

Simplifying data entry by using a form

Many people use Excel to manage lists in which the information is arranged in rows. Excel offers a simple way to work with this type of data through the use of a data entry form that Excel can create automatically. This data form works with either a normal range of data, or with a range that has been designated as a table (choose Insert ⇨ Tables ⇨ Table).

Unfortunately, the command to access the data form is not on the Ribbon. To use the data form, you must add it to your Quick Access toolbar or add it to the Ribbon. The instructions that follow describe how to add this command to your Quick Access toolbar:

1. Right-click the Quick Access toolbar and choose Customize Quick Access Toolbar.
2. The Quick Access Toolbar panel of the Excel Options dialog box appears.
3. In the Choose Commands From drop-down list, choose Commands Not in the Ribbon.
4. In the list box on the left, select Form.
5. Click the Add button to add the selected command to your Quick Access toolbar.
6. Click OK to close the Excel Options dialog box.

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The screenshot shows a dialog box titled 'Sheet1' with a question mark icon and a close button. On the left, there are five text input fields with labels: 'Name:' (containing 'abc'), 'Relation:' (containing 'xys'), 'Residence:' (containing '21571547'), 'Mobile:' (containing '4474134578'), and 'Office:' (containing '12457467'). On the right, there is a 'New Record' section with a 'New' button. Below this are buttons for 'Delete', 'Restore', 'Find Prev', 'Find Next', 'Criteria', and 'Close'. A vertical scrollbar is located between the input fields and the buttons.

After performing these steps, a new icon appears on your Quick Access toolbar.

To use a data entry form, follow these steps:

1. Arrange your data so that Excel can recognize it as a table by entering headings for the columns in the first row of your data entry range.
2. Select any cell in the table and click the Form button on your Quick Access toolbar. Excel displays a dialog box customized to your data (refer to Figure).
3. Fill in the information. Press Tab to move between the text boxes. If a cell contains a formula, the formula result appears as text (not as an edit box). In other words, you can't modify formulas using the data entry form.
4. When you complete the data form, click the new button. Excel enters the data into a row in the worksheet and clears the dialog box for the next row of data.