EXCEL
BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices - Formulas

- Don't include anything that might change
- Formulas should refer only to cells above them or to the left
- Keep formulas short
  - Stage calculations through multiple cells
- Minimize the number of different formulas on a sheet

Best Practices

- Include an About or Welcome sheet
- Protect parts that should not be changed
- If you have a lot of data, separate the data from your reports
- Do not use advanced features if you can avoid it
  - If you do, clearly document the feature

BEST PRACTICES:
THE FLAT-FILE DATABASE

Flat-File Database

- Each row is a separate data point
- Each column is a generic attribute
  - E.g., Date, Name, Amount, etc.
- No blank rows or columns
- One row of column headers
- Can be easily analyzed with Pivot Tables or other tools

Flat-File Database

Name	Division	Product	Month	Amount
Alan	East	Apples	Jan	123
Beverly	West	Apples	Feb	231
Mary	East	Bananas	Jan	145
Steve	West	Carrots	Mar	89
Rose	East	Bananas	Mar	136
Fred	West	Apples	Jan	208

Flat-File Database

Specific Columns
(*not generic*)

Name	Division	Product	Jan Sales	Feb Sales
Alan	East	Apples	210	123
Beverly	West	Apples	134	231
Mary	East	Bananas	231	145
Steve	West	Carrots	125	89

What about Mar and Apr Sales?

Flat-File Database

Generic Columns
(flexible)

Name	Division	Product	Month	Sales
Alan	East	Apples	Jan	210
Beverly	West	Apples	Jan	134
Mary	East	Bananas	Jan	231
Steve	West	Carrots	Jan	125
Alan	East	Apples	Feb	123
Beverly	West	Apples	Feb	231
Mary	East	Bananas	Feb	145
Steve	West	Carrots	Feb	89

Easy to add data for other months