

Smalls Steps Wrap-up 2022

Mindy: [00:00:00] Welcome to analysts Talk with Jason Elder. It's like coffee with an analyst, or it could be whiskey with an analyst reading a spreadsheet, linking crime events, identifying a series, and getting the latest scoop on association news and training. So please don't beat that analyst and join us as we define the law enforcement analysis profession one episode ahead time.

Jason: Thank you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progress. My name is Jason Elder, and today is another wrap up show. This time we are doing a wrap up episode for Small Steps with Seth Pots, and of course, who else would I have on the show with me other than Seth Pots? Seth, how are we doing?

Seth: I'm doing great. How about

Jason: yourself? I am Dawn. Well, it's a new year but , we wanted to take an opportunity to talk about. What you accomplished in 2022 with the small steps videos, the tutorials that you have been producing every Tuesday since the beginning of [00:01:00] April, 2022. So I guess For those that may be unaware of small steps, let's start out with your purpose we'll just do a brief

Seth: introduction.

Yeah. So you know, we talked about originally as just kind of One of those things that evolved from some of the trainings we've had at conferences, whatnot. You know, a lot of people train on specific thing, case studies, this and that, and there always seems to be a need and interest in certain products and Excel is one of those things that I feel like almost everybody uses.

To some extent, some more than others, but in discussing that, like it is, like, yeah, we could, maybe, we could put on like a weekly video, weekly training just for little things in there. So that was the original idea is maybe more on a beginner level. But just little short videos, you know, anywhere from two to 10 minutes depending on honestly on how long I wind up droning on, on something

But yeah, just like little things that you might not know, or even if you. Refresher or I try to give some, some real life examples. Normally made up data, but [00:02:00] data nonetheless that, that analysts would see. And we just kind of started, started going through some of those and you know, it's just, it's

been, it's been nice and, and, and my Honestly when I'm, you know, always searched stuff in Excel, it always seems like the examples are accounting based, sales based.

I mean almost everything. And it's kind of like, that seems like something that we could use in, in crime analysis in our field. It's just kind of translating that example over from sales. Seems like a lot of times it's just produce . I don't know why that's always a thing, but it's like, how can we make that practical for you know, our work and, and that was kind of the idea and, and we could just kind of jump straight in with it.

And we've kind of evolved it a little and I think. You know, overall I've gotten a little, a little quicker doing 'em. I'm still getting used to hearing my voice, try to just hear it one time to make sure everything recorded right. And then I, I never, never look again. .

Jason: Yeah. It'll pass with time.

Eventually you'll be okay listening to your own [00:03:00] voice. Trust me.

Yeah. Yeah..

Programming note, I forgot to mention in the intro that we are going to be taking calls later in this episode, we're going to be listening to your Don't Be That Analyst calls. So please get in your calls. To the show.

So you mentioned it's small steps, which is a play on law enforcement analysis podcasts. So we want to keep them short and, but it can be difficult to keep it short. I substituted for you over the summer , for a month and man, I thought I had this three.

Video planned, and then before I knew it, I was talking for 12 minutes.

Seth: Yeah, yeah. You almost, you almost feel like initially that you need to draw it out a little. Hmm. And then you get partway through and be like, man, I'm about a, a fifth of the way through this. I'm kind of through the amount of time I wanted, I go back and start again.

I'm like, all right, maybe I don't need all this. So yeah, it's it is definitely something that's a little tough to get used to. But it's tough to keep it short and [00:04:00] concise. .

Jason: Yeah. So do you have favorite episodes that you did in 2022?

Seth: Specific episodes? You know what I found interesting because a lot of times I will do a little research on my own you know, about certain tips or tricks and stuff like that. And throughout this process, I've, I've actually learned some stuff myself. And there's, man, there's nothing better when you're presenting and, and you present on one thing that just seems so.

But it was one of those things that like no one really seemed to know about, and you just get that reaction of no way. Like, now I feel dumb for not knowing that. And I'd actually done, found this and presented on it like at a, at a conference as well, but I, I did an episode on it. And so it kind of is one in particular that I just, I continue to go back to the idea that like is as simple as this is, that's kind of why we do this.

There's simple things that as much as you use Excel, It's staring you in the face and you're like, I just never knew that was there. And it was an episode. It was, it was a shortcut. It's control E, it's flash fill. Yeah. And [00:05:00] it just, like I say, it's one of those things going through when I was looking through things to, to do little video on, when I came across, it was the same kind of thing.

It was like, no way like you know, you gotta go test it out. Like, I gotta, I gotta test this on something now. Like, it's like watching a, a. You know, like a, a video on Facebook. All, all these things where people try to show something and it turns out being fake. Like, yeah, I knew that wasn't real. Like, that's almost how you feel about it.

