FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTION
VOTER DATA FROM THE WEB

October 2009

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The Franklin County Board of Elections has added the feature to download voter data from the web. A text file will be created that you can download at http://vote.franklincountyohio.gov/voter/voterdata.cfm.

The Franklin County Board of Elections supplies this data for users. It can not advise you how to use the data, but supplies the following documentation to assist users.

Because of limits on our file server and number of demands being processed your select will be limited to 5 minutes. In most cases unless the demand is unusually high you will be able to process your select.

Downloading All Voters in Franklin County

If you want the entire County, or need to run your own select on the data you can select to download the entire county.

Select 'Download Entire Voter File' and Click 'Export as TXT File' button to start the download process. The File Download dialog box will be displayed.
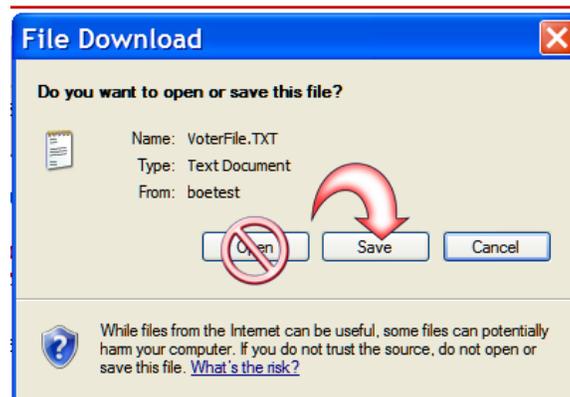
It is strongly recommended that the file not be opened but instead select the option to save the file to your system. Note where you are saving your file as described in the Save in area.
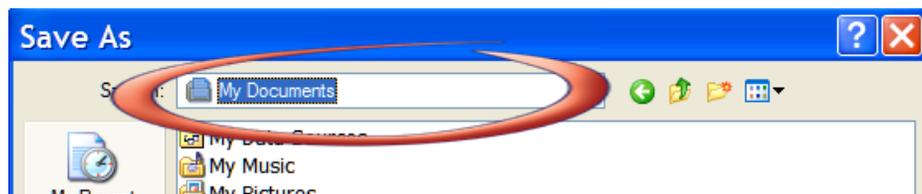
And click the Save button to start the file transfer.
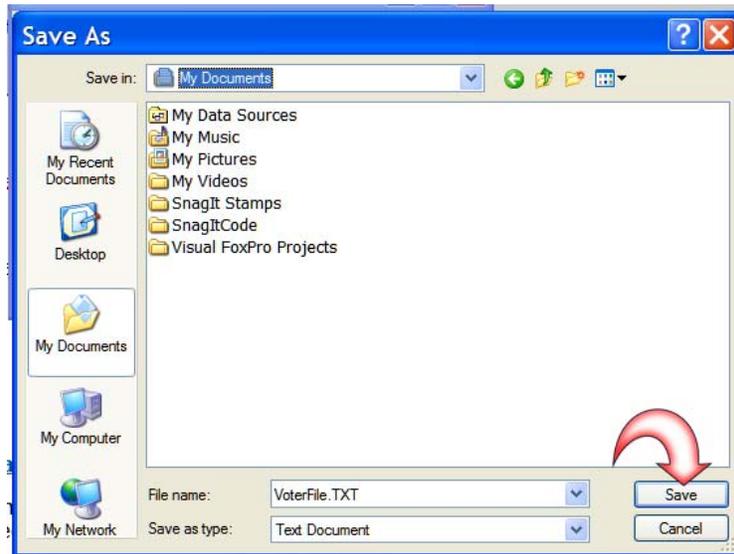
This will start the file download. If necessary, after the download is completed, click on OK to close the dialog box (some systems will automatically close the box depending on personal settings.).

The file is a comma delimited text file. For information on the fields and the file structure click on File structure Voter Data File. This is an Excel file that can be opened at or saved to your system. The file can be imported into a number of data base productions, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Visual Foxpro, FileMaker, Bento for Mac, Paradox, Oracle, MySQL, SQL Server to name a few. Unless you have Excel 2007 Excel is not recommended because prior to Excel 2007 there is a limit on the number of records you can import to 65,536 rows, in Excel 2007 that was changed to 1 million rows. As of October 2009 the Franklin County database contained over 841,000 records.

Downloading a Selected Area in Franklin County

You can select the Create a Customer Select.

Start by selecting either District or Precinct. If you select District you will be asked to select a City or Village, a Congressional District, a House District, a Senate District, a School District or a Township.

If you want just a single Precinct select the by Precinct option and you will be asked to select a single precinct.

Next you need to select the party affiliation that you want, you can make multiple selections. If you want all voters select all three options.

Next you need to select the sorting option.
- A walking list will sort the file by street name, then if the house number is even or odd. This allows for walking down one side of the street and then the other.
- Alphabetical sort on the voter name, last name then by first name
- Precinct is sorts by precinct and then by voter name.

Click on the Export as TXT file. This will bring up the save file dialog box.

