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How to Convert an Excel Spreadsheet to XML (Import And Export Data Easily)

Written by co-founder Kasper Langmann, Microsoft Office Specialist.

Extensible markup language (XML) is a common format for working with data. And if you want to **get your spreadsheet from Excel to another program**, you might have to use it.

Excel lets you **convert your spreadsheets to XML files** easily—but it's not obvious how to get started.

Let's take a look at creating an XML schema, adding that schema to your spreadsheet, and saving your new XML file.

We'll also go over the basics of XML, in case you're not familiar with it.

Kasper Langmann, Co-founder of Spreadsheeto

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Let me take a guess😁

You have several years of experience in Excel?

Yes, I'm an **expert**

No, I'm an **intermediate**

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✏️   **5: Marking up your data**

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Get your FREE exercise file

We'll be using a spreadsheet throughout this article to see how XML works.

If you'd like to follow along, you can **download that same spreadsheet below**.

Grab it now and let's learn about XML!

BONUS: Download the **XML Exercise Workbook File** to go along with this post.

What is XML?

XML is a way of marking up data. It doesn't actually **d**
anything—it serves to tell a program what particular pieces of information represent.

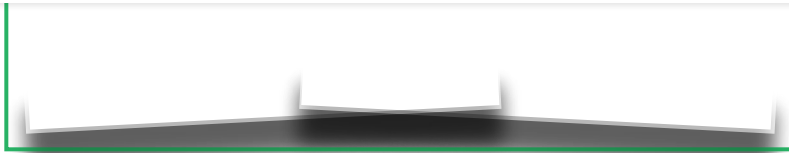For example, you might have some XML that looks lik
this:

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The tags—site, title, and topic—don't have **any built-in function** or purpose. But another program might be able to interpret them in a way that's useful.

When you convert Excel data into XML, you simply add markup information like that above to your spreadsheet. Then that information can be better used by some other application.

Creating a markup schema

Before you convert your spreadsheet into XML, **you need a markup schema**. This defines each field that you'll use in your XML file.

In our spreadsheet, we have four types of information: car make, car model, year of manufacture, and value. So our Excel schema will have four different tags.

For simplicity's sake, we'll call them "make," "model," "year," and "value."

Open up a blank text file, and add the following lines:

```
car-data - Notepad
File  Edit  Format  View  Help
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" standalone="yes"?>
<car-data xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance">
```

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See where we typed "car-data"? You should use that space to include a descriptive name for your XML schema.

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Now add the following lines:

The record tags **define a single record** described by our spreadsheet. The other tags define the relevant pieces of information for that record.

Finally, add the closing tag to the end of the file:

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> ## Why add two record?
>
> You'll notice that we entered the information for two cars (two records) in the XML file. **This is important.**
>
> If you don't do this, Excel won't know that each XML element is meant to be repeated throughout the spreadsheet. With a non-repeating element, you can only assign a single cell to any category.
>
> And that doesn't work for most spreadsheets.

Adding the markup schema to Excel

Now that we have an XML schema, we need to add it to Excel.

First, make sure the Developer tab is visible.

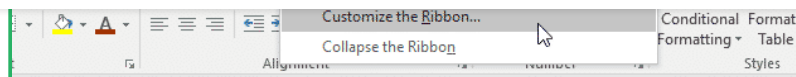Right-click on the Ribbon, and select **Customize the Ribbon**:

