

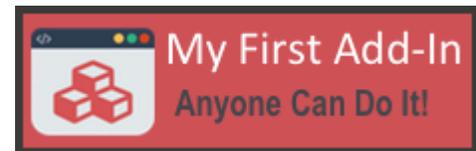
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VBA Code To Save As Picture in Excel

September 02, 2020 Chris Newman

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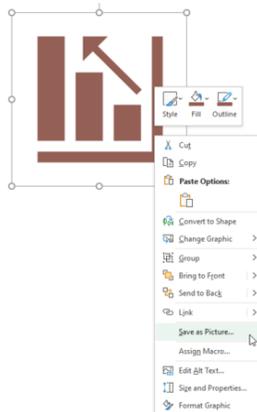


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Not As Easy As You'd Think...

One would think that saving something as a picture file (png, jpg, etc...) inside Excel with VBA would be a pretty straightforward exercise. Unfortunately, the “Save as Picture” functionality only exists for saving images of Charts (called exporting). This leaves saving pictures of



shapes, icons, and cell ranges void of any VBA automation.

However, with a little bit of creativity, we can utilize the chart object to store our desired image and use the chart object's **Export function** to create the image file that we can manually generate by right-clicking and selecting **Save as Picture...**

In this article I'll walk you through the basic concept of what the VBA code is doing and also go through two VBA macro examples pertaining to saving shapes/icons and cell ranges in various file formats.

Methodology

Not many people know this but Charts can actually store shapes/objects inside of them. For example, if you have ever copied a textbox and pasted it while a chart is selected, you'll notice the textbox object appears to be grouped with the chart. Meaning, if you move the chart to a different location, the textbox would move right along with it. What is actually occurring is the textbox is getting embedded within the chart and is essentially now a component of the chart object (think legend, chart title, chart series, axis, etc...).



Notice that the chart object is selected while selecting the textbox? This indicates the textbox has been embedded into the chart object.

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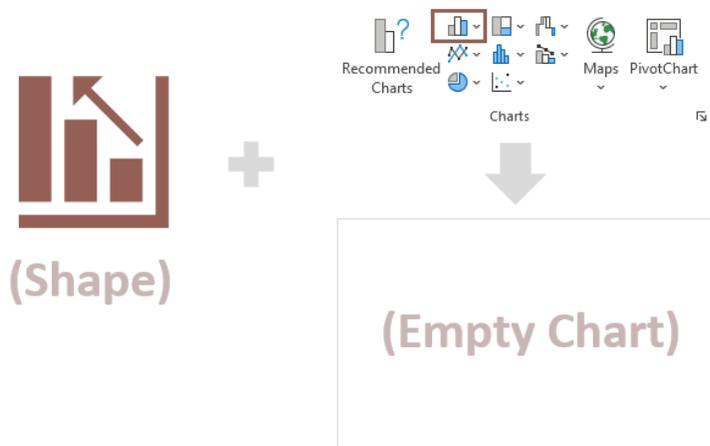
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The fact that charts in Excel can absorb other objects is what we will be utilizing to workaround the fact that shapes and other objects cannot be saved as a picture in VBA.

Before we dive into the VBA code, the concept the macro will be utilizing will be to isolate the object you want to save as a picture file and also generating a blank/empty chart object.



With those two objects in place, the VBA code will simply paste the desired object into the Chart Object (kind of like converting it into a chart!).



With this concept in mind, let's take a look at the VBA code I've proposed to get this job done!

Save Shape As A PNG File [VBA Code]

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Hopefully the following VBA macro is easily to follow along, but I'll outline essentially the steps it is doing so you can customize it accordingly if needed.



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1. Determine if a shape is selected, if not, don't proceed. Store the selected shape to a variable (ActiveShape)
2. Generate a **Chart Object** that is the exact same size as the selected shape
3. Remove the chart's **Fill** and **Border** to make the background transparent
4. **Copy** the selected shape and **Paste** it into the **Chart Object**
5. **Export** the **Chart Object** as a **PNG file** and save to the **user's desktop**
6. **Delete** the chart so it appears like nothing has occurred to the user

```

Sub SaveShapeAsPicture()
'PURPOSE: Save a selected shape/icon as a PNG
file to computer's desktop
'SOURCE: www.thespreadsheetguru.com

Dim cht As ChartObject
Dim ActiveShape As Shape
Dim UserSelection As Variant

'Ensure a Shape is selected
On Error GoTo NoShapeSelected
Set UserSelection = ActiveWindow.Selection
Set ActiveShape =
ActiveSheet.Shapes(UserSelection.Name)
On Error GoTo 0

'Create a temporary chart object (same size as
shape)
Set cht = ActiveSheet.ChartObjects.Add( _
Left:=ActiveCell.Left, _
Width:=ActiveShape.Width, _
Top:=ActiveCell.Top, _
Height:=ActiveShape.Height)

'Format temporary chart to have a transparent
background
cht.ShapeRange.Fill.Visible = msoFalse
cht.ShapeRange.Line.Visible = msoFalse

'Copy/Paste Shape inside temporary chart
ActiveShape.Copy
cht.Activate
ActiveChart.Paste

