

# How to Use the Session Contacts Tracking Spreadsheet

By Rep. Doug Holt, Georgia General Assembly

The Session Contacts Tracking spreadsheet is a Microsoft® Excel® based spreadsheet developed for tracking contacts (by phone, email, in person, etc.) that you receive during a legislative session. It is easy to use, even if you are not a computer “power user”. Since Excel can export to other formats, you can adapt it for other spreadsheet programs.

When using it, the first thing to do is make a copy of the sheet for the current legislative session. Just open the sheet, then go to the “File” menu, and select “Save As...”. Change the name by adding the year of the session at the beginning of the new file name (ex. “2007 Session Contacts Tracking Sheet.xls”). This way, you’ll always have the original sheet available to copy from when preparing for future sessions. Stash that original someplace safe – so you won’t have to copy from a previous session, and then delete a bunch of entries.

Next, change the title of the new sheet, contained in cell B1, to reflect the session year and your name. Click the “Save” icon on the menu bar, and the sheet is now ready to use for the current session.

As you go through the session, add a new row for each day you track. Always keep the blank row from the original – that way you avoid having to re-calculate the sum/totaling formulas at the bottom of the sheet. When adding a new day, use the following procedure:

- Select the whole blank row by clicking the row number box for that row (see [Ex. 1](#))

Ex. 1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1		2007 Session Contacts Tracking Sheet - Rep. Doug Holt											
2													
3		Non-Personal	Personal Mail	Personal Mail	Phone Calls	Phone Calls	In Person	In Person	Email	Email	Email		
4	Date	Mail	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(Spam)	Bills Read	
5													
6		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7													
8								% of Total	% Email				
9								#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	% Spam			
10								Total In District Contacts: 0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!		
11								Total Out of District Contacts	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
12								Total Contacts:	0	100.00%	#DIV/0!		
13													
14													
15													
16													
17													
18													
19													
20													
21													
22													
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31													
32													
33													

- Click “Insert” on the menu bar, and then “Row” from the “Insert” drop down list (see [Ex. 2](#)). You now have a new row, to record today’s counts.

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### Ex. 2

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with the 'Insert' menu open. The spreadsheet is titled 'Session Contacts Tracking Sheet by Rep Doug Holt.xls'. The data is organized as follows:

	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	I
1	2007 Session Contacts Tracking Sheet - Rep. Doug Holt									
2	Personal Mail	Phone Calls	Phone Calls	In Person	In Person	Email	Email	Email		
3	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(Spam)	Bills Read	
4										
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6										
7										
8					% of Total	% Email				
9					#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	% Spam			
10					Total In District Contacts:	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
11					Total Out of District Contacts:	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
12					Total Contacts:	0	100.00%	#DIV/0!		

- Key in the new date, and put a zero in all the data columns (Ex. 3). Click the “Save” icon on the tool bar, and the sheet is now ready to enter today’s counts.

### Ex. 3

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with the date '1/10/2007' entered in cell A5. The spreadsheet is titled '2007 Session Contacts Tracking Sheet - Rep. Doug Holt'. The data is organized as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	2007 Session Contacts Tracking Sheet - Rep. Doug Holt											
2		Non-Personal	Personal Mail	Personal Mail	Phone Calls	Phone Calls	In Person	In Person	Email	Email	Email	
3		Mail	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(Spam)	Bills Read
4	Date											
5	1/10/2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6												
7		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8												
9								% of Total	% Email			
10								#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	% Spam		
11								Total In District Contacts:	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
12								Total Out of District Contacts:	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
13								Total Contacts:	0	100.00%	#DIV/0!	

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- During the day, keep the spreadsheet open on a PC. Update the cells for today as new contacts, etc. come in. Click the “Save” icon every time you update a cell, so that you don’t lose anything if there is a power failure. Over time, the sheet will come to look like Example 4.

Ex. 4

1	2007 Session Contacts Tracking Sheet - Rep. Doug Holt												
2													
3		Non-Personal	Personal Mail	Personal Mail	Phone Calls	Phone Calls	In Person	In Person	Email	Email	Email		
4	Date	Mail	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(In District)	(Out of District)	(Spam)	Bills Read	
5	4/1/2007	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	36	0
6	4/2/2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	40	6	
7	4/3/2007	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	7	40	0	
8	4/4/2007	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	59	2	
9	4/5/2007	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	6	44	1	
10	4/6/2007	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	3	6	46	0	
11	4/7/2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	31	0	
12	4/8/2007	22	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	19	0	
13	4/9/2007	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	1	9	25	0	
14	4/10/2007	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	3	6	39	0	
15	4/11/2007	2	0	8	6	2	0	0	7	11	63	0	
16	4/12/2007	3	0	9	2	5	0	0	18	14	88	0	
17	4/13/2007	4	2	0	0	0	0	3	9	9	86	2	
18	4/14/2007	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	12	7	36	0	
19	4/15/2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	12	0	
20	4/16/2007	2	1	7	5	0	0	2	29	6	62	2	
21	4/17/2007	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	12	5	58	3	
22	4/18/2007	0	0	6	1	2	0	0	15	8	81	0	
23	4/19/2007	4	0	13	6	2	0	0	5	7	41	0	
24	4/20/2007	0	1	1	2	3	0	3	21	9	69	0	
25													
26		38	5	57	26	23	1	10	153	137	975	16	
27													
28								% of Total	% Email				
29								Total In District Contacts:	185	12.98%	82.70%	% Spam	
30								Total Out of District Contacts	1240	87.02%	11.05%	78.63%	
31								Total Contacts:	1425	100.00%	88.77%		
32													
33													

If you are familiar with Excel, or know someone who is, feel free to add columns to track other information you are interested in (constituent service requests, hours worked each day, etc.). You may want the data from the new column(s) to be totaled, and perhaps added into the grand totals at the bottom. If so, you will need to add a sum function for each new column, and add that sum into the formulas for the grand totals.

At the end of the session, you will have very clear-cut evidence of your communication workload. Sometimes the data can be very useful when explaining just how much effort a legislative session requires. Constituents often don’t realize just how extensive our jobs are.

Best wishes in legislating!

*Doug Holt*