It is strongly recommended that the file not be opened but instead select the option to save the file to your system. Note where you are saving your file to as described in the Save in area.
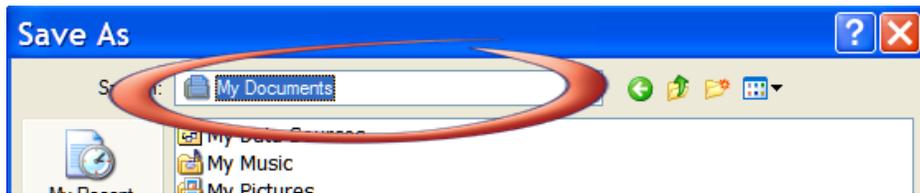
And click the Save button to start the file transfer.
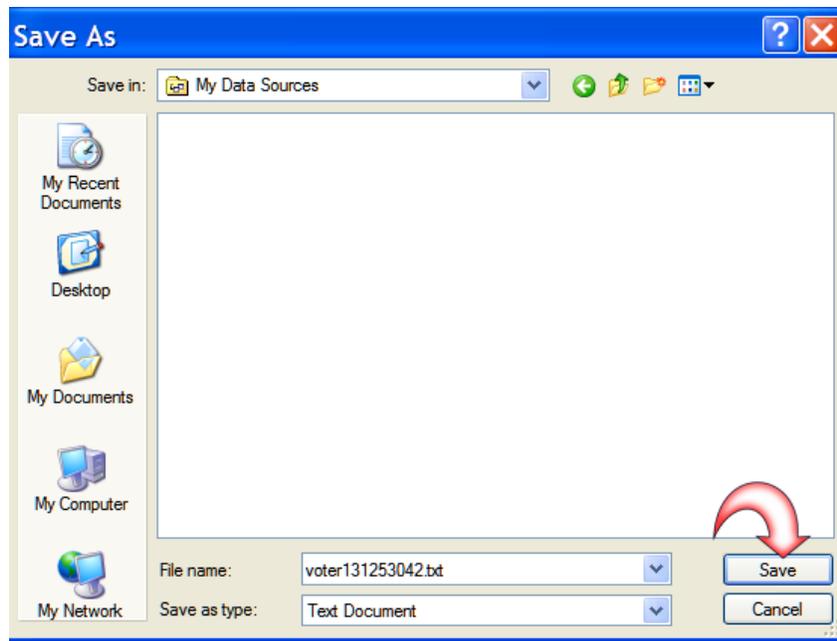
This will start the file download. If necessary after your download is completed you may click on OK to close the dialog box (some systems will automatically close the box depending on personal settings.).

The file is a comma delimited text file. For information on the fields and the file structure click on File structure Voter Data File. This is an Excel file that can be opened at or saved to your system. The file can be imported into a number of data base productions, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Visual Foxpro, FileMaker, Bento for MacParadox, Oracle, MySQL, SQL Server to name a few. Unless you have Excel 2007 Excel is not recommended because prior to Excel 2007 there is a limit on the number of records you can import to 65,536 rows, in Excel 2007 that was changed to 1 million rows. As of October 2009 the Franklin County database contained over 841,000 records.

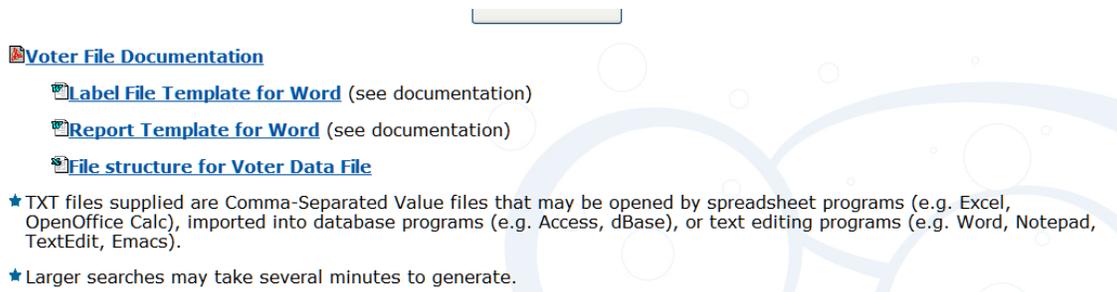## *Documentation and Label and Report Templates*

This document can be downloaded for the web page as well as label and report Word merge file templates and an Excel file of field descriptions for the data file (this is also available at the end of this document).   You must have Microsoft Word to use these templates. File structure will change after an election when voter data is added to the file.

To download the documentation and templates.

