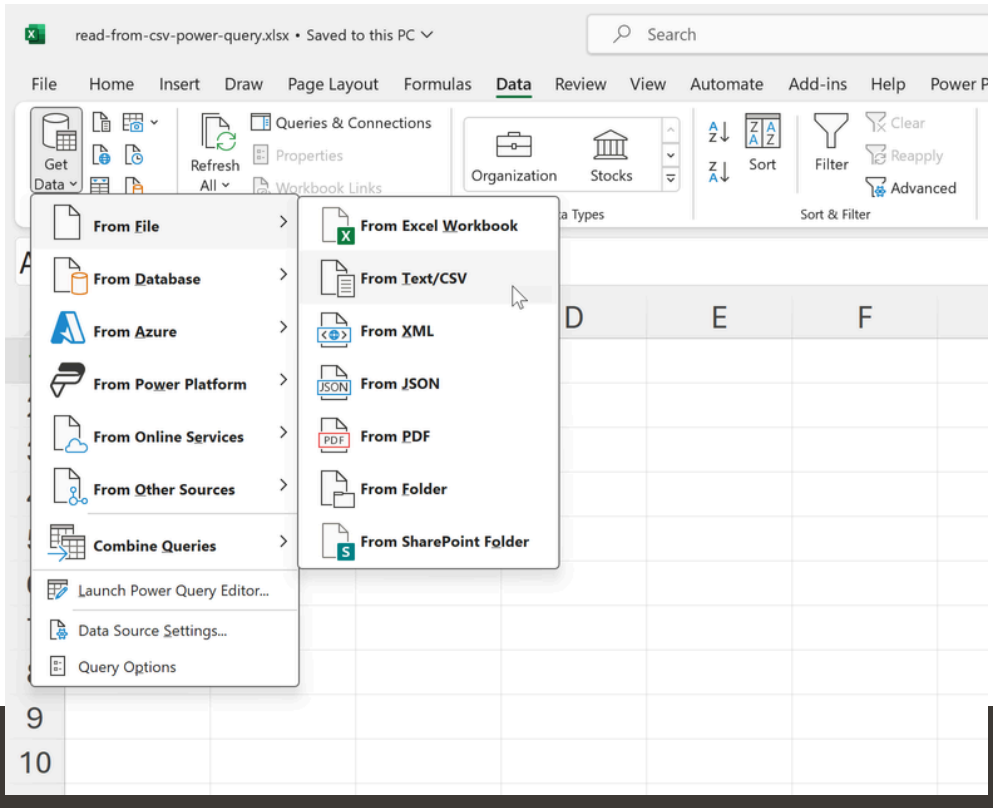
How to connect to a csv file from the web in Excel Power Query

One of the most commonly encountered data sources is still the trusty old comma-delimited value (CSV) file. In this post, I aim to demonstrate how to establish a connection with such a file in a unique manner: when it is not residing on your computer's local file system but is instead hosted on the web.

To get started, open a blank Excel workbook and navigate to the following: Data > Get Data > From File > From Text/CSV:

