

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2007 HINTS AND TIPS: MICROSOFT EXCEL PIVOT TABLES

Part 1:

What is a Pivot table and how can it help me?

Pivot tables are an Excel feature that you should learn how to use. Instead of analysing rows upon rows of records, a pivot table can aggregate your data and show a new perspective with just a few clicks. You can also move columns to rows or vice versa. The problem is people believe creating a pivot table is too difficult to learn.

What is an Excel Pivot Table?

You might think of a pivot table as a user created summary table of your original spreadsheet. You create the table by defining which fields to view and how the data should be displayed. Based on your field selections, Excel aggregates and organises the data so you see a different view of your data.

For example, here is a sample spreadsheet of 4,000 fictitious voters, which includes the following

data fields:

Voter ID

Party Affiliation

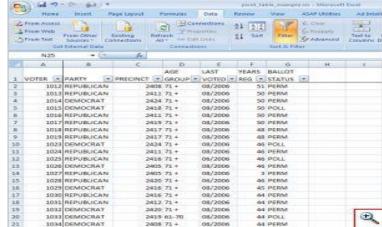
Their precinct

Age group

• When they last voted

Years they've been registered

Ballot status



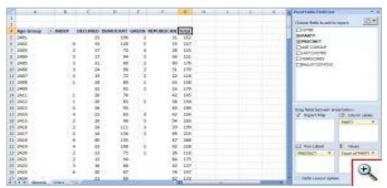
Looking at the first 20 data records, you can see the data is boring. In this format, the key question it answers is: How many voters exist in all the precincts?

Using pivot tables, you can organise and group the same data in ways that start to answer questions such as:

- What is the party breakdown by precinct?
- Do voters use permanent absentee ballots?
- Which precincts have the most Democrats?
- How many voter pamphlets do I need for Precinct 2416?
- Do 18-21 year olds vote?

Excel pivot tables allow you to group the spreadsheet or external data source by any of your data fields. The thumbnail below shows a count of voters by party by precinct.

Using a pivot table, you can continue to slice the data by selecting additional fields from the **PivotTable Field List**. For example, you can take the same data and segment it by voter age group.



Understanding Pivot Table Structures

In the thumbnail here, is labelled the main areas of the pivot table.

- (1) PivotTable Field List this section in the top right displays the fields in your spreadsheet. You may check a field or drag it to a quadrant in the lower portion.
- (2) The lower right quadrants this area defines **where** and **how** the data shows on your pivot table. You can have a field show in either a column or row. You may also indicate if the data should be counted, summed, averaged, filtered and so on.

61.70

(3) The red outlined area to the left is the result of your selections from (1) and (2). You'll see that the only difference made in the last pivot table was the AGE GROUP field was dragged underneath the PRECINCT field in the **Row Labels** quadrant.

NOTE: Additional Flyers regarding Pivot Tables in Excel are available; Look for Parts 2, and 3,

- 1. Part 1: What is a Pivot Table & Pivot Table Structure.
- 2. Part 2: How to create a Pivot table using Microsoft Excel 2007
- 3. Part 3: Pivot tables Additional Grouping and Options.

Source:

http://www.timeatlas.com/5_Minute_Tips/Chunkers/Learn_to_use_Pivot_Tables_in_Excel_2007_to_Organize_Data

Resources:

- Other QUICK TIPS FOR STUDENTS http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/tips.htm
- Online resources on ALSOnline http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alsonline/lecttuts/tuts.htm
- Talk with a tutor at The Learning Centre (tlc@usq.edu.au)

