

Excel Poll – Operating Manual

Introduction and Features

Excel Poll is a custom windows application that polls, on a regular basis, an excel file and displays that information on a multi-line LED sign.

Features:

- Uses Excel files natively, no need to have Excel installed.
- Uses each worksheet as a “page” to display on the sign.
- Each page can have a display duration.
- Each page is displayed in rotation and then restarted.
- Field justification (left, right, center) is automatically used when sent to the sign.
- Configurable for multi-line signs from 1 to 99 lines.
- Uses Ethernet communications to communicate to sign.
- Assignable poll rate – time between polling the entire Excel file.
- Excel file can be located anywhere visible to the file system, including network shares.

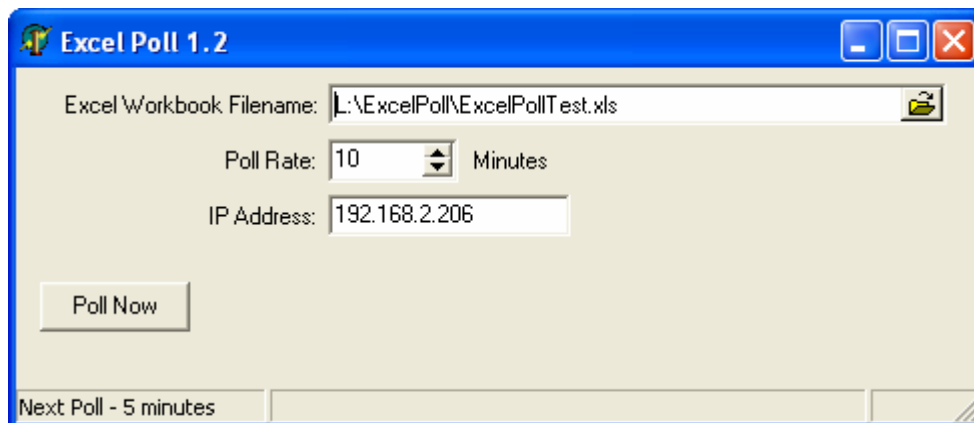
Installation

Installation is easy. Unzip the supplied ExcelPoll.zip (either emailed to you, or located on distribution media) file to an empty directory on your computer.

Operation and Initial Configuration

To run the application, simply locate the ExcelPoll.exe file in the directory you unzipped the distribution file to.

The following screen will appear:



Excel Poll will poll the indicated file by reading it into memory, processing it, and then sending each worksheet to the LED sign. The workbook must be in a special format (outlined below).

Configuration:

- **Excel Workbook Filename:** Enter the location and filename of the file to poll data from.
- **Poll Rate:** Enter the desired poll rate, in minutes. The poll rate is the amount of time between “reads” of the Excel Workbook.
- **IP Address:** Enter the IP address of the sign. Communications to the sign must be routable (see your IT department for details). For reference: TCP port 21 is used for communications.
- **Poll Now:** This button initiates an immediate poll. Useful when you are first setting up your workbook – to see immediate changes.

Workbook Format

The workbook must be in a special format in order for Excel Poll to understand it and send the correct data to the display.

Each “page” to display requires a separate worksheet in your workbook. If you want to display 3 pages of data, you will need 3 worksheets.

Note: Excel defaults to 3 worksheets when a workbook is created. If you are displaying less than 3 pages of data, you must delete each worksheet.

Each **page** of the worksheet must set data in certain fixed cells in order for Excel Poll to work correctly. Typically these fixed cells will be the same from page to page.

