Microsoft Office Access and Microsoft Office Excel possess many similarities, which can make it difficult to decide which program you should use. For example, both programs can store large amounts of data, run powerful queries and analysis tools to slice and dice that data.

However, each program has clear advantages — depending on the type of data that you are managing and what you want to do with that data. For example, if it is your goal to maintain data integrity in a format that can be accessed by multiple users, Access is your best choice, whereas Excel is better suited for complex numerical data analyzes.

**When you should use Access**
- Want to reduce the redundancy.
- Want to run complex queries.
- Want to produce a variety of reports or mailing labels.

**When you should use Excel**
- Frequently run calculations and statistical comparisons on your data.
- Plan to create charts and sparklines, and use conditional formatting icons, data bars, and color scales.
- Want to perform sophisticated what-if analysis operations on your data, such as statistical, engineering, and regression analysis.

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