Like, this can't be real, there's no, there's no way. Yeah. And you know, sure enough, so yeah, it sounds nerdy enough, but get excited about, so, so a function you find in Excel. But yeah, it was really, that was one in particular that you know what I found it was just kinda like, I can't, I can't believe that's a thing and that I didn't know about it

but yeah, that episode was kind of fun just because it was one of those things that for me, not just for, for anybody else watching or, or training, that it gets kind of excited or, or just that unreal. Like, I can't believe that's a thing. It was one that hit me that way.

that is one in particular, episode wise, [00:06:00] it, was cool just to be like, yep, let me show you guys what shocked me. . Yeah.

Jason: And the AI portion of that is fascinating, what they've built into that, because what Excel will start to do is try to guess. What you're doing, what you're trying to do, and then apply that to all the, records.

So yeah.

Seth: And it, it is hit or miss. I'm hop Yeah. And I'm hop hoping that's something that they, build on. Sometimes we get things pretty complex and I guess I understand why it wouldn't quite understand when you get too crazy with it. But, you know, that kind of stuff is, something.

They do continually build on and things get better. So yeah, that is, a very fascinating thing cuz it's Yeah. Intuitive as opposed to just a black and white. This formula does this. So, yeah, that was interesting.

Jason: That's one that I'm impressed by, but it just, I don't outta sight outta mind, I don't really think about it, do it.

And I don't know, I'm a, probably a little bit of old man elder, stuck in my ways, a little bit . I just end up doing it. [00:07:00] I, I'm definitely that way with the V lookup and the X lookup. Yep. Right. I know X lookup is there and every once in a while, , if it's convenient to use X lookup because of the columns that they're positioned in, I'll use X lookup.

Yeah. But most of the time it's just natural for me to just, yeah. Still use the

Seth: V lookup.

Yeah, I get that. And that V lookup. Nothing about that. That's one of those ones that when you first learn it, Every time you do it, you gotta go back and like, now wait, what am I, what do I put in this session? It almost feels like once you've learned it and you got it down, you're almost like, I mm-hmm.

I earned this , I earned this knowledge and I'm not gonna get away from it now. Now I know it and I'm stuck with it. Yeah. The X lookup is a, a, a little easier, I think, especially if you're learning if you didn't know V lookup or X lookup, you might as well just learn the X lookup. But yeah, you're right.

It's, it's hard to get away from some of those things you've. Previously you get stuck at your, your, I guess not to sound nerdy again, but your favorite, your favorite formula. What's your favorite Excel [00:08:00] formula? You know, .

Jason: Yeah, and it's, with that, I always tell folks when it gets into those complex functions, especially x lookup is to start it.

The X lookup, open pers and then, and then hit the shift F three. Yeah. And then that'll bring up the function arguments and , there's a little help tutorial there that'll help you step by step with all the arguments Yeah. Of the function. So yeah, I don't have to do that with V lookup. I still have to do that with X look. . Yeah. Yeah.

Seth: You just gotta get used to that. Yeah. Yeah.

Jason: So, all right. How about other episodes?

Seth: You know, I, I kind of got, got off on a tangent of some dashboard stuff and, mm-hmm. , I kind of tried a couple, I know episodes kind of building on each other.

Mm-hmm. and that was kind of an interesting process. You know, I know everybody uses Excel a different way. For, for their work. Some, some rely heavily on it, some not so much. Some have other products that do these dashboards and things. That was one for me cuz I, I, my department, we don't have that much specialized [00:09:00] software for things.

Which is fine with me because I, I mean I know some of these things can, can do just, just as well without me having to learn a whole new process. Kinda like you say, once you learn some of this stuff, it's hard to get outta your head and go into, move into another. Piece of software would be tough.

So yeah, there's a, a stretch of those where it, it, it really made me think about it cuz especially when I'm coming up with examples, I'm kinda like, you know what I mean? I might be starting a project using this myself. So this is, it's kind of a killing two birds with one stone. . I'm helping my personal projects at work and I'm going through the motions of, of showing people the steps that I would take to do it and what I'm actually doing.

With that there I actually learned a little more with some of those dashboards was that like I said, that camera tool I didn't know was there. And that I, I haven't had a chance to actually use that myself. But that was another one that like the eye of these idea of these dashboards and, and.

I personally connect things in through access, some queries I've built through a direct connection , to our RMS database. So it's for me it's just [00:10:00]

making a dashboard and kind of putting it all together. So that was a short series, kind of a couple episodes, one after another that kind of built on each other.