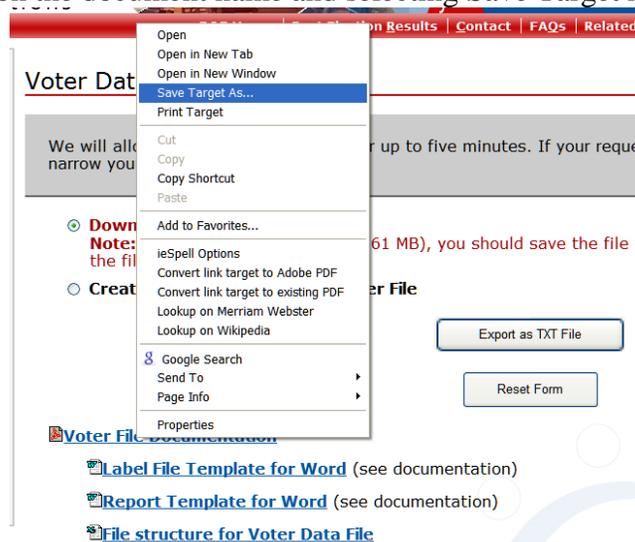These files are relatively small and you can open the file and then use the Save Option to save the file to your computer or you can save the file to your computer without opening it by right clicking on the document name and selecting Save Target As….

This will bring up the save file dialog box. Select where you want the file saved and the name you want file saved as.
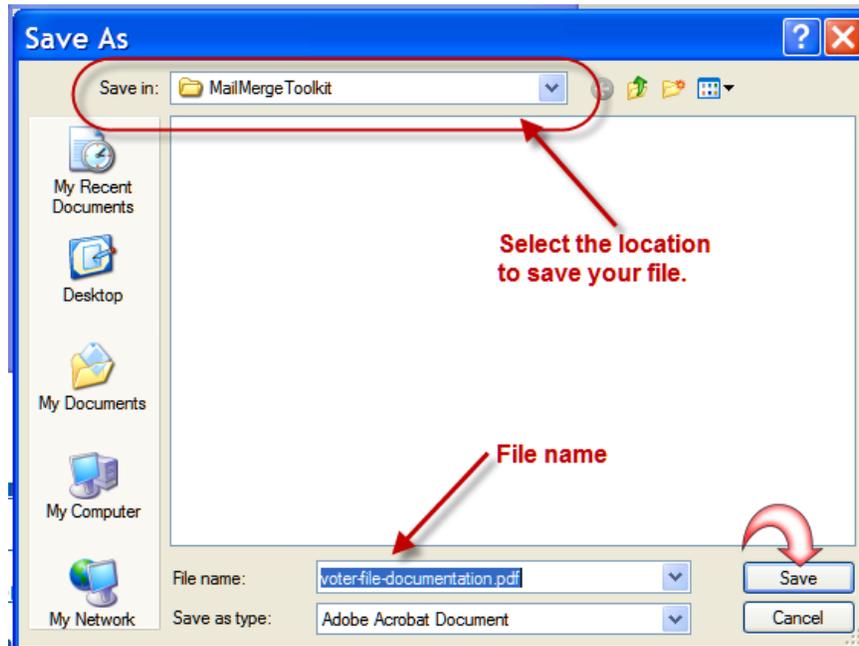
Document 1 is the current version of this document.
Document 2 is a merge template using Microsoft Word for labels.
Document 3 is a merge template using Microsoft Word for a Report.
Document 4 is an Excel file of the data structure of the Vote file; this information is also
        available at the end of this document.

Using the Label or Report Template

The two template files are Word Merge files created using Microsoft Word 2003. The label template uses the Avery 5160/8160 labels. This is a standard address label size and many manufactures make this size 1 inch high and 2 5/8 inch wide three across and ten down to a page.

The resulting labels will indicate party and precinct in the upper right hand corner and the name and address in the body of the label.

D-04000A LESLIE P AYERS 3119 WALKER RD HILLIARD, OH 43026	R-04000A ROBERT C BAILY 8027 ROBERTS RD HILLIARD, OH 43026

R-04000A

STEPHANIE R BAILY
8027 ROBERTS RD
HILLIARD, OH 43026

Party   **Precinct Code**

The report displays approximately 5 names per sheet on a regular letter size page.

LANA J AHLUM							Precinct/Split	04000A/04000A-1		
8501 PATTERSON RD							Year of Birth:	1955		
HILLIARD, OH 43026							Registration Date:	01/01/1900		
							Party:	R		

Congress	House	Senate	City or Village	Township	School	Fire	Police	Park	Road	
15	23	16	*	BR	HL	*	*	*	*	
	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Primary		R		R			X	U		
General	-		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feb Special	-	-					-		-	-
Aug Special		-			-	-				-

Feel free to alter these to meet your specific need.

How to Merge the Template File with the Date

After you have downloaded the data file open the template file you want to work with. Word can merge the text file but for performance reasons it is recommended that you import the file into Excel. See the section **"Importing the Text File into Excel"** starting on page 11. The instructions assume you have not changed the file to Excel, if you choose to import the information in Excel you would select the Excel file instead of the text file in the instructions below.

