

By: Apati2008aga, Technology News Editor

[Office Labs Offers Search Commands as a Free Download](#)

But promises much more

Microsoft is hard at work searching for ways to improve its Office System. This is why the company has introduced a quasi-independent effort dubbed [Office Labs](#). Designed to be a sandbox set up to streamline the experimenting, building and testing of new ideas, Microsoft Office Labs will offer the first taste of new products and features while still in the most early stages of development, even as prototypes. An illustrative example in this regard is Search Commands for the Office 2007 System. "Search Commands helps you find commands, options, wizards, and galleries in Microsoft Office 2007 Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Just type what you're looking for in your own words and click the command you need. Search Commands also includes Guided Help, which acts as a tour guide for specific tasks," reveals the product's description. But in the end, as Chris Pratley - Lead Program Manager, Microsoft Office explained, Microsoft Office Labs is an incubation effort that places what are essentially internal ideas, products and features into the public eye. The initiative is of course focused not only on exploring new technology, but also on gathering feedback from end users. However, Pratley stressed the fact that all the items featured on Microsoft Office Labs are no more than in an experimental phase, and that is why they are not delivered via the Redmond company's traditional download hotspots. What it all comes down to is that the prototypes and ideas featured via Microsoft Office Labs might become full blown products, might even be integrated into the company's solutions or could just be killed in their embryonic stage. "Concept testing is what this site is all about. The projects you find here are not products or beta versions. They don't even pretend to be complete product ideas. They are the equivalent of 'concept cars' for software. Automotive companies sometimes produce near and far-future test vehicles to test design concepts or features to see how effective they are. In most cases there is no intent to productize the vehicles as shown. They simply work for the purposes of getting feedback. We do the same for software. The difference is that you to get to test drive the concepts. Because of that, all these experiences are strictly 'use at your own risk', and we can't promise to fix every bug that is reported but we'll try to nip the worst ones," Pratley [explained](#). Search Commands is available for download [here](#).