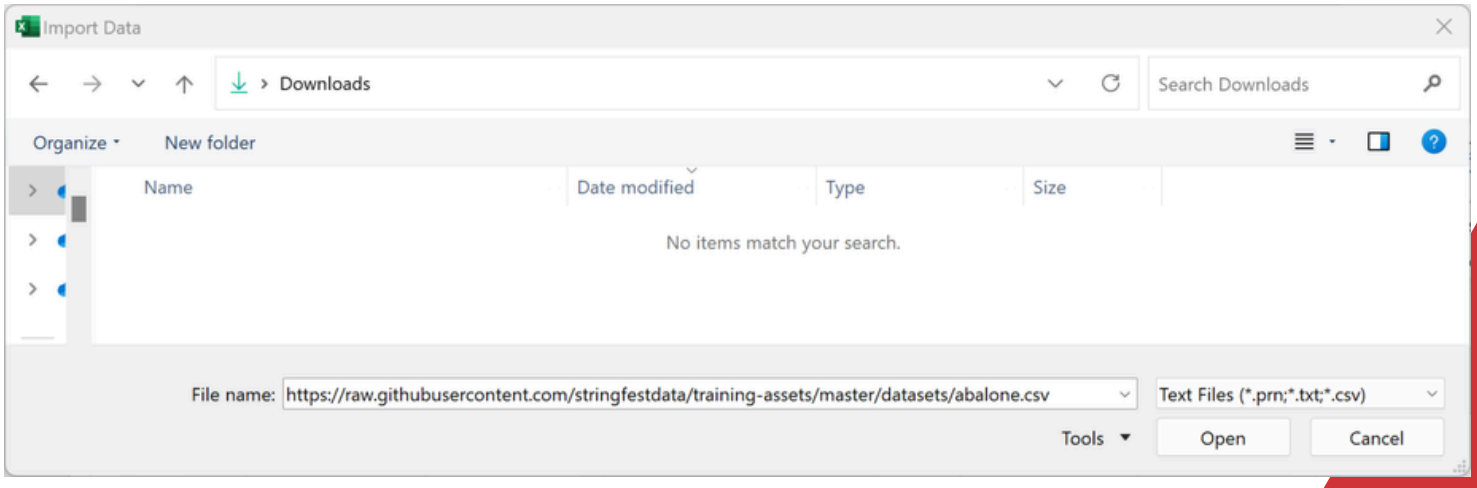


The next step is a bit unconventional.

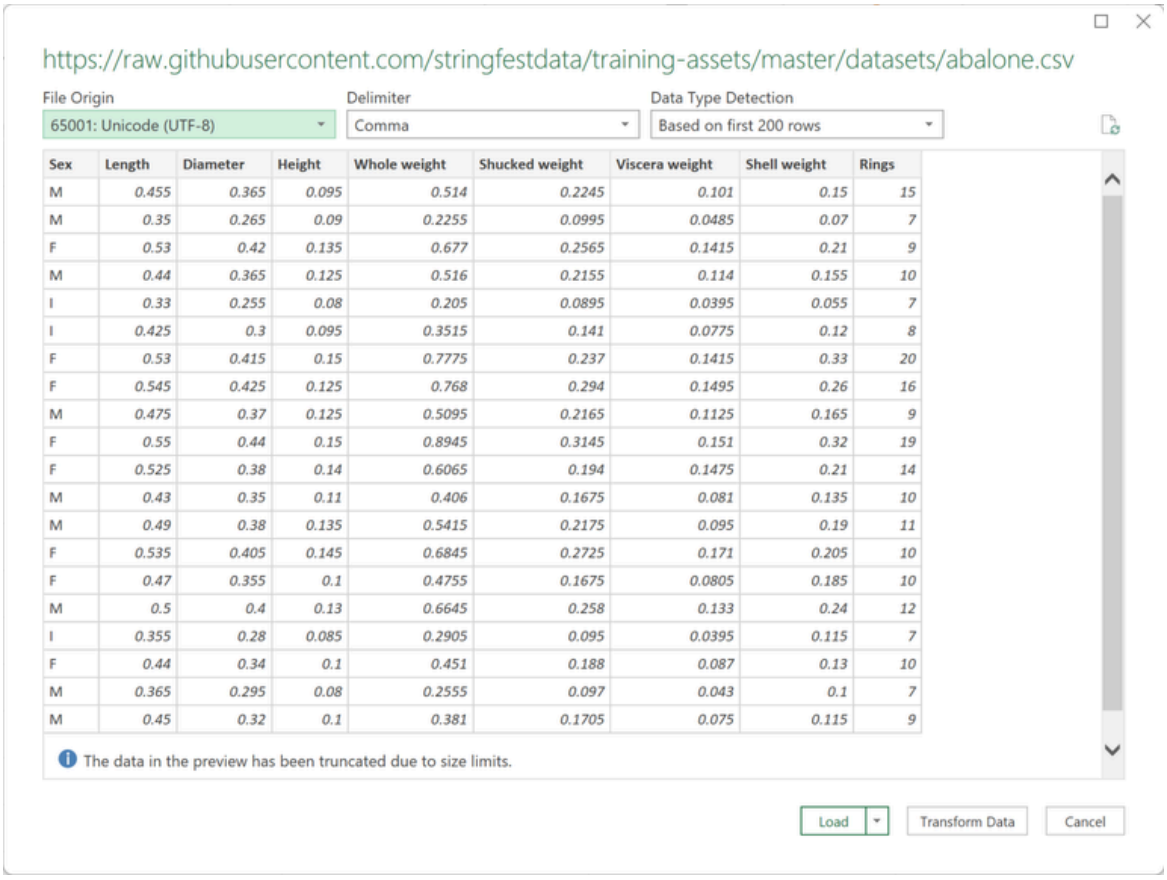
You're likely accustomed to the typical process of locating and selecting a file on your computer by clicking through directories. However, in this case, the file hasn't been downloaded to your computer, and there's no need to do so, especially if it's hosted on a web page with a ".csv" extension.

