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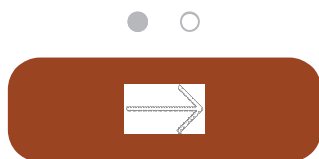
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History of Microsoft Excel 1978 - 2013 [Infographic]

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▶ How long have you been using Microsoft Exc

Have you ever thought how Excel or the other electronic spreadsheet softwares came to existence?

In today's post, we will go back in time to trace the origin of Excel. So, here we go:

While the origin of electronic spreadsheets can be traced back to 1978, but it wasn't until 1982 when Microsoft jumped into the arena of

Electronic spreadsheets with a product known as MultiPlan.

Multiplan was Microsoft's first electronic spreadsheet program. It was introduced in 1982 as a competitor for VisiCalc (the first ever electronic spreadsheet program). The key difference between Multiplan and its competitors was Microsoft's decision to use R1C1 addressing instead of the A1 addressing which was introduced by VisiCalc.

Multiplan was very popular on CP/M systems, but on MS-DOS systems it lost fame to Lotus 1-2-3. This thing motivated Microsoft to develop another spreadsheet product Excel. The first version of Excel was released in 1985 for Mac. Later in November 1987, the first Windows version was released.

It all started with VisiCalc:

In 1978, Harvard Business School student Dan Bricklin developed a program called VisiCalc. It was a relatively small program with few basic capabilities. It could only calculate data with a matrix of 5 columns by 20 rows.

To make VisiCalc more powerful Bricklin hired Bob Frankston, who is also known as the co-creator of VisiCalc. Frankston made the program fast and with better arithmetic. VisiCalc was an instant success and the duo were able to sell around 1 million copies of the program.

Note: You can still download an original copy of Visicalc from Dan Bricklin's website:

<http://www.bricklin.com/history/vcexecutable.htm> [size: 27 K]

What followed VisiCalc?

After the phenomenal success of VisiCalc, a team headed by Mitch Kapor in 1983, developed a new spreadsheet program called Lotus 1-2-3. Mitch and his team power packed Lotus 1-2-3 with charting, graphing and rudimentary database capabilities along with the basic arithmetic. This made Lotus 1-2-3 a new favourite in the industry.

Although, before this in 1982 Microsoft had already launched Multiplan but it was outshined by Lotus 1-2-3. And this thing provoked Microsoft to come up with Microsoft Excel and rest is history.

The Infographic on History of Microsoft Excel:

This infographic takes a closer look at the history of Excel, circa 1978-2013.



In 1978, Harvard Business School student Dan Bricklin (the father of Modern Day Spreadsheets) had to do some analysis task for his case study. To do this he had two alternatives: 1) do it by hand or 2) use a clumsy mainframe program. Bricklin thought there must be a better way.

He envisioned “an electronic blackboard and electronic chalk in a classroom”.

By the fall of 1978, Bricklin had programmed the first working

prototype of his concept which he named VisiCalc. The first version of VisiCalc could manipulate a matrix of five columns and 20 rows. Though it wasn't even close to the modern day spreadsheets but still VisiCalc was an instant success.

ITEM	NO	UNIT	COST
HUCK RAKE	1	1	56
QUICK CUT	1	1	106
TONER	25	4	1248
EYE SNUFF	2	4	9
SUBTOTAL			13155
9.75% TAX			1282
TOTAL			14438

VisiCalc - The First Ever Electronic Spreadsheet



A Brief History of Microsoft Excel

1978

VISICALC™

It was the first ever electronic spreadsheet program, originally released for the Apple II. Capabilities include: Basic arithmetic operations, Instant automatic recalculation and Scrolling.

1980

SuperCalc

SuperCalc was a spreadsheet application published by Sorcim, it was originally bundled along with WordStar. SuperCalc was notable for being one of the first spreadsheet programs capable of iteratively solving circular references.

1982

MULTIPLAN™

Multiplan was an early spreadsheet program developed by Microsoft. A fundamental difference between


Multiplan and its competitors was Microsoft's decision to use R1C1 addressing instead of the A1 addressing introduced by VisiCalc.

1983



Lotus 1-2-3 improvised on all the basics embodied in SuperCalc. Along with being a spreadsheet, it also offered integral charting, graphing and rudimentary database operations.

1985

Microsoft Excel 

Excel 1.0 was one of the first spreadsheet programs to use a graphical interface with pull down menus and a point and click capability using a mouse pointing device. The first version was only released for Macintosh.

1987



Excel 2.0 was the first Windows version of Excel and was labelled "2" to correspond to the Mac version. This also included a run-time version of Windows.

1990



Excel 3.0 included toolbars, drawing capabilities, outlining, add-in support, 3D charts, and many more new features.

1992



Excel 4.0 was the first popular version of Excel. It had better mouse implementation, more shortcuts, customizable toolbars and introduction of fill handle.

1993



Excel 5.0 was a major upgrade which included multi-sheet workbooks and support for VBA. This was a major breakthrough as now users could record macros to automate repetitive tasks.

1995


Note: There is no Excel 6. This was done to make sure that all the Microsoft Office applications would have the same version number.

1997



Excel 8.0 is also called Excel 97. It introduced the paper clip office assistant, validations and a new interface for VBA developers.

2001



Excel 10.0 was a part of Office XP. It had some useful features like Background formula-auditing which identifies potential errors in the formulas and capability to recover spreadsheets whenever excel crashes.

2007



Excel 2007 introduced the .xlsx format and .xlsm format for workbooks with macros. The major change was the introduction of Ribbon menu system.

Note: There is no Version 13 of Microsoft Excel. May be this has some connection with Numerology. :-)



Excel 7.0 is also known as Excel 95. It was the first major 32-bit version of Excel. Almost no external changes, but it was faster and more stable.

1999



Excel 9.0 is popularly known as Excel 2000. Improved the Clipboard to hold multiple objects at a time. It also introduced the feature of Excel Self-repair.

2003



Excel 11.0 or Excel 2003 and was a part Office 2003. It included the features like: improved support for XML, a new "list range" feature and the Smart Tag enhancements.

2010



Excel 14.0 also known as Excel 2010 was a major upgrade. New features include

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