

Microsoft Power BI or Jet Reports for Financial and Operational Reporting?



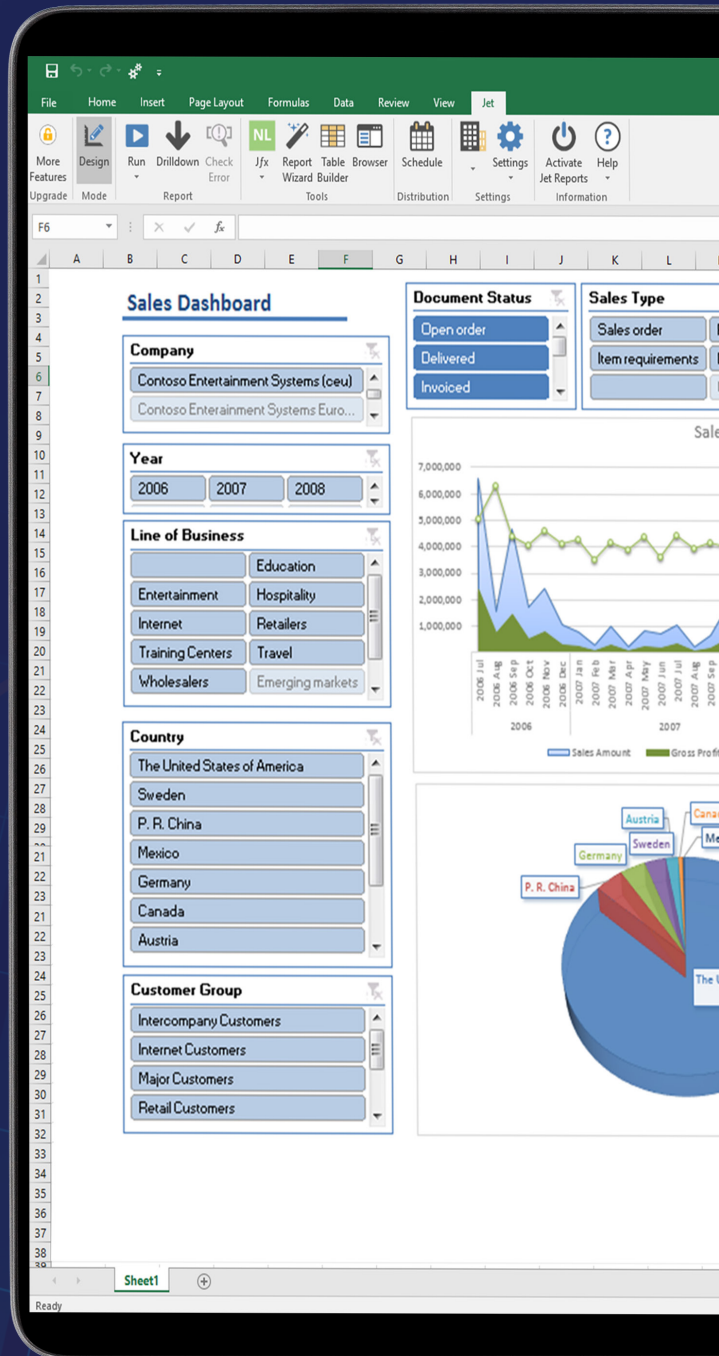
Jet Reports

from insightsoftware



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Power BI is Microsoft's own business intelligence service. It provides self-service visualizations, dashboards, and business intelligence capabilities. Power BI is one of the best available tools for interactive dashboards providing trend analysis, and it is a great compliment to our Jet Analytics solution, which helps you manage your data models. However, for financial and operational reporting, Power BI has a few shortcomings. So, if your customers currently use Power BI, or are considering it, here are some things to keep in mind, along with a handy comparison chart that shows how Power BI stacks up against Jet Reports for financial and operational reporting.



The Challenge with Power BI

- › **Creating new reports in Power BI is not easy**, given the complexity of navigating the Microsoft Dynamics data model.
- › For more complex reports, **you need to master the proprietary DAX scripting language**.
- › **Data preparation can be slow and cumbersome** and requires technical Power Query and Power Pivot knowledge.
- › **Learning Power BI takes time and requires a lot of training** because of its complexity and different options.
- › **There is no drill-down capability to launch Microsoft Dynamics NAV/365 Business Central client**. You need to include detailed transactions in the Power BI data model for users to view them.
- › **Power BI has no automatic real-time reporting**; the data model must be refreshed either manually or on a schedule. Data refreshes in Power BI Pro are limited to 8 times per day (Power BI Pro) or 48 times per day (Power BI Premium).



