

Spreadsheet Risk

This book offers a variety of strategies and tactics that financial institutions can employ to manage their exposure to this significant business risk. It is the first book to comprehensively address the many problems caused by the widespread and naïve use of spreadsheets in organisations. The book explores the notion that users do not take into account that through their use of a spreadsheet to solve a problem, they are deploying a complex software application. Technology can be faulty, but also spreadsheets are used, misused, abused and through the non-adoption of any of the disciplines of software engineering. The apparently simple task of creating a spreadsheet, for example, to calculate the cost of building a garden wall will be frequently performed incorrectly unless independent and comprehensive testing has taken place. Given that most financial spreadsheets are significantly more complex than this, it is essential that spreadsheet users come to understand how careful they must be in reaching decisions that are supported by spreadsheet models. The purpose of the book is to lay bare the various risks of using spreadsheets, supported by a comprehensive summary of the well-established academic and commercial research on the subject. The book will include some simple exercises for the reader to perform which will support the truth of the research being reported. The book outlines a set of strategies and tactics which can be put in place to control the risks of using spreadsheets, and introduces the emerging discipline of spreadsheet engineering. It considers technological solutions to spreadsheet risk, looking also at the alternatives to using spreadsheets.

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