



Excel Data Types

Excel is mainly used to make calculations. Therefore numbers are the most important data type. However, if there were only numbers, it would not be easy to present and explain what all these numbers are about. Never forget that Excel is also a communication tool. You do not only make calculations with it, you will send your result to colleagues, customers or even your boss. They need to understand what these numbers mean.

The main data types in Excel are:

- Number (value)
- Text (or label)
- Date
- Time

Number (value)

The number (or value) type is quite obvious, it contains numbers and can be used in calculations. By default, numbers are right aligned in a cell. The number can be an integer, a decimal number, or even a number using scientific (exponential) notation for large numbers (12 or more digits).

Text (or label)

Text or label is an entry that is usually used for headings, names, and for identifying columns of data. Labels can contain letters and numbers. By default, labels are left aligned in a cell.

Date

Represent a date, that can be displayed in different formats (e.g. "26/03/2020", or "26-Mar-2020", or "26 March 2020"...) depending on how you want them to appear. Excel stores the dates in the form of a serial number. The advantage of this is that you can make calculations on dates. This can be nice when you want to know how many days separate 2 dates for example. By default, date data is right aligned in a cell.

Time

Represent a time, that can be displayed in different formats (e.g. "16:15:00", or "4:15:00 PM", or "04:15:00 PM"...) depending on how you want them to appear. Excel stores the times in the form of a serial number. The advantage of this is that you can make calculations on times. This can be nice when you want to know how many hours separate 2 times for example. By default, time data is right aligned in a cell.

Static vs Dynamic Data

Many cells will contain static information, for example: "12.55" or "My name" or "12/12/2008". We will see later that we can use formulas and functions in Excel. These will display the same types of data (numbers, text, date, time) in the cells. The difference is that formulas and functions are calculated based usually on the contents of other cells. These are called dynamic data, because these data will change depending on the other cells. This calculated cells make the spreadsheet very useful and very powerful

Examples

Data Type:	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Text:	This is text.	John Doe	27 main street
Numbers:	1000	10.5	15,000
Date:	12.12.2008	12.01.2009	14.06.1968
Time:	12:00:00	13:30:25	20:30:00