

# Converting Data in Excel

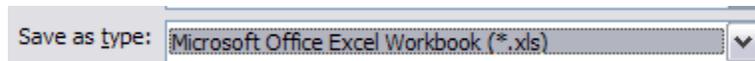
By Dick Evans

Bringing data into Excel is relatively easy when the exported file is in a CSV format—comma separated values. Numeric data, text data, and dates are easily moved from one platform to another.

```
10106 , 60101 , 20060101 , 2.34 , -9 , "HELLO" ""
51206 , 60512 , 20060512 , 9.80 , -2 , "BYE" ""
21906 , 60219 , 20060219 , 5.00 , -5 , "EXCEL TEST" ""
60406 , 60406 , 20060604 , .02 , -700 , "MOOSE" ""
92402 , 20924 , 20020924 , .99 , -1 , "HEART" ""
```

To open the file, first open Excel. Then File > Open and locate the .csv file. It opens as a workbook of one worksheet named the same as the .csv file—without the extension. The next step for me is to immediately save the workbook as an Excel (.xls) file before continuing.

File > Save As



Change the type to \*.xls, and then click Save

There are a number of formats date data might be coming in from an external database. They are all general format data rather than the Julian date codes used by Excel. Excel can convert the data into the appropriate date codes. Here are some examples.

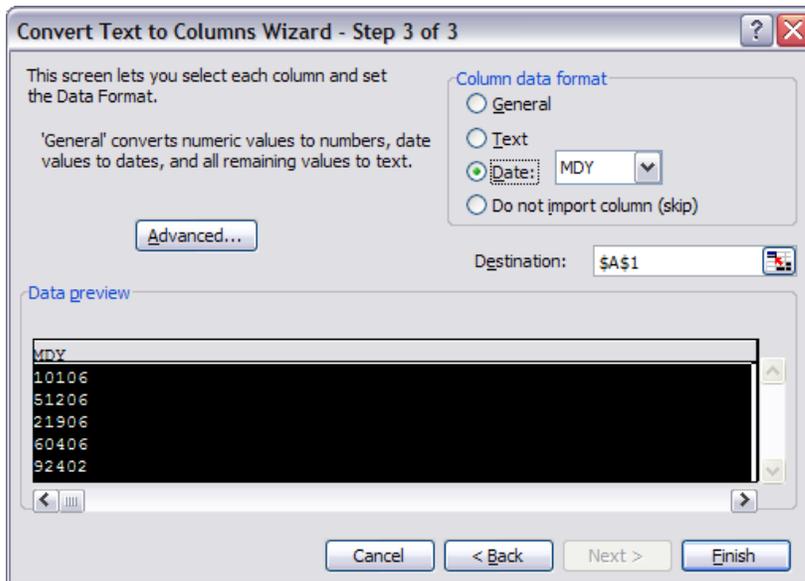
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	10106	60101	20060101	2.34	-9	HELLO	
2	51206	60512	20060512	9.8	-2	BYE	
3	21906	60219	20060219	5	-5	EXCEL TEST	
4	60406	60406	20060604	0.02	-700	MOOSE	
5	92402	20924	20020924	0.99	-1	HEART	

Let's look at them one at a time. **The first example** is a date in the MDY format missing leading zeros. Using convert text to columns, Excel will convert the data correctly in the existing column.

Select the column

	A
1	10106
2	51206
3	21906
4	60406
5	92402
6	
7	

Data > Text to Columns... > Next > Next



Under Column data format, select Date: MDY, then click Finish

	A
1	1/1/2006
2	5/12/2006
3	2/19/2006
4	6/4/2006
5	9/24/2002
6	

The text dates are correctly formatted as Excel dates

**The second example** is a similar set of data, but the date is in the YMD format with the leading zero missing. 2006 shows as 6 and 1999 as 99. This requires some extra work.

Insert an empty column to the right of the existing column.

B	C
60101	
60512	
60219	
60406	
990924	

Using an IF function, convert the data to a yyyyymmdd format. Here is the formula to use.

=IF(B1<990101,B1+20000000,B1+19000000)

Using the Fill Handle, copy the formula down through the remaining cells in the column. The new column now contains the converted dates.

B	C
60101	20060101
60512	20060512
60219	20060219
60406	20060406
990924	19990924

The resulting data displays correctly but must be converted to values—recall the cells contain formulas to convert the adjacent data, not actual data.

