

Crabby's shorty-shortcut tips for working smarter (part II)

Applies to: Microsoft Excel 2010, Excel 2007, Excel 2003

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Crabby Office Lady

In my column [Crabby's shorty shortcut tips for working smarter \(Part I\)](#), I offered a couple of tips each for Word, Excel, and Outlook that should make your computing life easier and more efficient. This week we're tackling PowerPoint, Publisher, and Visio.

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Have I got some tips for you. And unlike "tips" from Wall Street, these won't incur the wrath of Main Street. They may, however, make your coworkers jealous.

PowerPoint

Joke all you want — PowerPoint is the most widely-used presentation software in the world. Even so, you might not be using it to its full potential.

Practice made perfect with slide timing

You may not get to Carnegie Hall with your presentation, but you can learn the secret to nearly every great performance: rehearsal.

Consider this scenario: You're giving an awesome presentation. Your slide transitions are working, the style you've chosen for the slide show is gleaming on the large projector, and your audience is alert and attentive. Then you glance at the clock and you realize that you've used up 75 percent of your time and have only covered half of the material. So you start accelerating — tearing through it — and maybe, in your haste, accidentally skipping over some of the critical parts. What started out as perfection is ending up a rushed, scrambled mess.

This could have been prevented if you'd rehearsed your presentation using one of the most helpful features I know of in PowerPoint 2007: the Slide Timing feature. When you rehearse, use this feature to record the time you need to present each slide, and then use the recorded times to advance the slides automatically. (You can also turn the auto-forwarding off.)

Read more about [Rehearsing and timing the delivery of a presentation](#).

Save time: Use the slide master

You've created a gem of a presentation. The visual theme you've chosen is appropriate for the audience, and you did NOT forget to add the company logo on each and every slide. Because you diligently rehearsed timings, you know that everything is perfect. So since you have a few minutes before the big presentation, you check your e-mail. And wouldn't you know it, the marketing team just forwarded you the new company logo — the one they'd been working on the last right months and finally got it right, five minutes after you finished your presentation.

If you had used a slide master, there'd be no problem; you would swap out the old logo for the new one and *poof* it magically gets changed on every other slide. That's the beauty and majesty of the slide master: It stores information about the theme and slide layouts of a

presentation (making it the "master copy"), including background, color, fonts, effects, placeholder sizes, and positioning. Make a change to the slide master, and you've made a change to every other slide.

Learn more about [slide masters and how to create them](#).

Publisher

When you're creating posters, greeting cards, catalogs and brochures, or any sort of branded marketing materials, there's only one way to go: Publisher. It was made for these sorts of jobs.

Simple and effective: Keyboard shortcuts

If you want to toggle between pages in your Publisher 2007 publication, sure, you can use your mouse to click the pages at the bottom of the window. However, if you have many pages in the publication, there is a faster and easier way:

Press F5 and a Go To Page dialog pops up. Type in the page number and hit Enter.

Now, if you don't know the page number and you want to move between various pages, Ctrl + Page Up goes to the previous page, and Ctrl + Page Down goes to the last page in the document.

Not to be outdone by PowerPoint: Master pages

Master pages in Publisher are like slide masters in PowerPoint: When you create a new publication that has more than one page, and you want those pages to look consistent, you create a master page.

The master page contains the design elements that you want to repeat on multiple pages (thereby avoiding that panicked feeling of running out of time because you have to change all 135 pages of a brochure on the whim of your client who decides to swap a picture that appears throughout). When you need to change the look of your publication (or just add an element), instead of having to do that on each and every page, you can update the master page.

Yes, the master page is the feature for the control freak inside all of us. Master pages can contain a variety of design and layout elements, such as headers and footers, page dimensions, pictures, margins, and just about anything you can put on a page. You can also create more than one master page. If you have a catalog that has the same elements on the front and back covers but want the pages inside to look different from the covers, you can create two masters —one for the covers and one for the inside pages.

Read more about how to [create, edit, or delete a master page](#).

Shhh! Here's a tip: Use the library

I love the smell of old books — it makes me feel comfortable and cozy. And the thought of librarians tamps down my naturally loud voice.

Let's talk about the Content Library in Publisher. When you create branding for your business, you can store it and use it again in subsequent publications. If you create logos, lists of services, success stories, maps to a business location, testimonials, and pictures that you plan to reuse in your future publications, add these items to the Content Library.

Read more about the [Content Library](#).

Visio

Visio is drawing and diagramming software. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Frankly, it is. And it's not hard to learn. Even an amateur can get excellent results.

Create worlds with Visio

Consider this scenario: You're the administrative assistant for a huge group and you've spent the last month working on and mapping out every detail involved with your group's move to a new building. Your map, a Visio diagram, is a masterpiece. You've created the floor plan, you've assigned offices, you've indicated where the various resources are located, you've ordered furniture, and you've even noted the quickest paths to the lunchroom.

Your Visio file is saved, and so you print it out and show it to your manager. But then she drops the bomb: Not everyone in the group has Visio. (You do because with all the mapping and diagramming you do, it's a must.) Now she's wondering how you're going to disseminate your plan.

Oh how she underestimates you; you know that there are three main ways to do this:

1. Send an e-mail to everyone and attach the Visio file. Also include a link to the [Visio Viewer 2007](#), a free download that will allow people without Visio to view any Visio drawing or diagram in their Web browser.
2. If your recipients are using Outlook 2007, they can preview any Visio files that are attached to e-mail. They don't need the viewer and they don't need Visio. [Preview Visio diagrams in Outlook 2007 even if you don't have Visio.](#)
3. Finally, you can save your Visio drawing as a PDF (Portable Document Format). A PDF is a file format that is independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems. This means that anyone with a computer and Adobe Acrobat Reader (which is free) can open and read the file.

Your manager realizes you've saved the day and hands you the next project: Put 125 people's schedule into one Project 2007 file...and do it snappy!

From simple to spectacular: Work with themes

Simply put, a theme in Visio 2007 is a set of colors and effects you can apply to a drawing with one click. And themes are *new* for Visio 2007, so don't go looking for them in any other version.

Choose from a gallery of predefined themes, or customize themes with your own background colors, fonts, effects, and more. Your diagram will jump off the page, plus you can make it visually consistent with documents you create in other Microsoft Office programs.

Learn about how to [apply themes in Visio 2007](#).

Your turn

I'll bet you have some of your own super-secret tips. How about you share them with the world? Visit [Crabby's blog](#) and let 'em rip.

About the author

[Annik Stahl](#), the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the [Did this article help you?](#) feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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