



# ActivReporter vs Management Reporter

ActivReporter is quickly becoming the industry's top Microsoft Dynamics GP reporting tool to replace Management Reporter. In this document, we explore the differences between the two reporting tools.



## Architecture

Active Development	ActivReporter is a dynamic and growing product with a vibrant future.	No future development other than bug fixes. No new features.
Ease of Use	Reporting is Excel. You already know how to use Excel. No training is required!	Books are written with complexities of designing reports.
Reporting Periods	Define your own reporting periods in addition to the GP fiscal year.	One fiscal reporting year.
Trial Balance Comparison	No guessing whether ActivReporter database is in sync with GP; the Trial Balance Comparison report will tell you.	No way to determine if MR database is in sync with the GP database.
Automation	Full automation capabilities for ActivReporter and Excel.	Report Schedules allow automated reporting but only can store reports in the MR database.
Design Mode & Report Mode	No separate design mode. Just Excel with added functions.	Design Mode is separated from reporting. All format changes require a round trip back to the design mode. Underlying data changes require report regeneration.
Datamart	Updates occur immediately.	Updates are delayed.
Security of Designs	Designs secured by the database with abundant flexibility for the user.	Designs secured by the database.
Database changes	All relevant database changes are synchronized.	Dynamics GP account categories, account segment descriptions, and more are not synced to the datamart with change; require rebuilding.
Reporting Ledgers	Fully supported.	Fully supported. However, you cannot deviate from the hierarchical design of the reporting tree.
Multicurrency	Uses GP multi-currency tables.	Uses GP multi-currency tables.

Presentation

Excel	Excel IS the report writer and provides direct ties back to GP data. You have the full power of Excel to do all arithmetic calculations.	Export to Excel loses all ties back to the financial design.
Accurate Financials	Financial statements are not tied to closing and BBF entries.	P&L statements are not accurate in the new year until the prior year is closed.
Immediate Gratification	F9 key immediately updates the Excel spreadsheet with any data recorded in Dynamics GP.	For new data in Dynamics GP, you must regenerate the output. The Web viewer will update in the background but requires a complete report regeneration.
Drilldown to Transactions	ActivReporter can drill to details for all transactions: the unposted, current year, and historical.	MR can only drilldown to the journal entry detail for the current year.
Drillback to GP	Drillback to the exact GP posting and the associated images if available.	Drillback to Detail Inquiry for the GL account.
Reporting Trees	ActivReporter can create any reporting tree imaginable and place the results into an email, file share, or SharePoint site as a PDF or Excel spreadsheet.	MR can produce reports only to Library. Then you must manually email or disseminate.
Graphics	You have the full power of the Excel graphics engine to create any graph or chart.	MR has very simple graphing and charting capabilities.
External Data	Excel can pull data from external sources: other spreadsheets or databases.	MR has a problematic and abstract way to include limited spreadsheet data.
Embed Company Logo	Excel can embed any graphic in any location.	MR can only embed a logo in the report header or footer.
Design Flexibility	Create dashboards in Excel for professional-looking presentations.	Inflexible row and column definitions require you to export to Excel to create flexible designs. Designs are lost and must be recreated on each export to Excel.
WYSIWYG Report Creation	Create reports directly in their final form with all calculations displayed in real-time.	Interminable roundtrips from design to generate to design to generate, then export to Excel for presentation.
Presentation	If Excel can do it, your reports can do it. Use pivot tables, sorting, filtering, conditional formatting, cell formats, rounding, text alignment, font choices, data analysis, charting, cell comments, symbols, page layouts, watermarks, zoom, programmability.	If you export from MR to Excel, you have all the capabilities listed. However, the effort to dress up the Excel spreadsheet is not saved in MR and must be repeated with every export.

## Usability

Performance	ActivReporter calculates amounts to display on financial design much exceedingly faster than MR. The F9 key will update any changes to the underlying database.	Slow and requires regenerating the report upon any change to the underlying database (postings in GP).
Ad hoc Reporting	Efficient and straightforward.	Must adapt row/column/tree/report combinations and troubleshoot with multiple generations before obtaining a functioning report.
Versioning	ActivReporter maintains a complete version history of all prior versions for the financial design spreadsheet.	Historical row, column, tree, and report definitions are not retained.
Learning Curve	Fast. You already know Excel!	It can be tedious and frustrating because it requires you to think abstractly (i.e., not WYSIWYG).
All-in-One Reporting	ActivReporter can simultaneously generate all your financials in one workbook: balance sheet, P&L, cash flow, comparatives, etc.	You must go through a different generation for each financial statement type: balance sheet, P&L, etc. You can use report groups to generate several reports simultaneously, but they must be exported separately to workbooks.
Financial Functions	Over 50 financial functions in Excel extract data from the GP system and place the results in a cell on a spreadsheet. All the power of Excel's arithmetic functions is available to do calculations.	Arithmetic calculations are cumbersome. Sometimes you must do calculations in hidden columns.
Data Viability	ActivReporter provides SmartList type capabilities 1000x times faster than SmartLists in GP	No data visibility via Management Reporter.
Rollups vs Row Definitions	Rollups contain only account assignments, as Excel does the heavy lifting for formatting and preserving subtotals and literals like headers or section titles.	Row definitions contain account assignments, but also must include all formatting, calculations, and literals using unintuitive and unfamiliar methods.
Email Reports	Automation in ActivReporter provides a mechanism to disseminate all reports to a diverse group via email, SharePoint, and/or file shares.	Cannot email reports automatically.
Unposted	Include unposted at the click of a button.	Unposted available as an option on the designer and not available at the view level.

## Usability

Company Consolidation	Reports on multiple companies, whether in different databases or delineated as a segment of the chart of account number.	Similar capabilities but much more abstract and challenging to implement.
Unit (Statistical) Reporting	Unit (Statistical) data is reported in the same way as financial dollars. Excels arithmetic power can then be used to analyze.	Arithmetic operations are very tedious to implement.
Missing Accounts	View missing accounts as a byproduct of the HD pane display.	The report must be run to determine missing accounts. The report is very slow on large datasets.
Analysis	Excel is the best analysis tool - used daily for complex "what-if" and research.	No analogous functionality.
New Copy	Copy any financial design and associated Excel spreadsheet into a new financial design for editing in just a few seconds.	No analogous functionality.
Activ Trial Balance	The Activ Trial Balance provides account analysis.	No analogous functionality.

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