Select the converted column (in this case C), then right-click, Copy

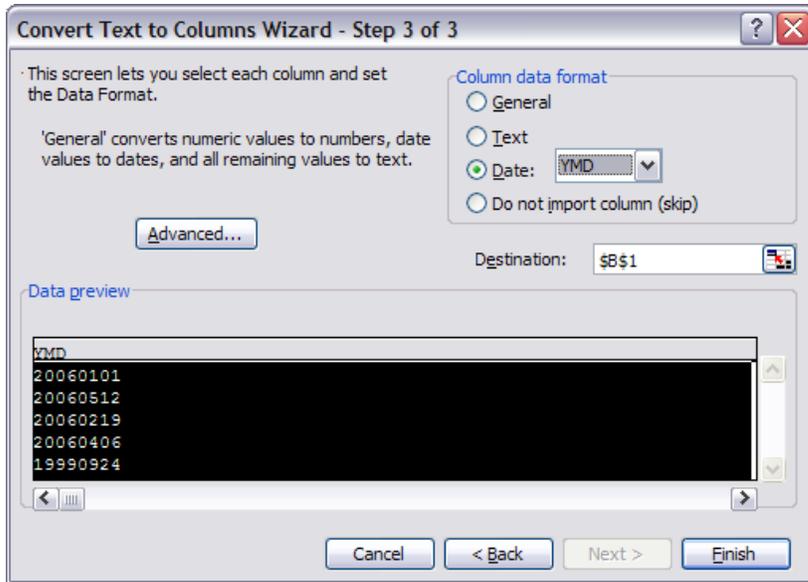
Mouse over the Column B header, click Paste Special, then select Values and click OK

Now that the correct values have replaced the original data, mouse over the Column C header, right-click, and then click Delete to remove the unneeded working column. We still need to convert the column to an Excel date format.

Select the column

B
20060101
20060512
20060219
20060406
19990924

Data > Text to Columns... > Next > Next



Under Column data format, select Date: YMD, then click Finish

B
1/1/2006
5/12/2006
2/19/2006
4/6/2006
9/24/1999

The text dates are correctly formatted as Excel dates

**The third example** is a date coming in as yyymmdd. Using the second half of the previous example completes the task.

The values in **the fourth example** are formatted as general. As such, the trailing zeroes to the right of the decimal point are dropped and the decimal points do not line up. This is an easy fix.

Select the column, and then from the formatting toolbar, click the comma style button

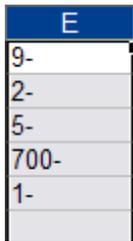


D	E	F	Comma Style
2.34	9-	HELLO	
9.80	2-	BYE	
5.00	5-	EXCEL TEST	
0.02	700-	MOOSE	
0.99	1-	HEART	

The fifth example is a little more challenging. The numbers are negative, but the sign is in front of the general formatted values, instead of trailing them. If you try the above example and simply select the column, click comma style, and then right align the column, it appears you have been successful. However, try and use these values in a formula and you soon discover they are treated as pure text.

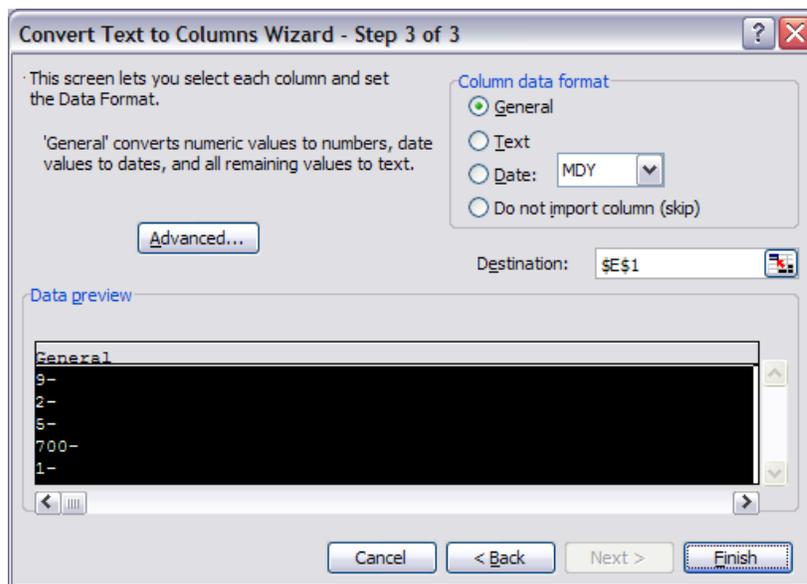
This column requires use of the Text to Columns technique we used back in the first example.

