Microsoft Office 2007 User Interface

Fact Sheet
January 2007

Microsoft® Office 2007 introduces a redesigned user interface (UI) to make it easier for people to get better results faster. The new UI replaces traditional menus and toolbars found in previous releases of Microsoft Office with a results-oriented design that enables people to focus on what they want to do rather than how to do it. New UI features will help organize and more effectively present application tools and capabilities. As a result, people will find it easier to quickly discover and use more of the capabilities that Microsoft Office applications offer, enabling them to produce their best work more efficiently.

The decision to redesign the Office application user interface was based on usability studies and extensive customer research conducted by Microsoft Corp. As the Office applications have become more powerful, it has become more challenging for many users to find and figure out how to use the full range of features the applications offer. Customer input helped make it clear that a new user interface was needed to empower people to work more productively with the powerful Office tools at their disposal. This led to four major design goals for the new UI:

1. Make Office applications easier to use

2. Reduce design clutter and user interface interruptions

3. Make it easier to browse and find tools and features

4. Support the creation of great-looking documents

Key Components of the New Microsoft Office UI
The redesigned user interface has many new features. There are nine key components:

The Ribbon
This primary replacement for menus and toolbars is a results-oriented UI designed for easy browsing. The Ribbon consists of tabs displaying the commands that are most relevant for each of the task areas in each application. For example, in Microsoft Office Word 2007, the tabs group offers commands for activities such as inserting objects like pictures and tables, laying out pages, working with references, creating mailings, and reviewing documents. The Home tab provides instant access to many of the most frequently used features, making it easy for users to be productive with the new UI right away.
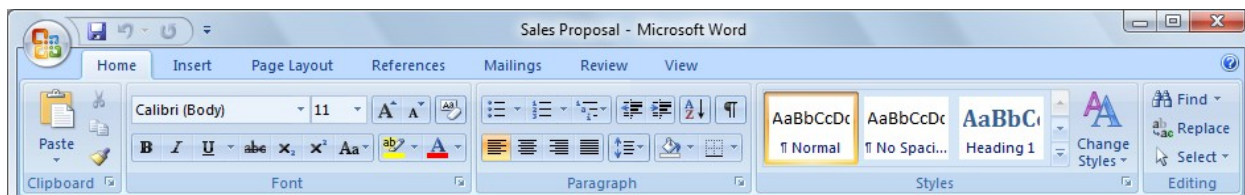

Contextual Tabs
In the new UI, whenever a user selects or inserts an object, the Contextual Tabs for modifying that object (such as pictures, tables, text boxes and charts) appear in the Ribbon. This simplifies the user interface, making it easier to browse for and locate commands that are relevant to the selected or inserted object. For example, the commands for editing a chart are not relevant until a chart appears in a spreadsheet and a user wants to edit it.

Microsoft

The Office Button
The Office Button replaces the File menu. It provides easy access to a rich set of tools for working with a document, spreadsheet, presentation or database once it has been created. In addition to commands for sending, saving and printing, the Office Button includes features for finalizing the work, adding protection, sharing it with others or participating in a workflow process.