So that was something that I, I kind of thought was not only very useful, but kind of a, a little branch off. One episode, just a quick thing. It was kinda like, Hey, , stick around. And you, watched this whole process, but it's definitely not enough time to do that in one episode,

Jason: Yeah, definitely. I think, , some of the buttons and dropdowns and other stuff that you can apply to your data is a right. Yeah, I don't, yeah, I always get a little cringey with Excel because you show some analysts of this stuff and it's kind of more for, I would recommend it for one off projects.

Like if you have this one time presentation or you have this data set for one dime, I, I hate to have them get to the point where they're having to update this weekend week out because really you're doing something regularly. It should be [00:11:00] automated and it's, yeah, for some of this stuff in Excel, it's, it's hard to.

Yeah. Yeah.

And

Seth: a lot of that depends on where you're getting your data from. Sure. Something that can update automatically. That's great. And I know sometimes it's not, sometimes there's those one-off projects and that's where a lot of this stuff, I think comes in handy. Like and like I say, it, it is hard to just remember these things.

as much as anything, you know, I'll remember, like I know I've seen that and I. I know it's available and I can look it up. , so I, hopefully some of these videos could do that. Like, oh yeah, I remember the, there being this tool there. I don't remember exactly what it is or where to get to it, but I know where I can look it up , so Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jason: That's why in the title bar now they have just a general search, so if you know what you're a after X lookup, for instance, you can just type, yeah, X lookup up there in the title. and it'll give you the, the link to how to set it up.

Seth: So yeah, that's become more convenient. Yeah.

There's a whole section [00:12:00] with that function library. Mm-hmm. That kinda has it grouped out to different things. You know, date and time, text, logical, things like that. You can always look up in there mm-hmm. . But yeah, we, we try to dig through some of those. Obviously a lot of things get into accounting and , I don't really deal too much with that kind of.

Luckily , but yeah. Yeah.

Jason: Yeah. Another, another series that you had early on in the channel is doing the text to

Seth: columns. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. That was, that is one. And we always talk about, you know, who, when we work with other people in our departments, this and that, how you do something and they're like, you're a, yeah, you're a wizard.

And, and that was, that's one kind of a grouping that I feel like that's a common thing that if you start doing that stuff for somebody and they're like, what'd you do? Like, how'd you do that? ? And it's so simple. And that's one that I. Very easy. That's, that's a good one to remember. The, the text to column as well as concatenate.

I mean, just the word concatenate. You [00:13:00] say, oh, all you gotta do is concatenate it. And they're like, you, you what? . . So, you know what I mean? So yeah. Those, it's like

Jason: a, it's a \$3 word for a 2 cent function, right? Yeah.

Seth: Right. Yeah. And tho I mean, those are some that I, if you learn, you could use those over and over.

and, and so those, those were some of the ones starting out. Like when we're starting out, when I'm, I say I'm basically starting from nothing. Like I've done nothing on here, so there's not anything that's already been covered. Mm-hmm. , and those are some of the ones that come to mind like right away. Like, well, this, I mean, this is a, these are easy ones that I, I, I've used repetitively.

I like, I know these are handy. So you start digging into things like that and, and yeah, those were some that came up right away. And just use those all the. It's just a good one to remember. I think if you're gonna memorize any, any of 'em, that's a good one.

Jason: Yeah. My tip for using text to columns is to remember that Excel will remember the delimited characters that you split by.

Yeah. [00:14:00] So what I mean by that is, let's say that you use Text to Columns to split by. Pipe character for instance, or tab character or whatever you use to separate the data. If in that same worksheet, if you come along and paste data into another tab, Excel's going to remember that you separated it out. The data in that way, and it'll apply it to that, that new data you're pasting in and you may or may not want that.

Yeah. And I actually didn't realize that. I learned that the hard way when I was putting some data together and like I didn't catch it, I didn't catch it, and I published it out and then the person received it and like, what's up with this other tab? And I was a little red in the face. I was like, I didn't realize that that would

Seth: happen.

And it's you know, we were talking about some of the stuff that's intuitive on, on their end, like a kinda the AI [00:15:00] kind of function of trying to figure out and do what you want. I mean, there's a con, there's a real downside to it. And that's, that's a perfect example of it. That's just like someone that wants to help so much.

You're like, I, I appreciate your help, but I don't I don't need that much of it. .
Yeah.

Jason: Now the only way I know to get out of that Yeah. Is to actually. Go through the process of going through the text to columns and then unchecking that off and then hit okay. Yeah. And then going back and, and, and pasting in your data.

That's the only way. I know there might be another way out there to do that, but that's the only way that I've found as a workaround for that when I have

Seth: that scenario. Yeah, you gotta, at this point, it's kind of just extra work and going back through it and undoing it. Mm-hmm. mainly. Yeah, you're right.

