

Speaker 1: 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 every day Excel use. We hope you enjoy this mini-episode. Over to you, Neale.

Neale Blackwood: In this podcast, I'd like to talk about using the Find in Excel, so if you hold the Control key down and press F, it opens up the Find dialogue. Now, this has a few quirks in how it works, so I thought I'd explain it with an example, so you can try this at home or when you get back to your desk.

Basically enter 1000 in three separate cells, and just sort of scatter them around the sheet. Format one of those 1000's as the comma format, so you'll find that on the Home ribbon under the Number section, and then create two other little very simple formulas and link one of the cells to one of the normal 1000's and then link another cell to the 1000 that you formatted with the comma format. Okay, so you'll have five cells that have a 1000 in them.

Now, let's do a find. If we do a Control-F ... now just a point on using the Find. If you've got a single cell selected and you open up the Find dialogue, you're actually looking on the whole sheet. Now, that may be okay for Find, but there's the sister operation of Find and Replace, so Control-H opens up Find and Replace. Now if you're using Replace on the whole sheet, you have to be very careful in what you're replacing, so just be aware of that, especially if you're affecting formulas, then replacing things can be a little bit dangerous.

In general, it's a good idea to select the range before you use Find, so you can select like whole columns or whole rows, and that can be a bit safer, especially using Find and Replace.

Okay, so Control-F, type in 1000, and click the Find All button. Now, down at the bottom, you will see the results. Now something that not many people are aware of is that if you now press Control-A, so hold the Control key and press A, you will actually select every single cell that you have found, which can be useful, so you could for example change the format of those cells that you found if you wanted to do that. The default operation of the Find is to look in formulas, so there's an Options button on the Find dialogue, and when you click that, you'll see that there is a dropdown that has formulas in it, and that's the default. When you search in formulas, you are in effect searching for a value in a cell, and also a value in a formula, so for example, if you had A1 times 1000, you would find that as well.

Now, the thing is, it doesn't return the results of formulas. When you use formulas, you'll find all of the data entered values of a 1000, and the format won't matter, but the problem is you won't find the formula results, so if a formula returns a 1000, you won't find that one, so if that's an issue, then what you need to do is you'll have to do two finds. The second find you're going to do

is you're going to use values. You need to select a single cell before you do this. In the dropdown that says Formulas, there's also an option for Values. Now when you select that, and then do your Find All, you'll find you get a different result. The result won't include the cell that was linked to the 1000 that had the comma format on it, okay? This is where the format can actually come into play.

So when you've got a format on a number, it can affect the results when you're using the values. To find the 1000 with the comma format, you'll actually have to enter one comma zero, zero, zero into the Find box, and then when you click Find All, you will find that one, but you won't find the other 1000s, okay? Unfortunately, the Find dialogue, depending on what you're looking for, can take a few finds to actually find all of the ones that you're after.

By the way, you can leave the Find dialogue open. You don't need to close it down to get back to the sheet. In the early days of Excel, you had to, but not now. The Find dialogue sort of floats above the grid, so you can still work on the grid and have the Find dialogue open there.

Now something that the Find is good for is finding formats, so this came in a couple of versions ago, and you have the ability to find based on a format. When you click Options, there's a button there that has a dropdown, so you can select a specific format or, which is often easier, you can just base it on an existing format in a cell. There's a Format button, you click the dropdown, and you can actually get access to Excel's normal formatting cells dialogue, or there's an option for Choose Format From Cell. When you click that, you get the opportunity to click a cell, you can then search for that particular format, and if necessary, you could use the Control-A option once you've found them to change that format by selecting Control-A in the bottom section of the Find, and then that will select everything and then you could use your formatting to change the formats on the ones you have found.

So be aware that when you're using Find that sometimes you don't always find what you're looking for, and you might need to do a couple of different finds to find everything that matches what you're searching for. You can have a play with that Find By Format, which can be useful if you are looking for certain formats.

Thanks for listening.

Speaker 1:

We hoped 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.