

excelan : Windows and Office tricks

At Excelan, we believe that everyone should maximise their IT investment. That is why we have developed a series of relevant and useful emails to help you achieve this.

In this edition of Excelan Tips we thought we would put together a small collection of tips that can help improve productivity.

Windows:

Managing your Quick Launch area.

The **Quick Launch** bar is a part of the *Taskbar*. The Taskbar is the whole bar along the bottom of the screen. The Taskbar is usually just to the right of the start button (it can be moved around). It is the collection of icons that start programs.

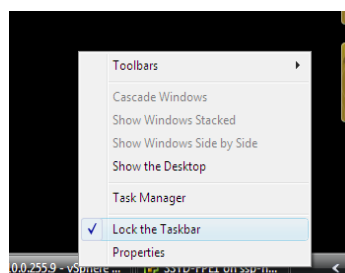
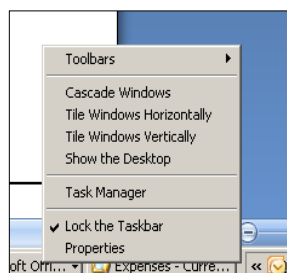
In Windows XP it looks a bit like this In Vista it may look something like this



These are handy icons that are always accessible to launch programs. They don't get obscured by your applications and will start the application with a single click of the mouse.

So how do you get your favourite icons onto the start bar and manage it?

Well firstly you need to have the Taskbar *Unlocked*. To unlock and lock the taskbar you need to right-click on some of the empty space on the bar. This is easy while you don't have any applications running. When you have a few applications running they can crowd the taskbar making it tricky to right click the taskbar that the applications are filling up. When you've right clicked the Taskbar you will see a menu something like one of the two below. To unlock the Taskbar, click on the Lock the Taskbar option so as to remove the tick. If the tick is not there that means the Taskbar is unlocked already.



With the Taskbar unlocked you will see some small control bars appear on the Taskbar as indicated below. You can click and drag these to resize the Quicklaunch bar and other components of the Taskbar.



To place an icon on the Quick Launch Bar you could simply drag an Icon from the desktop or even from somewhere in the *Start-Programs* area. However if you want to make a copy of the Icon, leaving one in its original location, simply hold down the **Ctrl** key as you drag the icon. You will see a + sign on the icon as you drag it. This indicates that you are making an additional icon. The same technique can be used to make copies when dragging files.

You can also drag the shortcut Icons off the taskbar. If you have a duplicate of it elsewhere you can just delete the icon. To do this right click it and select delete. This will only work if the Taskbar is unlocked. That's the idea of the lock.

While you are at it you may notice you need to adjust the size of the Quicklaunch area to accommodate all of the icons in one visible area.

Now that you have an Icon on the Quicklaunch bar you should lock the Taskbar again to prevent you from accidentally dragging the icons off when you click them.

Regional Settings.

We come across plenty of people who have the regional settings of the computer set wrong. This often means that the spell checker in Word and Outlook is using English(US) instead of English (Australian). The language being used in Word is usually displayed in the status bar along the bottom of the application window. You can also check this by typing a US word like "aluminum" in a word document and seeing if it is automatically corrected to become "aluminium".

