

Connecting to Delimited Flat Files



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Importing Data from Delimited “Flat” Files

What is a “Flat” file?

- CSV files
- Text files
- Essentially any “one page” data source

What is a “Delimited” file?

- Any file that has a columnar structure separated by a character pattern
- Delimiters can include comma, space, tab or other characters

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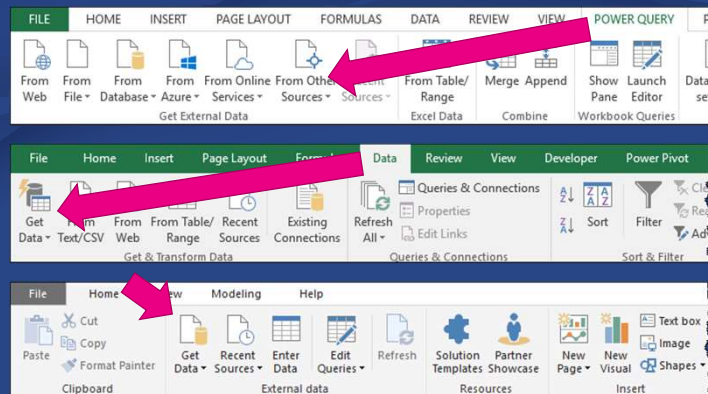
Connecting to a Data Source

How do you connect to data?

Excel 2010 /
2013

Excel 2016+

Power BI Desktop



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How Power Query Works

Power Query's methodology

- Looks at a preview of your data
- Import and transform the data
- Applying "Types" to your Data
- Load the query to connection, data model or (in Excel) a table

Refreshing

- Click the Refresh button
- Power Query runs the updated source file through the same steps!

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Working with Dates from Flat Files

The issue

- Excel and Power BI base dates on a “date serial number”
(This counts number of days since Jan 1, 1900)
- Flat files don’t contain any background about the date format
- Default date formats are applied based on your Windows regional settings

The solution

- Don’t apply the default Date data type when importing from flat files
- Use Change Type → Using Locale
- Define the region the data source is using

Note

- After this point, you can apply default date formats as it will know the region
- This technique can be used for any type of data (not just dates)

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