

'Yeah, if you could win spreadsheet title, that'd be great'

August 7 2017, by Matthew Barakat

John Dumoulin has never really set foot in an office. He works part time at Chick-fil-a.

But the 17-year-old from northern Virginia is the undisputed king of that bane to office workers everywhere—the spreadsheet. Dumoulin won an [international competition](#) on Microsoft Excel proficiency, earning \$10,000 in prize money along the way.

Dumoulin learned about the competition after taking an IT class at school in which he earned certifications on various office software products. As it turned out, his score on the Microsoft Excel 16 certification exam was the highest in Virginia, qualifying him for a national competition in Orlando, Florida.

He won, earning a \$3,000 prize and an expense-paid trip to the world competition in Anaheim, California, last week.

Dumoulin was a bit taken aback when he saw how seriously the international competitors approached the tournament. No American has won the Excel competition in 16 years, though they have won on other Microsoft Office products including Word and PowerPoint.

"Some of the foreign countries, they've been training for hours and hours and hours on end," he said. "When you first meet the international students, everyone's friendly, but when they find out you're competing against them in the same category, they get this fire in their eyes. They

want to win."

Aaron Osmond, general manager of Certiport, the American Fork, Utah-based company that runs the competition, said the Excel competition is more mathematical and analytical than the other categories, and is usually won by countries that place an extra focus on science, technology and math education.

"It's a huge accomplishment," Osmond said of Dumoulin's victory at the world competition, which included a \$7,000 prize.

Certiport limits the competition to ages 13-22; the company contracts with Microsoft to offer certification testing and educational materials designed to teach the software to high-school and college-age students, something they say is a crucial part of a modern career-tech curriculum.

Osmond said the skills help students land job offers, and they are often far more advanced on the programs than even veteran [office workers](#) who routinely work with spreadsheets.

"Most of us in an office think that we know how to use Excel. These kids really know," he said.

Dumoulin, a varsity baseball player at Forest Park High School in Woodbridge, first learned spreadsheets in middle school as a way to track stats on his favorite team, the Los Angeles Dodgers. He once did a spreadsheet-aided school presentation on how ballparks' field dimensions affect players' batting averages.

He said his friends and teammates were at first "confused" by his participation in a spreadsheet competition, but when he explained it to them "they were impressed and supportive, and pretty proud of it."

He said he'd like to eventually put his spreadsheet skills to use in a business setting. And as data analytics continue to become more prevalent in his favorite sport of baseball, he's thought about the possibility of working in a Major League front [office](#), "Moneyball"-style.

"That's the dream career for me, right there," he said.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: 'Yeah, if you could win spreadsheet title, that'd be great' (2017, August 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-yeah-spreadsheet-title-thatd-great.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--