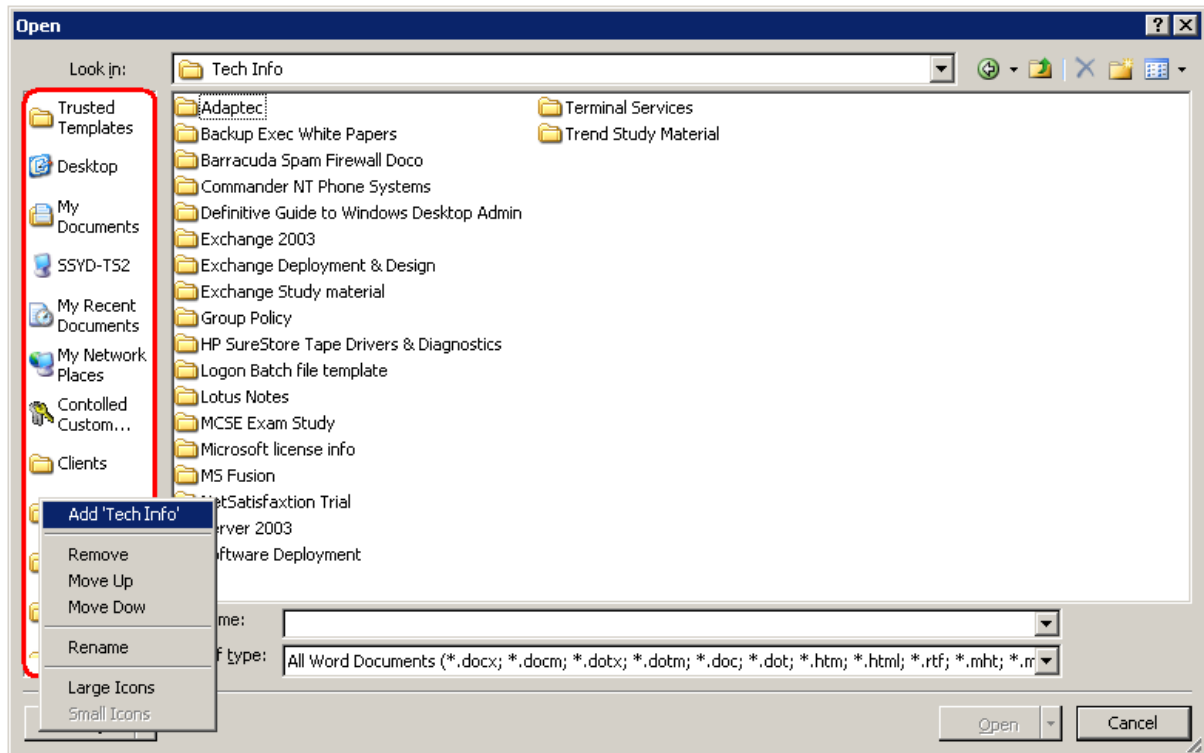
Regional settings also affect date formats.

You can check your regional settings using the Regional Settings tool found in the Control Panel. Go through it and where ever English(Australian) is a selectable option you should choose it. Generally speaking the only place English(US) should appear is the keyboard layout setting.

Microsoft Office:

Get to the files you commonly use quickly!

As of Microsoft Office 2003 and later the *File – Open* dialog can be customised to include a range of your commonly used file locations. The “Look in” list on the left hand pane (highlighted in red in the below picture) can have locations added and removed from it. First navigate to the folder that you would like to have added to the list, and then right click anywhere in the list (the left hand pane). On the drop down menu you will get options to add the current folder as well as removing and moving about the icons that are already in the list.



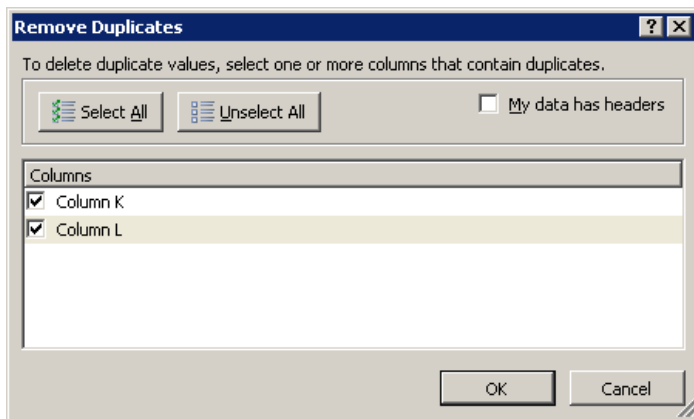
This is a great way of getting to the files you commonly use quickly and easily.

Both Word and Excel also have settings that allow you to choose which folder they will go to first for opening files. The location of these settings varies greatly from version to version so it is probably best to ask us. I will endeavour to cover this in a later edition of Excelan Tips so keep an eye out for it.

Pinning down Recent Documents (Office 2007 only)

This one is just for *Office 2007* applications. In case you haven't already noticed there is a column of icons that appear next to your recently used documents list (as circled in the picture below). These are meant to be thumb-tacks. You can use them to stop documents from leaving the list. Click on it and it will become a green pin that holds the document in place. The document will move down the list if you don't open it, but it won't disappear from the list.

