

UnderstandIT

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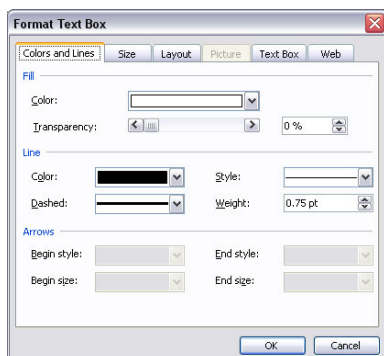
MICROSOFT WORD - TEXT BOXES

A client recently had a need to create a newsletter, and decided to use Microsoft Word, rather than Publisher or any other similar piece of software. In so doing, they discovered the use of Text Boxes – one of Word’s myriad of features.

A Text Box is, as the name says, a container within which you can enter text. The box can then be relocated anywhere on the page and positioned and sized to whatever size you need.

One additional point about Text Boxes is that they can be linked together and text will flow from one box into another. This is useful, particularly in a newsletter or similar type of document which might be formatted into columns. You can, of course, use Word’s columns feature to format columns of text. However, Text Boxes are more flexible, in that the boxes can be freely moved to anywhere on the page and if they are linked, then text will flow from one frame to the next, in the order that you specify, regardless of where they are positioned on the page.

The way you can link boxes is easy. You just create the first text box by placing the cursor in the document where you wish to insert the text box. The select **INSERT** and **TEXT BOX** from the Word menu. You can specify horizontal or vertical orientation for the box, although this is somewhat irrelevant, since you can change the dimensions of the box separately. Once the box is created, you can double-click on the boundary of the box and a **PROPERTIES** dialogue panel will be presented (see below).



Here you can set all the properties for the box, including whether it has a boundary line or not, its size, layout (inline, behind or in front of other text) etc.

In the case of a newsletter application, you would set the boundary line to No line and the layout to “inline with text”. Click on OK when all your required properties are set.

Create the second (or more) boxes for additional columns of text in the same way. Once the boxes are in place, you just then right-click on the border of the first box and a menu will appear, including the option to **CREATE TEXT BOX LINK**. When this option is selected, the cursor changes and you simply click on the text box you wish to link to (which must be empty, or you will receive an error message). The link is now created. When you type text into the first box, it will then continue and flow into the next box automatically.

WINDOWS XP TO BE RETIRED

Microsoft has recently announced that it intends to retire Windows XP with effect from January 2008.

This announcement has caused some serious consternation amongst the user community, as many believed that this also meant limited support for this version of Windows from this date also. However, it is not as precipitous as it first sounds. Microsoft do intend to stop selling new licences for Windows XP from this date – but only via its OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) resellers. From January 2008, companies like Dell will not be able to obtain OEM licences from Microsoft to sell with its range of new computers.

However, it will still be possible to obtain new licences from other resellers/retailers for some considerable time.

As far as support is concerned, there is a well-established program and commitment from Microsoft that details the timescales during which it will provide support for its products. They will therefore be continuing to provide mainstream support for Windows until April 2009 and extended support until April 2014. Details of the lifecycle for all Microsoft products can be found here:

<http://support.microsoft.com/gp/lifeselect>

The following link provides detail of the Microsoft Lifecycle policy in the form of a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page:

<http://support.microsoft.com/gp/lifepolicy>

Here you will find a full definition of “Mainstream Support” and “Extended Support”.

The above shows that Microsoft will be committed to Windows XP for some considerable time. However, if you are still using Windows (98 or 98 Special Edition), then extended support expires in July 2007, so it would be wise to consider an upgrade now.

SHUTTING DOWN PHISHING SCAMS

Nationwide, the building society has reported that it has successfully closed down many hundreds of phishing scam sites in the past 3 months, since installing new software, designed to protect its customers and reputation.

The software – Mark Monitor has replaced manual efforts to track down and close sites that attempt to encourage unsuspecting users to disclose personal information into official looking web pages purporting to be a bona fide financial organisation. It is then used to plunder the bank accounts of those customers.

Mark Monitor is a US company, with offices also in London and provide an extensive range of complementary services including technology and round the clock monitoring and reaction services to identify, trace and close down offending sites.

Whilst the services are aimed at the larger (Fortune 100) companies with brands and reputations to protect, business organisations are fighting back against online fraud.

The Mark Monitor web site provides some interesting white papers and other information regarding phishing and other online scams. You can find out more here:

<http://www.markmonitor.com/>

USB FLASH DRIVES – A SECURITY THREAT

Many organisations are struggling to cope with the potential loopholes in its network security resulting from the increased use of USB flash drives (also known as “thumb drives” or “pen drives”. These devices are now so ubiquitous that almost every one has one, and it is increasingly difficult to control the flow of information into and out of an organisation with many computer systems. The threats come from theft of information, and computer viruses.

For example, one organisation, the Salvation Army, has a workforce of 2,500 staff across the country and needed to exert centralised control of the flow of information on about 2,000 separate access points in their network – a mammoth task. They decided early on that a simple ban on the use of such devices would prove impossible and be counter-productive. They have therefore achieved their aim via a two pronged approach of deploying software on each of its computer systems and most importantly, user education and awareness.

If you require advice and help in securing your network, then please call Alan Finch on 01224 697457.

We wish to acknowledge with thanks that some of the material contained within this publication has been sourced from Computer Weekly, PC Pro, BBC and other reputable sources..

May Day Consulting Limited and your Chamber of Commerce have endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, but do not accept liability for any inaccuracy or omission contained within it.

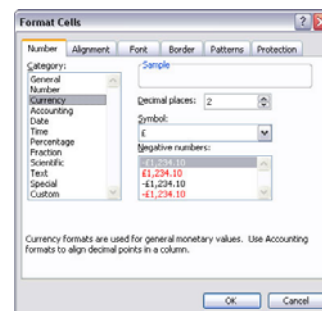
Information on other Business and IT services can be found on our web site at: <http://www.maydayconsulting.co.uk> or by calling Alan Finch on 07968 262079.

MS EXCEL – CUSTOM FORMATS

For those who use MS Excel a great deal, then this article may not be too revealing. However, for those who only use Excel occasionally, this might be useful.

When creating a spreadsheet in Excel, it is often necessary to apply a specific format to numbers contained in one or any number of cells. For most applications, using of one of the many built-in formats is usually enough. However, there are occasions when it is necessary to apply a format of your own design to a cell or series of cells.

As an example, you may wish to add a specific currency symbol to numbers in a series of cells. First, you need to select the cell, or range of cells, by clicking on the first cell in the range and dragging the mouse horizontally or vertically (or both) to highlight them. Then select CELLS from the FORMAT menu and you will see a dialogue box like this:



From here, you can select from a large number of format categories, including general, number, and the one we will use here – Currency. Firstly, you can select the number of decimal places to be displayed in the cell(s) – this is defaulted to 2. If you then click on the down arrow to the right of the Symbol box, a drop-down list of built-in symbols will appear, from which you can select the one you require.

However, in this example, we wish to format the amounts in Ringgit (the currency in Malaysia). The standard format provided for the Ringgit is “R”, which is incorrect – it should be “RM”. You can however, create a custom format by selecting the Custom category. Click on one of the examples shown and it will appear in the Symbol box, where you can edit it. We have used the British £ example here. Simply replace the existing symbol “£” with “RM” (complete with quotes). The format £#,##0.00;-£#,##0.00 should then become “RM”#,##0.00;“-RM”#,##0.00. Click on OK and the figures in your selected cells will have the new custom format.

Save the worksheet and the new format will be saved with it for future use. Unfortunately, we have not found a way to save the format for use in other sheets!

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