

# Lesson 7-10: Understand the three different ways to share a document

When an undertaking hath been committed to many, it caused but confusion, and therefore it is a saying... too many cooks spoils the broth.

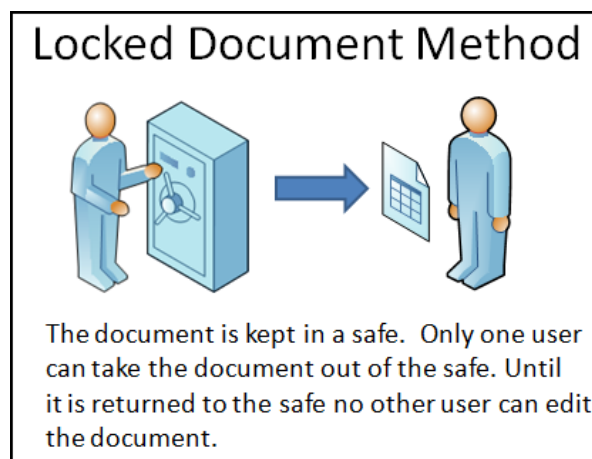
*B Gerbier , Principles of Building 24 (1662)*

Document sharing is one of the most confusing and complex Excel features.

To use document sharing properly, you need to understand the real-world problems that document sharing must overcome.

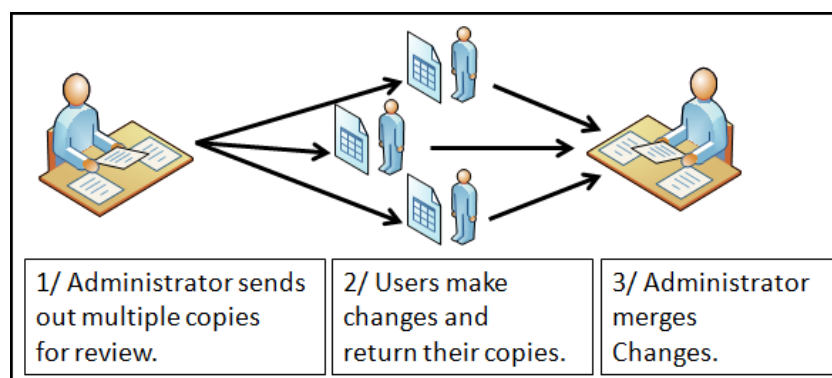
In order to understand the three different sharing methods Excel provides, we'll step outside the world of Excel and consider how we might have shared paper documents in the pre-computer age.

## The lock method



This is the simplest (and easiest) method to use. The feature is covered in: *Lesson 7-11: Share a workbook using the lock method.*

## The merge method



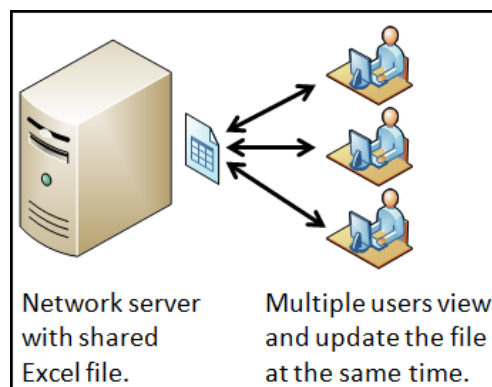
Excel allows you to send out multiple copies of a workbook by e-mail, and then merge all of the documents back into a master document when they are sent back with revisions. This feature is covered in: *Lesson 7-12: Share a workbook using the merge method.*

## Sharing workbooks on a network

Sending e-mail documents for revision isn't the most efficient way to work. If you have a network, it is better to save the workbook onto a shared drive, and then to have many different people work on it *at the same time*.

This method is explained in: *Lesson 7-13: Share a workbook on a network.*

Using a network makes the process far easier as you don't need to manually merge the changes.



This method presents Excel with several challenges:

- If two users change the same cell at the same time – which change should succeed? In Excel terminology, we'd say: "which change should *win*"?
- How can we implement an audit trail so that we know which user changed which piece of data? In Excel terminology, we'd like to be able to *track changes*.
- How can a manager approve changes that users have made?

Excel rises to the challenge and provides comprehensive tools to cater for each of these requirements.

By the end of this session you'll completely understand how to use all of Excel's shared workbook features.