Windows: Stop the Keyboard From (Suddenly) Changing Languages on You

If you ever use Excel and especially Excel on a laptop – you probably find that, from time to time, certain characters you type all of a sudden start showing up as French characters.

One reason…the [CTRL][SHFT] key combination is the default (Windows) keyboard shortcut for changing keyboard languages.

"But I don't ever press [CTRL][SHFT]" you say? Well…if you are using one of the best keyboard shortcuts in Excel (and if you've been to one of MY classes…you'd BETTER be using it!) then you *are* pressing it without realizing it.

[CTRL][SHFT] ↓ will select from the current cell to the bottom of a range – *boom*…DONE. It's one of the best Excel keyboard shortcuts going. ([CTRL][SHFT] ↑ and [CTRL][SHFT] → and [CTRL][SHFT] ← all work the same).

BUT (and this is a BIG butt <g>)…if you don't release the [CTRL][SHFT] arrow in the right order…you have basically triggered the [CTRL][SHFT] (Windows keyboard language shortcut) without realizing it. Of course, you realize it as soon as some French character shows up when you were expecting something else.

You can fix it by clicking the keyboard icon, down in your System Tray, and choosing US again. But – trust me – if you use Excel all day…and use the [CTRL][SHFT] ↓ keyboard shortcut a lot (which you should be!)…then you'll grow tired of having to "fix" the keyboard setting all the time.

So…I recommend that you disable the [CTRL][SHFT] keyboard language shortcut:
1. Click the START button – and choose CONTROL PANEL.
2. Make sure you're in Large Icon view (Windows 7) so you can see all your Control Panel programs at once.
3. Click the REGIONAL AND LANGUAGE program.
4. Click the KEYBOARD AND LANGUAGES tab at the top of the window.
5. Click the CHANGE KEYBOARDS button – to open up the TEXT SERVICES AND INPUT LANGUAGES window.
6. Click the ADVANCED KEY SETTINGS tab at the top of this window (quit whining…we're almost there).
7. Make sure the BETWEEN INPUT LANGUAGES line is selected/highlighted – and click the CHANGE KEY SEQUENCE button at the bottom of the screen.
8. In the SWITCH KEYBOARD LAYOUT column (on the right) – click the NOT ASSIGNED option.
9. Click OK – OK – OK then close the CONTROL PANEL.

No more annoying keyboard layout switcharoos (that's a technical term) – yay!