

# EXCEL <<<<<<<

By Bill Jelen

## Saving Custom Functions in an Add-In Workbook

There are many examples of custom Excel functions posted on the Internet. They usually encompass a few lines of VBA code. If you paste this code into your workbook's VBA code window, you can suddenly start to do new calculations that Excel generally doesn't do. Figure 1, for example, shows the SpellNumber function that Microsoft has posted for years at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/213360>.

The coolness factor for this code wears off, however, when you learn that the new function works only in the current workbook. If you want to use that function in another workbook, you have to either paste the code into that workbook or use the syntax that points to the workbook, such as:

```
= 'C:\Users\Jelen\Documents\MyCool CustomFunctions.xlsm'!spellnumber(A1)
```

The easy solution is to save all of your favorite custom functions into a single workbook and then save that workbook as an Add-In. When a function is stored in an Add-In that's installed on the computer, you can simply use the function name in the formula, such as =Spellnumber(A1).

**Figure 1**

	A	B
1	Number	SpellNumber
2	93778.07	Ninety Three Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Eight Dollars and Seven Cents
3	523.78	Five Hundred Twenty Three Dollars and Seventy Eight Cents
4	37495.43	Thirty Seven Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Five Dollars and Forty Three Cents
5	695.24	Six Hundred Ninety Five Dollars and Twenty Four Cents

### Creating the Custom Functions Workbook

The first step is to create the workbook that contains all the custom functions. Start with a blank workbook. It only needs to have one worksheet. Follow these steps to save the SpellNumber function:

1. Press Alt+F11 to switch to the VBA Editor.
2. From the VBA Menu, select Insert, Module.
3. Copy the SpellNumber function from the Web page listed above.
4. Paste the function into the code pane.
5. Press Alt+Q to close the VBA Editor and return to Excel.

Repeat the process for any other custom functions you want to have available. Once that is done, you need to

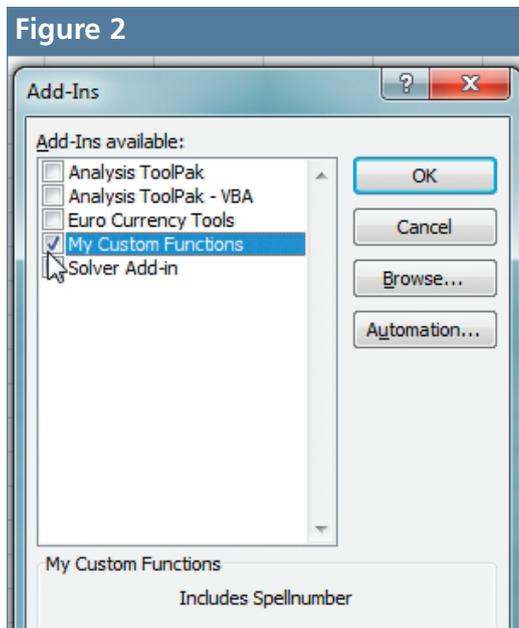
save the file as an Add-In.

### Saving as an Add-In

An Add-In is a regular Excel workbook that has been saved with an extension of XLAM. (For Excel 2003, the extension is XLA.) When you save as an Add-In, Microsoft hides the workbook and sets the "IsAddIn" flag. It's this flag that enables you to use the custom function without typing out the path to the workbook. Follow these steps to save your new workbook as an Add-In:

6. Give your workbook a title and description. Open the Excel 2010 File menu. From the navigation panel on the left, choose Info. In the far-right panel, click the Show All Properties link at the bottom of the list. In the Title field, add a title, such as "My Functions." In the Comments field, add a description of the file.

Figure 2



7. From the File menu, select Save As.

8. In the Save As Type dropdown, scroll nearly to the bottom and choose “Excel Add-In.”

9. Notice that choosing this file type changes the folder in which Excel wants to save the file. It will switch to the AddIns subfolder, for example, C:\Users\Jelen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\AddIns\. Use this folder as it will make the process of installing the Add-In easier.

10. Decide on a name for the file, such as MyFunctions, and click Save.

11. Nothing gives you a good feeling that Step 10 worked. Excel leaves your original workbook open with the original name. If you began with a blank workbook, for example, the file currently open is still Book1. This always makes me feel that Step 10 didn’t work. If I navigate to the AddIns folder, however, I can see the MyFunctions file is there. Microsoft leaves the “workbook” version of the file open and visible just in case you didn’t mean to save it as a hidden Add-In. At this point, you should close the workbook without saving changes.

## Installing the Add-In

You’ve created an Add-In, but it still isn’t

available for use. You need to go through the process of telling Excel that you always want to have access to this Add-In. The official process is shown below. Steps 12 through 15 can be skipped by pressing Alt+T, followed by the letter I.

12. Select File, Options.

13. In the left navigation panel, choose Add-Ins.

14. At the bottom of the dialog, choose Manage: Excel Add-Ins.

15. Click Go... to bring up the Add-Ins dialog.

16. Your new Add-In will appear in the list with the title that you provided in Step 6. The description at the bottom will be the comments that you added. Check the box next to your Add-In and click OK (see Figure 2).

At this point, you can begin using the =SpellNumber function in any workbook you use on your computer.

## Sharing the Add-In with Others

While SpellNumber will work on your computer, it will return a #NAME? error when the file is opened on a coworker’s

computer. You can place a copy of the MyFunctions.xlam file on a network drive and encourage all of your coworkers to install your Add-In. In Step 16, they should click Browse and navigate to find your Add-In file on the network drive.

## Adding More Functions to the Add-In

You can store all of your custom functions in a single Add-In workbook. To add a new function later, press Alt+F11 to display the VBA Editor. Press Ctrl+R to display a list of all open workbooks. Expand the + sign next to MyFunctions.xlam and double-click on Module1. You can paste additional functions into the module. It’s important that you remember to use the Save icon in the VBA window because you can’t save the hidden Add-In from the Excel interface. **SF**

*Bill Jelen is the author of 33 books about Microsoft Excel. The third edition of his popular Learn Excel 2007-2010 from MrExcel offers solutions to 512 Excel mysteries. Send questions for future articles to [IMA@MrExcel.com](mailto:IMA@MrExcel.com)*