There might be a way to do it, I'm sure. Can't be the only one with that frustration. I'm sure that comes up a lot. Maybe that's something, you know, when they put out new versions it's kind of hard to figure out what all they've updated mm-hmm. that could, that [00:16:00] could be something that winds up getting corrected at some point.

Jason: Yeah, that's a good point too, because we're dealing with law enforcement and so you get to the point where you have. Analysts from different departments having different versions of Excel, right? Yeah. I sure hope , I sure hope there's not anybody dealing with 2003 Excel, but

you do have people that are going to be on Office 360, so they're gonna have the latest and greatest, and then you're gonna have people that are gonna have older versions after that.

Seth: Yeah. Yeah, definitely Office 365 is one that. , my, my department does, does not have that yet. They have a, like, I was able to give 'em, to update everything and we have like a, I don't even know what they call it.

It's not, it's like 2021 I believe, but they call it something else that makes it seem like one of the last standalone versions they're gonna do. and I just know the off Office 365, pretty much anytime they push out updates in your [00:17:00] computer, things update on there. I know there's things and, and not just Excel, but think PowerPoint's, one that I've seen in particular, , there's extra functions that only come with three.

Office 365. Now that's frustrating when you try to put something together on that and you try to go send it to somebody else and like, it's not functioning right. Hey, well it's cool. I promise you it's cool. Sorry, your computer doesn't have it. , you know? But yeah, it's the same thing. That's a bit of a downside.

Downsize. Some of these, like Office 365 might get some stuff that other people don't have. And hopefully people kind of get. Along the way, but you know, that's, I know that's not always in the budget for, for cities and departments or a lease. It's not a priority. Some people are gonna get stuck with some of older versions.

I had that for a little while with, with some stuff. We finally got everything back on schedule, but we had, we had some stuff running 2007 at lease on the access front. For Oh, wow. For things and like, yeah, we gotta update. Like this is, this is like patched together, patched together between different versions.

Like we, we gotta update everything. So yeah, that's that is definitely something [00:18:00] you can run into. And I, I, most of the stuff I do I try to, I, I assume most of it is pretty blanket for the last couple versions at least. I think it's gonna be impossible to get everything, but I don't technically have the latest and greatest with Office 365, so there's probably stuff I wouldn't be able to do on there anyway.

But yeah, like you said, the X lookup, that's a good, that's a good example. That was a newer. Formula they put in, mm-hmm. , and I can't remember if it was 2016 was the first. It might be, but I think there's, it might be 19, probably. It might be 19. Yeah. So there's gonna be plenty of people that don't have that.

available now or yet. Hence why V look ups still a viable thing cuz that is earlier as well. So yeah, it's, it's, it's hard to pick through those and figure out what's in, what's in what version. Yeah. Hmm.

Jason: Then do you have a favorite moment of 2022?

Seth: Yeah I . I don't know. Doing, doing this starting to do it and, and like I said, kind of the difficulties of getting into the idea of, of recording videos.

Like, say, hear my own voice and doing this [00:19:00] stuff, and I, I mean, a two minute, five minute, whatever, video recording taking me an hour to do because I keep deleting things and I hate it and everything about it, you know, the whole, out of this whole process, one of the coolest things and I, I was at, at the I c A conference, big conference, and someone was talking to me about the, the show, the, the small steps, and sh mentioned that her, her kid loves it,

And I'm like, what? What do you mean? What do you mean your kid? Like, how old's your kid? and I, I don't remember his exact date. He, he was, he was younger. Yeah. Grade school kid. And essentially what happened is, She said she watched the videos and he he watches, you know, YouTube whatever shows on YouTube and it kind of gives you that, you know, video clicks over to the next mm-hmm.

and it just picks it out. And it essentially, after the videos he'd been watching, small steps will start up. and he, he'd still be watching and he would always, he's just like, he, he just, he knows your intro and repeats it. He's in there saying, welcome to small steps. [00:20:00] And I was one of those things that I, I thought it would be fun to give him a little shout out to, to Ben.

At the beginning of, of one of my shows in. Yeah, doing that, I heard, heard back from him saying that he was just over the moon about it, . So yeah. Having a, having a super fan of, of a show on some short tips for Excel was something I never expected would be a thing, but yeah, that made, that made my day.

Made my year

Jason: for sure. Yeah. Yeah. How fun. That's awesome, Ben. Someday is gonna revolutionize Excel. .

Seth: Yeah. Yes. Hopefully.

Barry: Hello, I'm Barry Fosberg, the Senior analyst with Houston Police Department. I'm here to do a PSA for regional associations. If you're an I A C A or familiar with I A C A, get in, find out if you have a local association and if for [00:21:00] no other reason your crooks don't know you have borders. Your borders typically have other crime analysts, and this is a great way to know 'em by name.

