The word "spreadsheet" came from "spread" in its sense of a newspaper or magazine item that covers two facing pages, extending across the center fold and treating the two pages as one large one.

The compound word "spread-sheet" came to mean the format used to present book-keeping ledgers—with columns for categories of expenditures across the top, invoices listed down the left margin, and the amount of each payment in the cell where its row and column intersect.

While other have made contributions to computer-based spreadsheets, most agree the modern electronic spreadsheet was first developed by:

- Dan Bricklin
- Bob Frankston

Because of Dan Bricklin and Bob Frankston’s implementation of VisiCalc on the Apple II in 1979 and the IBM PC in 1981, the spreadsheet concept became widely known in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

PC World magazine called VisiCalc the first electronic spreadsheet.

VisiCalc was the first spreadsheet that combined all essential features of modern spreadsheet applications:

- VisiCalc went on to become the first killer app, an application that was so compelling, people would buy a particular computer just to use it.
- VisiCalc was in no small part responsible for the Apple II’s success.
- The program was later ported to a number of other early computers, notably CP/M machines, the Atari 8-bit family and various Commodore platforms.
- Nevertheless, VisiCalc remains best known as an Apple II program.
Excel

Spreadsheets on computers

We all know the rest of this story ......