Difference between reports and dashboards

**DASHBOARDS**

A dashboard makes data easy to understand for technical and non-technical audiences which easily displays all the *data visualisations* in one place

* They’re intended to convey different, but related information in an easy-to-digest form

Dashboards are useful across different industries and verticals because they’re highly customisable

They will typically include visuals that demonstrate:

* What happened
* Why it happened
* What may happen
* What action you should take

In the introduction, it is important to outline **why** we are looking at this data, the relevance of it – give them a reason to be *invested*

As dashboards use visualisations like tables, graphs, and charts it make those who aren’t as close to the data able to easily understand the ‘story’ it tells or the insights it reveals

Dashboards have a high-level view of **broad** amounts of data and are created to answer a specific single question e.g. “How was our site performance last month?”

The main use of a dashboard is to show a comprehensive **overview** of data from different sources, they are useful for *monitoring, measuring, and analysing data* in key areas

There are several basic steps required to create a good data dashboard:

1. **Define your audience and goals**: Think about who you are building this dashboard for and what they need to understand, this will make data visualisation selection easier
2. **Choose your data**: Most businesses will have an abundance of data from different sources, choose only what’s *relevant* to *your* audience and avoid overwhelming them
3. **Choose your visualisations:** Choose the best visualisation to represent your data
4. **Use a template**: When building a dashboard for the first time, using a template of intuitive software can save time
5. **Keep it simple**: use similar colours and styles so your dashboard doesn’t become cluttered and overwhelming
6. **Iterate and improve**: Once it is complete, ask for feedback from someone in your audience, find out if it makes sense to them and answer their questions, use that to make improvements

A screenshot of a graph

Description automatically generatedMake sure that all information you present can be visually seen on the dashboard or report, so that it’s obvious where you got that source from (e.g., a study, or specific data visual)

For your visuals make sure the orientations make sense e.g., tables/graphs should usually be right to left as that is how we read

Do not clutter your dashboard with visualisation, likewise, do not leave loads of whitespace

To create a dashboard in Power BI (desktop):

1. Publish your data
2. Click on a visual of your choice
3. ‘Pin’ the visual and add it to a dashboard

It is important to think about **what** data you want to put on, you only have limited space so it must be utilised effectively – what is **relevant** to the stakeholder

**REPORTS**

Reports usually have a narrower *focus* as they serve the purpose of providing a **deep-dive** view into a dataset and tend to concentrate on a single item or event

They tend to focus on one specific topic and provide in-depth information on that topic

Reports can be several pages long, each focusing on a different topic and typically include text, charts, graphs, and tables

Should be evidence of external research