Rachel: My name is Rachel Sun Galeski, and here is my public service announcement. Being a law enforcement analyst by trade, who's definitely worked in the open source intelligence world, one of the things that has always driven me crazy is the amount of oversharing our world does. So my public service announcement would be to keep your business to your.

Seth: Stop telling the world everything about you on social media because it near about always comes back to bite. You maintain a professional image at all times. That is my recommendation.

Jason: Speaking of revolutionizing Excel, I did want to take a moment and just have a [00:22:00] conversation of if Microsoft would listen to us, what would we want Excel to do?

Seth: Yeah, that's that's, that's, Ooh, sometimes that's tough. Sometimes you just get used to how things are and you, you, mm-hmm. , you don't give it another thought.

Yeah. One of my biggest. I don't say gripes, but something I wish that they would do better about is mm-hmm. Like the formatting for dates, dates and times. And even when I know the tricks, I feel like even though the tricks to, to get things in the right mm-hmm. Format and everything. I, I, there's just times where you do something and like it's, it's still not putting it as a date and time.

why is this so difficult? I think there's definitely room for improvement and I, I know we kinda had chatted before, like I know that dropdown menu for the format you gives you the general number currency accounting. They have short date and they have long date, but. At least in our field, a lot of times we, we've run across is that, that date and the time and military time.

Mm-hmm. or wherever the case may be. And it is kind of you gotta go in and you gotta [00:23:00] go to the more, you gotta go to the custom and you gotta make sure that formatting's right and in almost every time you do it. I always forget, like, oh, it's a capital H with some brackets around it. It might be the military time or the 24.

Mm-hmm. , I, I don't every, you gotta look it up every time. I wish that they would update that and make, make date and time formatting much easier. Or just the fact when you pull stuff. and is clearly that date and time format and it, it puts it as something else when you copy it, copy and paste into there.

Yeah, once again, that might be like part of their intuitive stuff that I wish they wouldn't try to be intuitive on , you know?

Jason: But I would, speaking of copy and paste, I wish that when you copied something, and then you go to make even the slightest change, you wouldn't lose your copy. Do you know what I'm talking about when you hit the copy and you got the marching ants and then I go to paste it on something and then I might make either a slight change to the new spreadsheet, maybe putting a a, [00:24:00] a title to it and then I go to hit control V to paste in, yeah. The new data. And I've lost it because I've done something Yeah. There. And it seems to me that it should still be in my clipboard. That I Oh, yeah. Shouldn't have lost it. And going back to that, and I don't realize that, that might seem small, but I, there's been a number of times where it's just been super annoying.

Yeah. That I lost my coffee.

Seth: That's a, and that's a repetitive thing. Yeah. Yeah. All the time. I, I tell you other one that I do all the time with that is if I have something like a field that I've copied it mm-hmm. and I hadn't gotten to the past, whatever, and I try to, I, I try to start typing something else in.

I always forget, there's like a, if I don't double click off, , it's still in there. And if, especially if it's something that's referencing other fields mm-hmm. , then I just mess up what I've done and now I gotta go and, and control z, undo it and figure out what I'm doing again. But yeah, those, those dotted line, yeah, it's yeah, it stops when you don't want it to stop and it keeps on sometimes when you.

Don't want it to . Yeah,

Jason: yeah. Oh, and don't get me started. [00:25:00] Like when you have filtered data and you're trying to copy and paste stuff in there, that can be a, a nightmare too. But that one, I guess I, I can least a little bit understand how that, Behaves cuz you are dealing with filtered data and then you're trying to paste new data in there.

So that's at least a little bit I've, I have a little bit more patience with that than I do the losing the copy and when I'm trying to copy and paste something, so, oh yeah. Hmm. I guess my big thing with Excel, and this is. , this is would be really large. This is not something simple that they could add.

This would totally revolutionize what they do. But yeah, to me, , I think they should have a platform in which it combines all the office tools. Meaning that if you are in Excel, you can source data like you are in access and you can just pull it over [00:26:00] there like Access and Excel merge into there. So you get some of the power in access.

Yes. With some of the flexibility in Excel and then, and also join that into PowerPoint, that you just move it from one there. Now I want to present on this, so now I gotta move this into a presentation and Yeah. Or maybe it's a writeup that I have and I have to do it in Word and yeah. Oh yeah. I think they should all.

Easily seamlessly linked together into one platform, and that you shouldn't have this situation where, oh, I gotta go to access in order to get this to work, or, I'm in access. Yeah. And I've said, oh, I, I'm just gonna take this over to Excel and get it to work and then bring it back into access. I mean, that is really, yeah.

