



Spreadsheets vs. Databases



In this activity, you will compare the uses and functionalities of a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet to a Microsoft Access Database, while getting to know your classmates a little more. Many times, information can be simplified in its organization and interpretation depending on the tool that you use to analyze the data.

Getting to know your classmates using spreadsheets

You and classmates will assist in building a spreadsheet (or flat-file database).

1. Open **Getting to Know Your Classmates.xlsx** and add the information for each of your classmates onto the spreadsheet.
2. Once the entire team has entered in their information, find any similarities or relationships with the data. Go ahead and explore before answering the questions below.

How many of your classmates are born in the same month as you?

Do you have the same middle name as someone else in class? If so, how many?

How many groups of students have the same favorite holiday?

Are there any other similarities or relationships you see with other classmates?

Getting to know your classmates via databases

Now, it's time to have a little fun with this activity! Relational databases are designed to connect information through related fields in order to find a unique relationship.

1. As a class, form smaller groups of specific fields to create multiple clusters of information. (For instance, divide yourselves into groups by age.)
2. Next, raise your hand based on a specific request. (For instance, raise your hand if you were born in the month of March.)
3. Depending on the number of students who raised their hand, you're able to see the connection between the different groups of age and the birth month. This is what's called a relational database.

Which method did you think was easier and faster at analyzing and organizing the data (flat-file database or relational database)? Why?

What were some of the advantages of creating a relational database?

In your own words, describe some of the functions of relational databases.

In this section, you experienced creating a flat-file database and got a glimpse at how relational databases work.