All you need to do is copy the contents of a file, such as the one shown below, which contains abalone snail measurements, and paste it into the file explorer:

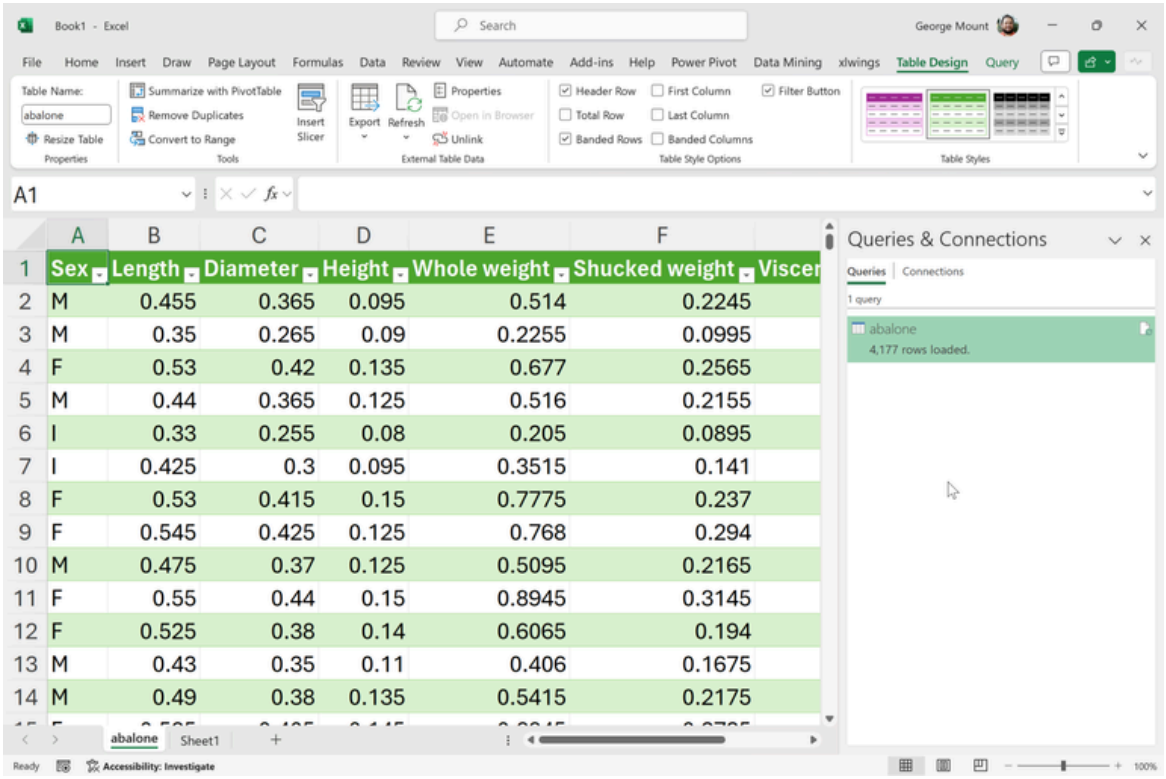
https://raw.githubusercontent.com/stringfestdata/training-assets/master/datasets/abalone.csv



From here, you can either transform or load the resulting dataset like any other in Power Query:



The dataset appears to be in good shape, so I'll proceed to load it directly into an Excel table. Now, we have a Power Query-sourced data source that appears just like any other:

