

TCP-IP's Tips & Tricks



In this Issue!

- MS Excel Preventive Measures
- MS Access Formatting Years
- MS Word Customizing Columns
- Is it a Virus or a Hoax?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Excel	2
Access	2
Word	3
Virus Myths	3
Mapped Drives	BACK
TCP-IP	BACK

Wireless LANs are ideal for many

When rolling out a new network, small and midsize businesses can save money by installing a wireless LAN rather than a traditional wired LAN. Gartner details why WLAN technology is now a viable alternative and looks at the TCO issues involved.

The word wireless, when associated with any data technology, commonly connotes complexity and high cost. In the case of wireless LAN technology, however, this is not the case. With support from vendors (for example, 3Com, Avaya, Cisco Systems, and Symbol Technologies), wireless LANs are now an option for small and midsize businesses (SMBs), not only for complementing wired LANs for network access in midsize and large office spaces, but also for replacing the need for an extensive wired LAN network in

small and home offices that typically have fewer than 100 users. Gartner research measuring total cost of ownership (TCO) shows significant savings (in time and money) by using standard wireless LAN technology instead of wired LANs.

The primary purpose of a wireless LAN in the enterprise is to extend network coverage to allow for in-building or campus wide communication for mobile and roaming users. Another key benefit is to provide LAN access where it is too costly or prohibited to run wired access—pulling cable and paying installation fees for unwired buildings is expensive. A wireless LAN system is typically composed of four components: Wireless Access Point (AP), Wireless LAN network interface card (NIC), Wired LAN or access to networked devices (servers or printers

for example) and client notebook, desktop or handheld computers.

When to consider a wireless LAN. For SMBs that require local networks for shared printers, Internet access, e-mail, or database access, a wireless LAN offers a lower-cost alternative to installing a new wired network. The two scenarios most conducive to wireless LAN deployment are; 1) Requirements to connect an office to a network or add networking capacity within an office of fewer than 100 employees. 2) A need to complement a network infrastructure that is outdated or at capacity.

For the complete story goto:
<http://www.tcpip-inc.com/wlan.htm>

Excel: Preventive Measures



“You can tell Excel to prompt you any time you attempt to drag-and-drop data onto a cell that already contains data.”

If you're a "keyboard person," you probably do all of your copy-and-paste and cut-and-paste using keyboard shortcuts [Ctrl]C to copy, [Ctrl]X to cut, and [Ctrl]V to paste. When you use those shortcuts, Excel assumes you know what you're doing and obediently pastes what you've copied or cut, whether or not the destination cell(s) already contain data.

If you're a "mouse person," you probably use drag-and-drop to move a cell or a range of cells to a new location. With drag-and-drop, Excel has a measure in place for preventing accidental data overwrite in destination cells.

You can tell Excel to prompt you any time you attempt to drag-and-drop data onto a cell that already contains data. To activate this prompt go to Tools | Options | Edit, and click the check box for the Alert Before Overwriting Cells option.

Now when you try to drag-and-drop onto a cell that

already contains data, Excel will display an alert that says, Do you want to replace the contents of the destination cells? If you're not sure, you can click Cancel and double-check the destination.

Access: Formatting Years

Endear yourself to the end users of your Access databases by asking them how they like to enter their dates.

Some users are firmly entrenched in the habit of typing dashes in their dates, while others prefer slashes; still others just want to type six digits and let the program fill in the dash or the slash

automatically. Fortunately, you can accommodate almost any style of data entry by tweaking the



Input Mask associated with your Date/Time field.

As you probably know, you can open your table in Design View, and click on the Date/Time field for which you want to customize the input mask. In the bottom

half of the screen, click the General tab and then click the Build button (the gray button displaying an ellipsis) to launch the Input Mask Wizard. From there, you can view and experiment with the built-in masks and design your own.

In some cases, you'll want to force Access to display four-digit years, even if the input mask allows the user to enter only two digits for the year (e.g., to avoid ambiguity

about a date). In Access 2000, you can make that change globally by going to Tools | Options and clicking the General tab. In the Use Four-Digit Year Formatting section, activate the check box for the option labeled All Databases, and click OK.

Download our popular shortcuts list which includes several shortcuts for Microsoft Office, Windows 98 and Internet Explorer

<http://www.tcpip-inc.com/tools/keycheat.htm>

MS Word: Customizing Columns



Word 2000 and 2002 make it easier than ever to format columnar text. To divide your text into columns, go to Format | Columns to display the Columns dialog box.

In the Presets section, you'll notice a couple of particularly useful options: Left and Right. When you select one of those options, by default, Word creates two columns, making either the column on the left or the right twice as wide as the other column. If you increase the number of columns, Word will slightly decrease the width of the wider column and increase the number of narrow columns.