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Let me take a guess😬
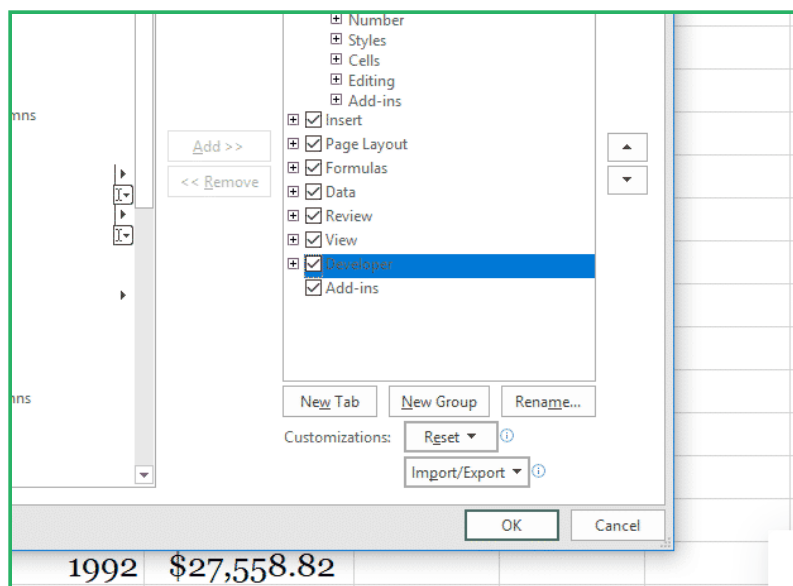
You have several years of experience in Excel?

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In the resulting window, make sure the **Developer tab is checked**:

Now we need to add the schema file to Excel.

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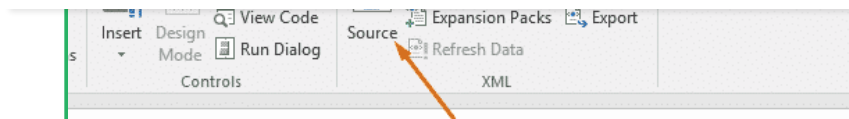Open the **Developer** tab, and click on **Source** in the **XML** section:

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Let me take a guess😁

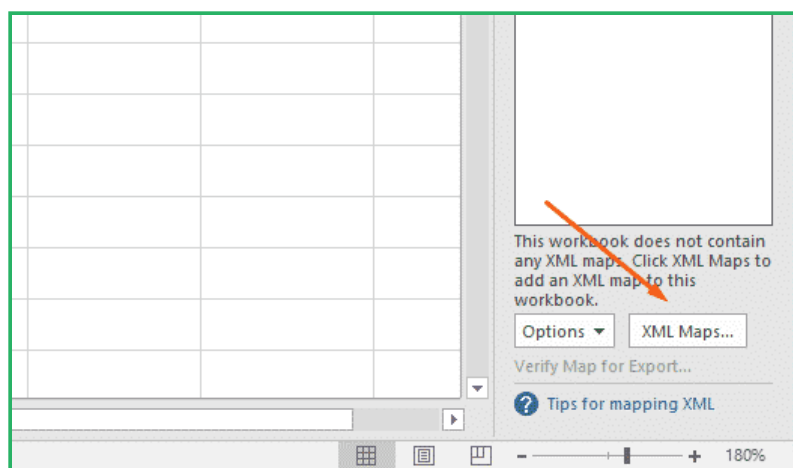You have several years of experience in Excel?

Yes, I'm an **expert**

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In the XML pane, click **XML Maps**:

Click **Add** in the resulting window, then navigate to your XML file and select it.

You'll see a warning message from Excel:

