. As you scroll thru a worksheet it's helpful to be able to see those names. Here's how.
 - Select the row immediately below the row you want to freeze.
 - In the Window menu, click on Freeze Panes. Excel will put a thick line under the row to freeze.
 - To unfreeze the row, go to Window menu again and click on Unfreeze Panes.

Creating Multi-lines in a Cell

- You want to type more than one line in a cell and word wrap is not putting the breaks where you need them.
 - Click on the cell and type your first line.
 - Press simultaneously Control, Option and Return key.
 - You should see a new line being created.

You Want an Unique List of Values

- You have a column of data and would like only the unique values from it.
 - Select the column you want the uniqueness based on.
 - Choose Filter from the Data menu, and then choose Advanced Filter. A dialog box pops up.
 - I always like to choose the Copy to Another Location option.
 - In the Copy To Field, specify the cell where you want the list of unique, filtered values to be copied.
 - Make sure the Unique Records Only check box is selected and click Okay.

When Excel Chooses the Wrong Format for Your Data

- You want 00125678, not 125678
 - The format of the cells that you are entering data in needs to be corrected.
 - Go to Format and click on Cells. Excel displays the Format Cells dialog box.
 - Click on the Number tab.
 - In the Category list, choose Text and click okay.

When Excel Chooses the Wrong Format for Your Data

- The gene name is Oct4 not 4-Oct!
 - The previous fix for leading zeros will also work here.
 - There is one caveat, you must change the format of the cells before entering the data.
 - Otherwise 4-Oct becomes 37167

Data Validation

- Data validation guarantees that each data value you enter will be correct and accurate.
 - There are many different ways to validate data. Here's how to present a list.
 - Highlight the cells, column or rows that you want to validate.
 - Go to Data and click on Validation.
 - A popup menu will appear. Under Allow chose list. Under Source, type your comma delimited list. You can check whether or not you want the drop down menu.
 - When you press okay, you should see a drop down menu of your list.

Sorting

- You have 5 columns of data you want to sort and Excel only allows you to sort 3.
 - If you want to sort by columns A B C D E, select the whole spreadsheet, than sort by C D E, than A B. This will result in all five columns being sorted.

Sorting

- You have a column of Ids that are F1, F2,F150 and would like to sort based on these ids. How?
 - The only way to make Excel sort the proper way is to change your ids to F001, F002, etc.
 - =LEFT(C1,1) & RIGHT("000" & RIGHT(C1,LEN(C1)-1),3)

Dealing with Large Files

- Using outside software it is possible to generate a file that is > 65,535 lines. If you want to import this file into Excel, you have a few options.
 - If you are familiar with unix commands, you can use the split command to create smaller files.
 - If you don't want to break up the file, you could try importing it into Access which has no limit on the number of rows.
 - You can use a macro to import the large file and create a new worksheet when necessary.

Fun with Macros

- Macros can be useful if you do the same process over and over again. Here's how to create one.
 - If you want to 'record' steps, Click on Tools, Macro, Record New Macro
 - Type in a name for your Macro and perform all the steps you want to record
 - Click the stop Recording button when done.

Fun with Macros - cont.

- If you are familiar with program code, you can also create macros using VBA (Visual Basic for Applications)
 - Click on Tools, Macro, Macros....
 - A window will appear, Type in a New Name under Macro Name and click Create
 - A VBA editor will appear and you can code and debug your macro.
 - You can also paste in code from macros that other people have created.

Making Your Macro A Button

- If you have a macro that you use frequently, going to the menus to run it can be a pain. Here's how to create a button on your toolbar.
 - Choose tools, customize and click the commands tab.
 - In the categories list, click Macros
 - Drag the custom button or custom menu item to the desired spot on a toolbar
 - Right-click the button or menu item and choose Assign Macro, select the macro you want, and then click OK and close.
 - When the button is clicked, Excel will run the macro.

Some Macro Examples

- When you export a tab delimited file from Excel, Excel puts "" around each cell
 - So when you export a row of information that has this:
 - Wavelength "635"
 - When you export it, it becomes this:
 - "Wavelength ""635"" "

• Using a macro you can export this file without the extra quotes.

Export Macro

Sub Export() Dim r As Range, c As Range Dim sTemp As String Open "c:\MyOutput.txt" For Output As #1 For Each r In Selection Rows sTemp = "" For Each c In r.Cells sTemp = sTemp & c.Text & Chr(9) Next c 'Get rid of trailing tabs While Right(sTemp, 1) = Chr(9) sTemp = Left(sTemp, Len(sTemp) - 1) Wend Print #1, sTemp Next r Close #1 End Sub

Finally, When You Need a Break...

Pac-Man http://www.xl-logic.com/pages/games.html (Look for paccyman v1.zip) **Rubic's Cube** http://www.xl-logic.com/xl files/games/cube.zip Yahtzee http://www.xl-logic.com/xl files/games/yahtzee.zip Tetris http://www.xl-logic.com/xl files/games/tetris.zip