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## A Ribbon is Used for More Than Wrapping Presents

By Dan Ayars, Marketing Coordinator, TechSolutions

No this isn't an article about X things you can do with gift ribbon. The Ribbon I am referring to is the one introduced in Microsoft Office 2007 to replace toolbars and menus. Still present in current Office products, I presume at this point most of you are familiar with the Ribbon. However what I have found is that most Office users have not taken the time to customize the Ribbon to their own liking. So I want to give you a few tips on customizing the Ribbon and suggest that if you take 10 to 15 minutes to customize your Ribbons. You will easily make that time back by not having to hunt for the various Commands you use regularly.

First let's get on the same page by identifying a couple of key parts of the Ribbon. For this article I'll be referring to Microsoft Word 2010, however the tips are easily transferable to other versions of Office 2007 and 2012, and other programs within Office, like Excel. In Figure 1 across the top you will notice the words Home, Review, Page Layout, etc. These are the **Tabs**. Within each Tab are **Groups**. In Figure 1 the Home Tab has the Groups: Font, Paragraph, etc. Within the Groups are **Commands** like Bold and Underline in the Font Group.
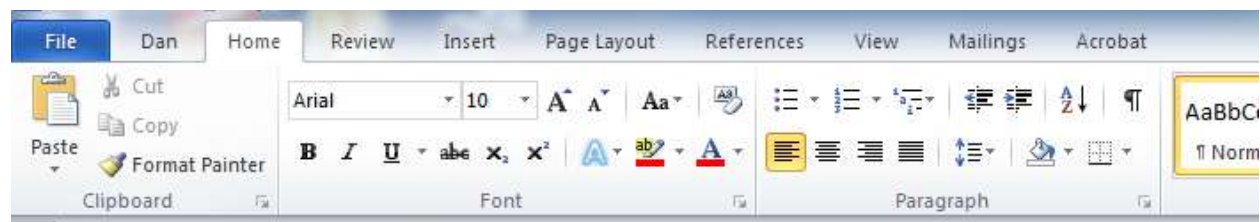

Figure 1

Simple enough. Now the beauty of the Ribbon is that you can customize it to the way you want it. For example, you can create your own Tabs (check out that nifty Dan Tab in Figure 1) and your own Groups that contain Commands you use frequently. You can also change the order of the Tabs and the Groups or remove Groups or Tabs that you never use.

