

Tech Tips for Seniors

Spreadsheets

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Maintaining a household budget is probably the most basic and practical use of computer spreadsheet software.

You can download a spreadsheet app to your computer by first selecting one from a list offered after an Internet search on the word “spreadsheet”.

Spreadsheets are vertical columns and horizontal rows of small boxes, or cells, where you can type words and numbers. Horizontal rows are named “A”, “B”, “C”,

etc. Vertical columns are named “1”, “2”, “3”, etc.

Content typed across the top row of cells can be the names of different utilities, for example. The names of each month can be typed in cells down the first column.

A number typed in the third horizontal cell from the left and the third vertical cell from the top is in the C3 cell ... the third cell down in the C column.

After rows or columns of numbers is typed into cells, they can be manipulated with commands (formulas) such as “sum”, “count” and “average”.

For example, if you have entered amounts of 12 electric bills in rows 2-13 of the second column of cells (the B column), you can order the spreadsheet to total those

numbers in the cell directly beneath the 12th amount.

A formula typed in the 14th row of column B totals those 12 amount. It looks like this: `=sum(B2:B13)`. You can average the 12 electric bills by typing the word “average” instead of “sum”.

The same process can be done in columns of numbers representing other utilities or categories.

One of the most useful tasks done with spreadsheets is providing a year-end summary of expenses needed when time comes to file income taxes.

You can find examples and full explanations of what spreadsheets do by conducting an Internet search.

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If you have questions about any of this, feel free to make a “Technology Tips” appointment on Tuesday mornings at Generations, when the center opens. Just call the main number: 215-723-5841.

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