

Intro to Flourish

Hi, my name's Duncan Clark. I'm one of the co-founders of Flourish, which is a tool for data visualization and storytelling. In this module, we're going to be helping you use Flourish to get started making charts, maps, tables and other kinds of data driven content. It's going to start with a quick tour of the product, which I will give. And then my colleague Katie Riley, our in-house data journalist, has made a series of short videos just two to three minutes each focusing on different aspects of using Flourish, particular templates, for example, or using the flourish data tables. In the next module, we'll also be talking about how to use Flourish for storytelling, but we'll come back to that bit.

So Flourish is a tool for visualizing data and telling stories with data. It lets you create interactive, attractive, mobile friendly graphics without needing to code. The way it works is you go to flourish.studio and register. You'll find yourself on your project home page where you can browse and search any projects you've made. Up here you can click to create a new visualization and that takes you to the Flourish template browser. Here you can pick a template and the general workflow is that you pick a template, replace the data with your own, configure the graphic and then you're ready to publish or export it.

So let's have a look at the kinds of things you can make in Flourish. The templates include a basic chart. So this is our line bar pie chart template. They're all combined in one template which allows you to create cool animations between the different types of graphic and even animate between a single chart and a grid of charts. There are things like the bar chart race template, which creates cool play through animation showing changing values over time. There are flow diagram templates for things like chord diagrams and Sankey diagrams, and there are some things that are a little bit more Flourish specific like our survey template, for example, which enables you to plot every individual data point in the data set and then break them out to different groups and put them on a histogram or even on a map where you can still individually interrogate them.

We also have other types of graphics in Flourish, such as tables where you can create a nice mobile-friendly table even with little charts, spark lines. And we have lots of map templates, so that includes things like the projection map where you can upload some regions or we use an existing example as a starting point and then shade in those regions by the values in your data.

We also have 3D maps which have a base map behind which extends out to the whole world, and then you can visualize data on top of. So this is an example also of US counties data visualized on a 3D tile map. The other thing to say about Flourish that makes it really unique is that any of these visualizations can be used as the basis of a structured story. So if you open this visualization into the story editor, for example, we can quickly make a cool animated tour of this visualization to guide the audience through our dataset.

So that's a quick overview of, you know, Flourish at the top level. Let's just quickly come back to the first template I had opened, just a look at the layout of the editor. So over on the left here we have the previews. Anything in this box is what will ultimately be published. This is your visualization. You can also change the size of that, see how it looks on different screen widths up here. Down the side, you have the settings. Now, these settings are typically part of the template, so you won't find the same settings in every template, which actually makes everything easier to use because there should be nothing

irrelevant. But you will find some things like headers and footers in pretty well all the Flourish templates.

Over here in the data area is where the actual values live, the spreadsheets. A Flourish template can have one or more sheet. And as you can see, when you open something from the template chooser, it loads with some sample data that you can look at and then you can replace this with your own data and we'll be looking at that in more depth soon. Over here, the final bit to mention is the column selection. So this is where you choose which columns are used for which element of the graphic. So that's a quick tour of Flourish. We're now going to dive into more depth on individual templates and individual aspects of the editor, and for that, I'm going to hand over to my colleague, Flourish's data journalist Katie Riley.