

When I do a Word Mail Merge using an Excel spreadsheet or an Access table/query, the numbers in the spreadsheet (GPA's, currency, dates, etc.) don't retain their original format.

Use Dynamic Data Exchange

Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE) is one method available in the Microsoft Windows® operating system for transferring data between applications. It uses shared memory to exchange the data. If you use other data transfer methods, you run into a problem: Data from the worksheet is transferred in the native format in which Excel stores it rather than with the formatting that you applied in the worksheet cells.

To choose the DDE data transfer method when you're connecting to an Excel worksheet during a mail merge, all you have to do is select one check box in Word:

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Options**, and then click the **General** tab.
2. Click **Confirm conversion at Open**.

At the step in the mail-merge process when you connect to your data file, after you locate the Excel worksheet you want to connect to, the **Confirm Data Source** dialog box opens. Click **MS Excel Worksheets via DDE (*.xls)**, and then click **OK**. In the **Microsoft Excel** dialog box, for **Named or cell range**, select the cell range or worksheet that contains the information you want to merge, and then click **OK**. The numbers from the Excel spreadsheet will now look exactly the same in your merged documents as they look in the worksheet cells.

Note: It's probably a good idea to turn off the **Confirm conversion at Open** option after you finish your mail merge. Otherwise, you might be prompted to confirm your data source at times when that's the last thing you want to worry about.