If you hover your cursor over most parts of the Ribbon and right click, you'll see an option to Customize the Ribbon. Clicking on that opens up the Customize the Ribbon window as in Figure 2 below. In this window towards the left is a list of Commands and Groups. On the right is a list of the Tabs, Groups and Commands currently on your Ribbon. In between are Add and Remove buttons. The Add button allows you to take most Commands or Groups from the left and add them to the right thereby adding them to your Ribbon. The Remove button does the reverse moving Commands from the right (your ribbon). In addition to Commands you can also remove Groups. Sounds pretty easy however there are a couple of caveats which I will point out in a moment.
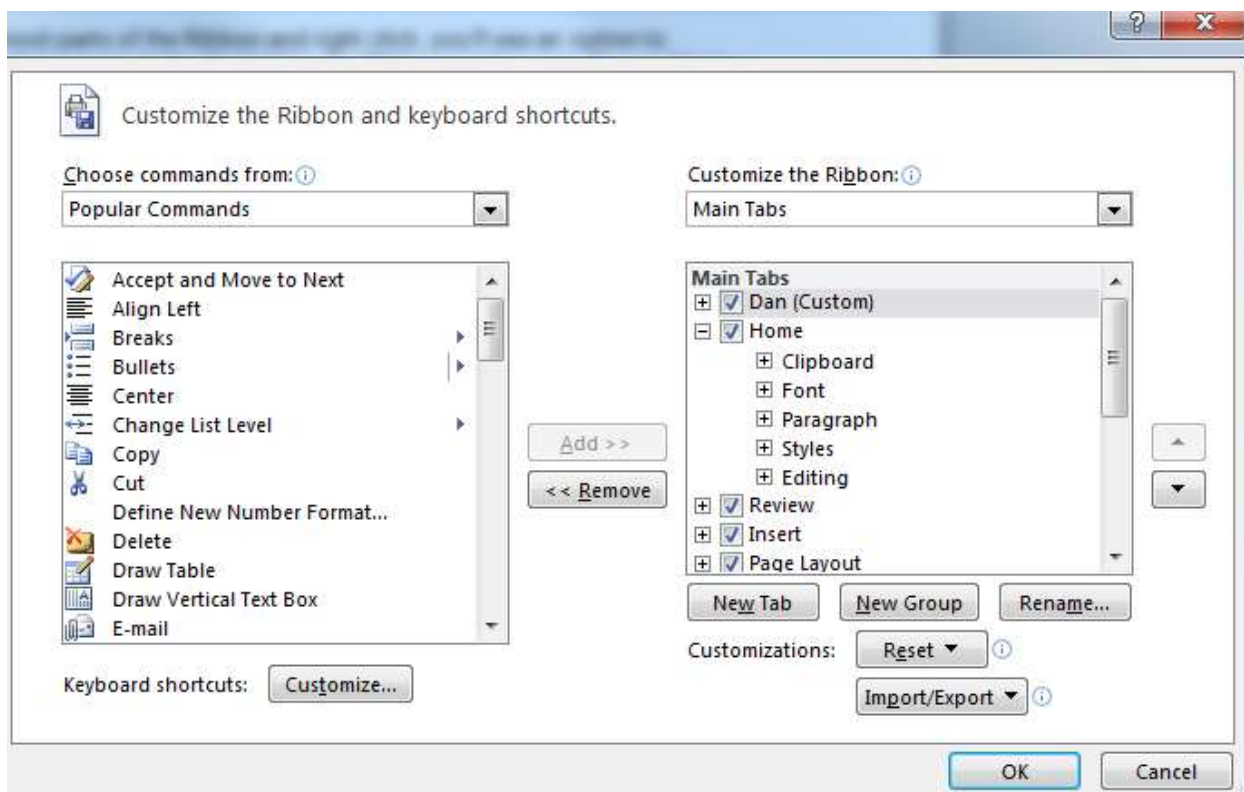
**Figure 2**

Now that we know key parts of the Ribbon and where we go to customize it, let's list some of the ways to customize the Ribbon. I'll be referring to the Customize the Ribbon window that is pictured in Figure 2 as I go through this list.

- **Choosing what Tabs you want on your Ribbon** – On the right under **Main Tabs** notice the check marks next to the Dan, Home, etc. Tabs. You use the checkmarks to select the Tabs you want on your Ribbon. If you want the Tab off your Ribbon, uncheck it.
- **Choosing what Groups you want on your Tabs**
  - o   To add a Group, on the right click on the Tab that you want to add a Group to. On the left in the **Choose Commands from** drop down menu select **All Tabs.** Click the plus sign next to the Tab that has the Group you are looking to add. For example, if you click on the plus sign next to the Review Tab you will see a list of Groups for that Tab. Select the Group and click on **Add**. That will add that Group to your Tab on the right.
  - o   If you want to remove a Group from a Tab just click on the Group on the right, then click **Remove**.
- **Changing the order of how the Tabs or Groups appear on the Ribbon** – Use this option to change what is first on the Ribbon, then second, etc. Just click on the Tab or Group and use the **Up** or **Down** arrow keys located on the far right to change the location of the Tab or Group.
- **Adding a Custom Tab** – Having your own Tabs are a time saver because you can put your most commonly used Groups and Commands in one place. To create a new Tab, just click the **New Tab** located on the bottom right. To rename it, click on it and then click on the **Rename** button. In fact you can rename any of the Tabs.
- **Adding a Custom Group** – Click the Tab you want to add a new Group to then click **New Group**. You can rename this just like you can with a Tab.
- **Adding Commands** - Commands can only be added to Custom Groups not Default Groups. On the right, click on the Custom Group that you want to add commands to. On the left, in the **Choose Commands from** drop down menu, click on the list you want to add commands from. Click on the Command, then click **Add**.