If the Mail Merge tool bar is not active turn it on by selecting View/Toolbars/Mail Merge. If there is a check mark besides Mail Merge the toolbar is already turned on.
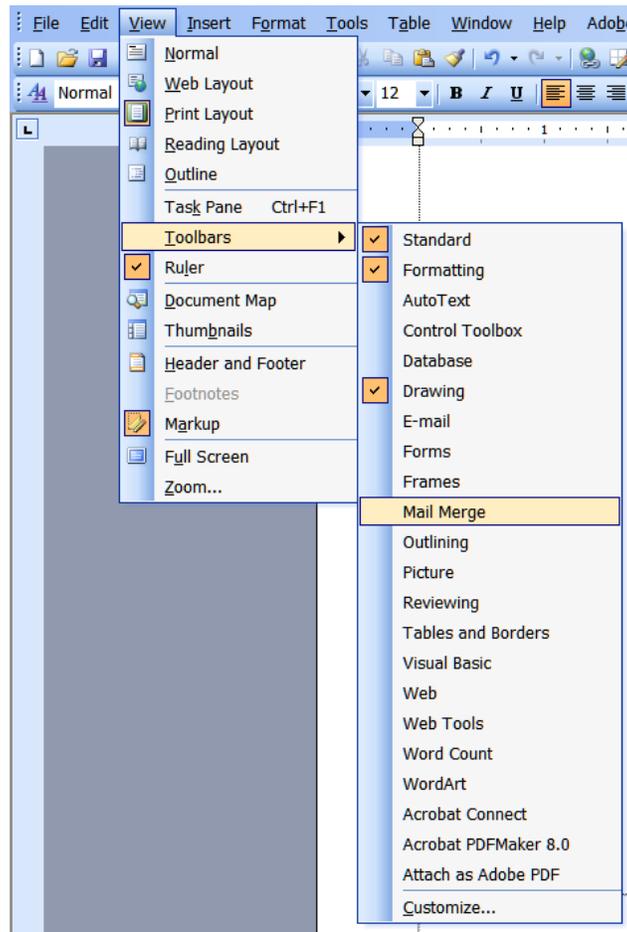
The mail merge toolbar will look like this:

First you must open your data source by clicking on the second icon.

You will need to remember where you saved the data file, and the data file name.
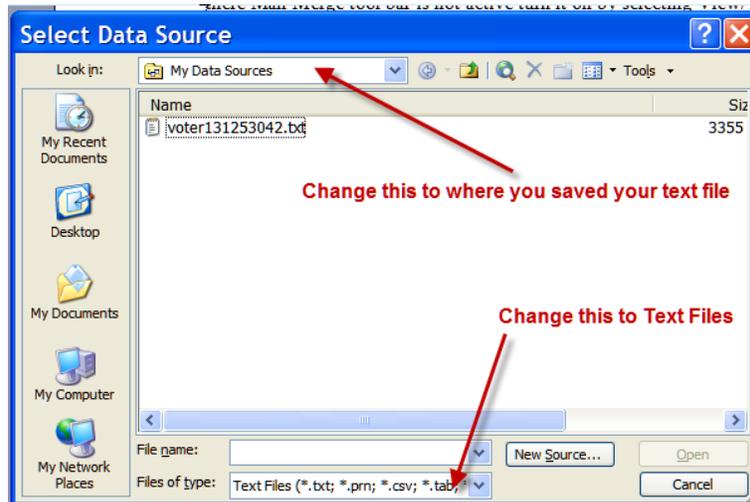
By default Word first looks at the sub-folder My Data Sources in My Document. If you have not saved your data file in this directory navigate to the location you saved the file. Change your *Files of Type* to Text Files and select your file and click on Open. If you have converted the text file to Excel you will change the Files of Type to Excel.
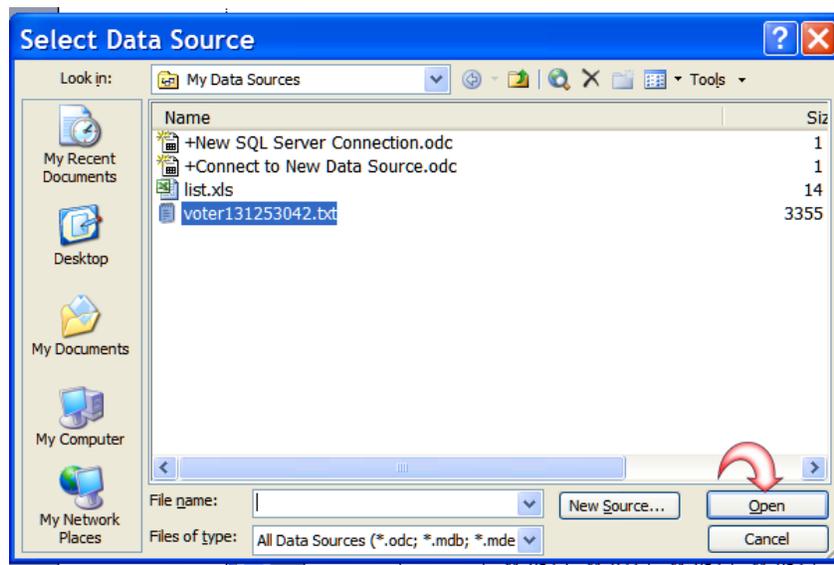
It may take a minute or two for Word to make the necessary links with the data document. Next you can merge to a new document or straight to the print by selecting one of the icons shown below.
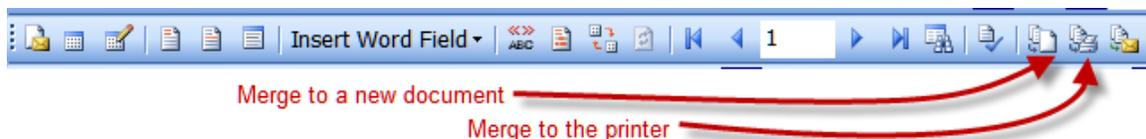
You can also import the text file into Excel and manipulate what data you want see.