Benefits of Jet Reports

- › **Report against real-time Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, NAV, and GP data directly in Excel** with reports that drill down into transactional details and can report across multiple legal entities.
- › **Get up and running with reports immediately.** Easily create and modify reports using drag-and-drop tools and report creation wizards. Use the extensive, purpose-built, out-of-the-box templates to be up and running fast.
- › **No need to master complex scripting languages.** Leverage existing Excel skills and allow your team to easily build and modify the reports they need, without requiring coding or programming skills.
- › **Refresh against live data.** Refresh reports directly against your Microsoft Dynamics system in real time, so you always have up-to-date, accurate data to support time-critical processes throughout the month and during your close.
- › **Always have the answers.** Drill down on the numbers directly in Excel to view detailed transactions, with direct integration with the NAV/BC client.

The Solution: Jet Reports

Jet Reports offers fast, flexible financial and business reporting inside of Excel or in the browser. Simplify access to information by reporting against real-time Microsoft Dynamics data, and collaborate by easily sharing reports across your organization.

	Power BI	Jet Reports
Product Positioning	Microsoft's analytics and data visualization solution.	Purpose-built financial and operational reporting solution built inside Microsoft Excel.
Real-Time Reporting	No. Data model must be refreshed either manually or on a schedule.	Yes. Reports are refreshed directly against the live ERP system.
Drill Down	No drill-down capability to the ERP. Detailed transactions would need to be included in the Power BI data model to enable users to view.	Yes. Integration with ERP client. Ability to drill down to view detailed transactions.
Report Scheduling and Distribution	Partial. Power BI can refresh a data model in a schedule, but has no distribution capabilities via email.	Yes. Jet Reports has a scheduler that allows reports to be refreshed automatically, saved in several different formats, and distributed via email. It can also schedule reports in batches, for example, so the same report can be run and filtered for each salesperson.
Access to Custom Tables and Fields	Yes, but requires custom queries to be written as objects in NAV/BC, which needs development skills. Pages can also be published as web services, but this requires extra management.	Yes. The entire database is accessible from Jet Reports, with no technical skills needed.
Multi-Company Reporting	Yes. It is possible to pull data from multiple companies with the Power Query Editor.	Yes. Ability to run a report, pulling data from multiple companies and multiple data sources.
Security	If data are exposed with Queries, then security roles in NAV/BC need to be set up and managed for this.	Uses NAV/BC security model—no need to manage separate security model.
Flow Fields	Yes. Access to flow field, when connecting via web services.	Yes. Access to flow fields whether connecting via Direct SQL or web services.
Table Relationships	No. Data models need to be set up and maintained, including defining table relationships.	Yes. Understands the relationship information between tables, which makes report design easier. No need to set up and manage data models.
Formatting	Yes, but report layout is limited to the objects available in Power BI.	Yes. Reports can be formatted exactly as a user wants directly in Excel and with familiar tools. Jet Reports also uses replicators to dynamically insert rows/columns/sheets into the workbook when a dataset is refreshed and returns fewer or more data.

	Power BI	Jet Reports
Dimensions	Partial. Reporting against two global dimensions is straight forward. Reporting against non-global dimensions requires building a data model including Dimension Set IDs.	Yes. Ability to run reports based on global or non-global dimensions.
User Permissions	Needs to be manually managed.	Inherited from Microsoft Dynamics.
Designing Reports	Slow and cumbersome, because it requires technical skills, and the UI is unfamiliar.	Fast and easy thanks to the familiar Excel UI.
Financial Reports	Not suitable	Yes
Sharing Reports	Requires Power BI Pro minimum to be able to share outside of Office 365 tenant.	Reports can be shared widely with Jet Hub/Scheduler.
Trigger-Based Email/Notification	No	Yes
Microsoft Dynamics Focus	No	Yes

Are You Currently Offering Power BI to Your Customers?

Although Microsoft will position Power BI as a complete reporting solution, it is not necessarily optimized to serve all reporting needs. Although it is a great tool for dashboards and visualization—specifically, presenting summary-level management information—it is not a robust financial reporting tool.

Jet Reports provides everything finance teams need in a cost-effective, easy-to-use solution, from advanced business reports to sophisticated financial statements. There is no exporting, no copying and pasting, and no programming. Finance teams can use Excel for reporting with Jet Reports, which they tend to prefer, when they need real-time access to data and the ability to drill-down into underlying transactions.

About insightsoftware

insightsoftware is a global provider of reporting, analytics, and performance management solutions. We enable the Office of the CFO to connect to and make sense of data. Over 32,000 organizations rely on our best-in-class solutions for increased productivity, visibility, accuracy, and compliance.

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