

Navigating MS Office 2010
(When You Really Just Want XP Back)
By Veronica C. Valero

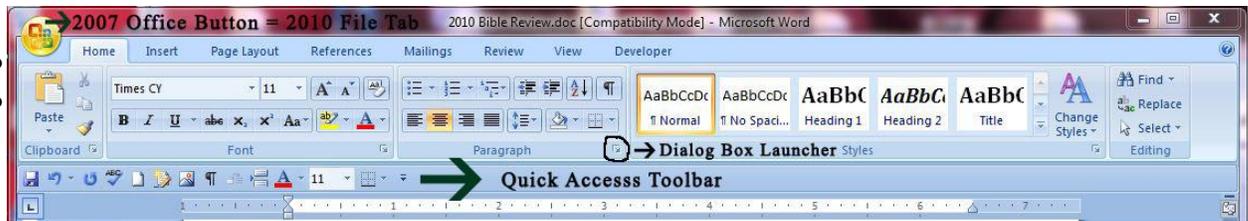
BOOK REVIEW: Microsoft Office 2010 Bible, By John Walkenbach and others
Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2010, \$44.99

Microsoft continues to evolve its office products with upgrades every few years. Most upgrades do not negatively impact users. But, recent upgrades have become inconvenient, requiring experienced users to change the way they've been using the applications. A few years ago, Microsoft rolled out its 2007 Office products to replace the 2003 (XP) standard that many of us could use with our eyes closed. The transition to 2007 was filled with frustration and declined productivity, so much so, that many businesses refused to upgrade until forced. The biggest complaint from many hardcore users was, "Where did it go?" Our beloved dropdown menus and (File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, etc.) and toolbars were merged and replaced with icon driven "Ribbons." Now ribbons are a lovely accessory in a young girl's hair, but it is a cumbersome, space-hogging, graphic overloaded tool in a Microsoft product!

The problem with the Ribbons is that you have 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's a major annoyance. One solution is to go back to using Office 2003 products, another is to download the free OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org) open source software that looks and feels almost like Microsoft products. Or, you can bite the bullet, stick with Office 2010 but purchase a manual to assist you. I recommend *Microsoft Office 2010 Bible*. Though more of a Rosetta Stone than a bible, it is an invaluable resource for those who have purchased Office 2010 that includes Word, Excel PowerPoint, Outlook, Publisher, Access and OneNote. This book is really 7-books-1, all conveniently located in one book with over 1301 pages to answer your basic how-to questions. Although this book is written for Office 2010, the information is still useful for those who have version 2007.

COMMON FEATURES: The most helpful chapter for those transitioning from the old to the new is *Part 1: Common Office Features*. You are given an overview of the lay-of-the-land that is shared with most of the Office applications. Here are the features I learned about:

- **Ribbons:** are located above the document workspace. The Ribbon names are located on the Tabs at top. 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, etc. This is part of the big headache in figuring out the logic behind the re-organization and it's the cause of the "Where'd it go!?" syndrome.



Microsoft Word 2007 "Home" Ribbon

- **Groups:** Within each Ribbon are “Groups,” related elements that have been clumped together. For example, in the Home tab, there is a Font Group that includes: font style, font size, grow font, shrink font, font color, bold, italics, underline and a few others.
- **Dialogue Box Launchers:** This is easy to miss. It is a small square-arrowed icon located at the bottom-right of some of the “Groups” that give you access to some of the old familiar dialog boxes.
- **Quick Access Toolbar:** This is a customizable toolbar that is always accessible no matter what Ribbon is selected. This is one of the saving grace features of Microsoft Office 2007 and 2010. It’s like having the old toolbars back, it never moves or changes. To customize it, click on the far right dropdown triangle and select “More Commands,” then add your favorite or most often used icons. I also highly recommend learning the combination keyboard commands to bypass the Ribbons. To Save, hold the Ctrl key down then press “S” (Ctrl +S), to Print hold the Ctrl key down then press “P” (Ctrl +P), etc.
- **MiniBar:** the irritating floating mini toolbar comes and goes on its own accord, but does give you quick access to set formatting features right next to the text that you select. The benefit is that you don’t have to go up to click on a Home Tab to access common format features like bold, underline, center align, font size, font style, etc.
- **About “Help”:** You no longer have a Help menu, nor a Help Tab. Instead, click on the circled question mark (?) on the upper far right corner. A window will appear with a table of contents and links. You can also do a search for specific functions, icon names, etc.
- **The File Tab:** In the 2007 many of us were shocked to learn there was no “File Menu” replacement: How do we Print or Save or Save As if we didn’t know key commands? As it turns out there was a replacement, but they didn’t name it. It was the circled Microsoft logo icon found to the left of the Home Tab. I found it accidentally. Microsoft made a wise decision to remove the icon and replace it with a File Tab in the 2010 version.

Once you have mastered the basics, then you can go to the specifics. 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, it’s very important to 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, they changed the file extension to “.docx” and you could only open the file two ways (1) purchase the newest Word program, or (2) download an add-on from www.microsoft.com and install it on your

computer. Unfortunately, many people haven't managed the downloads and are not able to open up the Word document. The "x" was also added to all of the other Microsoft applications' extensions (For Excel = .xlsx, For PowerPoint = .pptx, etc.) and also require add-ons to open up 2007 and 2010 in earlier Microsoft Office applications.

ADDED FEATURES: Microsoft Office 2010 has additional new features, including a myriad of high quality templates to choose from in all applications: letterheads, greeting cards, flyers, agendas, newsletters, budget reports, business cards, recipe cards, book layouts, planners, calendars, proposals, etc. These timesaving documents allow you to 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. There are other new features that make up for the loss of the menus and toolbars. To learn more and get the most out of your new Office products, I recommend purchasing this book. The content is well written and informative and will help ease the pain in this time of transition.

Rating: 4 Stars

(Rating: Five Stars = Over the top!, Four Stars = Outstanding. Three Stars = Good, Two Stars = Adequate)

This article was written for the Golden Gate Computer Society June 2011 Newsletter (www.ggcs.org).

Veronica C. Valero started her own computer tutoring business in 2002 in Marin County California. She provides one-on-one computer assistance and instruction in your home or office. For more info www.ComputerTutorMarin.com or 415-897-2302.