



The “*Buzz*” on Microsoft Office 2007

The Glitz, the Glamour, and the Gotcha’s...

Now that Microsoft Office 2007 is rolling out, it’s time to take a peek and let you know what’s going on - from the “*Rollout-ee*” perspective. “*Rollout-ee’s*” (or as some call them, victims) are the office workers who come in on Monday morning and find that the *IT Keebler Elves* were busy over the weekend rolling out a new version of Microsoft Office. I’ve been teaching what are called “Transition” or “New Features” workshops for some time now, and here’s what I’ve discovered.

From my perspective, there’s the **Glitz, the Glamour, and the Gotcha’s**. It’s as if they took **Visio** and made it available in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. They put **Excel on steroids** so now it acts more like Access. They took parts of **MS Publisher** and made it available in Word. Office 2007 is in cahoots with Adobe so you can **save as PDF**. With 2007 you will spend less time trying to be a graphic artist. You will spend more time on content than on style.

Office 2007 is **visually very different**. It has some **great new features** and many new “things” to click on, as well as **new locations** for tools we took years to master. Add to that **a few idiotic changes** users don’t expect, (nor appreciate), and you’ve got a recipe for some home grown **high anxiety** – right out of the box! It wouldn’t be a Microsoft upgrade if they didn’t do a couple of things they think are great, and you think is crazy!!! And, of course, they never tell you what they are! The good news is that with some advance warning (such as my “*What’s New in MS Office 2007*” workshop), and a little practice, **people overwhelmingly prefer Office 2007**.

The Glitz

The biggest change you will notice is that Office 2007 is no longer Menu Bar centric, but Tab and tool button centric. You no longer select from drop-down lists from the Menu Bar (File, Edit, View, etc.). Rather, you select “Tabs” that have groups of toolbars called **Command Groups**. **Tabs** allow for more and bigger toolbar buttons to be displayed, making them easier to use. Some Tabs and Command Groups (toolbars) display only when needed (called Contextual Tabs). The Recently Used File list now displays the last 17 files you’ve used!

But *the real Glitz is that* you can now **UNDO AFTER SAVE!!!** To me, this was worth the price of admission.

The new Auto-preview feature uses “mouse over” technology. A wonderful array of styles and themes will enable you to quickly and easily pre-view then apply a wide range of very cool formats, graphics, and colors. Each package has its own “survival tool” that is quite beneficial – the **Interactive Tool Guide** – a very nice feature that displays Office 2003 commands and toolbars, and shows you where they live in Office 2007. Tool button “tooltips” display more information as you hover over tools. PowerPoint’s graphics, styles, and animation tools are greatly improved - you can now work with “layered” pictures and text boxes much better for easier animation setting. The Office Suite’s **SmartArt** is an excellent graphics tool that will have you spending more time thinking and writing what to say than drawing it! You **will** like this tool!

The Glamour

Excel 2007 has **1 million rows** and **64,384 columns**. **Auto Filter** has been greatly improved. You can sort up to 64 levels, and **Excel now has Page Layout View**, which makes adding headers and footers a breeze! Word has an **Insert Cover Page** feature that is excellent and easy to use. Expanded Smart Art and templates await in all your packages. Chart-making is now controlled by Excel (not Microsoft Graph).

Office 2007 **has lots of new graphics and galleries** to work with. It uses what I call “try it before you buy it” formatting. But be aware, because Office 2007 *disconnects* tools that aren’t available in *earlier versions*, SmartArt, for instance, goes from 24 choices to six when you “Save As” 2003. As a consequence, if you send an Office 2007 document to a 2003 or Office ‘97 user, the new graphics will *display*, but won’t be able to be *edited* in the earlier version. No more big, empty boxes with a red x at the top left! However, recipients have to have run the Compatibility Pack in order to get this functionality.

Each package comes with its own set of free on-line demonstrations and courses. For years, Microsoft has made hundreds of courses and demos available to end users. The last few years they’ve done a better job of providing relevant and brief on-line learning to the general public – problem is, nobody knows about it!! (But

that's another story. The demos are all 6-8 minutes long and are well done. Courses are between 20-40 minutes. Free. 24/7.

The Gotcha's

Word 2007 has a couple of gotcha's you need to know about. It changed the way "new" documents are formatted. Word 2007 defaults to **double spacing** every time you hit [Enter] and when word wrapping within a paragraph. It really annoys people!!! These can permanently fixed. The **default font** has changed to **Calibri**. (What the heck is Calibri?) This too can be fixed. Mail Merge has changed – Word 2007 fixed what wasn't broke! Unless you use the "Step by Step Wizard", Word 2007 defaults to NOT suppressing blank lines in labels and adds 5.5 points "above" paragraph spacing for labels. Fix this by choosing the **Step by Step Mail Merge Wizard** (from the Mailings Tab) and Word will open the familiar 2003 Mail Merge tools/functionality.

Outlook changed the way the **Out of Office Assistant** notifies you (in a bad way). It's *still* not easy to get the **Reading Pane View** turned *Off* so Outlook attachments stop opening in that annoying View. **Outlook's monthly calendar view** does not print like it used to. It used to print monthly appointment details in full. Now your monthly appointments will print truncated! I'm working on finding a "fix" for this. Stay tuned...

If you convert an **Access** 2003 database to 2007, 2003 users cannot open it. **Access** also defaults to forcing you to expand your list of tables, forms, and queries, and to double click to open Tables, etc. Most Access users I know are waiting to see what they'll gain by converting a database to 2007. Just so you know, you can open and use a 2003 database in 2007 – it's still a 2003. Once you convert it, then things get serious!

Pivot Tables in Excel 2007 is visually different, and is located under Insert, not Data. However, people like it once they see how it works and play with it a bit. Having 64 levels of **sorting** is nice, but not as intuitive as 2003. Also, be aware, the **location of Tools, Options** in each package is now Office Button, Word Options, or Excel Options, etc.

Finally, the whole conversion to and from Office 2003 situation is improved, BUT... there is a "compatibility" file to execute, from Microsoft's Web site. This enables Office 2007 documents to be opened by 2003. Attempting to open a 2007 document in 2003 triggers a prompt to download this "Compatibility Pack." Takes less than a minute to run.

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Buzz Merrick is Founder and President of Right Click Learning, a computer application and business skills training, consulting, and e-Learning company. Buzz specializes in putting complex computer concepts and applications into "plain English," encouraging end users with his motto, "Let's do better what we do every day". Buzz has taught over 23,000 users since 1993. His workshops consistently receive the highest in content and instructor evaluations from attendees.

Buzz has extensive experience in enhancing professional skills through business and technology courses, and facilitating organizational discussions. From 2000-2007 he developed and delivered training programs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore for their Student (Banner) and HR, Payroll, and Financials & Grants (PeopleSoft) IT enterprise systems. Most recently he managed the UMB e-Learning (Skillsoft) program. He teaches Microsoft Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Word, as well as PeopleSoft and Banner. He designs and records web based e-Learning modules. In addition, he teaches "business skills" workshops such as Sexual Harassment Awareness and Survival Skills for Service Professionals. He can be reached at buzz@buzzmerrick.com.