

EXCEL <<<<<<<

By Bill Jelen

Office Mobile for the iPhone and iPad

>>> The Apple Product Experience team at Microsoft recently released the first version of Excel for the iPhone and iPad. For those who have always wanted to carry Excel around in their pocket, this column will look at the good and the bad of version 1 of the app.

Free? Not Really

The Mobile Office app is free to download from the App Store, but using it isn't really free. In order to use the app, you must have an Office 365 subscription. For the last 25 years, Office was sold on diskette, CD, or DVD. You would pay \$125 to \$399 and own that copy of Office. Starting in 2013, Microsoft began heavily pushing the concept of renting Office. Plans include \$99 per year for Office 365 Home Premium, \$12 per month for Office 365 Pro Plus, and \$22 per month for Office 365 Enterprise E4. It doesn't matter if you've already paid \$399 for Office Professional, you must go back and start renting Office in order to use it on the iPhone or iPad. (Tip: Avoid the \$12.50 per month Office 365 Small Business Premium and go for the \$12 per month Office 365 Pro Plus. It costs less but includes PowerPivot, Power

View, and Power Map).

Older iPhones or iPads

The app won't work on an original iPad or on an iPhone 3 or lower. If you try to install it, the app will complain that you don't have an autofocus camera. Why do you need a camera to use Excel? Well, you don't. But Apple's rules prohibit apps from requiring a specific version of the software. Consequently, app designers look for the autofocus camera to make sure you're using an iPhone 4 or the second-generation iPad.

Syncing SkyDrive or SharePoint Files

If you create a file on your desktop and save it to the SkyDrive, the file will be available for downloading on your mobile device. You can also open e-mail attachments for Excel, Word, or PowerPoint on the device. If you have the patience to create a new Excel file on the device, you can Save As to the SkyDrive, where it will later be available on your desktop.

One thing to note is that you can't have the file open on both your PC and mobile device at the same time. If you

save a file from the PC to the SkyDrive, remember to close it on the PC so you can open it on your iPhone or iPad.

Viewing Excel Files

The iPhone and iPad do a good job of rendering Excel files. Most formatting appears faithfully. A few formats, such as double accounting underline, aren't supported. Double underlines appear as a single underline. A dotted red border is converted to a regular border.

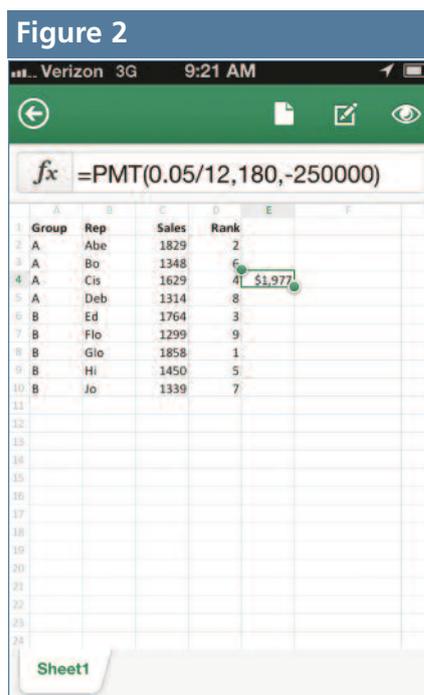
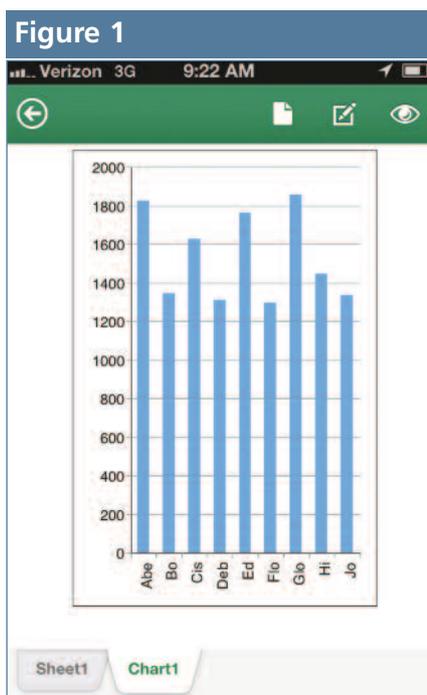
Similar to Excel 95, embedded charts are moved to their own chart sheet. Figure 1 shows a chart created on the iPhone. There is currently no way to add a title to the chart while on the iPhone; you would have to go back to the desktop to do further formatting.

Regular formulas that refer to cells A1:IV16,384 will recalculate on mobile devices. If you try to use an array formula or a formula that extends beyond row 16,385, a static result is shown and the workbook is marked to disallow editing of cells.

Features that Don't Render

There are a host of Excel features that

won't work on the iPhone or iPad: pivot tables, slicers, tables, sparklines, conditional formatting, VBA macros, data validation, and Group & Outline. The Office team is working to add support for these features in future releases, but they aren't supported now.



What Can You Do?

Mobile Excel has three menus: File Options, Editing Tools, and Viewing Tools. Spread throughout these menus are commands for Save, Save As, Send via E-mail, Undo, Redo, Create Chart, Clear, Show Quick Sum Statistics, Bold, Italics, Underline, Format as Date, Currency, Percentage, and Text. You can apply font colors of red, yellow, green, or black and fill colors of red, yellow, green, or white. There's also a fast Sort, a rudimentary Filter, a Find function, and an Outline command that lists the worksheets in the workbook.

The familiar right-click menu in Excel

is replaced with a double-tap menu. The four commands are View Cell, Freeze, Wrap, and Comment.

You can also enter formulas. Excel offers 468 calculation functions. It isn't always easy to type a formula—the characters you need to enter the formula in Figure 2, for example, are spread across the alpha, number, and symbol keyboards—but you can eventually tap it out and get a result.

Is There a Real-life Use?

I perpetually keep a to-do list running in Excel. Every day, I have a to-do list and cross off things using CTRL+F5 to apply strikethrough text. If I have to run

errands, I print the list, cross things off with a pen, and then transfer it back to the computer when I get back. Once I began using Office Mobile, I found that

I could save the to-do list to the SkyDrive, open it on my phone, and see the list. There's currently no way to apply strikethrough, so I had to switch to placing an X in the column next to completed items. Once I saved on the phone, however, the changes were there when I reopened the file on my PC. Arguably, I could have done this with EverNote for free. For a very limited feature set in Excel, \$12 per month is a steep price to pay. **SF**

Bill Jelen is the author of Learn Excel 2007-2010 from MrExcel and a frequent speaker at IMA® chapter professional development days. Send questions for future articles to IMA@MrExcel.com.