

Coding Annoyances

Export PNG charts from Excel

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Excel cannot directly export charts or `Save As` in other image formats, but with a simple macro one can export charts in PNG format. This format is great for including charts in LaTeX documents with `\includegraphics{chart.png}`.

The macro can be stored in the personal macro file `PERSONAL.XLSB`. Excel 2010 places the file in the following location: `C:\Users\yourusername\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Excel\XLSTART`

This file is hidden when first starting Excel. To unhide, perform the following steps.

1. + **View** -> **Unhide**
2. + **Unhide** personal macros file.

You can now select the `View -> Macro` or the `Developer -> Macros` menu items to create a new macro. The macro for saving the generated PNG files is as follows:

```
1. Sub Export_ActiveChart_as_PNG()  
2. '  
3. ' Export_ActiveChart_as_PNG Macro  
4. ' Export Active Chart as PNG  
5. '  
6.     ActiveChart.Export Filename:="C:\path\to\save\excelcharts\" & ActiveSheet.Name & ".png", Filtername:="PNG"  
7.  
8. End Sub
```

The generated PNG file can now be used in `tex` documents as usual.

Today, however, I found another alternative, but it doesn't work as well.

Save chart as PDF

Excel 2010 provides a `Save As` option that can save the active chart as a PDF file. The file can be used directly with `\includegraphics{chart.pdf}` but the resulting PDF has a significant white margin all around that would have to be cropped for better results. Cropping a PDF without the full version of Acrobat can be a problem, so the PNG route works better, in my opinion.

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