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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 othe electronic spreadsheet softwares came to existence?

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

While the origin of electronic spreadsheets c be traced back to 1978, but it wasn't until 198 when Microsoft jumped into the arena of Electronic spreadsheets with a product known as MultiPlan.

Muliplan was Microsoft's first electronic spreadsheet program. It was introduced in 1982 as 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.

Muliplan 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 fi 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

was a relatively small program with few basic capabilities. It could only calculate data withi 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 v 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]

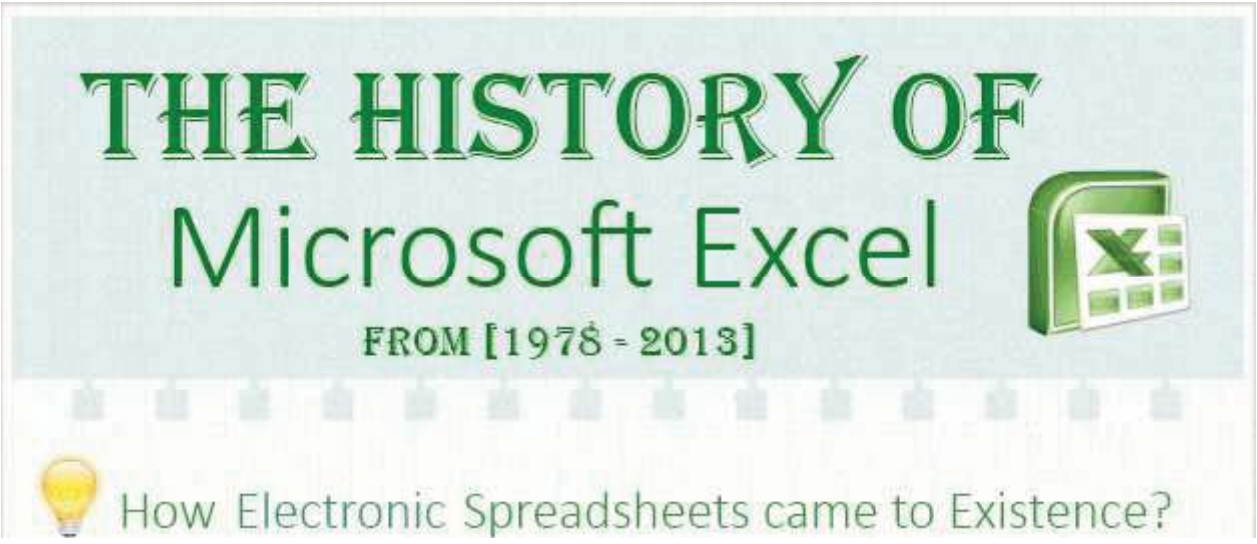
What followed VisiCalc?

After the phenomenal success of VisiCalc, a team headed by Mitch Kapor in 1983, develope new spreadsheet program called Lotus 1-2-3. Mitch and his team power packed Lotus 1-2- 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 Muliplan but it was outshined 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.

VisiCalc - The First Ever Electronic SpreadSheet

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.

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

MICROSOFT EXCEL

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

Microsoft

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

1992

Microsoft®

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 break through 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.

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.

1997

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

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.

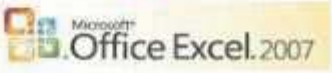
2001

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.

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.

