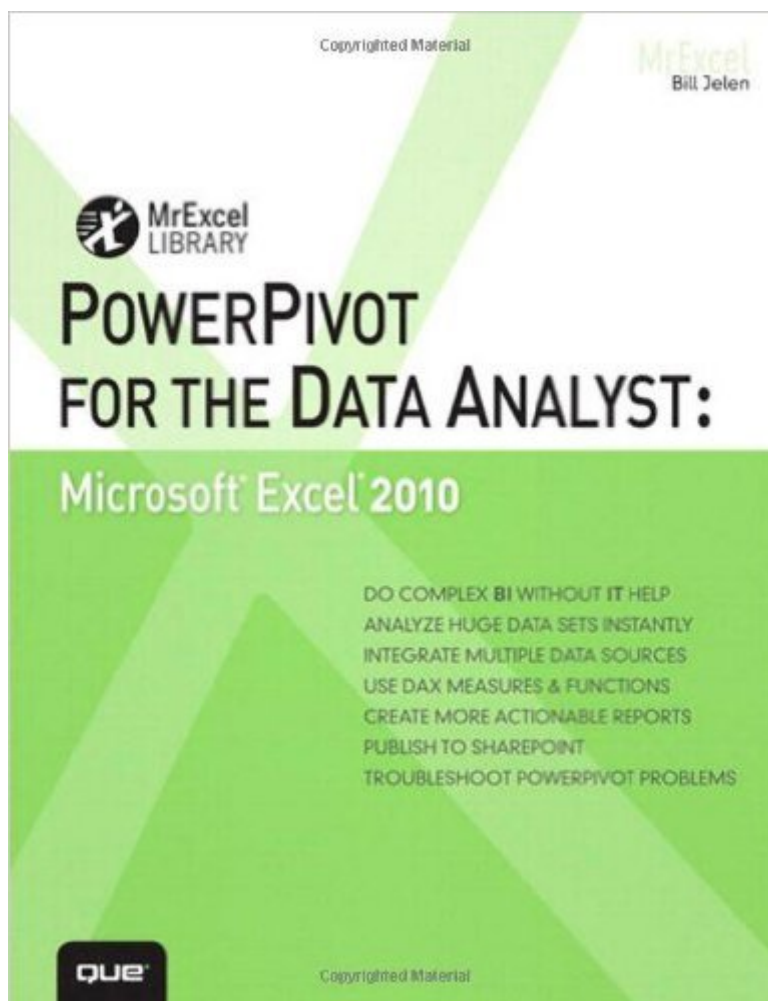


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PowerPivot For The Data Analyst: Microsoft Excel 2010 (MrExcel Library)



Synopsis

ANALYZE HUGE AMOUNTS OF BUSINESS DATA FASTER, MORE EASILY, AND MORE ACCURATELY! Use Microsoft's free PowerPivot add-in for Excel 2010 to analyze immense amounts of data from any source, perform state-of-the-art business analysis far more easily, and make better decisions in less time! Simple, step-by-step instructions walk you through installing PowerPivot, importing data, using PivotTables with PowerPivot, using super-powerful DAX functions and measures, reporting to print or SharePoint, and a whole lot more. Whatever your Excel data analysis experience, this book will help you use PowerPivot to get the right answers, right now "without IT's help! • Import and integrate data from spreadsheets, SQL Server, Access, Oracle, text files, Atom data feeds, and other sources • Analyze multiple tables together, without complicated VLOOKUPS • Format, sort, and filter data in the PowerPivot window • Add calculated columns using new DAX functions • Create powerful reports from PowerPivot data "and format them so executives instantly get your point • Discover PivotTable tricks that work even better in PowerPivot • Control multiple PivotTable elements on one worksheet, with one set of Excel 2010 Slicers • Use DAX Measures to quickly perform tasks that were difficult or impossible with Calculated Fields • Compare today's sales to yesterday's "or to sales from the parallel period last fiscal year. • Use Named Sets to prepare asymmetric reports, show actuals for past months and plan for future months. • About MrExcel Library: • Every book in the MrExcel Library pinpoints a specific set of crucial Excel tasks and presents focused skills and examples for performing them rapidly and effectively. Selected by Bill Jelen, Microsoft Excel MVP and mastermind behind the leading Excel solutions website MrExcel.com, these books will • Dramatically increase your productivity "saving you 50 hours a year, or more • Present proven, creative strategies for solving real-world problems • Show you how to get great results, no matter how much data you have • Help you avoid critical mistakes that even experienced users make • • •

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Customer Reviews

The good: * Excellent information on new features and capabilities of PowerPivot tables. Lots of good examples. * Good compare & contrast with base PivotTables. * Good documentation of some of the v1 PowerPivot limitations. * The prose is very easy to read. The gaps: * The book was written before the final product was delivered. It would be good to see some errata/revisions covering changes made in the mean time for early buyers. * Probably somewhat related to the above, the discussion of DAX is fairly limited. DAX is the real key feature that makes PowerPivot more powerful than base PivotTables. (The best reference source I've seen so far is the MS "Data Analysis Expressions in PowerPivot for Excel 2010" document.) * It would have been nice to explain some considerations when moving models from PivotTables to PowerPivot. For example, PivotTables by definition have to have everything in one giant table. PowerPivot models end up working better with separated lookup (dimension) tables in my experience so far.