Importing the Text File into Excel

Start Excel and open the text file by selecting File and Open. In the open dialog box change the file of type to Text and change the location to where you downloaded your data file.
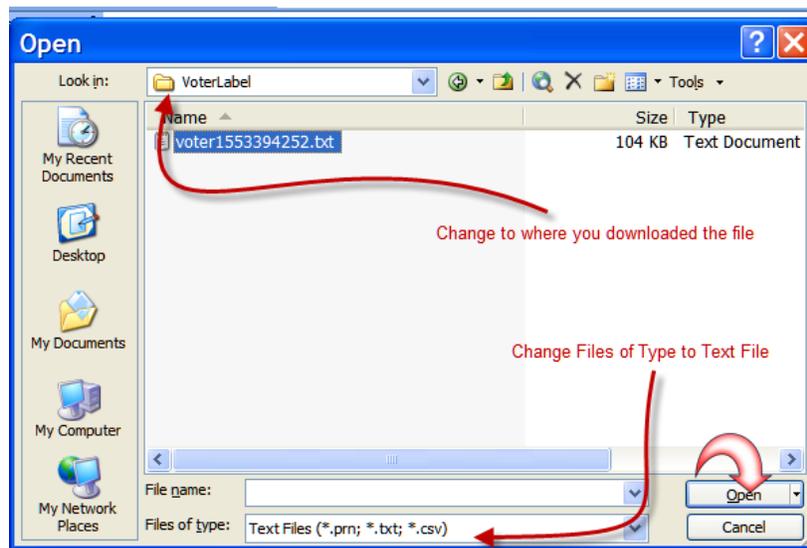
Select the text file and click on open. This will automatically start the Text Import Wizard. If Delimited is not selected select Delimited and Click on Next.
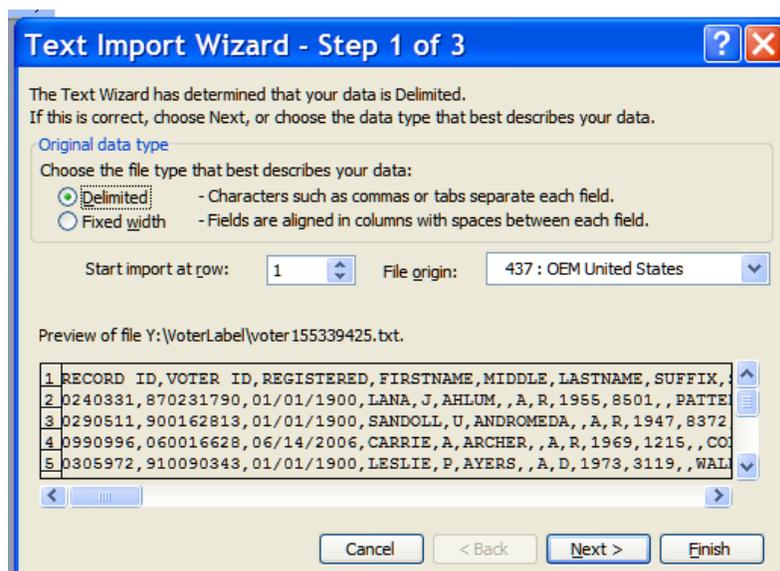
If the delimited has the Tab checked you will need to click on it to uncheck the Tab selection.
