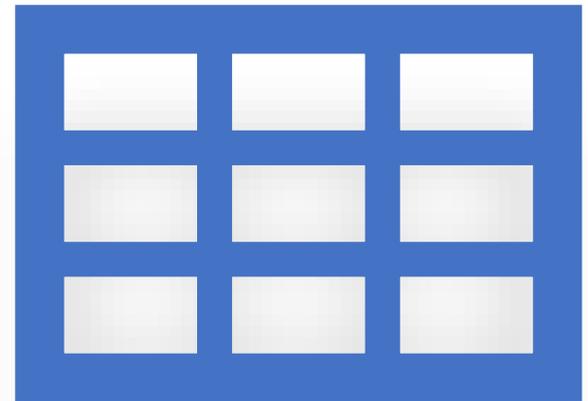
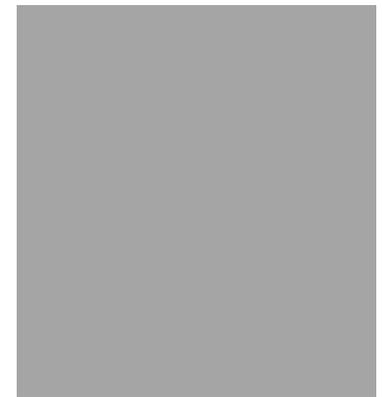
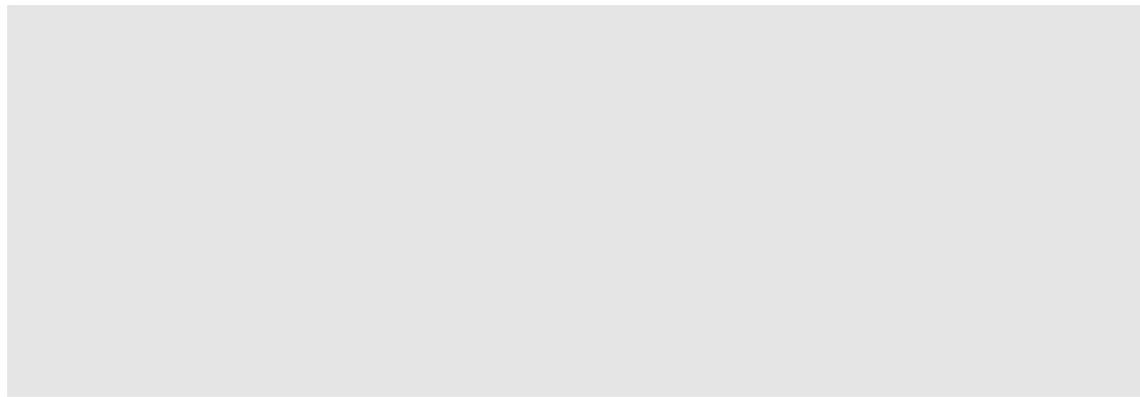


MRDCL Excel Productivity Scripts (EPS)

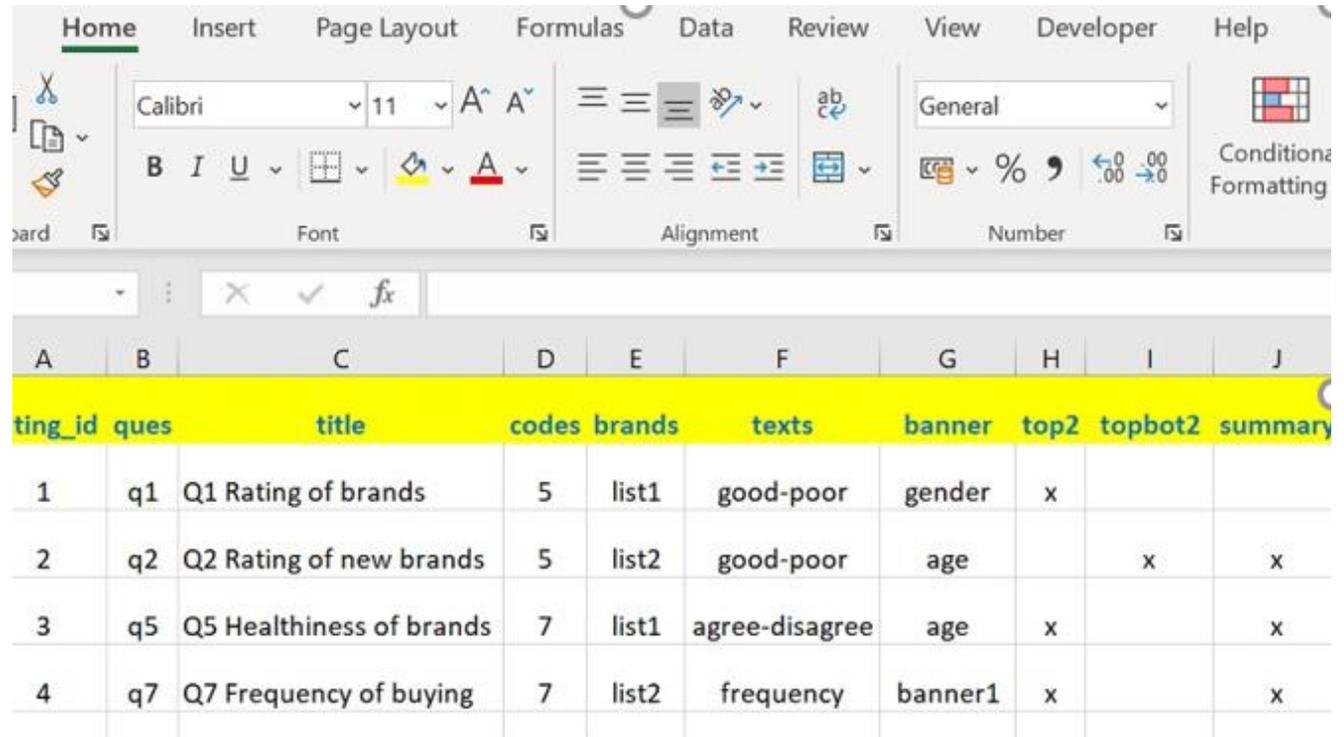
Developing easily customisable systems to improve your productivity using MRDCL and Excel



