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Create a list box in Excel to ensure data entry accuracy

May 10, 2005

Takeaway:

A great way to ensure accuracy when users are entering data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet is to have them choose options from a list. Learn how to create a list for controlling data entry using a State field as an example.

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A list box makes it easier for Microsoft Excel users to avoid errors. For example, a State field requires users to know the two-letter abbreviation for each state. To ensure accuracy, let users select from a list.

To create a list for the State field cells, follow these steps:

1. Select all the cells in the State column.
2. Go to Data | Validation.
3. On the Settings tab, select List from the Allow drop-down list.
4. In the Source text box, enter the allowable entries separated by commas as follows: NJ, NY, PA, DE, etc.
5. Select the In-cell Dropdown check box.
6. Click OK.

When users move to a cell in the State column, Excel displays a drop-down arrow. Clicking the arrow reveals a list of allowable states users can select for that cell. If users attempt to type an entry that's not on the list, Excel displays an error message.

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