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Let me take a guess 😁

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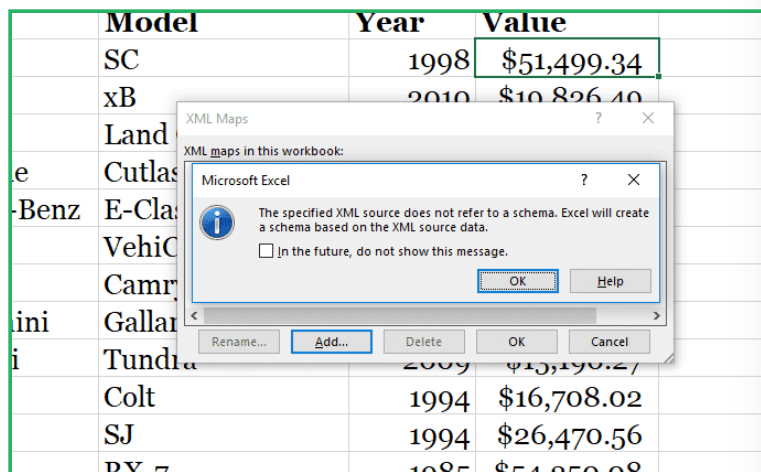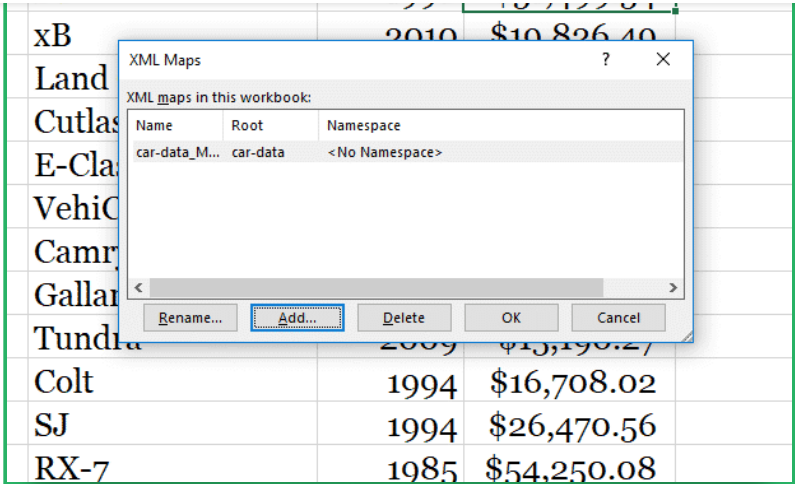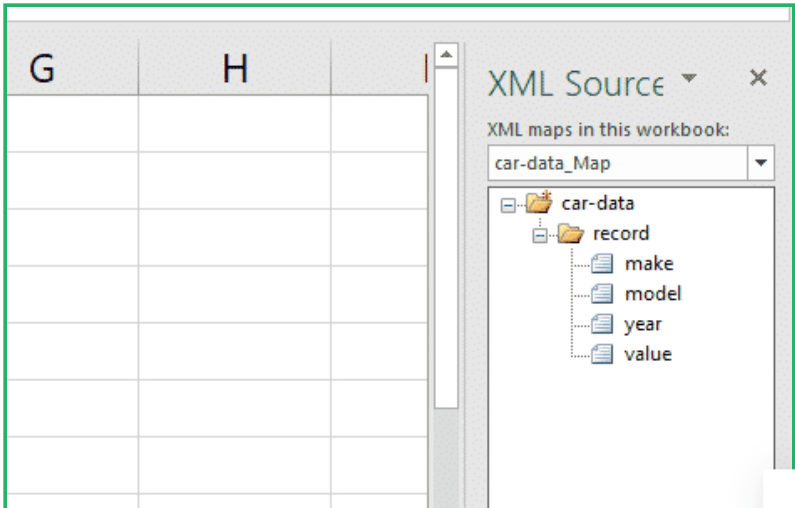Yes, I'm an **expert**

No, I'm an **intermediate**

Finally, click **OK** again, and you'll see your map added to the XML Source pane:

Now that the XML schema has been added, we can start assigning data to it.