With the Columns dialog box, you can set up a maximum of 12 columns, unless you've selected the Left and Right options.

These options permit a maximum of eight columns per page.



If you'd like to customize your columns further, print vertical lines between the columns to make the columnar text easier to read. To add those lines, just click the

check box for the Line Between option in the Columns dialog box.

Use the Width And Spacing section to tweak Word's settings for column and spacing widths. If you change your mind, you can reset the columns to their default widths by clicking the Equal Column Width check box.

Cut through the Virus Hype with Vmyths.com

Where does the responsible person go to find concrete virus information on what's real and what's hype? The answer is Vmyths.com, where you'll find a great site filled with unbiased, straightforward info "about computer virus myths, hoaxes, urban legends, hysteria, and the implications if you believe in them." According to the editors, "Vmyths.com doesn't sell a product or service—we sell the truth about computer virus myths and hoaxes. We take no prisoners; we pull no punches." And from what I could tell, they keep their word.

An easy-to-use, mostly ad-free layout

Vmyths.com refuses all anti-virus advertisements, thus remaining impartial and free from Big Business's purse strings. When you first arrive at the site, you are immediately offered a beginner's

tour. Aside from a few ad banners, the layout is fairly clean.

Recent news and articles are easy to find and access. The writing tends to be humorous and edgy, definitely revealing the writers' slight disdain for the antivirus establishment. You won't find Mr. Norton or Mr. McAfee here.

What you will find is a great way to search for information on any virus-related topic. With access to a six-year archive, one can search by keyword or alphabetically. After typing in Melissa, Vmyths.com quickly displayed seven articles to research. The data was informative and included a history of the Melissa outbreak. Each article contains the usual links to keywords and related articles, plus you can e-mail whatever you find to a friend by simply clicking an

icon and typing in an address.

In the Hot News section, I checked out the latest dish on the Sircam worm/virus. This article detailed the Code Red chain-letter hysteria created by this bug and even included links to both Symantec and McAfee's sites so further info could be accessed.

In addition to offering a great no-BS resource for anti-virus info, Vmyths.com publishes a weekly newsletter, as well as "virus hysteria alerts" and multimedia updates. Sign-up was easy and hassle free. Criticism, error reporting, clarifications, and questions can be sent to "Vea Culpa," Vmyths.com's pseudonymous columnist.

"So, if you and/or your end users need the lowdown on the latest virus scare in a timely, straightforward fashion, I recommend Vmyths.com. The site's humor and general distrust is reason enough to visit the site."



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Map Drives Using the NET.EXE Command

Perhaps the most common way to map a drive letter to a network drive is to use Explorer. It's possible, however, to connect these mapped drives from the Windows 98 MS-DOS prompt using the Net.exe command. You use this method for Windows NT logon scripts, but it's also useful if you need to complete a specific task during the day (or night) that requires a remote file share.

For instance, if you need to map a drive (G) to the \\server1\work share, you could use the following command:

```
Net use g: \\server1\work
```

However, if there is already a

drive G mapped on the PC, this will only return an error. To work around this, it's common practice to run the following command before the command that maps the drive:

```
Net use g: /delete
```

This deletes the current mapping of G, allowing the new mapping to complete successfully.

If you don't necessarily need to specify the letter used in the drive mapping, you can instead use the wildcard symbol [*]. For example,

the following will map the first available drive letter (after the letters assigned to fixed disks and removable media) to the network share:

```
Net use *: \\server1\work
```



TCP-IP Incorporated is a computer service and networking company. We specialize in service to small to medium sized companies who need a professional level of Information Technology support for a reasonable price. TCP-IP has been servicing the Reno and Sacramento areas for 5 years and has experience servicing companies with as few as 1 computer to large LAN/WAN networked environments.

TCP-IP™ is on a mission to support the computing needs of small businesses and remote offices of larger corporations. What does this mean for your business? Simply put, we are focused. We exist to bring your business the highest levels of technological expertise, scalability and customer service typically reserved and made available only to the Fortune 1000.

We have serviced and logged thousands of computer and network problems for our customers. No one knows the technology challenges of small business like TCP-IP™. No one.

Rates & Fees

In Shop Service:

Diagnostic Fee	\$75
Bench Service	\$55 per hour

Field Service: (Home or Office) For Time and Material customers only

Desktop Support	\$65 per hour
Network Support	\$85 per hour

Misc. Charges and Fees

Phone Support	\$35 per incident
Service Call	\$25
Mileage	\$0.50 (for every mile over 15 miles from office)