Microsoft
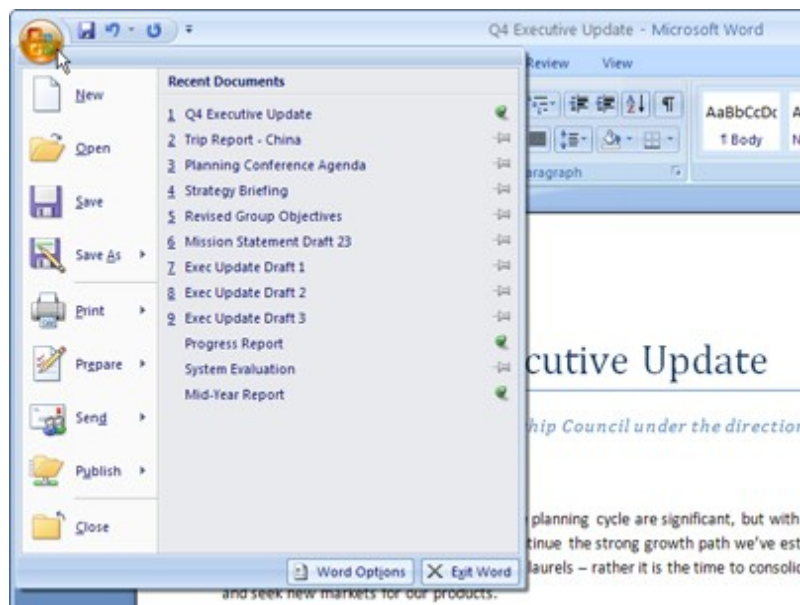
Galleries

Galleries are at the heart of the redesigned experience. They provide users with a visual set of formatting options to choose from when working on a document, spreadsheet, presentation or Access™ database. By presenting a simple set of potential results that can be achieved with a single click, rather than a complex dialog box with numerous options, Galleries streamline the process of producing professional-looking work.
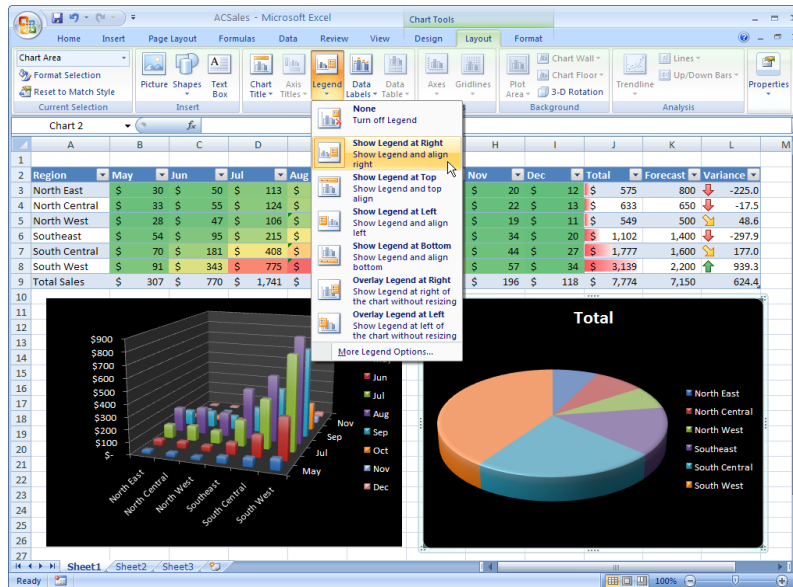

Live Preview

This new dynamic technology shows the potential results of a Gallery selection within the document before it is actually applied. Moving the mouse pointer over an option in a Gallery generates a Live Preview of that action, allowing users to quickly try different options and select the one that works best before actually making changes to the document. This eliminates the cycle of applying formatting, undoing and redoing repeatedly to get the desired results.

Mini Toolbar

The Mini Toolbar is a new UI mechanism that provides easy and efficient access to the most frequently used text-formatting commands. Instead of selecting text and then moving the mouse pointer to the Ribbon to apply formatting, users can use the Mini Toolbar, which appears right next to the selected text. The Mini Toolbar appears as a ghost image, and when users move the cursor over the ghost image, the Mini Toolbar fades in and becomes a functioning formatting toolbar. As the cursor is moved away from the Mini Toolbar, or if a command is not selected, the Mini Toolbar fades and disappears.
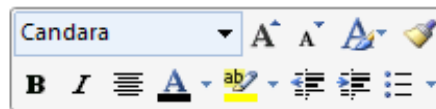
Microsoft

Enhanced ScreenTips
Enhanced ScreenTips bridge the gap between the features and the relevant help documentation to help make it easier to discover new functionality in the applications. A ScreenTip appears as users move the mouse pointer over items in the Ribbon. ScreenTips provide detailed information about the feature and may illustrate with a picture or diagram what the feature does. ScreenTips show the name of the feature, the keyboard shortcut and a brief description of what the feature is used for. They also offer a direct link to the associated articles found in the help menu.

Quick Access Toolbar
The Quick Access Toolbar provides a single location for people to place the commands and features they use most frequently. By default, the Quick Access Toolbar presents core commands (for example, Save or Undo), but users can customize the Quick Access Toolbar by right-clicking on the control they want to add and choosing Add to Quick Access Toolbar from the menu. These commands are available no matter where users are on the Ribbon and allow one-click access to their favorite and most frequently used features.

KeyTips
Users who prefer using the keyboard over a mouse will find that the old keyboard shortcuts and menu accelerators work as they did in previous versions of Office. Further, with Office 2007 applications, all commands can be easily accessed via the keyboard using KeyTips. KeyTips help users navigate the menu structure as they would with a mouse. When users press the Alt key, KeyTips appear in front of the Ribbon tabs with a single letter or combination of letters for users to type to activate the feature.
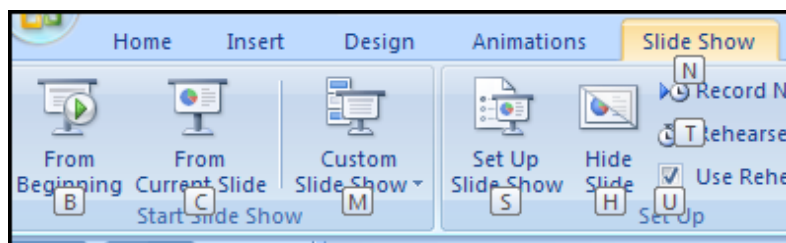
Accessing Microsoft Office 2007 Applications With the New UI

The new Microsoft Office user interface is designed to increase accessibility of the full range of advanced features provided by the Microsoft Office authoring applications. For this reason, the new UI is found in the following Office 2007 applications:

- Microsoft Office Word 2007

- Microsoft Office Excel® 2007

- Microsoft Office PowerPoint® 2007

- Microsoft Office Access 2007

- Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007 *(Partial implementation: The main Outlook window uses menus and toolbars; all other program functions such as creating, reading and replying to e-mail, and working with appointments, contacts and tasks, use the new Office user interface.)*

More information about the Office 2007 user interface can be found at these sites:

- Jensen Harris: An Office User Interface Blog, http://blogs.msdn.com/jensenh

- Office Online: http://office.microsoft.com/en-au/default.aspx

- Developer Overview of the Office User Interface: http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=5ae8ea78-6ba9-4de4-aabd-2616d010caa7&displaylang=en

- Office User Interface License and Program Frequently Asked Questions: http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=e2ddd3fb-8635-4d54-8730-102b75c31db6&displaylang=en

#########

For further information, please contact:
Rapid Response Team, Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, (503) 443-7070, rrt@waggeneredstrom.com