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Welcome to NDA's monthly email newsletter for August 2007.

Last week I had the pleasure of sharing accommodation in Dubbo, NSW, with about 40 people of all ages from the Tasmanian orienteering fraternity. We were there for the Junior World Orienteering Championship, won last year by [Hanny Alston](#) of Hobart, who one month later became the first non-European to win the adult world championship.

Every evening the lounge area was a hive of activity, with juniors catching up on school work and parents catching up on business activities. One parent I talked with operates a consultancy in vibration and acoustic modelling and was doing some nifty things with Excel and Visual Basic. Surprisingly, he had not discovered Pivot Tables, which are an effective tool for extracting information from databases, such as the lists of noise readings he was working with. So – this month some hints and tips on using Excel as a database and Pivot Tables.

Kind regards

Nigel Davies

Director, NDA

PS Tasmania punches above its weight in orienteering. Despite being the smallest state the schools' team won the Australian Schools Championships and overall we won the Australian Relay Championships. If you are looking for a healthy pastime, either as a family recreation or an individual challenge, you may find orienteering an enjoyable way to maintain physical and mental wellbeing. See <http://www.tasorienteeing.asn.au/orienteering.htm> for how to get started.

Hints and Tips – Excel databases

What is an Excel database?

A database in Excel is a table in which every row is a *record* (all the information about one entity – for example a transaction, stock item or noise reading) and every column a field (each item of information about the entity – such as the transaction date, amount and description).

How do you create a database in Excel?

You can create a database in Excel by typing the data directly into the worksheet or by importing data from another program:

- In some instances the data may be stored permanently in Excel and all the data entry, editing and reporting is done in that program.
- In other instances the data may be stored permanently in another program (perhaps an accounting program such as MYOB) and periodically exported to Excel for analysis or report production – see the Data, Text to Columns command below.

Whichever method you use, the first row of the database must be the Field Name Row and describe the contents of each field. For Excel to work effectively there should be no blank rows or columns in the database.

What can you do with a database in Excel?

Excel provides some simple tools to manipulate databases. Some of the more useful are the:

- Data, Sort command to sequence data from smallest to largest / oldest to newest by the contents of any field.

- Data, Filter command to view only the records that satisfy specified criteria (last month's transactions / out of stock items).
- Data, Subtotals command to calculate numeric fields by category (total payments by item / average noise reading by day).
- Data, Text to Columns command to import a text file from another program and convert it to an Excel database.
- Data, PivotTable and PivotChart Report command to 'cut and slice' data in a variety of ways and produce summary tables or charts. For a detailed explanation of Pivot Tables click [here](#). You can learn more about Pivot Tables on NDA's [Excel Advanced](#) course.

What can't you do with a database in Excel?

The main limitation of Excel as a database is that you cannot easily link two or more separate tables of information. To do this you need a 'proper' database program such as Microsoft Access. People often use Excel as a cheap and simple method of setting up a trial database and exploring the possibilities. In many instances Excel is all that is required; in other instances the application may outgrow Excel and may need to be converted to Access.

How to get more value from your data

To get more value from your data:

- Create records that capture as much data as possible so detailed analysis can be performed. If a transaction records the time, location, department, salesperson, item sold, quantity sold, unit cost and customer you can extract more management information than if you just record a sale and the total amount.
- Avoid the temptation to summarise data to reduce file sizes. Retaining all transactions each month will enable you to analyse data in more detail than if you summarise the data as total debits and credits for the month.
- Retain historical data from previous years so you can analyse trends over time – what stores / items / sales staff are doing better / worse this period than last period?

Some useful Excel database keyboard shortcuts

- To delete a record, click anywhere in the row you want to delete, press Shift+Spacebar to select the row and Ctrl+Hyphen to delete the row.
- To insert a new record, click anywhere in the row beneath where you want to insert the new record, press Shift+Spacebar to select the row and Ctrl+Plus to insert a blank row.
- To jump to the bottom of the database, click anywhere in the data and press Ctrl+Down arrow.
- To jump to the top of the database, click anywhere in the data and press Ctrl+Up arrow.
- To select the entire database, click anywhere in the data and press Ctrl+A.

How NDA can help with your database

NDA offers training at both [Introductory](#) and [Advanced](#) levels in setting up databases in Excel. We also offer training at all levels in developing Access databases. The Excel training should be entirely sufficient to enable you to fly solo. Access can be a little more complex and some professional support may be required. Many of our clients follow the steps listed below in developing Access databases:

- Attend an NDA [Access](#) course to learn about general database principles, develop simple databases and experiment with the development. of more complex databases.
- If necessary, engage NDA's [software developers](#) to design the data model and program a database.
- Use skills developed at the NDA training courses to maintain the database, develop data entry forms, queries and reports.

Stand by rates

NDA is now able to release the following courses for Stand-by enrolment, most at significant discounts on standard rates (to obtain the discount, please mention this email when making

bookings):

Hobart – IT courses

[Access Advanced](#) 24/26 July – 25% discount \$345 (standard rate \$460)

[Photoshop](#) 31 July – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

[QuickBooks](#) 13/14 Aug – 10% discount \$495 (standard rate \$550)

[Flash](#) 15 August – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

[Outlook](#) 16 August – 20% discount \$184 (standard rate \$230)

[Access Introductory/Intermediate](#) 20/22 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[Word Introductory](#) 21/23 August - \$460

[Word Intermediate](#) 23/27 August – \$460

[PowerPoint](#) 30 August - \$230

Hobart – Business Skills courses

[Managing Successful Projects](#) 30/31 July – 20% discount \$440 (standard rate \$550)

[Time Management](#) 9 August – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

[Conflict Resolution & Assertiveness](#) 21 August – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

[Training Delivery](#) 23/24 August – \$550

Launceston – IT courses

[Photoshop](#) 25 July – 25% discount \$206 (standard rate \$275)

[Excel Introductory](#) 9/10 August – \$460

[Designing Simple Websites](#) 10 August – 20% discount \$184 (standard rate \$230)

[Internet Basics](#) 20 August – 20% discount \$184 (standard rate \$230)

[Access Introductory/Intermediate](#) 20/22 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[Word Intermediate](#) 23/27 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[Access Advanced](#) 24/28 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[MYOB Payroll](#) 27 August - \$275

[Word Advanced](#) 27/29 August \$460

[PowerPoint](#) 30 August - \$230

Launceston – Business Skills courses

[Delivering Convincing Presentations](#) 27 July – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

[Learning Environment](#) 13 August – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

[OH & S in the Workplace](#) 22 August – 10% discount \$248 (standard rate \$275)

[Performance Management](#) 24 July – 20% discount \$220 (standard rate \$275)

North West – IT courses

[Access Advanced](#) 24/26 July – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[MYOB Setup & Operation](#) 25/27 July – 20% discount \$440 (standard rate \$550)

[Excel Introductory](#) 9/13 August - \$460

[Excel Intermediate](#) 13/15 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[Outlook](#) 16 August – 20% discount \$184 (standard rate \$230)

[Access Introductory/Intermediate](#) 20/22 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[Word Intermediate](#) 23/27 August – 10% discount \$414 (standard rate \$460)

[PowerPoint](#) 30 August – 10% discount \$207 (standard rate \$230)

Call NDA on 1300 765 376 for more information or make a [booking](#) here. Existing bookings may not be amended but where at least one person is already enrolled at full price, additional people from the organisation may be enrolled for 50% of the standard course fee. These discounts may not be used in conjunction with any other offer.

Our privacy policy

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