

Intro: Hello, and welcome to the CPA Australia Podcast. In this mini episode, we welcome back Excel expert, Neale Blackwood, CPA, who's had more than 20 years experience using and writing about Excel for accountants. Neale will discuss important and time-saving features that have been added to Microsoft Excel over the years that may help you out in everyday Excel use. We hope you enjoy this mini episode. Over to you, Neale.

Neale Blackwood: In this podcast, I wanted to cover the F5 Function key. It's got a couple of useful applications. The first is following links, so both hyperlinks and normal links. There is a shortcut you can use to go back after you follow the link. So if you use hyperlinks in Excel, you can set up a hyperlink by pressing Control K, and you can hyperlink within the document. You can also hyperlink outside Excel, but I'm not going sort of talk about that. But if you hyperlink within Excel, if you want to go back to where you were when you followed the hyperlink, all you do is press the F5 Function key, and then you press Enter. So you don't hold them down. You just press them in sequence. So F5, Enter. That takes you back to where you were when you initially followed the hyperlink.

Now, that also applies to following a link. So if you've got a cell linked to another cell, there is a keyboard shortcut using the Control key. So you hold the Control key down and you press the left square bracket. Now, that's the key on the right hand side of the letter P. And when you do that, you will follow the link to a cell. Now, again, if you want to go back to where you were when you followed that, you just press F5 and then press Enter. So it works for hyperlinks and it also works for links if you're following a link and you want to go back, which can be handy, especially in a big model.

The other thing that the F5 does actually open up is the Special button. So it's Go To Special. So F5 is actually the Go To dialogue. You could also access it by Control G if you're more into Control keys. But F5. And then, there's a Special button on that dialogue. And when you click that, it actually opens up a whole lot of different cells that you can select in one go. You press F5. You click Special. And I won't go through all of them because there's quite a lot of different types of cells. The very first one that's selected is Comments. So if you wanted to select all of the comments at once, it's quite easy.

Some of the useful ones are blanks. Now, blanks are a bit painful in Excel. When I'm doing my training, I basically say blanks are the devil. They can slow down a whole lot of good shortcuts by being there. And one of the problems that people face with pivot tables can be caused by blanks. When you create a pivot table in Excel and you drag a value to the value section of the pivot table, most times you're going to sum that value. But sometimes it'll actually count that value. Now, this is just a frustration. It's not a big pain because you can change that to sum quite easily. But it's a lot easier when you don't have to do that.

One of the major causes of that count default is a blank value. So if you've got a table and you've got a value column and you've got some blanks in that column, Excel will default to counting it rather than summing it. To get around it, what

you can do is select the range that's involved, so all of the values, and press F5, and then click Special, click the Blanks option, and then click Okay. Type in 0. So just type the 0 key or press the 0 key. Don't hit Enter. Hold the Control key down, and then press Enter. And what that will do is that will populate all of the blank cells with a 0. And now, when you create your pivot tables, the value that you drag there will actually default to summing.

When a pivot table goes to account, it basically means there's either a blank in the range or a text value in the range. And so if that's either of those is the case, it will default to counting. One of the other areas that the F5 can help you identify and select is errors, for example. So if you want to track down, if you think there's some errors on your sheet, you can find them all in one go by pressing F5, clicking the Special, and there is a Formulas section that you can access. So it defines a lot of different types of formulas like numbers, text, logicals, and there's also an option there for errors. So you can un-tick all of the other options and just select Errors, and click Okay. And that will select all of the errors on the sheet.

Now, you may not see them, like it may not be on the sheet or the part of the sheet that you're looking at. So if you want to actually find where they are and see them situ, all you do is you press the Tab key once you've selected them. So when you click Okay in the Go To Special dialogue, it's actually going to select all of those different types of cells. And so once they're selected, you just hit the Tab key, and that will toggle you through all of the individual cells. And then you can see where they are throughout the sheet. And, for example, you could change their format, so it's easy to spot them as well.

Couple of the other useful options that are on that Go To Special dialogue is the Current Region. But that actually has a shortcut as well. The current region is basically the range around the cell that you're in. So it's basically looking for a blank row and a blank column. So it stops at blank rows and blank columns. The keyboard shortcut is Control A. Hold Control and press A, or Control asterisk, which, I use that a little bit. And the asterisks I use is on the numeric keypad on the right-hand side.

And Visible Cells Only is another option that's on that Go To Special. You can just select the visible cells, so if you've got hidden rows and columns, and you want to just select the visible rows and columns or cells. So if you want to select visible cells, maybe you want to copy it, maybe you want to format just the visible cells, what you can do is before you do the copy or the format, you can select the range. So the keyboard shortcut is hold the Alt key down and just press the semi-colon, and then do your copy or do your formatting. And that will only do it to the visible cells only.

There are a few other options in that Go To Special that's worth taking a look. F5 and Special will open it up. It also does have an option on the ribbon. It's on the Home ribbon, and it's on the far right-hand side. There's something called Find

and Select. On the drop-down there, there is a Go To Special as well. So that's the other way to get to it.

Hope you found that useful. Thanks for listening.

Outro:

We hope you enjoyed this mini episode of the CPA Australia Podcast. To learn more about Neale and to listen to more podcast episodes on Excel, you can visit our show notes at [www.cpaaustralia.com.au/podcast](http://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/podcast). Never miss an episode by subscribing to our podcast on iTunes, Spotify, or Stitcher. Thanks for listening.