



Navigating MS Office when you really just want XP back

Book: *Microsoft Office 2010 Bible*

By John Walkenbach and others

Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2010

\$44.99; 1,301 pages

Rating ★★★★★

The transition to Microsoft Office 2007, which replaced the 2003 (XP) standard, required experienced users to change the way they had been using the applications. The resulting frustration and declined productivity caused many businesses to refuse to upgrade until forced.

The biggest complaint was, “Where did it go?” The familiar drop-down menus (File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, etc.) and toolbars were merged and replaced with icon-driven “Ribbons.” Though ribbons are a lovely accessory in a young girl’s hair, they are a cumbersome, graphic-overloaded tool in a Microsoft product.

Ribbons require users to interpret the icons—or as I call them “Microsoft hieroglyphics.” The process of interpretation could be fun for those interested in the development of language, but for those who use Microsoft Office products as a business or deadline-driven tool, it only annoys.

One solution is to go back to using Office 2003, another is to download the free Open Office

software that looks and feels almost like Microsoft products. Or you can stick with Office 2010 but buy a manual to help.

I recommend *Microsoft Office 2010 Bible*.

Though more of a Rosetta Stone than a Bible, it is invaluable for users of Office 2010 for Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Publisher, Access, and OneNote. This book is really seven books in one, with more than 1,301 pages to answer your basic how-to questions. Although written for Office 2010, the information is still useful for version 2007 users.

The most helpful chapter, “Part 1: Common Office Features,” provides a lay-of-the-land shared with most Office applications. I learned about these features:

- **Ribbons:** The Ribbon names are located on the Tabs at top. For Word, they are: File (for 2010), Home (was Format Toolbar), Insert, Page Layout, References, Mailings, Review, and View. These tabs replace the menus and are icon-driven. Many of the drop-down menu items of earlier versions have been rearranged on these Ribbons. For example the Insert Ribbon includes: cover page, blank page, page break, table, picture, clip art, shapes, charts, hyperlinks, header, foot, page number, symbol,

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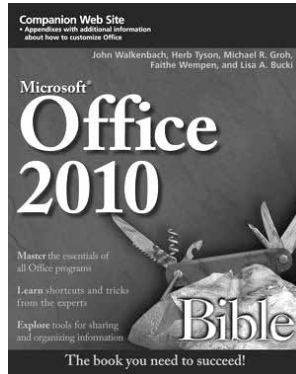
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etc. This is part of the headache in figuring out the logic behind the re-organization and the cause of “Where’d it go!?” syndrome.

- **Groups:** Within each Ribbon are “Groups”—related elements that are clumped together. For example, in Word’s Home tab, you find a Font Group that includes: font style, font size, grow font, shrink font, font color, bold, italics, and underline.
- **Dialog Box Launchers:** Easy to miss, these launchers are the small square-arrowed icons located at the bottom-right of some of the “Groups” and give you access to some of the old familiar dialog boxes.
- **Quick Access Toolbar:** This customizable toolbar—thankfully—is always accessible. It’s like having the old toolbars back; it never moves or changes. To customize it, click the far right dropdown triangle and select “More Commands,” then add your favorite or most often used icons. I also recommend learning the keyboard combination commands to bypass the Ribbons. To save a file, press Ctrl+S; to print, press Ctrl+P, etc. These same keyboard combinations are from earlier versions of Windows.
- **MiniBar:** The irritating floating mini toolbar comes and goes of its own accord, but it does provide quick access to set formatting features next to the text you select. The benefit is that you don’t have to go up to click a Home Tab to access common format features such as bold, underline, center align, font size, and font style.
- **About “Help”:** You no longer have a Help menu or a Help Tab. Instead, click the circled question mark (?) on the upper far right corner. A window will appear with a table of contents links. You can also search for specific functions and icon names.
- **File Tab:** In the 2007 version many of us were shocked to see no “File Menu” replacement: How do we “print” or “save” or “save as” if we didn’t know key commands? A replacement did exist, but Microsoft didn’t name it. It was the circled Microsoft logo icon found to the right of the Home Tab. I found it accidentally. Microsoft wisely removed the icon and replaced it with a File Tab in the 2010 version.



Each application, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, etc., has well over 200 pages of how-to instructions that cover the basics and additional tips and tricks for each application.

Important sections

Regardless of which applications you use, read the chapter on “Mastering Fundamental Operations,” which explains the importance of file formats/extensions. Since Microsoft Word came on the market, its unique file extension ended in “.doc.” In all versions of Word, whether Mac or PC or versions 98, 2000, 2003, you could always open a Word .doc document and edit it.

But, when Word 2007 arrived, Microsoft changed the file extension to “.docx” so you could only open the file by purchasing the newest Word program or downloading an add-on from www.microsoft.com. Unfortunately, many people haven’t managed the downloads, so they can’t open the .docx documents.

The “x” was also added to the other Microsoft extensions and require add-ons to open 2007 and 2010 in earlier Microsoft Office applications: For Excel, it’s .xlsx; for PowerPoint, it’s .pptx.

Added features

Microsoft Office Word 2010 has new features, including myriad high-quality templates for letterheads, greeting cards, flyers, agendas, newsletters, budget reports, business cards, recipe cards, book layouts, planners, calendars, and proposals. These timesaving documents let you quickly produce a professional-looking document.

Beware: If you haven’t learned the basics in the application, attempts at modifying the templates can have disastrous results.

I recommend purchasing this book. The well-written content informs and helps ease the pain in this time of transition.

—By Veronica Valero, GGCS

Veronica has provided one-on-one computer assistance and instruction in Marin County homes and offices since 2002. (www.ComputerTutorMarin.com; 415-897-2302)