

## Re: Excel to Works

**Source:** <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Excel/microsoft.public.excel.misc/2004-04/0460.html>

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"Ken Wright" <[ken.wright@NOSPAMntlworld.com](mailto:ken.wright@NOSPAMntlworld.com)> wrote...  
>> *no good reason to waste storage (not to mention money) on Works.*  
>  
>*other than that certain versions appear to be a valid media for*  
>*upgrade pricing qualification for Office or Excel :-)*  
...

You mean if you lack a third cousin's step child to claim for the student pricing option?

All things considered, I'd much prefer MSFT losing a large chunk of the market to OpenOffice and StarOffice (even better, to Gnome Office) and be forced to return to the 'competitive Upgrade' (read: predatory) pricing of about a decade ago when owning any of the major spreadsheets qualified one for upgrades to any other at about US\$100.

That said, I don't use Excel for stats, so for me the improvements in its stats functions are a big ho hum, ditto regression & simulation. At the moment I use XL8/97 at work and XL9/2K at home, and I dread the scheduled rollout of XL10/2002 at work later this year. Other than the quantum leap in functionality provided by colored worksheet tabs in XL10/2002, I can't think of any compelling reason to upgrade from XL9/2K. So . . . if the OP can find a cheap copy of Office 2000, that may well be the best of all options.

If Microsoft ever develops a spreadsheet that

1. has at least as many columns as there days in a leap year,
2. can have C:\foo\bar.xls and X:\Y\Z\bar.xls open in the same instance at the same time,
3. learns from StarOffice/OpenOffice that DDE calls can be implemented with the syntax of function calls rather than hardcoded DDE command expressions,
4. adds any dozen of the functions in Longre's MOREFUNC.XLL as built-in worksheet functions (aside from MDETERM.EXT and MINVERSE.EXT, for which there's no excuse for such functionality not \*ALREADY\* being part of Excel),

5. extends the CELL function to return formatting information such as text and background colors, which 123's @CELL has been able to do for over a decade now,
6. either extends SUMIF/COUNTIF to handle multiple, nontrivial criteria and arrays as well as ranges or implements a simple way to set up tables with field names for use with SQL.REQUEST (gosh, maybe even think about rewriting SQL.REQUEST in VBA rather than XLM, or even make it an XLL),
7. adds true regular expression support to Edit > Find/Replace, Data > Text to Columns, FIND(), SEARCH(), MATCH(), {V|H}LOOKUP, DSUM etc. like OpenOffice/StarOffice already provide,
8. DOCUMENTS what exactly the object returned by

OFFSET(Range,{0;1;2},{0,1},1,1)

is (and makes it possible to pass such beasts to and return them from udfs) [this is a plea for better documentation in general, including correction of long-standing errors in online help],

9. makes 3D references part of Excel's object model so that they can also be passed to and returned from UDFs.

I could go on, but these are what I'd consider a minimal list of new features that'd make for a compelling upgrade. Until all governments east of the Urals and south of the Yucatan peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea adopt OpenOffice or StarOffice for use on all of their PCs, I doubt MSFT would get off their collective, monopolistic butts to tackle any of the items above (except, perhaps, for #8, which doesn't actually require any coding work, but does assume someone there knows what this mysterious type really is). I'd bet blinking text is added to Excel before any of the 9 items above.

To be fair, I'm not an ideal Office customer. I don't use Word or PowerPoint if I can help it. When I do use them, it's usually to open documents and print them to .PDF files so I can then delete the .DOC and .PPT files. The company I work for uses Lotus Notes, so I'm blessed by having no contact with Outlook, Exchange etc. I use Excel and Access as analytical tools, I create as few 'documents' as possible. SmartTags and Task Pains strike me as Clippy's Revenge.