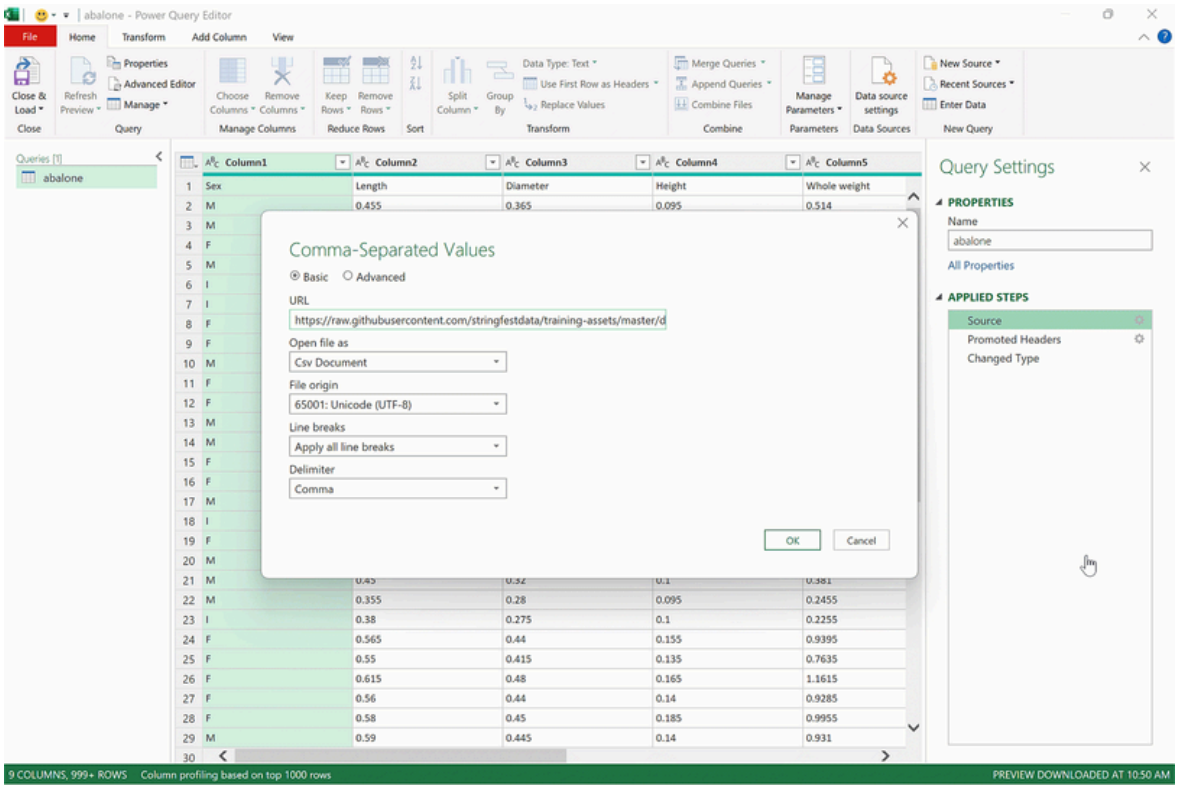


Please keep in mind that when you read data from a CSV file hosted online, you are essentially connecting to a live, external data feed. While this eliminates the need for downloading the file locally, it does introduce an element of unpredictability when it comes to data refresh if you're not familiar with how this data source is maintained.

On the other hand, saving the file locally ensures reliable access and enhances security but requires manual updates and consumes storage space. The choice between these two methods ultimately depends on the trade-off between the need for up-to-date data and the considerations of data stability, security, and storage capacity.

To reassess the source of this query, right-click on the “abalone” query in the Queries & Connections menu and select Edit.

You can then click on the gearwheel icon located next to Data Source in the Applied Steps menu to view the source of this data:



STRINGFEST ANALYTICS

THANK YOU

Thanks for checking out this post on connecting to CSV files via the web in Power Query.

Do you have any questions? Let me know in the comments. And if you're interested in getting started with Power Query for Excel, check out my book, *Modern Data Analytics in Excel: Using Power Query, Power Pivot, and More for Enhanced Data Analytics.*