



## Spreadsheets: Retaining Numerical Values

### How do you display numbers in thousands, or millions, while retaining the numerical values?

Reader Rolando J. wins a copy of the book *Excel for the CEO* for his question: "How do you display numerical values in thousands while retaining the numerical values? For presentation purposes you may want to display the dollars in thousands (or in millions)."

This used to be easier in Excel. Actually, it hasn't gotten any more difficult to select thousands or millions. The issue is that it has become far easier to select other number formats.

Starting in Excel 2007, Microsoft offered this dropdown menu from the center of the Home tab of the ribbon. The dropdown makes it so easy to choose from a few formats that you might forget that there are hundreds of other formats in the old Format Cells dialog box.

To get to the complete list of number formats, either choose More Number Formats... from the bottom of Figure 1 (below) or simply type Ctrl 1 to access the Format Cells dialog box.

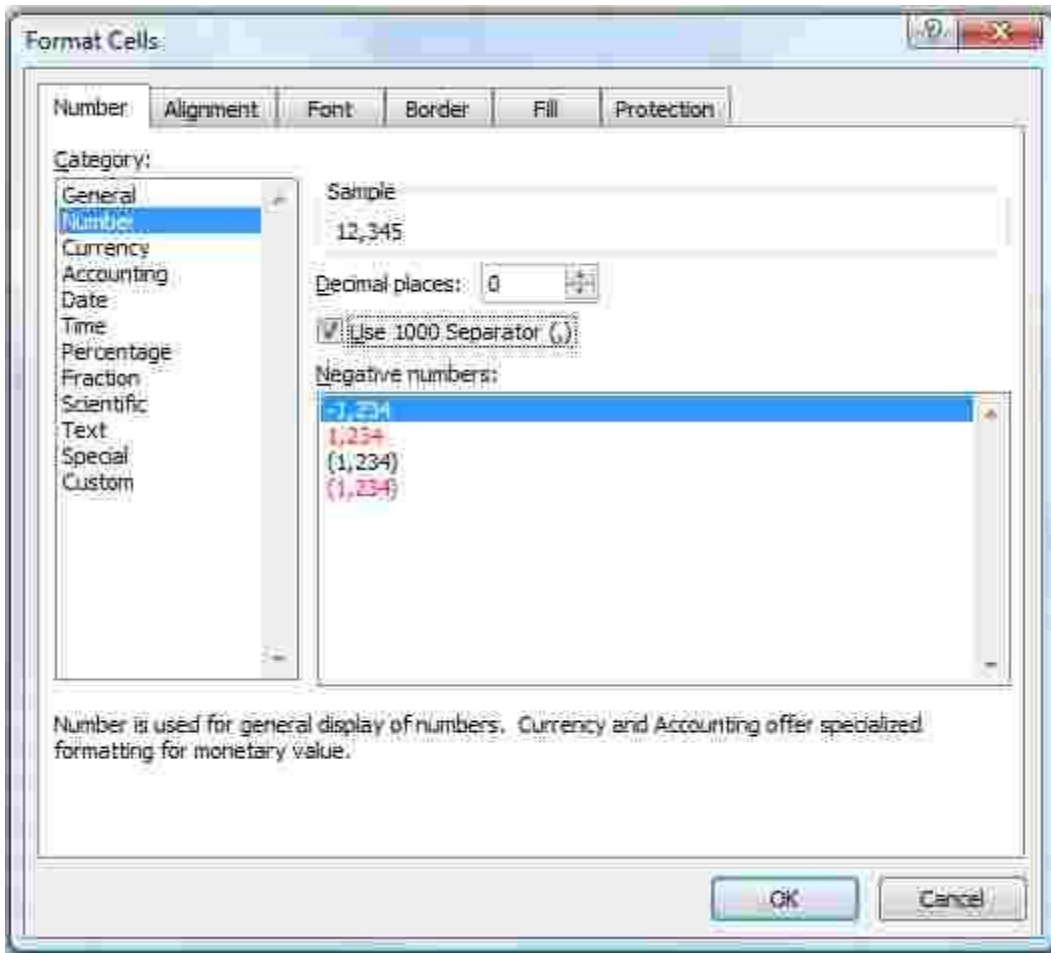
The Format Cells dialog box offers categories such as Number, Currency, and Accounting. Choose the closest category. Choose your currency symbol, decimals, and/or thousands separator as appropriate.

