

NOTE I: IMPROVING DOCUMENTATION

The objective is to have within the *.xls file, written textural sections that allow full documentation as part of the entire workbook.

COVER SHEET

This is a new section that allows written text, and a brief table of contents. This would be a stand-alone, one page “sheet”, prepared using a subset of Microsoft Word. The word “cover” would appear on the main menu, to allow it to be brought up for entry, changes and additions. This would appear as page 1 in a printout.

The allowable information entered in page-setup headings and footers is much too limited to give any useful information about the workbook. This has been a real problem and bottleneck in the use of Excel.

One approach, that of setting up a Word document (i.e. *.doc) for the “cover sheet” and inserting Excel “sheets” is very cumbersome and fault prone. It just doesn’t work. The heavy reloading of the Excel and Word software takes considerable time, and the inserted Excel worksheet cannot be entered/changed as it would be as a worksheet under Excel. Under the new *.net approach to software with the “thrown exception” capability, an error can easily lead to a total system crash, because exceptions occurring under Excel aren’t handled adequately by Word.

WORKSHEETS

Each worksheet would have a “null cell” that would display above the standard column line, and be accessible by the mouse pointer at any time. This cell would allow only text entry. The allowable “Format-Cells” menu options of Alignment, Font, Patterns and Protection would be allowed. It would not allow equations or calculations. The size would be re-sized to fit page-widths (horizontal) and vertically to fit the amount of text put into the cell. The null cells would allow up to 8191 characters. The current cell limit of 255 characters is much too limited. On printout, it would appear at the top of the sheet, and be page “cut” to fit the printed sheets (which differ from the workbook sheets).

ADVANTAGES

This gives Excel the ability to prepare a “full” lab report, with cover sheet and any descriptions of the various data sets (sheets) and different analysis’s done on each sheet. The text can be put in at the same time as the work is done, avoiding the re-write problem of trying to remember exactly what each regression was done on and conclusions from it, at the time it was done. The linkage is then direct, at the time it was done.