Power BI Licensing Overview

Power BI is Microsoft’s powerful business intelligence tool that enables users to visualize data, share insights, and collaborate on interactive reports. Depending on the needs of individuals or organizations, Microsoft offers different types of Power BI licenses. Below is a detailed explanation of each type, their differences, and why Power BI Premium may be better than Power BI Pro for certain use cases.

# Types of Power BI Licensing

## Power BI Free

- Best suited for individual users who want to create reports for personal use.  
- Users can connect to various data sources, create dashboards, and publish content to their personal workspace.  
- No sharing or collaboration with others.

## Power BI Pro

- Designed for small to mid-sized teams and organizations.  
- Allows users to share reports and dashboards with others in the organization.  
- Includes features like collaboration, publishing, sharing, and ad hoc analysis.  
- Requires a Pro license for both the report creator and viewer.

## Power BI Premium

- Intended for enterprise-level use.  
- Offers enhanced performance, dedicated cloud capacity, and larger data models.  
- Supports advanced AI, paginated reports, and on-premises reporting through Power BI Report Server.  
- Available in two forms:  
 - Per User (Premium Per User or PPU)  
 - Per Capacity (dedicated resources for the entire organization)

# Differences Between All Types of Licensing

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Feature | Power BI Free | Power BI Pro | Power BI Premium (PPU) | Power BI Premium (Capacity) |
| Report Creation | ✅ | ✅ | ✅ | ✅ |
| Report Sharing | ❌ | ✅ | ✅ | ✅ |
| Collaboration | ❌ | ✅ | ✅ | ✅ |
| Data Refresh | Limited | 8/day | 48/day | 48/day |
| AI & Machine Learning Features | ❌ | ❌ | ✅ | ✅ |
| Paginated Reports | ❌ | ❌ | ✅ | ✅ |
| On-Premises Reporting | ❌ | ❌ | ❌ | ✅ |
| Cost | Free | ₹800–₹1000/user/month | ₹1600–₹1800/user/month | Starts at ₹4.3L/month |

# Benefits of Power BI Premium Over Power BI Pro

## Performance and Capacity

Premium provides dedicated cloud resources which ensure faster performance and scalability. Pro users share capacity, which can result in slower performance under heavy use.

## Larger Dataset Size

Premium supports datasets up to 400 GB (per capacity), whereas Pro is limited to 1 GB per dataset.

## Advanced Features

Premium includes features such as AI capabilities, paginated reports, and XMLA endpoint access for developers. Pro lacks these enterprise-level features.

## Wider Distribution

With Premium capacity, even users without a Pro license can view reports if hosted on the Premium workspace. Pro requires every user to have a Pro license for sharing/viewing.

## On-Premises Reporting

Only Premium (Per Capacity) includes Power BI Report Server for on-prem deployment needs.