

EXCEL <<<<<<<

By Bill Jelen

PowerPivot for Excel 2010

>>> Companies that have Volume Licensing Agreements with Microsoft will be able to start using Office 2010 on May 12. This will enable you to begin using the PowerPivot add-in for Excel 2010, the most powerful tool for Excel in 15 years.

PowerPivot is a free add-in for Excel 2010 from the SQL Server Analysis Services team at Microsoft. After installing Excel 2010, you have to download the add-in from www.PowerPivot.com. The client version of PowerPivot is free. For 90% of the people using Excel, the client version is all that you'll need. If you actually start developing reports that need to be updated daily, you might be inclined to invest in PowerPivot for SharePoint in order to take advantage of the overnight automatic refresh options. Several beta testers have been blogging about PowerPivot tricks at www.PowerPivotPro.com, which also has an updated FAQ section. Now let's take a look at some of the advantages of using PowerPivot (see Figure 1).

100 Million Rows

With PowerPivot, you no longer have to get the IT department to give you million-row summaries of a transactional

database just so you can get your data into Excel. PowerPivot blows through the 1.1 million-row limit of Excel and allows you to load data sets up to 30GB in size. There really isn't a row limit—as long as the data set fits into available memory, you're good to go. I've personally seen 100 million rows of transactional data being sorted and filtered, all on a machine with 8GB of RAM. If you invest in a 64-bit machine with double-digit GB of RAM, the sky is the limit.

Join Worksheets without VLOOKUP

When you create a pivot table with PowerPivot, fields from all of the worksheets are available in the PivotTable Field List! Select some fields from Sheet1, and then choose to filter by a field on Sheet2. PowerPivot will attempt to discover the relationship and often succeeds. If it can't figure out the relationship, it will take you two to three clicks to show PowerPivot that the CustID field on Sheet1 maps to Customer Number on Sheet2. If you're reading this magazine, it's likely you can already do VLOOKUPS in your sleep, but why go to that trouble when PowerPivot

can do them for you?

Four Pivot Tables Filtered Together

Excel 2010 introduces new visual filters called slicers. PowerPivot makes it easy for all of your pivot tables to be controlled by one set of slicers. Apply a filter, and all four of your pivot tables will instantly update to reflect the selected regions, products, or sectors.

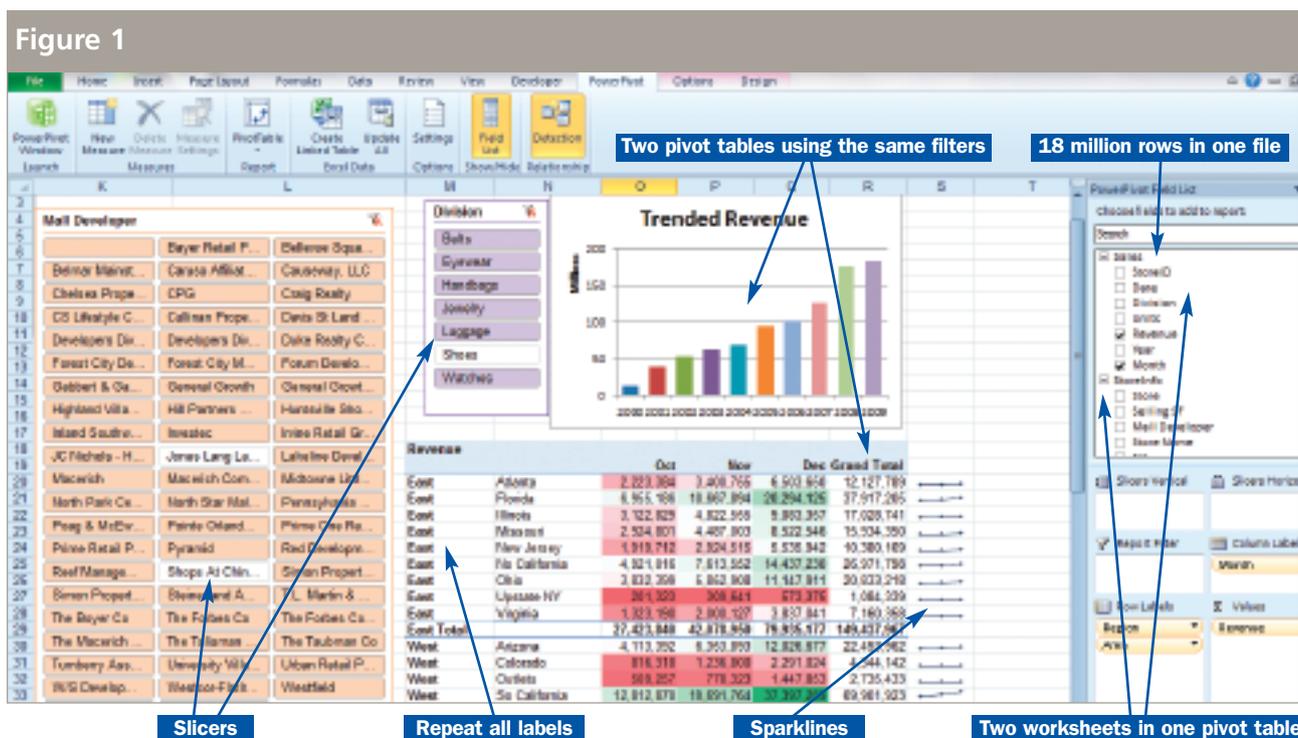
Calculated Fields with Time Intelligence

Pivot tables have allowed calculated fields for a long time. But the new DAX function language in PowerPivot adds 30 new functions that handle time intelligence. You can finally deal with fiscal years that don't end on December 31. You can calculate this month's to-date sales compared to the parallel period from a year ago.

Asymmetric Reporting

Say that you have a pivot table with monthly Actuals and Plan. You would like to show Actuals for past months and Plan for the future months. This is impossible in regular pivot tables: As

Figure 1



soon as you hide the Actuals for June, the Actuals will be hidden for all months. Pivot tables created with PowerPivot are treated as OLAP pivot tables, and the new Named Sets feature makes it easy to report Actuals for some months and Plan for other months.

Convert the Entire Pivot Table to Formulas

You might have tried using the GetPivotData feature to extract data from pivot tables in previous versions of Excel. You can now take an entire pivot table based on PowerPivot and convert the formulas to cube formulas. This allows you to cut

and paste individual cells into any arrangement that you might need for your management reporting.

Other Excel 2010 Features

While PowerPivot is the best new feature in Excel 2010, it isn't the only one. Excel 2010 pivot tables offer new calculations, including ranking and percentage of parent items. And you can finally fill in the blank cells in the outermost row fields of a pivot table. Excel 2010 offers support for Sparklines, tiny, word-sized charts. A new Paste Options menu will have you converting formulas to values in two

keystrokes. New statistical functions fill in some gaps that have been missing in prior versions. An improved File menu offers print preview and page setup in one screen. And a new Web Excel allows you to work on your documents on the road without access to Excel. **SF**

Bill Jelen is the author of PowerPivot for the Excel Data Analyst, which will be available at your favorite bookstore by the end of May. See him demo PowerPivot at IMA's 91st Annual Conference & Exposition in Baltimore, Md., this June. Send questions for future articles to IMA@MrExcel.com.