Xspread 2.4 Quick Start

Executive summary of xspread 2.4, a re-working of the venerable X11 spreadsheet program for the Agenda VR3 Linux-based PDA. This is not a substitute for the full manual, which you should read if you wish to make the best use of xspread. There's also built-in help documentation, which is accessed by typing ?.

Getting data into xspread

Xspread reads its own format (ASCII) worksheets. To get pre-existing data into this format, use the utility xsdata, supplied as part of the xspread distribution.

To enter data manually, just start xspread and type in the data values. In the default entry mode, typing a digit, +, - or = starts a numeric entry (either a constant or a numerical formula). String entries are started by typing " (for a centered label), < (left flush label) or > (right flush label).

Formulas

These work as in most spreadsheets. You can reference cell contents by putting the address of the cell (e.g. B20) into a formula. The $ symbol is used for absolute references. To enter a cell's address into the command line, tap on the cell with the stylus. (There are other ways of doing this—see the manual.) There's a reasonably wide selection of built-in functions, whose names all start with @ (see the manual or built-in help).

Navigating

The Agenda's Left, Right, Up and Down buttons all move the cell highlight by single rows or columns. You can move the highlight onto a given cell by tapping on the cell. There are various cursor-motion keystrokes too (see the manual). When you're editing a formula, the Left and Right buttons move the text cursor within the command line, but you can get the button-motion focus back onto the worksheet by tapping on the bar that displays the column headings. (And you can get the focus back onto the command line by tapping on it.)

Editing

To get a cell open for editing, select it (i.e. get the highlight onto it) then tap on the top line. An editable version of the cell's contents will appear. At the edit prompt the keystrokes Ctrl-A, Ctrl-E and Ctrl-K do their Emacs things: start of line, end of line, and delete to end of line.

Menus

Hit / (slash) to get into the menu system. You can scroll the menus with the Left/Right buttons and select items with the stylus. The / command can also be used to back up the menu tree if need be.

Ranges

Many commands operate on ranges of cells. The range separator is the colon, as in A2:B10. When a range is required as part of a command, xspread will (usually) insert a trailing colon if you tap a cell to enter its address into the command line. Some commands accept "degenerate" ranges (single cell addresses): if you don't want the automatically supplied colon, then backspace over it.

Canceling commands

Esc or Ctrl-G gets you out of most things.

Getting out

Besides the Quit menu item, a typed Q (not case-sensitive) quits xspread, with a query regarding saving the data if anything has changed since the last save.

Command hints

Where a command requires specific arguments, the nature of the required input is shown in square brackets on the second line of the display. Where a command wants a quoted string, xspread supplies the opening quote; the closing quote is generally not needed, unless a further argument follows the quoted string.

Graphs

I had to fudge things to get graphs working at all on the Agenda; please don't expect too much! Only the XY and line graph types are available, and text elements (titles, legends) are likely to disappear or mess up the graph.

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