How to Create Pipe Delimited Files in Excel

Microsoft Excel allows you to export spreadsheet data to a number of common formats for use with other applications. If you need to export data to another Windows-based application, chances are that one of the native Excel export formats will work just fine. In most cases, if all else fails, you can export Excel data in the text-based CSV, or Comma Separated Value, format for use with text/data editors that cannot read or decode common spreadsheet file types. With a few applications – usually designed for Linux or for use on the Web – you might have to save the file in a pipe-delimited format. Excel does not provide a native export function for this type of file. Therefore, you must change the Windows regional settings to save a file in pipe-delimited format.

Step 1
Close Microsoft Excel if the application is still active. Click the "Start" button, then "Control Panel." Click the "Region and Language" option.

Step 2
Click the "Additional Settings" button in the Region and Language window. After the Customize Format window opens, locate the List Separator value on the Numbers tab. Click inside the drop-down list field and type a "|" symbol in the space. Note the "|" symbol is on the same key as the "\" symbol on most keyboards. A tilde (~) can also be used in place of |.

Step 3
Click the "Apply" button, then "OK" to close the Region and Language window.

Step 4
Open Microsoft Excel again on your computer. Click the "File" tab on the ribbon bar. Click the "Open" link and browse to the Excel workbook file you want to save in pipe-delimited format. Highlight the file name and click the "Open" button.

Step 5
Edit the Excel workbook as needed. Click the "File" tab on the ribbon bar, then the "Save As" menu option.

Step 6
Browse to the folder where you want to save the new file in the "Save As" window. Enter a name for the new pipe-delimited format file in the "File Name" field. Click the "Save as Type" drop-down list and select the "CSV (Comma Delimited)" option. Click the "Save" button. Excel saves the file in pipe-delimited format in the folder you selected.