Don't be afraid to give this a try. Within a couple of minutes you can at least change the order of the Tabs and remove unwanted Tabs. And if you don't like your changes, you can change it back or use the Reset button located on the lower right.

The purpose of this article was to introduce you to Ribbon customization and hopefully I've inspired you to take a few minutes and customize your ribbons. For more information click on this link: Customize the Ribbon. If you have any questions or are having trouble following what I have outlined, just call or email and I'll be happy to help you out.

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# Get More Phone for Less Time and Money: Business VoIP and Internet Phones
By Matt Paulson

Every penny counts when it comes to running a business of any size, and that's why companies that still use a traditional landline phone system need to consider switching services. Relying on a traditional telephone system costs businesses as much as 5 times more each month than they would be spending if they used a Business VoIP provider for Internet calls.

VoIP, which stands for Voice over Internet Protocol, connects phone calls through the Internet instead of running through the traditional telephone network. An Internet call bypasses the inefficiencies associated with sending a phone call through a nearly 150-year-old network, which costs businesses less money to run. The best VoIP providers also offer powerful tools to help manage calls and run a business more efficiently. By removing the additional stress of operating a phone system, VoIP helps businesses focus on what they do best: business.

**Low Monthly Billing**
Business VoIP plans start out as low as only $15 a month per extension. Using the public phone system incurs taxes from the FCC, but calls made over the Internet avoid this extra tax. This is what helps VoIP providers keep their rates so low. Virtually all business VoIP plans offer unlimited calling as part of their standard package as well. Since the bill is the same no matter how much the lines are used, businesses save money with VoIP. Employees can stay on the line as long as they need to to close a deal with a sales call too, which helps earn money.

Expensive hardware is also a thing of the past with business VoIP. Most businesses with multiple extensions use a Private Branch Exchange (PBX) to coordinate their phone lines and match up callers with the correct extension. Unfortunately for many businesses, the cost of acquiring, installing, and maintaining an in-house PBX is prohibitively expensive. Thankfully, business VoIP providers offer hosted PBX solutions, which give businesses remote access to a PBX server that is owned and operated by the service provider. Even the smallest business can afford the low monthly cost of a hosted PBX, especially considering the boom a business encounters after installing a more effectively managed phone system.

**Easy Call Management**
VoIP also provides businesses with cheap and effective management tools. In fact, many of the tools, like caller ID, voicemail, and conference calling, are included for free. While regular phone companies will charge subscribers every cent that they can for these features, business VoIP includes most of them as part of every VoIP package, at no extra cost. Businesses with multiple offices save even more money when they link up multiple locations into the same calling network. Cloud-based technology combines phone systems so that calls made from any of the offices, or even from telecommuting employees, are priced and handled as if they were internal calls. This allows for unlimited desk-to-desk calling, for easy collaboration.

Adjusting the number of phone lines needed at any given time is a breeze, because business VoIP systems are usually managed in a convenient web portal. Simply go to the website, enter the account

information, and adjust any and all settings from there. Upgrading a phone system because of a last-minute development or removing phone lines to save money has never been easier.

Business VoIP technology is a money machine, because it saves money while granting the tools to run a business more efficiently. Business VoIP pays for itself through increased profits in only a short period of time and truly gives companies more for less.

Matt Paulson is a technology writer and editor based out of Southern California. He covers the latest news about VoIP innovations for both home and business settings.

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# 10 Tips to Extend Your Laptop Battery Life

Laptops have become more and more popular nowadays as almost everyone has their own one. However, there are a few of people who know how to take care of their laptop batteries as well as extend the battery life. Here are ten tips you can follow to increase your laptop battery life.

### 1. Reduce your screen's brightness level

The screen is a huge power sink and operating at max screen brightness probably isn't necessary in most of the situations you use your laptop. Therefore, you should adjust the display brightness to allow prolonged battery life. You can use the Display Settings applet in the Control Panel or the Function key toggles to cut the brightness down to the lowest level you can tolerate in order to squeeze out some extra battery juice.

