



POWER BI VS EXCEL

DASHBOARDS



Excel



Power BI

	Excel	Power BI
Easy to Learn	✓ Most of us already have a lot of the skills required to build Excel Dashboards, so getting up to speed is quick and easy.	✗ Requires Power Query and Power Pivot knowledge, plus there is a whole new charting engine to learn as well as how to share reports etc.
Chart Selection	! Excel has a huge range of charts but is light on mapping functionality. Microsoft 365 users with Python have access to amazing charting libraries.	✓ Power BI has a huge selection of charts, and it has excellent maps, plus you can even create your own custom charts, or use ones shared in AppSource.
Chart Customization	✓ You can customise almost everything in an Excel chart. This flexibility allows you to do things with charts that Microsoft never intended.	! Power BI native charts are not as flexible. They are improving, and you can develop custom visuals, but some Excel users may find this frustrating.
Interactivity	! We can provide interactivity with Slicers to allow users to filter and focus in on items in our Dashboards.	✓ Power BI has Slicers too, but it also has interactivity we can only dream about in Excel; drill down charts, cross filter and highlight from one chart to others and more.
Flexible Analytics	✓ Nothing is more flexible than Excel! Add and edit data, analyse with PivotTables, formulas, etc. anywhere in the grid.	! Power BI doesn't have proper PivotTables (yet), you can't write formulas anywhere, ad-hoc analysis is inflexible.
Sharing	✗ We can share Excel files via email or shared drives, and publish reports online using the Excel WebApp, these options leave our data exposed. There's no real way to lock down the underlying data.	✓ Power BI dashboards can be viewed on any device. Views of data can be restricted to individual roles and downloading of data can be prevented.
Data Size	! On its own Excel can't handle big data, and even struggles with medium size data. However, with Power Pivot it can, but there's a learning curve.	✓ Power BI can handle millions of rows of data. It uses the same Power Pivot modelling engine available in Excel.
Data Sources	✓ Get data from almost anywhere with Power Query.	✓ Power BI also uses Power Query so it too can get data from almost anywhere.
Automatic Refresh	! Kind of, if you use VBA, but it's fraught with complications.	✓ Yep, schedule your refresh frequency, or if your data source is online then refresh is automatic.
Accessible	✓ Excel is for everyone and is a great place to start if you're new to Dashboards.	! Unless you're building Dashboards for yourself, you'll find that Power BI requires the buy in from management, and most probably IT as well.
Cost	✓ Most of us already have Excel so there's no additional cost for using it to build and share Dashboards	✗ Free for personal use, otherwise US\$10/mth to share reports with others. For large companies there is a Premium license available.



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