One of the key productivity features within MRDCL is the set of tools that allow users to read Excel workbooks. This single feature means that a range of possibilities exist – from simply reading a list of items right through to developing systems that automate variable definitions and tables as well as merging and managing data. Scripts that utilise this feature are known as EPS (Excel Productivity Script).



What Is An EPS Like?



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel ribbon with the 'Home' tab selected. The ribbon includes options for Font (Calibri, size 11), Alignment, and Number. Below the ribbon, a table is displayed with the following data:

ting_id	ques	title	codes	brands	texts	banner	top2	topbot2	summary
1	q1	Q1 Rating of brands	5	list1	good-poor	gender	x		
2	q2	Q2 Rating of new brands	5	list2	good-poor	age		x	x
3	q5	Q5 Healthiness of brands	7	list1	agree-disagree	age	x		x
4	q7	Q7 Frequency of buying	7	list2	frequency	banner1	x		x

An EPS is a combination of an Excel worksheet design coupled with a MRDCL script that can read and process it.

A Good Example Of An EPS.....

A good simple example of an EPS is the way that code lists are traditionally handled in market research. Typically, a coding team will develop code lists, a researcher will want sub-totals, leaving the MRDCL scriptwriter the task of co-ordinating this information. In other programs, this may require the scriptwriter to paste texts into scripts (text files) and to add syntactical commands to specify sub-total, ranking requirements, code groupings etc.

Using MRDCL, one worksheet can be used as a template to store the code list – this can be handled entirely by the coder. The researcher can add simple markers in the Excel spreadsheet to indicate which codes are used to make sub-totals. And, what does the MRDCL scriptwriter do? He/she only has to set a reference to the worksheet within the workbook using an EPS, so that everything is automated.

In other words, the coder does what they are responsible for; the researcher specifies what they need to; the scriptwriter only needs to set his MRDCL script to read the relevant worksheet. That, we believe, is efficiency in action.

Why Is An EPS Important?

There are five key reasons why an EPS is important

- 1. Everyone Understands Excel**

Use of Excel is understood by almost everyone within the company. It is easy to train a junior member of staff with no expertise in MRDCL to enter or provide information in Excel. You can even get clients to provide information in a ready-to-use format that no needs NO further work to use.
- 2. Well Designed Systems Can Be Re-used & Shared**

A well designed EPS can be used across all or a number of projects n even be re-used by different teams in different countries.
- 3. Changes To The Worksheets Do Not Require Any Updates For The Script Writer**

A well designed EPS will mean that the script writer merely sets a reference to the worksheet and uses the relevant driver file, setting the relevant parameters. It means that if a worksheet changes – for example, where codes are added, the scriptwriter does not have to make any changes at all.
- 4. Senior Staff Do Not Waste Time Doing Junior Tasks**

It is not uncommon for senior scriptwriters to spend a high proportion of their time – possibly as much as 90% of their time – doing simple work such as entering codes and texts. Systems designed using Excel mean that junior staff or coders can prepare much of an analysis specification.
- 5. MRDCL Scriptwriters Focus On Scriptwriting Tasks**

The greatest skill of a good MRDCL scriptwriter is usually their scriptwriting ability! This is not a surprise, of course, but much of a scriptwriter's time is often wasted changing code lists, sorting out data corrections and specifying simple tables. In other software packages, this I a problem. Why? Because, we believe, the software is not good enough. MRDCL allows juniors and other staff to do what they are good at while MRDCL scriptwriters focus on doing what few people understand.

The Usual Excuses For Not Using An EPS



“They take longer to develop than entering the code”

This statement is absolutely true. However, it is highly short-sighted. Under pressure, it is easy to be short-sighted, of course, but companies making use of an EPS will get repaid for their initial effort many times over. As Excel is so easy to understand, minimal documentation of how to use a particular EPS is usually required as use is generally intuitive.

“They Are Too Difficult To Develop”

Understanding how to develop an EPS can appear to be daunting at first, but it is surprising how easy it convert existing code so that it has a general purpose use as an EPS. Read the section on 'How to develop an EPS' or ask MRDC to provide you with a short online tutorial at a small fee, which will save you hours for years to come.

“It Means Changing The Way We Have Worked For Years”

This is really no excuse. Whether you stick to the adage “There’s no need to fix what isn’t broke” or not – simply, if you can do something more efficiently, it has to be the right way to go.