This is the first book I have used written by Mr. Jelen. It is obvious he knows his stuff and I can envision that he is very adept at the art of teaching. However, this book is written in a manner similar to other "How To" books in the sense that he describes step-by-step how to achieve a desired result in understanding a concept. Unfortunately the supporting sample files do not lend themselves well to the examples given in the book. First, it took a bit of slueing to even find the files (the link provided in the book was not a valid link) and then after the file was finally discovered, the naming of those files had almost no correlation with the book exercises. After some poking around and guesswork, you can usually find the file you're seeking but it should be much more obvious than it is. Also, the sample files should contain two states, the raw file to use so you can do the exercise and then a solution file. I wonder if everyone involved in this book had the goal to get it out early and just didn't want to take the time to make following the exercises a little more student friendly. On one other unrelated note.... I have purchased other books that are accompanied by a

CD that contain a searchable PDF of the book. This is a very much appreciated and useful companion to the hard copy. If producing a CD is problematic for the publisher for whatever reason they have, perhaps an online version could be made available?

Excerpt from my full review at PowerPivotPro: My biggest overall conclusion after reading Bill's book is that Excel users will be hard-pressed to find a better place to start their PowerPivot journey. Bill is not a SQL guy and he is not an MS employee - he has been building spreadsheets in the wild since before Pivots even existed. And for many years now he has made his living simply teaching others to get the most out of Excel. That history and perspective shows through in the book. Reading it is VERY different from reading any of the MS documentation on PowerPivot for instance - that MS content is excellent at describing PowerPivot, but it just isn't written by a multi-decade Excel maestro, so it doesn't tell Excel users, in detail, what will be familiar to them and what will be new. What the book is NOT Clocking in at 294 pages, this book doesn't try to do everything, which I think is wise. I don't think any Excel pro wants to pick up, as a starting point, a 1200 page bible. This book is an excellent intro and you will hit the ground running fast, but at some point later, you will eventually go looking for:- An in-depth guide to high-powered DAX measures- An in-depth guide to the implications of various table structures and relationships- Performance-tuning reference- A how-to reference for deploying PowerPivot for SharePoint- List of best practices, tips and tricks, workarounds for Excel Services on SharePoint Like I said, as an Excel pro, you are MUCH better off NOT trying to tackle those up front. You can get incredible mileage out of PowerPivot without once touching those topics. You will want to someday, but you don't NEED to, so I highly recommend Excel pros pick up this book as their starting point.-Rob Collie PowerPivotPro

The material covered is excellent. The effort it takes to use the sample files is a distraction, to say the least. Poorly planned and little effort was given to this area. JWalk has you beat hands down on this.

Wishing to learn about PowerPivot, I ordered four PowerPivot books - this one, plus those by Ferrari and Russo (the Excel 2013 version, "Building data models with PowerPivot"), Ralston, and Bosco - and had a quick look at each title, to see which one I prefer. The clearly inferior book by Bosco made a quick exit, followed by the just-OK Ralston, which turned out to be dominated by SharePoint and did not leave much space to PowerPivot proper. Two contenders remained - Jelen, and Ferrari and Russo... and I went with Ferrari and Russo, for the following three reasons. a. If Ralston's book was

"too much about SharePoint", then Jelen's book is "too much about the pivot table", which means discussing the generic Excel pivot table, and focusing on presentation, such as various report-formatting issues. Coming to PowerPivot from the database world, I think of formatting challenges as something that can be solved with a Google search, and missed discussion of data handling, which I found in Ferrari and Russo.^b I very much like Jelen's engaging, simple-spoken and information-packed, no-fluff writing, but the book felt like a run through a sequence of vignettes - and I plumped for Ferrari and Russo's more methodical, pedagogical approach.^c "PowerPivot for the data analyst" talks about Excel 2010, while "Building data models..." is about Excel 2013. PowerView comes to mind as a topic not covered by the older book, and there could be other risks. Overall, I think that a BI professional would be better served by Ferrari and Russo's "Building data models with PowerPivot", but, subject to consideration (c) above - and there is a case for sticking with Excel 2010 - "PowerPivot for the data analyst" makes for a friendly and substantial PowerPivot introduction for a broad audience of Excel power users.

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