

COMP1000: WEB, SPREADSHEETS & DATABASES

1.0 EXCEL

1.1 INTRODUCTION, FORMULAS AND FUNCTIONS

WHY USE SPREADSHEETS?

- Makes tasks easier, faster and more accurate
- Automatically recalculates if data changes
- Easy creation of charts

ABSOLUTE VS. RELATIVE REFERENCE (USE F4 TO TOGGLE)

- Absolute: Cell reference remains unchanged e.g. \$B\$3
- Relative: Cell reference adjusts during copy operations e.g. B3
- Mixed: Uses a single \$ sign to make the column or row absolute, leaving the other as relative e.g. \$B3 or B\$3

NAMING RANGES

- Range names used to identify a cell range to make formulas easier to read
- Must begin with letter or underscore
- Contains letters, digits, period or underscore
- Right click on selected range > Define Name
- 'Name Manager' in Formulas tab can be used to maintain them

PMT

Calculates periodic (monthly) payment for a loan with fixed interest rate and term length

=PMT(interest rate, periods, principal)

- Interest rate: yearly rate divided by period
- Periods: years x payments per year (period)
- Principal: present value aka amount of loan

TESTING/DEBUGGING/AUDITING SPREADSHEETS

Very easy to make mistakes so you must thoroughly test your solutions for things like ...

- Invalid or missing data in a cell
- Formula is replaced by a constant in a cell
- Incorrect cell references in a formula

Tips:

- Test for different input values — use borderline cases and abnormal input values
- Use an alternative method (say by hand or using a different approach) to compute few answers
- Try to keep input, processing and output regions of your spreadsheet separate
- Use IF statements, Conditional formatting, Statistical functions, etc. to locate errors

Debugging using cell selection:

- 'Go to special' to locate cells with blanks, formulas, constants, etc.
- Locate cells that are 'different' in a given range

Debugging using tracing:

- Formulas > Trace precedents



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