*Fig. 1*



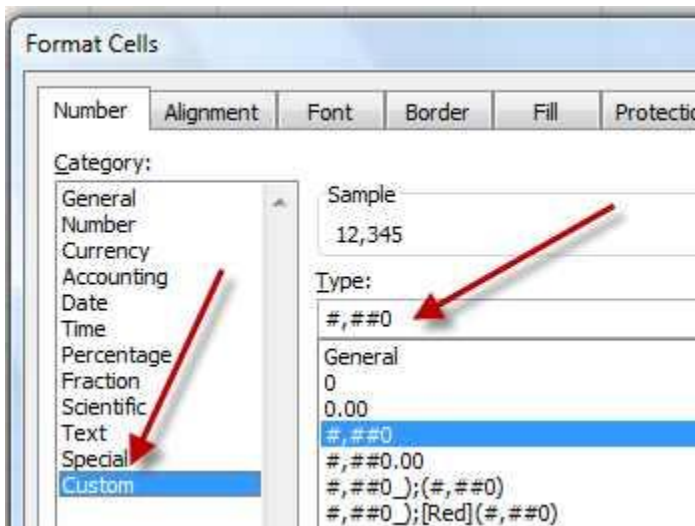
In Figure 2 (below), the numbers would be formatted with no decimal places and a thousands separator.

*Fig. 2*



After choosing a number format, select the Custom entry from the bottom of the Category list in the Format Cells dialog box. A new "Type:" box will appear in the dialog box. This box will start out with the somewhat cryptic characters that are used to represent your selected format. In Figure 3 (below), the number format is "#,##0."

Fig. 3





B19		5505000		
	A	B	C	D
1	ORIGINAL			
2		2010	2009	2008
3	Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,505,000	6,076,000	10,339,000
4	Short Term Investments	31,283,000	25,371,000	13,323,000
5	Net Receivables	15,198,000	13,405,000	15,606,000
6	Inventory	740,000	717,000	985,000
7	Other Current Assets	2,950,000	3,711,000	2,989,000
8				
9	DISPLAYED AS THOUSANDS WITH #,##0,			
10		2010	2009	2008
11	Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,505	6,076	10,339
12	Short Term Investments	31,283	25,371	13,323
13	Net Receivables	15,198	13,405	15,606
14	Inventory	740	717	985
15	Other Current Assets	2,950	3,711	2,989
16				
17	DISPLAYED AS MILLIONS WITH #,##0.0,,			
18		2010	2009	2008
19	Cash and Cash Equivalents	5.5	6.1	10.3
20	Short Term Investments	31.3	25.4	13.3
21	Net Receivables	15.2	13.4	15.6
22	Inventory	0.7	0.7	1.0
23	Other Current Assets	3.0	3.7	3.0

Fig. 6

Number	Custom Format
31283000	0
31,283,000	#,##0
31,283	#,##0,
31,283K	#,##0,K
31	#,##0,,
31M	#,##0,,"M"
31.3M	#,##0.0,,"M"
\$31.3M	\$#,##0.0,,\M

**[Bill Jelen - CFO.com](#)**

Bill Jelen is the author of 32 books, including *Excel Gurus Gone Wild*, and is the host of [MrExcel.com](#). Suggest a topic for his next column at [CFO.com's Spreadsheet Community Center](#) (right) and if your suggestion is chosen, you'll receive a copy of one of Jelen's new books.