2007

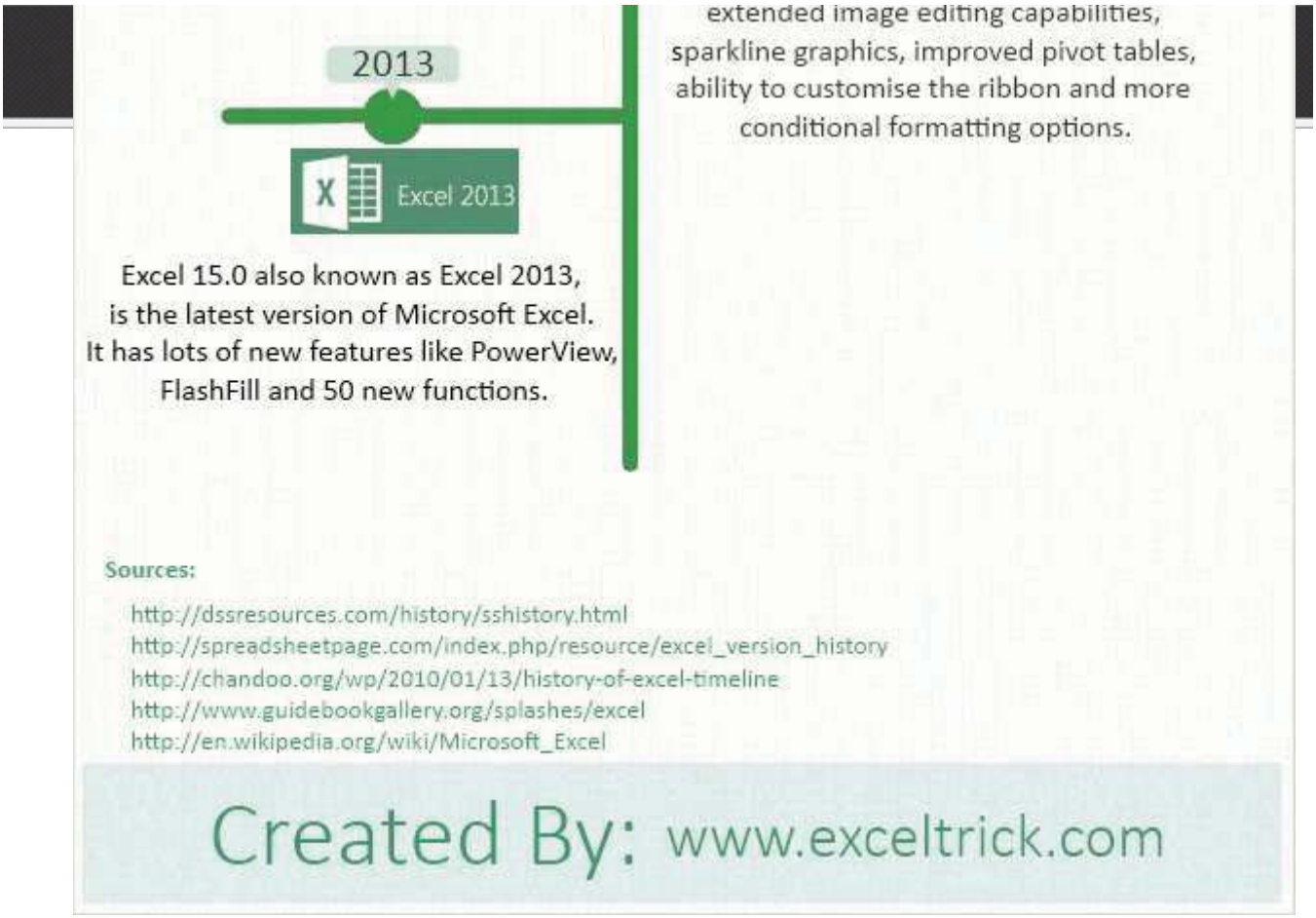


Excel 2007 introduced the .xlsx format and .xlsm format for workbooks with macros. The major change was the introduction of Ribbon menu system.

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

2010

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



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About Ankit Kaul

Ankit is the founder of Excel Trick. He is tech Geek who loves to sit in front of his square headed girlfriend (his PC) all day long. :D. Ankit has a strong passion for learning Microsoft Excel. His only aim is to turn you guys into 'Excel Geeks'.

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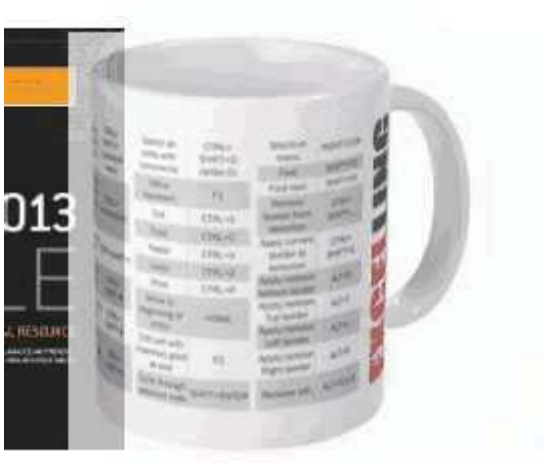

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