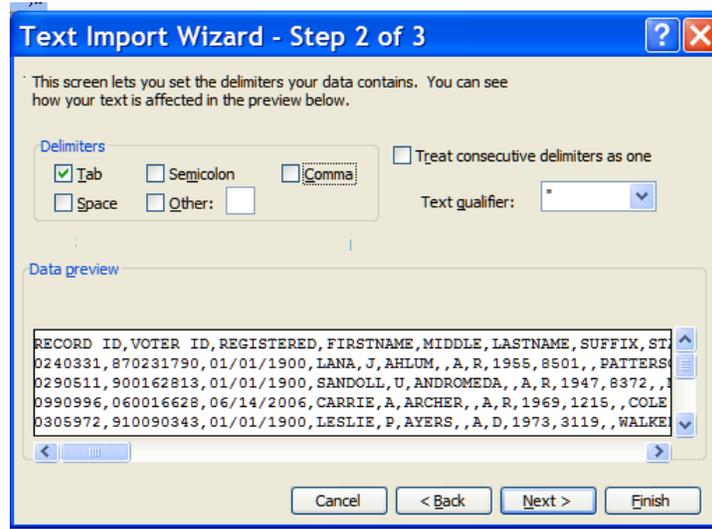
The file is a comma delimited file, you will need to check on the box beside comma to indicate that comma is the delimiter. You will notice the information breaks apart into columns.
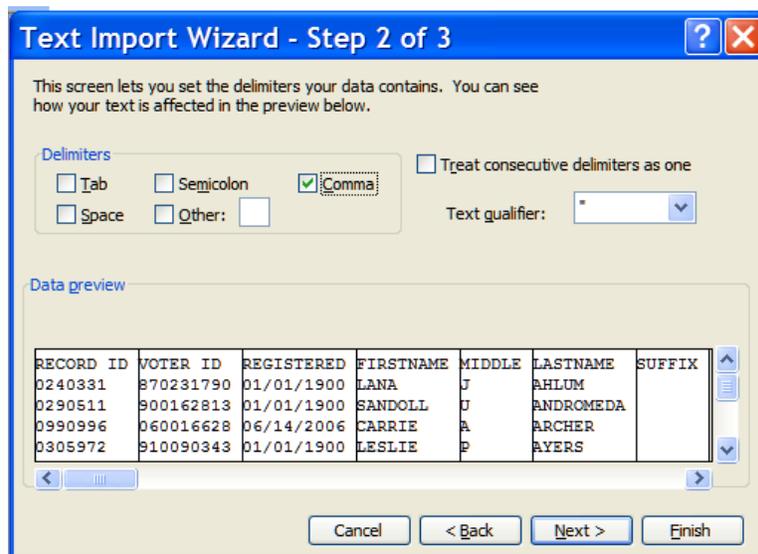
Certain fields are made up of numbers that start with zeros, Excel looks at these as numbers and drop the leading zero unless instructed otherwise. The Record ID, Voter ID, Precinct and Precinct with Split are all columns that may start with a zero. To maintain this information select the column and select Text as the Column data format.
