

K² Technologies Class Blast

April - May 2013

Managing Your Data: Access or Excel?

When you're trying to determine which data management program will work best for you, it really should not be based on a personal preference. The data--and what you need to do with it--should be the deciding factor. The choice is critical if you want to update and maintain the data and know that it's accurate and useful. (It doesn't do any good to collect data and then not be able to analyze it, right?). Even though Excel is not a database management system, you can still manage data with it, and in ways similar to Access.

Access and Excel can both:

- Run queries to sort and filter your data
- Run calculations (sometimes complex ones) to make the data meaningful to you
- Use Pivot tables and charts
- Create reports
- Use forms to add, change, delete, and navigate through your data
- Work with Word (as in a mail merge)
- Import from external sources
- Be published to a web page
- Store data in columns (fields) and rows (records) with each column holding only one type of data and each row containing all the information for one instance of the data

If your data can be stored in a single table then use Excel. If it is multi-layered, or requires more than one table, you should use Access. How do you know if your data can be stored in a single table? If the data in each column is directly related you can use a single table. For instance, you wouldn't store first names in one table and last names in another. This is the type of data that Excel can handle with ease, so there's no need to tackle the steeper learning curve with Access. If your data contains information where the columns in the table are not directly related, you should probably use Access. An example might be a list of customers on one table (with names, addresses, etc.), then a list of orders on another. The two tables are related to each other because you have the customer names on the customer list table, but you also have customer names on the order table. The tables are related only on one point--the customer names. This is a perfect example of when to use Access.

When to Use Excel	When to Use Access
Single layer (or table)	Multiple layers (relational data)
Mostly numerical data	Mainly text data or text strings
Manageable data set size (less than 15000 rows)	Large amount of data (thousands of entries)
Run mostly calculations and statistical comparisons	Rely on external sources and run complex queries

No matter which one you ultimately decide to use, you should still backup your data regularly and insert the needed protections so that only those who need to see the data can see it.

May 2013 K² Computer Training Classes

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MICROSOFT WINDOWS 7 – FOUNDATION - \$179

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HTML 5 - \$179

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January 2013

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	Dec 31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1	