



### Websites of Interest

www.fivethirtyeight.com  
track the electoral votes

www.epicurious.com  
yummm

www.onlineconversion.com  
convert measures, sizes, currency



The country code TLD for the island country of Tuvalu is .tv. But Tuvalu, the 4th smallest country in the world, with a highest elevation of only 16 feet above sea level, is threatened by rising sea levels. There are no natural resources, little fresh water, and poor soil. But by selling their TLD for royalties for use by TV stations and their area code (900) for use in toll-free numbers, the 11,000 residents have managed to forestall disaster, but in the near future, most of them will relocate to New Zealand, as their islands shrink from rising seas.

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## TLD Spam

Some of our clients have been receiving e-mails encouraging them to register their domains using additional top-level-domain (TLD) names.

TLDs are the letters at the end of a web address, after your domain name. There are a number of different types, all managed by ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. You are probably most familiar with the gTLD—generic TLDs (.com, .org, .net, .biz, and the like), and there are others, the sponsored gTLDs, that are increasingly common (.edu, .gov, .museum, .coop, etc.).

If you want a domain name, it's probably a good idea to register the common variants of it—*www.example.com*, *www.example.net*, *www.example.org*. If you do that, you're covered no matter which one a visitor types, you can have each of the ones you don't use redirect their browser to your main address.

But it's yet other TLDs that our clients are getting e-mails about—ccTLDs—country

code TLDs. They are generally the 2-letter ISO code for the country (.ca, .cz, .uk, .us, etc.). The troublemakers in the spam? Usually .ru and .cn—Russia and China.

Much of the problems with the Internet originate in Russia, where rogue programmers and “script kiddies” write viruses and Trojan horses. And lots of Internet Service Providers in Russia are willing to look the other way as they distribute their wares (and relay spam off the open servers). It's become such a problem that some western ISPs block all traffic from .ru domains, even the little that is legitimate.

So, why would you want a .ru or .cn version of your domain? You don't. If someone wants to register *www.example.ru*, let them. Your visitors won't be confused, and you won't be dealing with some spammer who may end up stealing your credit card information during a bogus registration.

## The OS that Would Not Die

Microsoft has once again pushed back the demise of Windows XP, this time for an additional 7 months. They had already extended the Home version availability for use on the new mini-PCs (Dell Mini 9, Asus Eee, MSI Wind, etc.) that just don't have the processor power to run Vista. And XP Pro was always going to be supported for a long time, even after the sales of it stopped. Now, those sales will continue until at least July 2009.

What does that mean for Vista? It's hard to say. Businesses have been slow to switch over to Vista even though it offers improved security. Unfortunately, adoption of Vista by

businesses will be hindered by the Windows that is yet to come—Windows 7. That's the official name for the next version of Windows, and it's due to ship in June of next year, just as they pull the plug on XP.

Windows 7 may be an incremental



release, not an all-new version, but it will involve major changes in the core kernel, security, and the bundle of applications that install with it (or more likely don't install with it). The rumor is that this will be a lean, mean OS without all the multimedia bells and windows built in. Those will be optional installs.

# How Do I...

## Decide to upgrade MS Office

You've been doing okay with the older versions of Microsoft's Office suite so far, but you wonder if it's time to switch. It might be; you just need to balance the benefits (added capabilities) with the downside (a slight learning curve).

There has been a lot of work done under the hood on the programs and the files they create. Files are stored in a new format, and while this is causing some compatibility problems (as it did the last time this happened, in Office 97), in the long run, the new files will be easier to share and use in different programs, and they are more secure.

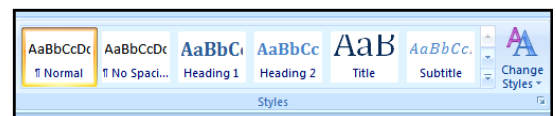
able to see at a glance the status of figures and make the data more meaningful for customers and staff, without the added step of creating a chart. And because it's now offered right on the main ribbon instead of in a drop-down menu, more people will start using it.

Excel now calculates faster because it can make use of multiple processors that are common in new computers. PivotTables and filtering also have greatly improved functionality, and there are many more functions built in for making calculations.

Word's improvements are mostly in the

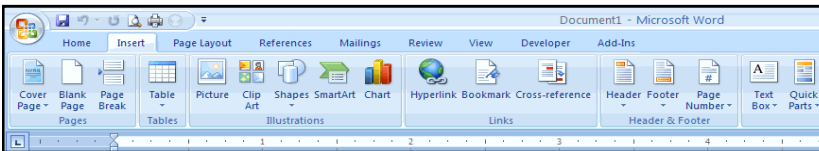
interface, automation, and proofing tools. The automation helps in tasks like formatting. Word

make better use of *styles*, allowing you to format large documents easily. It puts the styles on the Home ribbon, making it easier to use than in the past, and as you experiment with changing the format, your document previews the changes in real time, as your mouse moves over the selections.



The ribbon interface takes a little getting used to, but because it places more options directly in front of the user (rather than buried in submenus), it will encourage

experimentation and allow you to access many features that you never used before.

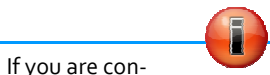


The learning curve is mostly related to the new *ribbon* interface. Gone are the old menus and toolbars. Well, gone from Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and parts of Outlook. The other apps still have the old interface.

Excel has had the most improvements that benefit the user. Each worksheet is now over a thousand times larger than in the previous versions. You probably won't need a million rows of figures, but the jump from 256 columns to over 16,000 is bound to help in laying out your data. Previously, if you tracked something by date, Excel couldn't accommodate the days in a single year horizontally; it ran out of columns in mid-September; now, there's plenty of room.

Conditional formatting (right) has now been greatly improved; you are better

	A	B	C
1	John Doe	\$ 25,000	33%
2	Jane Smith	\$ 19,000	25%
3	Arthur Dent	\$ 36,500	49%
4	Jonathan Edwards	\$ 64,250	86%
5	Jethro Tull	\$ 15,700	21%



If you are concerned about file compatibility with older versions of programs, you can choose *Save As*, and choose to use the older file formats. You'll downgrade some formatting and some features, but the program will warn you in advance so you can decide what to do. The changes are usually minor, but obviously, if you use more columns than the older version of Excel can hold, you'll lose data.

If your staff has a mix of Office versions, download and install the Compatibility Pack from Microsoft's site...

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads>

And if you're having trouble finding the equivalent commands in the new version, go to...

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/help>

...search for *commands*.

You can watch the animation online or download it for future reference.

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