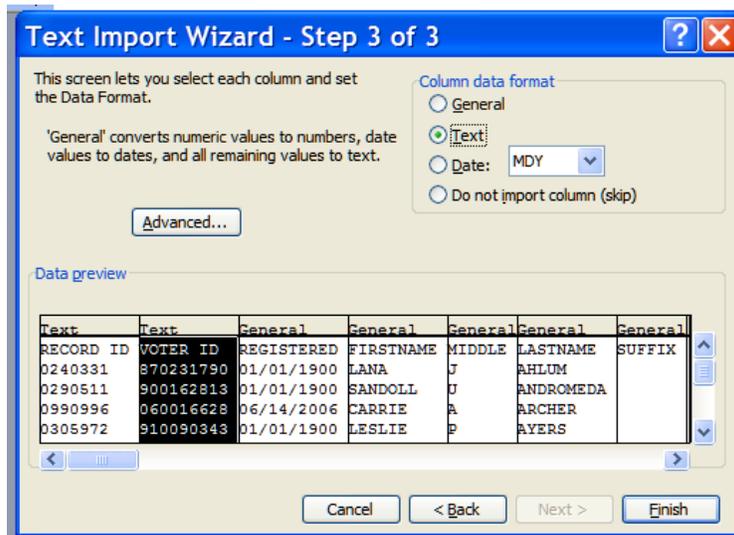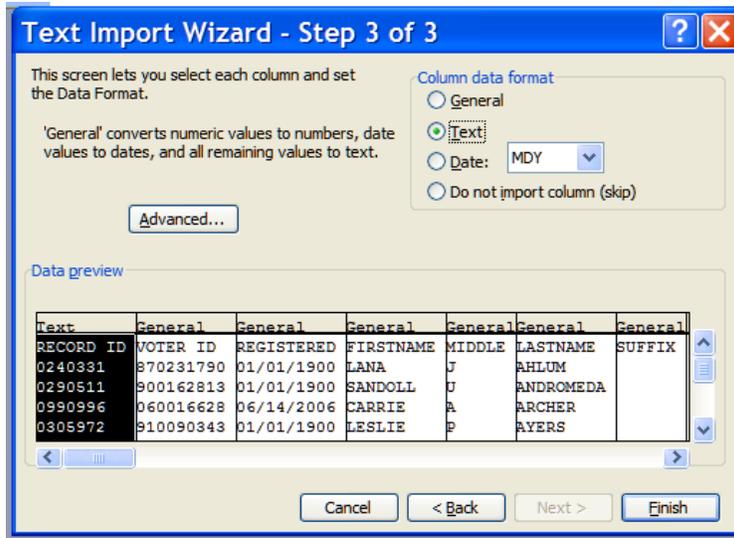
When the columns are side by side you can select the adjoining columns and change them both at once.
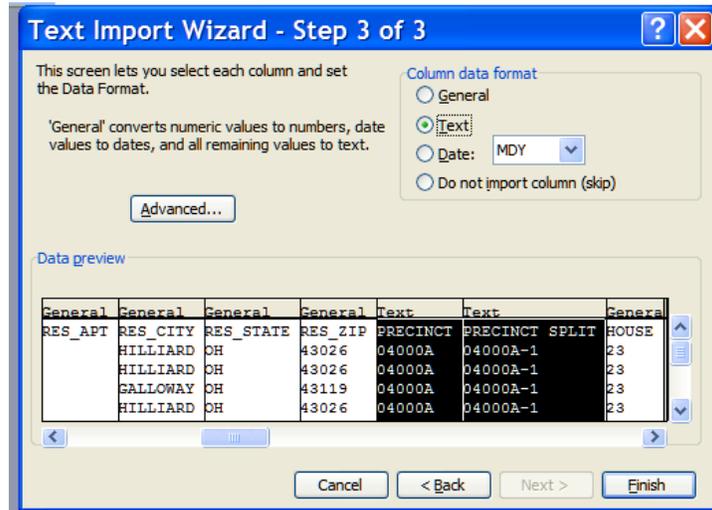
To format the columns so that they display the information in the columns. Select all the data and select Format/Column and Autofit Selection. The columns will change to a width that will display the information with truncating the information from view.
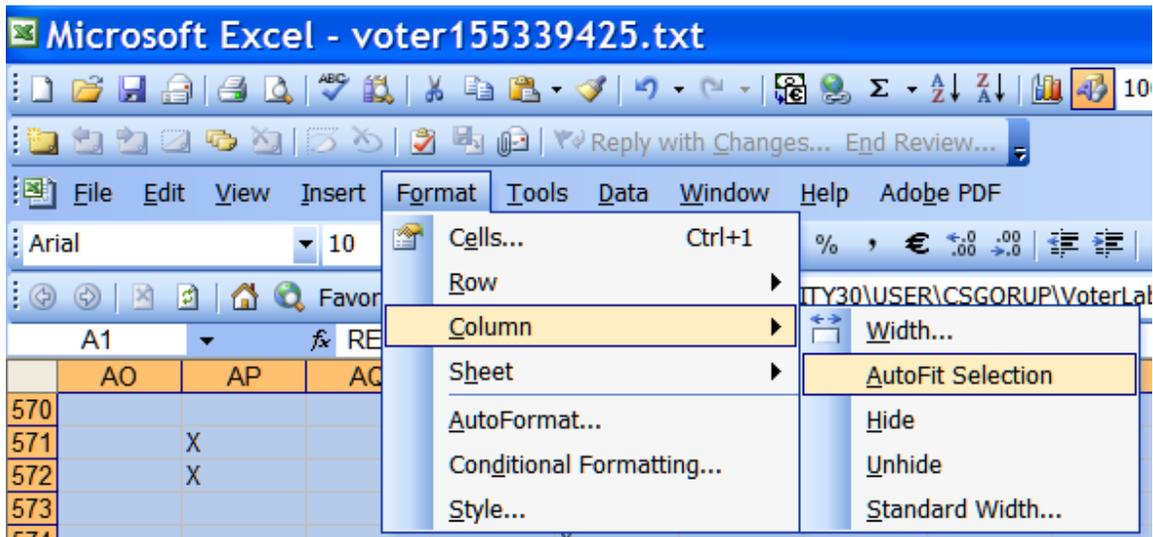
Frequently Asked Questions on Data in Excel

