

How OfficeWriter SSRS Integration works

What is SSRS?

SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) is Microsoft's reporting platform. It allows users to design reports with data sets tied to different data sources (e.g. SQL data bases, SharePoint lists). This is done with a type of XML file: RDL (Report Definition Language). SSRS RDL files can be exported to different file formats using the Reporting Services rendering extensions (Excel, Word, PDF, HTML etc.)

The RDL contains information about the data sources, data sets, queries, connection strings and more. It also contains information about the look and feel of the report. Reports are typically designed in Visual Studio or with Report Builder.

For more information about SSRS, please refer to [this MSDN article](#).

OfficeWriter SSRS Integration Components


OfficeWriter fits into SSRS with two parts:

Component	Description
OfficeWriter Renderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Server-side rendering extensions for Excel and Word• Provides Excel and Word features beyond the built in SSRS Export options
OfficeWriter Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A client-side Add-In for Excel and Word• Used for designing reports that will use the OfficeWriter rendering extensions

How does the OfficeWriter SSRS Integration Work?

Designing a Report


The RDL file contains information about connecting to data sources, queries, as well as report design information. The **OfficeWriter Designer** adds its own data and design information to the report, which will be used by the **OfficeWriter Renderer** to export the report. The Designer sections off a part of the RDL for storing this information separately from the rest of the RDL file. In particular, the Designer saves a binary copy of the Excel or Word template file to the RDL and information about binding the report data to that Excel or Word template file.

 If a report needs to be exported to both Excel and Word, then you will need to design the Excel portion of the report in Excel, and separately design the Word portion of the report in Word.

Exporting a Report

When the report is exported using the Renderer, Reporting Services retrieves the data from the queries and data source locations stored in the RDL. It passes this data along to whichever renderer was selected for exporting the report.

The OfficeWriter Renderer loads the copy of the Excel or Word template file and binds the data from Reporting Services to the template. The Render is actually using [ExcelTemplate](#) or [WordTemplate](#) to bind the data to produce the output.

 If you want to export a report to one of the default rendering extensions, you will need to design a layout for the report in Visual Studio or Report Builder because the report designed in Excel or Word for OfficeWriter will only be available to the corresponding OfficeWriter renderer.

Why use the OfficeWriter Integration?

The default rendering extensions for Reporting Services deliver flat, static output. In order to render for multiple extensions such as HTML and PDF, the basic report design cannot accommodate specific features, such as multiple worksheets in Excel. This also means that certain features like charts cannot be dynamic in the output because not all the rendering extensions support Excel charts, so charts are exported as images.

Also, until SSRS 2008 R2, there wasn't a default rendering extension for Word.

Using OfficeWriter for Reporting Services allows end-users to Design reports in Excel and Word and make use of many specific features in those applications.

Interested? Learn more about [OfficeWriter for SQL Server Reporting Services!](#)