### 2. Run only the programs you need at the time of use

Programs that run in the background use more system resources, so working on multiple programs while on the battery is a sure fire power drainer. Instead of leaving many applications and windows open, you should run only what you need at the time of use. To increase the life of the battery, you should shut down everything that isn't necessary and open just one or two programs concurrently.

### 3. Defrag your hard drive regularly

Regular defragmentation helps to arrange file fragments, so they are closer together on the hard drive. It will decrease the time your system must spend searching for files. It also means that you will use less battery power. Therefore, you should defrag your hard drive regularly, at least every two months, to make your system operate as efficiently as possible.

### 4. Unplug external devices you are not using

All external devices such as a USB mouse, an attached iPod, an external drive or speakers are the biggest drainers of battery power. Even when these laptop accessories are not in use, they still drain power from the battery. Therefore, they should unplug, remove or shut them down when you don't need so that you can save additional battery life.

### 5. Avoid extreme temperatures

You should not expose the battery to high heat because it will die faster at extreme temperatures. Therefore, you should try and use it at room temperatures instead of leaving it under direct sunlight or inside a closed car. Additionally, you should avoid propping your laptop on a pillow or other soft surface that can heat up.

### 6. Keep your laptop in the hibernation mode

In the sleep mode, your laptop turns off the hard drive and screen but memory remains active while the CPU slows down. So this draws on the battery. Meanwhile, in the hibernation mode, your laptop will actually save the current state and completely shut itself down. Thus, it will help you save power.

### 7. Disable Bluetooth and Wi-Fi when not needed

Using Bluetooth and Wi-Fi can drain your laptop battery a significant amount. So you can safely disable them by pressing the dedicated Wireless and Bluetooth buttons on your computer or selecting the correct hotkeys on your keyboard when you don't use them.

### 8. Set up your power options

To set up and optimize your power options, you can click "Power Options" in the Control Panel and set it up. You can also select the "max battery" for maximum effect.

### 9. Clean the battery contacts

Every two months, you need to clean the battery's metal contacts with a cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol. This keeps the power transfer between the laptop and its battery more efficient.

### 10. Avoid using a CD/DVD

CD and DVD drives are power consuming. They spin and take power even when they are not actively being used. So if you store a copy of data you need on an optical disc, should should copy it to your laptop's hard drive or a thumb drive.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com

## Internet Safety 101: How to Protect Your Kids Online



(NewsUSA) - It is no mystery that technology allows kids to gain 24-hour access to the media, but a recent study by the Kaiser Foundation discovered the average kid spends 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media. Through using multiple media at one time such as music, TV, movies, the Internet, video games and texting, kids can actually pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes.

Although these ways of socializing and communicating can be enriching, they do come with certain risks. Kids can become victims of online bullies, predators, hackers and scammers.

"The Internet has great potential for kids in terms of knowledge and resources, but we take seriously the job of teaching our youth how to navigate it safely and properly," said Dan Rauzi, senior director, technology programs at Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). BGCA has partnered with Sprint to address these issues and help better prepare young people to navigate their world -- both real and virtual. Sprint's online resource, www.4NetSafety.com, offers free tools from experts that address the dangers that young people commonly encounter online and encourages positive dialogue about Internet safety. In addition, www.myclubmylife.com -- BGCA's website for teens -- includes a special Media Safety section that has more information and teen-friendly resources to further promote Internet safety.

It's important that your child be aware that the fundamentals -- what we say, how we say it, and why we say it -- are the same online and off. Here are some tips for discussing Internet safety with your family:

- Create an honest, open environment. Kids look to their parents to help guide them. You may not have all the answers, and being honest about that can go a long way.
- Initiate conversations. Even if your kids are comfortable approaching you, don't wait for them to start the conversation. Use everyday opportunities to talk to your kids about being online.
- Communicate your values. Be upfront about your values and how they apply in an online context. Communicating your values clearly can help your kids make smarter and more thoughtful decisions when they face tricky situations.

Be patient. Most kids need to hear information repeated, in small doses, for it to sink in. If you keep talking with your kids, your patience and persistence will pay off in the long run.

For more information, visit www.4NetSafety.com.

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