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Marking up your data

With the XML schema loaded into Excel, we can begin the process of assigning XML tags to the data in our
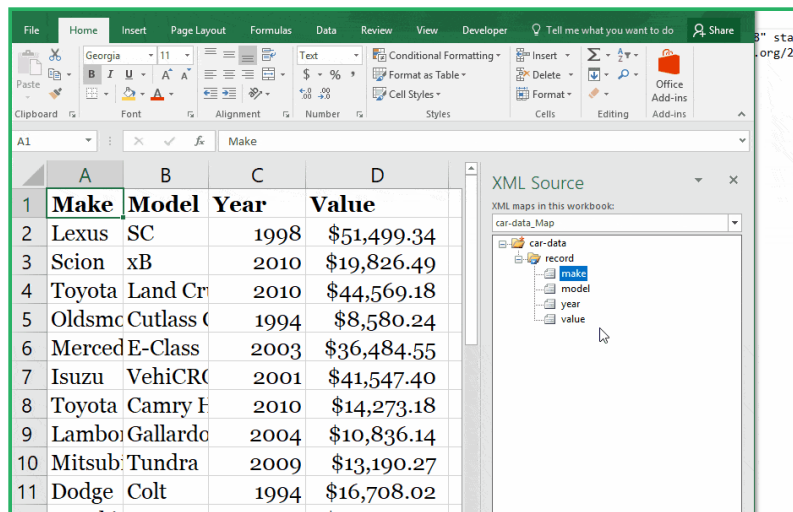
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Let me take a guess 😁

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No, I'm an **intermediate**

corresponding column in your spreadsheet.

Below, you can see me dragging the "make" element to the "Make" column:

If everything has gone as planned, the column will be highlighted in alternating shades of blue.

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To assign the rest of the elements, drag them to the corresponding columns.

When you're done, all the columns will be highlighted. That means all the data in your spreadsheet has been correctly tagged with XML.

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Let me take a guess😬

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Yes, I'm an **expert**

No, I'm an **intermediate**

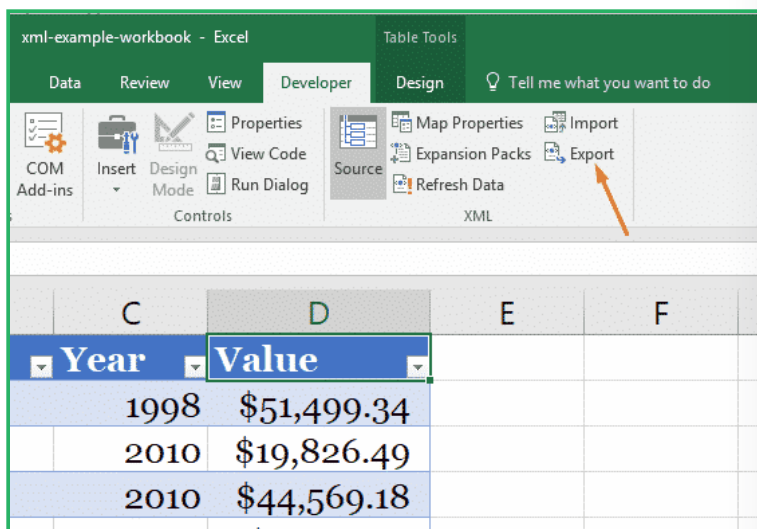| 2 | Lexus | SC | 1998 | $51,499.34 |
3	Scion	xB	2010	$19,826.49
4	Toyota	Land Cruiser	2010	$44,569.18
5	Oldsmo	Cutlass Cruiser	1994	$8,580.24
6	Merced	E-Class	2003	$36,484.55
7	Isuzu	VehiCROSS	2001	$41,547.40
8	Toyota	Camry Hybrid	2010	$14,273.18
9	Lambor	Gallardo	2004	$10,836.14
10	Mitsubi	Tundra	2009	$13,190.27
11	Dodge	Colt	1994	$16,708.02
12	Suzuki	SJ	1994	$26,470.56
13	Mazda	RX-7	1985	$54,250.08
14	Chevrol	Corvette	1987	$44,006.73

Just to make sure, we'll export the XML and take a look at it.

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Exporting XML

To export your data into an XML file that other apps can read, go to the **Developer** tab in the Ribbon and click **Export**:

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Choose a location and a filename, then click **Export**.

you'll see the full XML:

Starting converting Excel to XML

Once you've gone through this process a couple times, you'll be able to do it very quickly.

Soon you'll be exporting your Excel spreadsheets to XML in no time at all!

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