People Profile: Brad Marcum

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2745

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
The similarities between Google Spreadsheets and Excel are apparent from a simple glance. Both have an unlimited number of cells that can be manipulated in a variety of ways. Standard features include the ability to change the appearance of fonts, to add colors for emphasis and organization, and possibilities of adding and deleting rows, wrapping text, and inserting formulas. In addition, the Spreadsheet team at Google has added features since the product’s debut that have considerably narrowed the gap between it and Excel. Among these are the AutoFill feature, an improved A-Z/Z-A sort bar, and the ability to freeze columns and to create charts (albeit with fewer templates than offered by Excel).

At the same time that the Spreadsheet updates have helped bridge the gap between it and Excel, they have also created new differences between the two. While Excel still has the upper hand in some data manipulation areas, including filtering abilities, it is users of the Web-based product who can take advantage of 2.0 integrations into their spreadsheets. One of the newest Spreadsheet features is the ability to create and distribute forms for others to complete. The results are automatically time stamped and integrated into the desired spreadsheet. This allows users to collect and input data from others without granting them access to the spreadsheet itself. Another function unique to Google’s product is the ability to import data from other Web-based sources, such as stock information from Google Finance or your favorite RSS feeds, for example.

For what it does offer, Google Spreadsheets deserves to be counted as a useful tool for both individual users and collaborators alike. The sharing, publishing, and chatting features that make collaborating with Documents useful also apply to Spreadsheets. In addition, users will find that the Spreadsheets design team does take into account user preferences and requests as indicated by several pages on their site. A team blog announces the latest additions and updates. A “Known Issues Page” identifies problems with the product and reports on the status of fixes, and the “Suggest a Feature” page serves as a poll of sorts to help the designers decide what Excel-like features to add next.

Against the grain