There's some different

Seth: annoying extra steps, extra steps to, to do something. And kinda, we were talking earlier, if I don't have specialized software for stuff mm-hmm. , chances are I'm. All the Microsoft products. Cause that's [00:27:00] what I have, that's what a lot of cities, a lot of agencies have is, is the Microsoft products.

They have nothing else. So, yeah. And you're using all of them, but like you say, there's extra steps you gotta take to do this and that. I've gotta open access separately. I've gotta do everything here. And you know, there's a roundabout ways I, I do link stuff. Into Excel from Access, but it's two different programs open, things function slightly different, you know, a slight different way.

So yeah, it's a, that, that would be cool to have everything like a one-stop shop. You could incorporate everything. Yeah. Well, especially

Jason: with the report, the reporting function, and this is what I railed on in one of the episodes that I substituted for you on, is like, yeah, I wish there was a way that I could build a report in Excel.

What I mean by that, say like, I have a detailed set of data with incident number and post maybe the reporting area and district, and I want to create a summary that adds [00:28:00] up her counts, the, the data by. Service area and post and district. Well, the only way I know how to do that is you select those columns that you want, copy 'em bring 'em over to a new spreadsheet, make 'em distinct, and then do count ifs functions or a sum ifs functions.

If you're, you're summing, and to me that it works just fine, but to me that there should be a way easier. To re summarize data off a spreadsheet. Yeah. In

Seth: Excel. Yeah. And I, I think along those same lines another thought I have, a lot of times I'll run into one of the situations where you, you're having to google search, like how to do whatever in Excel, and when you finally find the answer, it is like, A line of code with mixing and a bunch of different functions and formulas together and things like that.

I was like, man, it would be nice [00:29:00] if they would kind of go ahead and make some formulas that take that on, that do the complex portion of it. Even if it's, you know, more stuff to fill out. Kinda like you said, you get a information from them on yeah, this formula, these are what, this is what you're filling in.

Like this. You put this, this is gonna be your range for this, and then the comma, and then now you can just, do you want unique values? Do you want, you know, whatever the case may be, you could at least walk you through it. Yeah. I think there's enough. enough of those formulas out there that I've seen.

And, and that's one that I've definitely dealt with you, you talking about kind of the unique values versus duplicate values in there, and you're wanting to count certain things and it's a, it's like a research project trying to figure out how to do it. I think they could simplify some of that stuff and yeah, yeah.

Like you say, I made, chances are there's ways, but it's. hard to find. Yeah.

Jason: You know, you're writing a script and all that other stuff. Yeah. And then if it's for a one-time project, is, is the juice worth the squeeze juice? Yep.

Juice for squeeze. [00:30:00] Yeah. And if it's not, if it's a more long-term project, maybe you shouldn't be using Excel.

Seth: Right? Yeah. Yeah. Maybe you need something a little more robust if that's the case, but yeah. That's definit. . That's definitely something that a simple project could wind up taking you a long time when you're really trying to get something to function a certain way and it's not just in there. Like yeah, you could Frankenstein something together and make it work.

Mm-hmm. . But yeah. Here a lot of extra work for, for one thing, . Yeah. .

Jason: Hmm. All right. Well, good. Did you have anything else?

Seth: No, I, that's all I can think of off the top of my mind. I'm sure there's other things. I'll run into something here in a week, . Yeah, that's true.

Jason: All right, well hey, we got some callers on the line, so let's here's some.

Don't be that analyst and screw those that may be new to the show. The don't be that analyst segment as callers who have seen an analyst do something that they really shouldn't be.

So our first caller on the line is Agnes.

Agnes, what's your, [00:31:00] don't be that analyst.

So

Agnes: please, when you are doing your Intel product, Please save it. Save it, save it. Don't be the analyst who complete everything and don't save the intel world because it's gonna shut down the computer. You will lose everything. So please save it. All the working that you are doing every 10, 15 minutes because I have a lot, a lot of experience back on my days when I make everything super perfect, beautiful, you know, pretty everything and don't save at the job.

Seth: So, And the next day when you are going to look into search, you need to do it again.

Jason: So yeah, say even save often. I always say, and I don't always practice what I preach though. Unfortunately, there are times that I have lost, lost. [00:32:00] Data or products that I thought I saved, but I did not. Yeah,

Seth: that's, that's no joke there.

There's nothing more frustrating than needing to pull something back up and realizing you didn't save it or even if it's just an example, like a formatting or something. Yeah. I should be like, I have that. Well, I think I have it. You know what? I probably just deleted it. Yeah, that's a, that's a time, time saver right there.

