Stacked Area Chart with Historical and Projected Data

End result: a stacked area chart with a visible division between historic and projected values

Instructions

1. Format your data similarly to the cells outlined in red at left. Note that the final year of historical data, 2004 in this example, is repeated on two lines (highlighted in yellow). The data for 2004 appears in the historic and projected series.
2. Select the years, data, and series names (cells A20:G47 in this example), and create a stacked area chart. It should look like the one at left.

3. As you can see, Excel treats 2004 and 2004 as two separate categories, which is not what we want. We can get around this by formatting the category axis as a time-scale. Do this by right-clicking on the chart and selecting Chart Options, then on the Axes tab, select "Time-scale" under Category (X) axis. Now your chart should look like the one at left.

4. The rest is just formatting. Start by formatting the x-axis so that the number format is "Number" with 0 decimal places, and on the Scale tab, set the major unit to be 5.

Delete extra legend entries and fix up the colors in the chart*, and you’re done.

*You can define custom colors in an Excel workbook. Go to Tools -> Options… and go to the Color tab. You can modify any colors in the palette, but I recommend sticking with the two rows at the bottom.