This is great for those documents and spreadsheets that you are working on a lot lately and want them to stay on the list.



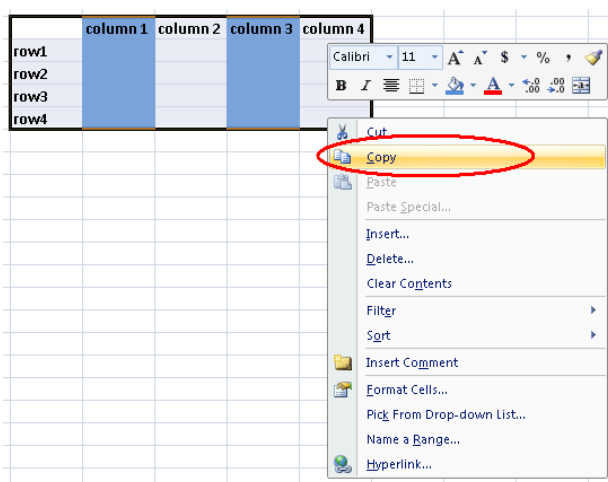
It is possible to remove duplicates in **Excel 2003** but it is a bit more complicated. Microsoft has an explanation of how to do it on their web pages here: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HA010346261033.aspx?pid=CL100570551033>

Switching Rows to Columns and Columns to Rows

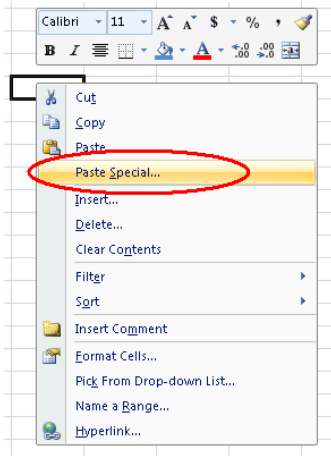
This is an old one but a good one. Have you ever had a table where you wish the columns were the rows and the rows were the columns? Switching them around may not be as hard as you think.

Select the data you want to switch around, right-click the selected data and choose copy. In an empty sheet right-click a cell and choose Paste Special, in the Paste Special options you will see a check box called Transpose Data. Check this and click ok. Your data will be pasted with the columns in rows and the rows in columns.

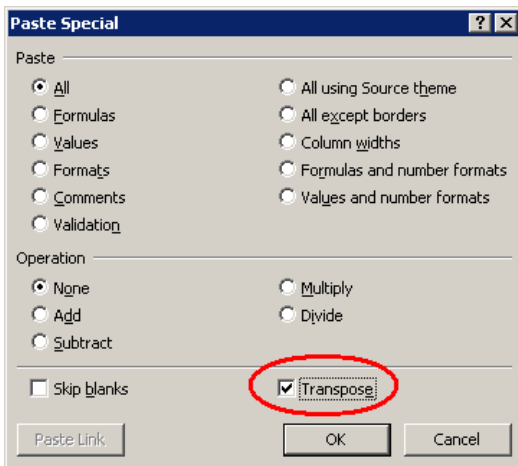
Step 1: Select the area and copy it



Step 2: select where you wish to place the pasted table, right-click and choose Paste Special



Step 3: Tick the Transpose button from the options, then click OK.



Your columns are now rows and your rows are columns.

	row1	row2	row3	row4
column 1				
column 2				
column 3				
column 4				

While you are at it, take some time to have a play around with some of the other options in the Excel *Paste Special* feature. For example you can use it to just copy the formatting of one set of cells to another set of cells, or just the data with no formatting, or just the values of the data without the actual formulas. You can also use it to add, subtract and multiply numbers with those being pasted over.

This feature is really worth getting to know well.

Excelan Tips archive:

We have now started to archive the Excelan Tips on our web site. So if you have missed an edition of Excelan Tips in the past or just want to review them jump on the website and go to the IT Tips link on the menu.



This free tip has been provided to you by Excelan. Feel free to pass it on.

If this tip has been passed on to you by a friend and you wish to receive them in future please send an email to enquiries@excelan.com.au and we will get you on the mailing list.