```

```
'Save chart to User's Desktop as PNG File
cht.Chart.Export Environ("USERPROFILE") &
"\Desktop\" & ActiveShape.Name & ".png"

'Delete temporary Chart
cht.Delete

'Re-Select Shape (appears like nothing happened!)
ActiveShape.Select

Exit Sub

'ERROR HANDLERS
NoShapeSelected:
MsgBox "You do not have a single shape
selected!"
Exit Sub

End Sub
```

Save Range As A JPG File [VBA Code]

Hopefully the following VBA macro is easily to follow along, but I'll outline essentially the steps it is doing so you can customize it accordingly if needed.

1. Determine if a cell range is selected, if not, don't proceed.
2. Copy/Paste the range as a picture and store the picture to a variable (ActiveShape)
3. Generate a **Chart Object** that is the exact same size as the selected shape
4. Remove the chart's **Fill** and **Border** to make the background transparent
5. **Copy** the selected shape and **Paste** it into the **Chart Object**
6. **Export** the **Chart Object** as a **PNG file** and save to the **user's desktop**
7. **Delete** the generated chart & picture so it appears like nothing has occurred to the user

```
Sub SaveRangeAsPicture()  
'PURPOSE: Save a selected cell range as a JPG  
file to computer's desktop  
'SOURCE: www.thespreadsheetguru.com  
  
Dim cht As ChartObject  
Dim ActiveShape As Shape  
  
'Confirm if a Cell Range is currently selected  
If TypeName(Selection) <> "Range" Then  
    MsgBox "You do not have a single shape  
selected!"  
    Exit Sub  
End If  
  
'Copy/Paste Cell Range as a Picture  
Selection.Copy  
ActiveSheet.Pictures.Paste(link:=False).Select  
Set ActiveShape =  
ActiveSheet.Shapes(ActiveWindow.Selection.Name)  
  
'Create a temporary chart object (same size as  
shape)  
Set cht = ActiveSheet.ChartObjects.Add( _  
    Left:=ActiveCell.Left, _  
    Width:=ActiveShape.Width, _  
    Top:=ActiveCell.Top, _  
    Height:=ActiveShape.Height)  
  
'Format temporary chart to have a transparent  
background  
cht.ShapeRange.Fill.Visible = msoFalse  
cht.ShapeRange.Line.Visible = msoFalse  
  
'Copy/Paste Shape inside temporary chart  
ActiveShape.Copy  
cht.Activate  
ActiveChart.Paste  
  
'Save chart to User's Desktop as PNG File  
cht.Chart.Export Environ("USERPROFILE") &  
"\Desktop\" & ActiveShape.Name & ".jpg"  
  
'Delete temporary Chart  
cht.Delete  
ActiveShape.Delete  
  
'Re-Select Shape (appears like nothing happened!)  
ActiveShape.Select  
  
End Sub
```

I Hope This Helped!

Hopefully, I was able to explain how you can use VBA to create image files in Excel. If you have any questions

about this technique or suggestions on how to improve it, please let me know in the comments section below.



About The Author

Hey there! I'm Chris and I run TheSpreadsheetGuru website in my spare time. By day, I'm actually a finance professional who relies on Microsoft Excel quite heavily in the corporate world. I love taking the things I learn in the "real world" and sharing them with everyone here on this site so that you too can become a spreadsheet guru at your company.

Through my years in the corporate world, I've been able to pick up on opportunities to make working with Excel better and have built a variety of [Excel add-ins](#), from inserting tickmark symbols to automating copy/pasting from Excel to PowerPoint. If you'd like to keep up to date with the latest Excel news and directly get emailed the most meaningful Excel tips I've learned over the years, you can [sign up for my free newsletters](#). I hope I was able to provide you some value today and hope to see you back here soon! - Chris

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