Select the column

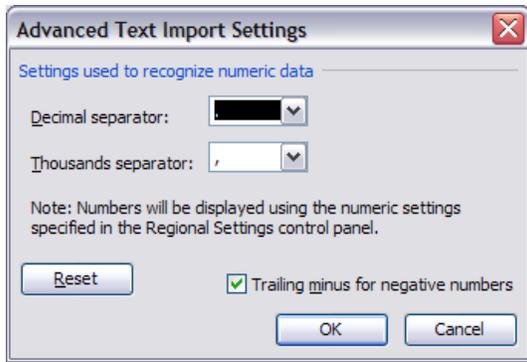


E
9-
2-
5-
700-
1-

Data > Text to Columns... > Next > Next



Click the Advanced... button

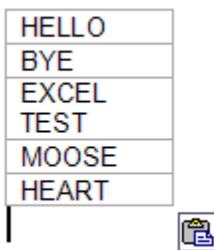


Verify that the Trailing minus for negative numbers is checked, click OK, and then Finish

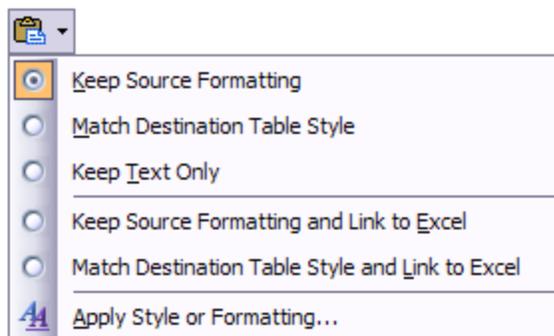
The sixth example contains text. As is the case with data coming from a legacy system, the characters are all UPPER case. Excel does not handle case conversion, Word does.

Select the column, and then on the standard toolbar, click the Copy button

Open Word, and then on the standard toolbar, click the Paste button



Click the smart tag and pull down the Paste Options list



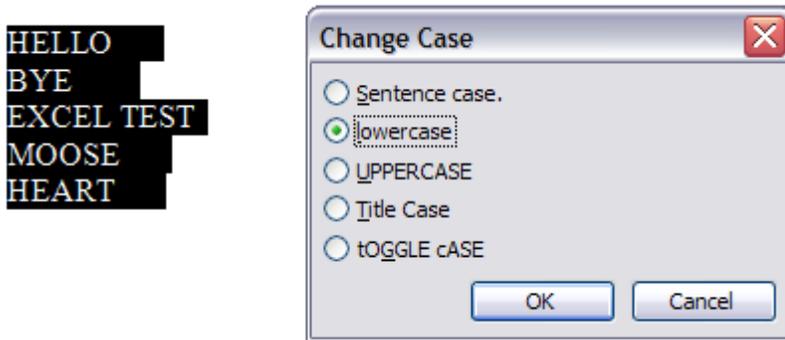
Select Keep Text Only

HELLO  
BYE  
EXCEL TEST  
MOOSE  
HEART

This removes the table boundaries, revealing the pure text

Edit > Select All

Then Format > Change Case...

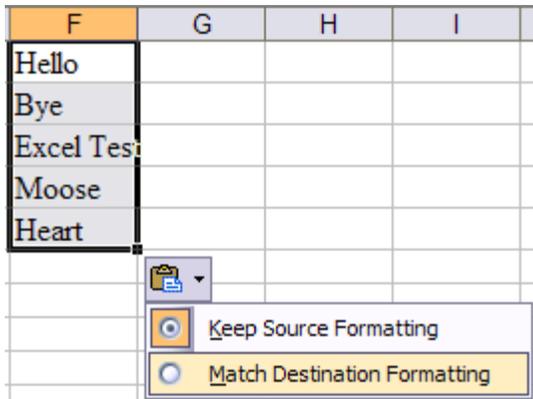


Select the desired case, and then click OK

Hello  
Bye  
Excel Test  
Moose  
Heart

The selection remains. Edit > Copy to bring the data back to Excel

Switch to the Excel window, click the first cell (the one containing HELLO), then right-click and select Paste



Pull down the smart tag list and select Match Destination Formatting to change the default Word font to the default Excel font matching the rest of the cells in the workbook

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	1/1/2006	1/1/2006	1/1/2006	2.34	-9	Hello
2	5/12/2006	5/12/2006	5/12/2006	9.80	-2	Bye
3	2/19/2006	2/19/2006	2/19/2006	5.00	-5	Excel Test
4	6/4/2006	4/6/2006	6/4/2006	0.02	-700	Moose
5	9/24/2002	9/24/1999	9/24/2002	0.99	-1	Heart

Save the final workbook. The data is now ready to be used in Excel