I want to sort the file so that I group the odd and even house numbers together but I don't see a field that will let me do that?

This is a computed value, use the MOD function. This function returns the remainder after a number is divided by divisor, so by dividing a number by 2 if the number is even you will get zero and if the number is odd you will get 1, and then use this field to sort on.

My version of Excel only allows a 3 level sort how can I increase the number of fields to sort on?

Create a new field that merges multiple fields into one, such as Last Name & First Name & Middle & Suffix to sort the entire name on one cell value.

When I add two fields together Excel says #Value!.

Using the + sign to join non-numeric fields confuses Excel because it can't figure out how to add letters together. To join alphanumeric fields with other field use the & sign. For the adventurous look up the function concatenate in Excel Help.

I joined the street name and house number to one field as you suggested, but 735 now comes after 6784, why isn't it in order.

When you join the house number to the street name the house number ceases to be viewed as number but just characters in a string of letters. Seven comes after six. To fix this when you add the house number to the street name for sorting purposes left pad the number so all the house numbers are the same length. So instead of adding street name & the house number, add street name & RIGHT("000000" & HOUSE NUMBER,6), this will give your house numbers all six characters and 000735 will come before 006784.

The data is great but I only want to print one label per household not one to every voter.

Determine what makes up a household and create a cell with those values. A common way to define a household is to use the Last Name and the complete address Last Name & House Number & House Fraction & Street & Apt & City & Zip. Since every address is in Ohio you don't need to include it. After creating the formula sort the file on this new field if you need help in sorting see Excels HELP. Once you have sorted the enter an IF formula that determines if the combined field on this line is like the field above =IF(this_line_cell_value = line_above_cell_value,1,0). In this example if the value in the cell above is equal to the value in the cell on this line it will put a 1 in the cell, if not it will put a 0 in the cell. Make sure you add a Heading to your column.

| BH	BI
HOUSEHOLD	MAIL TO
AHLUM8501PATTERSON RDHILLIARD43026	0
ANDROMEDA8372MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	0
ARCHER1215COLE RDGALLOWAY43119	0
AYERS3119WALKER RDHILLIARD43026	0
BAILY8027ROBERTS RDHILLIARD43026	0
BAILY8027ROBERTS RDHILLIARD43026	1
BARTH-WARNER8520MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	0
BARTON6951FEDER RDGALLOWAY43119	0
BARTON6951FEDER RDGALLOWAY43119	1
BATTLES8480MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	0
BATTLES8480MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	1
BEAR8584MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	0
BEAR8584MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	1
BEAR8584MORRIS RDHILLIARD43026	1
BEATTIE7813ROBERTS RDHILLIARD43026	0
BEATTIE7813ROBERTS RDHILLIARD43026	1
BEBINGER943COLE RDGALLOWAY43119	0

In your Word Document you need to change the recipient List by clicking on the proper icon.

This brings up the Mail Merge Recipients list. Click on one of the ▼ (it does not matter which one you select).
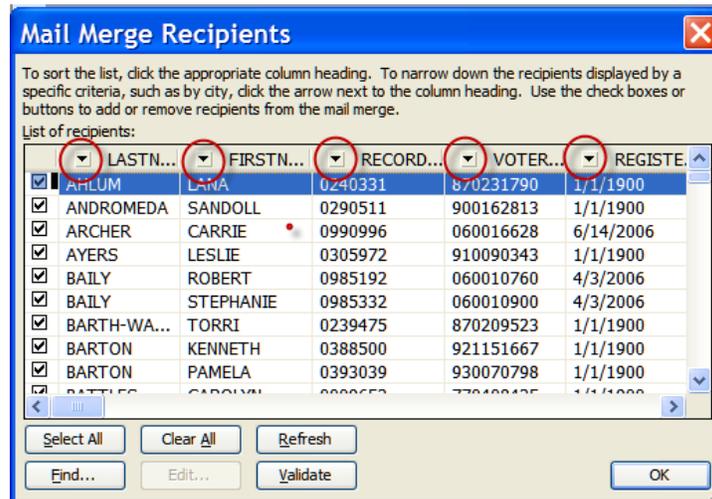

Select Advanced from the drop down list.
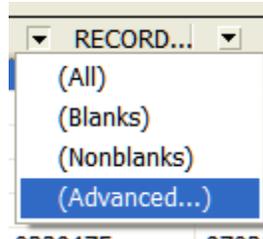
This will bring up the Filer and Sort dialog box. The column where the householding data is found is labeled MAIL TO. Under field find the Field MAIL TO and selected the Comparison of Equal to and put zero in the compare to. This will select on those addresses that have a zero.
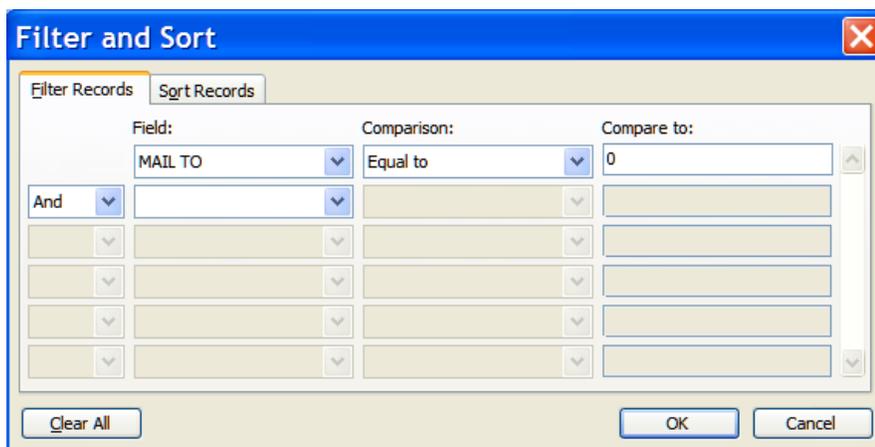
The Household information was lost when I sorted the information on another value.

If you change the order of the value you are basing your holdholding on the calculation will change. Convert you calculation to a value. Highlight and copy the area you do not want to change from a formula to a value and then Right Click in one of the highlighted cells. Select the Paste Special option from the pop up menu.
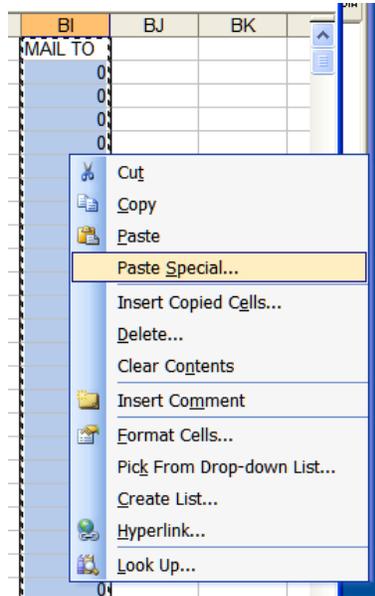
This will bring up your options list select Values and click on OK. Your formulas will now be the value that was displayed rather then a computed value.