

Excel-Minitab Comparison

This comparison is from “Excel or Minitab: Which Software Package to Use in an Introductory Statistics Course?,” by Robert M. Saltzman, College of Business, San Francisco State University, posted 22 June 2001, *Exchanges: The Online Journal of Teaching and Learning in the CSU*, <http://www.exchangesjournal.org>

Excel - Positive

1. Interface dialogs are consistent and have a modern look and feel.
2. Flexible. Easy to control and modify the location of input data and output.
3. Graphs are dynamically updated, and can be embedded in Word files.
4. Wide use in business and other courses.

Excel - Negative

1. Harder for the novice to use - often must enter cell formulas and cell ranges.
2. Occasionally misuses terminology; e.g., checking the box for “confidence level for the mean” yields the CI’s margin of error
3. Harder to get a histogram; e.g., user must set up a column of “bins.”
4. Doesn’t have built-in procedures for confidence intervals and 1-sample t-tests (although these can be performed).

Minitab - Negative

1. Function interfaces are not consistent; many features are buried underneath several layers of dialog boxes.
2. Somewhat inflexible. Can’t control location of output; hard to modify graphs.
3. Graphs are static; if the data change, the graphing process must be restarted.
4. Limited use in business, other courses.

Minitab - Positive

1. Easier for the novice to use; can do most tasks with just a few clicks.
2. Uses common statistical terminology.
3. Generates a default histogram without user-specified intervals.
4. Performs almost all inferences discussed in a first statistics course.