The Table Template

In this video, I'm going to be talking about the table template in a little bit more depth, and sort of explaining some of the features of the table template. This is kind of a newish Flourish template. And it's sort of a simple concept, but it's quite powerful when you know how to make the best of it. So I'm going to be explaining how to make best of it.

So actually I'm going to start not here in the table with the settings, but actually in the data tab just to show it to you and explain the data structure. And the data structure is probably the simplest of any Flourish template that we have.

You basically just enter your data in the data table as you would like it to appear in the actual table. There's a little bit more intricacy going on here when you want to make charts, but I'll talk about that in a second. So basically the only thing you have to make sure is that the data is in the right order, whatever you want, and that all of the columns that you want to show up are selected. There's only one column settings, so it's pretty simple.

So back here in the preview tab, you can see that the data is, you know, kind of just displayed in the same way. And there are a couple of different features I really want to point out that sort of make tables quite powerful and useful.

So the first one is that these can be sortable. These columns can be sortable, so make sure you have this column-sorting setting on. And once you do that, you can click through and sort of sort the columns – A to Z, Z to A, or unsorted back to the beginning. This is really useful if you're sort of creating some sort of interactive database that you want people to be able to sort through, and discover, and analyze themselves.

Another thing I wanted to point out was that you can sort of control the pagination with this rows-per-page setting. So right now, it's at 51 because this is a table of the 50 U.S. states plus the District of Columbia. But if I wanted this to be sort of a shorter table with more pages, I could just do like five per page or eight per page or something like that. And now you have this pagination that helps you click through the different pages. So that's something that you may want to play around with.

[00:02:21] So the next thing I wanted to point out was this stripes option. So a lot of tables will have each row sort of colored slightly differently to make a clear differentiation between the rows. It's a spare column, so it's a common sort of table-design feature.

And so in this case, you'll just click over here to make it a really light gray. Okay. Try again. One, two, three, one, two, three. There you go. So now you can see that every other row is colored slightly differently. You can also do this by column if you want, which, I don't know, may be useful.

There's also obviously a bunch of different cell styles for alignment and padding, and you can add borders if you want. Change the color. You can add borders around the entire thing. You can change the column widths. You can get into some really sort of custom column widthing here with this custom option. Auto is usually pretty good though. You can also style the headers. So that's all really useful.

Then the next thing that I want to talk about is this charts option. And this is sort of the option that makes Flourish tables kind of different from other visualization tools and table tools, which is that you can add these bar and line charts to them. First thing is to make sure that you have them enabled, so if I disable this, it just goes way. But actually, this is useful because it shows what the bar chart is actually doing.

So what you do is you enter the name of the columns that you want to make the bar chart out of. So if you go back to our data sheet, you can see Clinton and Trump vote shares, I believe, per state. By state.

And then once you enter them in here, you also can give it a new column name, and it makes the bar chart out of those two values. If I disable this, you can see that we go to Clinton and Trump back as their own columns. If I enable it, you see this bar chart, which is really quite nifty, I think.

The same sort of goes for this line chart, so you can only make one of each at the moment. But you do the same with the line charts. So if I disable it, you'll see that this line chart is being made out of all of these columns. It's kind of drawing a line – one to the next, to the next, to the next. If I enable it, you can see that's what it's doing, and we're creating this new population column.

And you can also choose a color palette. Well, I guess this isn't going to do anything because they're there. But I can choose a color palette. I can choose to change the color of this if I want. That's bright. And it's really quite a nifty feature, and it can make really useful data visualization out of tables.

The last main thing I want to show you is this number-formatting column. So if you want to reformat, say I had, let's go back and turn this chart off. So say I had all of these columns here – 1960, 1970, 1980. And I wanted them to instead of having this number here, which is like, I guess, 3.2 million, I actually wanted it to have commas in there. I need to put the names of the columns right there, and then it will format those columns, according to these in this format. So you can see that it has a comma in there, and if there were decimals, it would have decimals, they would have decimals. If I wanted to make it a European style with the decimal points instead of the commas, I could do that. And then if I add 1980, it will do that next column as well.

So this is something that confuses people, but it is definitely important to know. If you have data without commas or something and you want to add commas, that's how you do it.

And then actually the last thing I want to show you is this mobile-view option. So tables are not always something that look great on small screens because they're inherently wide in format. We have this option here to control what the table looks like on mobile.

The default option is blocks, which means that each row, instead of being a row in a table, is made into this sort of block. But you can change it back to table with a scroll bar, if you want to. And this is really useful, especially if you're a news organization or someone who knows that a lot of people are going to be looking at this table on mobile. You definitely want to play around with this.

So that was kind of a long one, but I just wanted to make sure that I explained all of the really important features of the table. Because it really is a great template, and it really is something that I don't think people use enough. So, yeah, hopefully that was helpful.