If you get a good product down, good intel down, mm-hmm. , and don't reinvent the wheel. You should, don't have, shouldn't have to start from scratch. Yeah. If you already got it saved, yeah. That's a, that's great advice right there. Hmm.

Jason: And I don't know if this is with all windows, but I know at work. , I have the ability, if there, if, if the data's on the network and I changed something that I didn't want to change and saved it, let's say I did save it.

I can go to that folder, go into the properties, and they will keep older versions of the files that are in [00:33:00] that. So I can actually revert back to that myself. Yeah. Without getting it

Seth: involved. Yeah. I think I've got a hit, hit and miss with that. Mm-hmm. . Sometimes I feel like it's there and sometimes it's already cleared, whatever out, but yeah.

I know that is a function, like a recovery function. Yeah. On some of those items. Yeah.

Jason: So you might have that option as well if, if you've done something you shouldn't have kind of. . So yeah.

right. Our next caller is Lindsay. Lindsay, what's your, don't be that analyst.

Lindsay: Don't be that

analyst who refuses to share information and resources.

We're all trying to accomplish the same thing. If you have a tool that will help others, please

share it.

Jason: Yeah. , I should go without saying it. Fascinating that you hear that, where somebody's like, yeah, I had this tool this whole time and just kept it to myself and didn't even share it with other people within the department, let alone the rest of the law enforcement analysis world.

Seth: Yeah, that's something. I [00:34:00] mean, kinda along the lines of, of me doing these videos, sharing little things that I know. And I still get things from other people that they know too. But yeah, you're not ever gonna know it all. And this, this line of work is, to me, this sharing's, like it's just invaluable.

We can't all know everything, can't all have the same resources or know, know, everything like that. Yeah, definitely share. That's that's one of our, our prime objective is, is to you know share the information we have with each other to make everybody you know, function top in. , that's mm-hmm.

you say It should go without saying, but Yeah, I've seen it before. Sometimes it might be out of not being confident that something , you know, anybody would want to hear it. Mm-hmm. Or could just be, I don't say selfishness or just not thinking about it, but yeah, keeping stuff to yourself, , it's just doesn't seem overly.

You know, a good successful tactic for, for you know, cohesive work with everybody else.

Jason: Yeah. I think that especially is true if we're talking about software that's [00:35:00] specific to the law enforcement analysis profession. Because if you get something maybe in I two or arc g I. Or even a records management system that you've figured out a little trick.

Certainly there's going to be an other analyst out there that could benefit from that, that trick that you learned. Yeah, definitely.

So, all right, next on the line is Amy. Amy, what's your Don't be that analyst.

Amy: You know, Jason, I'm gonna say don't be that analyst that uses different fonts in your flyers and on your reports.

We're gonna get overwhelmed and we're not gonna know where to look and what to go and what's important, what's not. So don't be that

Jason: analyst. I think that's funny because we try to be clever, but sometimes we do too much. and you certainly can get a little too fancy and have too many colors, too many bolds, too many font sizes.

And yeah, before you know it, everything's blending together and [00:36:00] what you're trying to highlight is actually hidden with all the noise.

Seth: Yeah. Yeah. You start, start looking like you Just sending a letter that you kidnap somebody, , you know, all the different fonts and sizes and that. Yeah. Keep it what's the saying?

Keep it simple, stupid . Yes, it does. Yeah. Sometimes less is more. That's that's a good bit of advice right there. Just don't go overboard, .

Jason: Next on the line is Carlina Carlina. What's your Don't be that analyst,

Carlina: so don't be that analyst that doesn't mention the data caveats or limitations with the data.

Whenever you produce an analytical product, you wanna make sure that you explain every possible limitation, whether it's missing data. or missing variables, and you provide that before any product

leaves your office.

Jason: I think this is really important advice because your data definition needs to be known.

to the, reader. Cuz they may [00:37:00] have their own ideas on what your descriptions of the data are, they could take it into a total different direction than your intent and Yeah. Oh yeah. So when you. These terms that you think are column of knowledge, be be really careful if you're excluding certain records or you are combining records and giving it one name, that data governance aspect might not.

Go to your reader, especially if you're talking about stuff that goes outside the department and it gets into the public's

Seth: hands. Yep. Yep. I, I had that come up and I had, this is not the first time I've heard that advice and I, I can't tell you how much stress it would've saved if I would've known this upfront really, or thought about it upfront.

And asked to pull some, some data for like, just some, some seems simple enough, but traffic crash. Intersections and and it's just one of those [00:38:00] things that it's okay to say what the caveats are like. Yeah, you know what? The data's only as good as what comes in you know, per, per our system.

