E-COURSE
REVIEWS

The intermediate Excel 2000 courses we've reviewed are generally good. Choosing between them is mainly a matter of deciding which functions you want to learn. Different publishers draw different lines between beginner, intermediate, and advanced. If you've taken an introductory course, you may find repetition or gaps in courses by other publishers.

Highly Recommended

★★★★ *Microsoft Excel 2000 Series: Data Formatting and Customization:* 8 hours, US$99 for 6 months of course access. Publisher: DigitalThink

This well-written course thoroughly and simply explains each Excel function. As you progress, the course instructs you to work in a spreadsheet on your desktop copy of the application. Mouse-overs and flip-books illustrate cause-and-effect relationships. You can download a PDF file with the lesson content, quizzes, and exercises for off-line reference. This course is easy to navigate, with a hyperlinked glossary and toolbar.

★★★★ *Microsoft Excel 2000: Intermediate:* 6 to 8 hours, US$75 for 90 days of course access. Publisher: ActiveEducation

The material in this course applies to several versions of Excel, with new features noted for 2000. The presentation should appeal to a variety of learning

styles. Each lesson includes written instructions, bulleted tips, animations, and practice exercises. As with DigitalThink's course, you perform tasks in the Excel application on your desktop as you move through the material. *Microsoft Excel 2000: Intermediate* introduces complex information at a quick pace that may not appeal to all users.

Recommended

★★★1/2 *Microsoft Excel 2000 Intermediate:* 4 to 5 hours, corporate pricing is available. Publisher: Wave Technologies

The instruction explains what each feature does rather than how it works. For example, the section that covers using lists begins with a short discussion on how to design a simple database so that you have some context when practicing the function. Most of the course is taught in a simulation, prefaced with comprehensive introductions. Animations are provided for more advanced functions. Our only complaint is that the simulations are extremely sensitive, marking items incorrect if you accidentally click outside of a target area.

★★★1/2 *Excel 2000 Level 2:* 1 to 2 hours, US$199 for 1 year of access to Element K's Office Productivity Library. Publisher: Element K

This short course focuses solely on manipulating charts and data. Topics include creating, modifying, and formatting charts; using graphic objects; and sorting and filtering data. You can apply new skills in an ongoing simulation. One of the best parts is an animation of drawing tools.

Adequate

★★★ *Microsoft Excel 2000: Proficient User:* 6 to 8 hours, US$74.95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: NETg

The material in *Microsoft Excel 2000: Proficient User* is comprehensive and useful, but the presentation is limited. While simulation exercises provide some opportunities for hands-on practice with the application, some of the exercises are as basic as opening the application from your desktop. However, the course does review several more advanced Excel features, including using WordArt. Feedback is provided on assessment questions and some of the simulation exercises.

At a Glance

Data Formatting and Customization: Includes thorough content coverage and meaningful practice opportunities.

Intermediate (ActiveEducation): Proceeds at a quick pace; content coverage is thorough with meaningful practice opportunities.

Intermediate (Wave Technologies): Provides context for features, but the simulations are too sensitive to errors.

Level 2: Focuses on manipulating charts and data.

Proficient User: Provides thorough content coverage, but has limited practice opportunities.

Expert: Presents robust simulations and quizzes, but lacks context for Excel features.

MOUS: Formatting Worksheets: Excel not accurately simulated in this course; context of the features isn't explained. It does allow for flexible quiz questions.

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★★★ *Microsoft Excel 2000 Expert:* 3 to 4 hours, US$99 for a perpetual course license. Publisher: Educational Multimedia

This course offers adequate explanations of the intermediate and advanced features of Excel 2000, including useful tips on keyboard and toolbar shortcuts. But it lacks context, failing to explain why you might want to use the features it describes. Quizzes are offered at the end of chapters and provide users with meaningful feedback. The simulations are robust, but they progress at a slow pace.

Not Recommended

★★ *Excel 2000 MOUS: Formatting Worksheets:* 4 hours, US$48 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: MindLeaders

The course includes only a few examples of Excel features and doesn't explain why you'd want to use any of them. The interactive elements often fail to emulate the program. For example, the course may say you're doing something wrong when the keyboard or menu shortcut you're using would work in a real copy of Excel. There's some flexibility in the text-entry questions. For example, the course accepts "merg" as a correct answer for "merge."