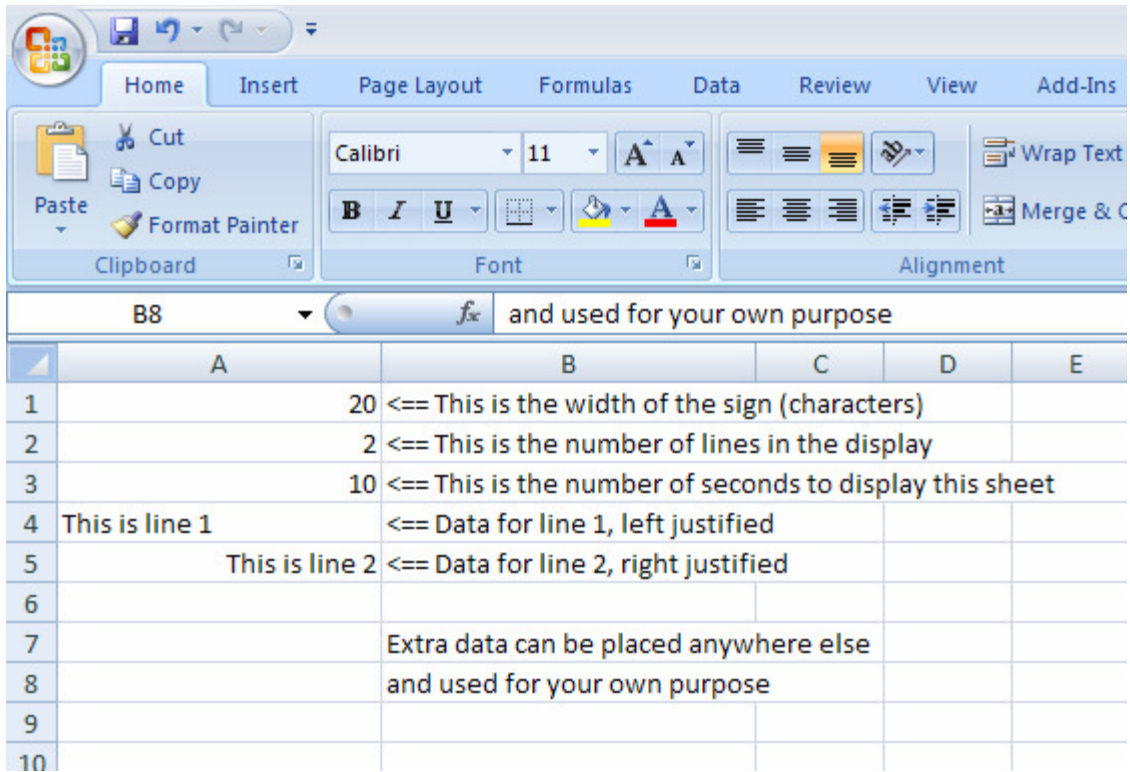
These special cells are as follows:

- Cell A1 must contain the width, in characters, of the signs being controlled for this sheet. This must match the width of your LED sign.
- Cell A2 must contain the number of lines to display for that sheet. This also must match the height of your LED sign.
- Cell A3 must contain the number of seconds to display this screen/sheet. This can vary from worksheet to worksheet as desired.

Once you have setup these special cells, the data to display can then be formatted into cells A4 to A(n+4) where n is the number of lines of your LED display.

For example, if your sign is 2 lines high, you would place line 1’s data in cell A4, and line 2’s data in cell A5.

Here’s a screenshot of an example Excel file:



You may also use cell justification (right, left, center only) on each of the data cells. Each cell is independent and Excel Poll will correctly display this information based on the LED sign's width.

All other cells are ignored and can be used for any other purpose.

Note on using formulas: Since Excel Poll uses the workbook natively without the use of Excel, formulas cannot be used in the data cells. To make formulas work, simply setup macros in your Workbook to copy the evaluated data to the appropriate data cell. This will require Excel on your system.

Note on using xlsx files: Excel Poll currently understands xls files (Excel 97-2003 format) only. Please make sure your Excel files are saved in this format.

If you have errors when the application polls the workbook, make sure the number of sheets matches the number of screens.

An example workbook is included. Please see the ExcelPollTest.xls file that was also unzipped from your distribution file.