This is showing crashes at different intersections. This is things in the intersection. This is things right outside that we, we would. Intersection related. But on top of that, there's always a caveat of this is per our system, , it's okay to say that this is not perfect necessarily. Here are the limitations of it.

This is what we're looking at. Yeah, getting something like that and then having it passed over to city council and then winding up on the news and you're just sitting there hoping someone doesn't come, asking like a billion questions that you could have. Taking care of upfront by saying, Hey, this is what this is, , the good, the bad, the ugly.

This is what this information's coming from. Yeah, that's, that's fantastic advice right

Jason: there. Yes. All your products need to have fine print. Yeah.

Alright, so that is, don't be that analyst and if you have a, don't be that analyst that you would like to share with the show. [00:39:00] Please email us at leapodcasts@gmail.com.

All right, Seth, let's finish up with an outlook of 2023. What can folks expect from small steps in 2023?

Seth: Yeah so I said it's been a bit of a, a learning curve here for me and trying to figure out how to get things to flow right. as, as this kind of has evolved what I would like to do going forward I will still do some small, you know, formulas here and there, things like that.

I'll probably add a couple. I, I guess kind of extended like couple videos in a row, almost like a little mini-series for things when I come into it. But what I would love to do is have more kind of real life examples from people. I've had a few people throughout this. Email me and ask for help on a specific project or people that had different, you know, varying degrees of, of expertise in Excel.

And here's a project. They send me what they have and I can help them work through how to make something function, how it needs to, or how they're, they're envisioning it. So I would love to have. Some more [00:40:00] episodes

over maybe products or, or specific issues, even if it's something that we've gone over a formula for more of a, a real life situation.

You know, like, Hey, I've got these two spreadsheets here and I'm trying to combine some stuff on it. Is there like an easy way of, of kind of, Connecting these things like that where we can really pick through a problem that someone's actually having and not, not just you know just some bare bones general stuff in Excel, kinda mix and match that up.

So yeah, , I would love to, to get more. Actual feedback and problems maybe people have that we could, , real life help solve. And we'll mix those in however, but yeah, we're gonna, we're gonna dig through, I think I'm gonna dig, also start digging through some of those extra menus in Excel.

I think I found some of the more like I did that camera tools one, which I, you know mm-hmm. , it's buried in a, in a A menu inside of a menu, inside of a menu seems like so yeah, I think I'll do some extra digging on stuff. But as much as anything, I would love to have some, some real examples from people, some real problems that we can solve.

And I think that as much as anything, I guarantee if someone's having a problem with [00:41:00] something or questions on how to do something, I guarantee there's somebody else out there that's having that same issue and they might not, might just not know that something's possible. Yeah. Or that other people are having that same issue.

So that would be my hopes is to get some real life examples.

Jason: Yeah. So, you know, one that I just thought of that. Would be beneficial, I think, to folks is the concept of turning your data into a table. Yeah. And what that means in Excel. Yeah. And some of the functionality that you get from that, because it does give you a lot of functionality, which I think is great, but at the same time, When the downfalls that I've found with it is it blows up the size of your spreadsheet.

It's, it's, yeah. A lot more megs in that table data. Yeah. As compared to tables leaving a data, regular data.

Seth: Yeah. Tables versus ranges. And Yes, sometimes switching it to a table just for a short time and then switching it back to a range that, that information could be pretty good to dig into. Yeah, [00:42:00] I agree.

Jason: Okay. All right. Well, hey uh, do you have any just real quick words to the world?

Seth: I, I just I say I appreciate people actually taking time to listen and, and some of the feedback we've gotten . Yeah. Appreciate you guys hearing my voice. Hopefully you don't mind it as much as I do. So thank you for, for all that and yeah, absolutely.

I'd love to keep helping. So if you guys have something, feel free to email me. I would be more than happy to, to look into any Excel issues you have and, and hopefully be able to help you out. So don't hesitate to to contact me with. Specific problems or honestly any ideas you have for the show, any specific formulas, things like that, let me know.

I'm happy to help. All right.

Jason: And thank you for doing this for l a podcast. Love the tenacity, love the willingness to learn and share. So thank you so much for putting this together and publishing this out week after week. Yeah, absolutely. And if you have something that you want [00:43:00] Seth to go. Email us at leapodcasts@gmail.com and we'll certainly get Seth on it.

All right, well, we've given them just enough to talk bad about us later, but I do appreciate you all being with us. Happy New year. Best of luck to everybody in 2023 and you all be safe.

Seth: Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analysts Talk with Jason Elder. You can show your support by sharing this in other episodes found on our website at www.leapodcasts.com.

If you have a topic you would like us to cover or have a suggestion for our next guest, please send us an email at

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