



Why IT professionals
choose Tableau for
modern BI and analytics

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This paper is written for IT and business intelligence decision makers to understand what differentiates Tableau from other analytics solutions in the market. A growing demand for data means an increasingly competitive business intelligence and analytics market, and we believe a critical aspect in evaluating modern BI solutions is to understand more than the present capabilities of the software. To ensure its longevity as an investment for driving enterprise transformation, you should have confidence in the mission, philosophy, and community that surround your analytics platform and understand the value these bring to end users and IT professionals as you deploy, scale, and support your modern BI efforts.

Tableau is the market-leading choice in modern business intelligence platforms, offering the greatest analytical breadth, depth, and flexibility. Everything we do is driven by our mission to help people see and understand data, and our commitment to offering the most user-friendly, complete visual analytics platform.



Tableau offers the greatest choice and flexibility as a complete, modern analytics platform

Your BI platform should not dictate your data and analytics strategy. Choice is a Tableau philosophy, and we give customers the greatest options for how to deploy, what data to connect to, and how to collaborate. You'll not only be able to leverage existing technology investments, but the value you are getting from those investments today and the investments you make in the future. You can rely on Tableau as a constant as both your data environment and the needs of the business continue to evolve and expand.

 We needed a tool that could take all of that great data and information and allow us to turn it into an insight. From a global perspective, it becomes more and more paramount to have all of this information and be able to discern it. Now, with what we've created with our logical data warehouse and Tableau, people can collaborate and all of that information is accessible.

— TIM NALL, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, BROWN-FORMAN

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Deploy Tableau where you want—on Linux or Windows, on-premises, in the public cloud, or fully hosted SaaS, even embedded in web portals and applications; you won't find this much flexibility with any other complete platform. And you don't need to license and connect a stack of products or disconnected tools to get the full value of your modern analytics solution. You can also use existing security and authentication protocols, device management platforms, and more.

Tableau supports the full cycle of self-service analytics from prep to analysis, governance, and sharing. Users can work with any shape, size, and type of data, whether on-premises, in cloud applications, or flat files. Analyze your data where it is live, or create extracts that automatically refresh on any schedule you set. Author new content completely from the web. Interact with Tableau from your Android or iOS mobile device.

- Connect to any data with more than 67 native data source connections and hundreds more through our web data connector and APIs.
- Prepare data for analysis with Tableau Prep. Access and combine disparate data without writing code. Pivot, split, and manage metadata to optimize data sources.
- Access, query, and display all data—not just a sample or subset.
- Load and query large data extracts up to five times faster with Hyper technology.

Administration that's simple, yet powerful

Tableau offers the features, integration, automation, and auditability you need to easily track and manage content, users, licenses, and server performance—directly in Tableau or with enterprise-standard monitoring tools. We've made it very easy to see and manage content (with version control), users, groups, and tasks (like extract refreshes, subscriptions, and Active Directory synchronization), as well as maintain row-level security on your data. Additionally, there are default views built right into the administration capabilities, so you can visually monitor traffic to views and data sources, user actions, load times, and many more performance metrics.

Exactly the security and governance you need

People in your organization are already self-serving their analytical needs, exporting data into ungoverned environments for downstream analysis and collaborating via files and email. The people who know the data best should ask and answer their questions, but responsibly, without risking governance, trust, or security. You need self-service without chaos or compromise.

Tableau securely supports as much or as little governance required to balance IT needs and business agility, allowing access to the full spectrum of governance—from a traditional, IT-owned pipeline to an IT-enabled, self-service model. At scale, governed self-service analytics is made possible where flexible controls intersect with well-defined roles, responsibilities, and processes. It's a journey of right-sizing security and governance principles for iterative success with an ongoing evaluation of changing business needs as data-driven decision-making spreads across your organization.

Tableau Data Server satisfies security, governance, and monitoring requirements and hides the complexity of your data architecture from business users. Centrally manage:

- Data access and permissions in a secure, governed operational model.
- Database drivers—installations aren't required on users' local machines.
- Data sources, including Published and Certified Data Sources.
- Metadata, including standardized calculations and definitions of fields.

Tableau products are designed to put the user first

Our mission is to help people see and understand data—the most critical word being *people*. We believe that people are your greatest asset, and that data—that you spend millions of dollars capturing, curating, cleaning, and storing—can be used to make your people even more valuable. If you can get the data into the hands of the people who know the business, that's when the magic happens. We want to give people the ability to think, act, and deliver.

Unfortunately, most business analytics products are built to centralize and control data, not democratize it. What's more is that there's too often a high barrier to entry to data-driven insights, as many solutions require deep, technical expertise that limit the benefits of analytics to the specialized few. But we believe data analysis should be about asking questions and not about learning software. Deeply specialized skills are a barrier to satisfying curiosity and unleashing new creative potential at scale—it's all about empowering people to discover, explore, and share powerful insights with ease.



We saw Tableau as more than just a great visualization solution. It can connect to our Oracle database, our SQL database, our Teradata database, and Excel all in the same place!

— TOM LANEY, BUSINESS CONSULTANT
DATA SCIENCE CENTER, SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

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It's not about the dashboard

We make data easy to explore by using the visual as an interface for the data, not simply as a way to display the result. While a dashboard can be powerful, the transformative value to the business lies within exploration and interactivity, allowing users to answer question after question in an uninterrupted flow. A dashboard or report may help to answer known unknowns, but exploration through visual analysis is how people discover unknown unknowns and arrive at impactful insights beyond initial questions.

VizQL is our patented, visual query language that translates drag-and-drop actions into data queries and then expresses that data visually. VizQL abstracts the underlying complexities of query and analysis, letting people answer questions as fast as they can think of them.

Tableau enables the greatest breadth and depth of self-service, visual analysis

Interactive, visual analytics are the new norm in business intelligence. Visual analysis makes it easier for users of all skill sets to gain insight from their data. Yet, many BI solutions retain antiquated, code-heavy processes that rely a set of predetermined criteria to create reports and dashboards—only to limit the insight users can glean without the specific, technical expertise to modify the visualization. What happens when they have follow-up questions or need to pivot their analysis? Do they go back to IT and wait in a queue of requests? In Tableau, immediate visual response allows limitless visual data exploration without interrupting the flow of analysis. There's no “build” vs. “view” mode, and with unlimited “undo,” there is no wrong path.

Powerful analytics for everyone—no coding or deep expertise required

- Automatically group and replace similar data points while preparing data in Tableau Prep.
- Join tables from different vendors and databases, then save them as a new, single data source. Bring additional data into analysis, automatically linking fields to your existing data.
- Model data in the midst of analysis. Create groups, sets, and calculated fields in a few clicks. Hide or exclude rows, columns, or outliers in a couple clicks.
- Select multiple data points with a lasso or other selection tools—no holding Control with repeated clicks.
- Drag and drop to create reference and trend lines, distribution bands, clusters, and more.
- Perform level of detail and quick table calculations to manipulate aggregated data with a few clicks, simplifying otherwise challenging database work.

Maps

Built-in mapping abilities include display data by country, state, city, and more without latitude or longitude. Tableau automatically recognizes geographic fields, and supports spatial files, linear geometries, dual-axis maps, custom maps, and more.

Dates and time

Tableau automatically recognizes date and time formats and creates date hierarchies, making it easy to quickly move through years, quarters, months, weeks, or days during analysis.

We don't stop at making end-user self-service possible. We're building on the intuition of the pioneers and the conclusions of decades of dedicated, scientific research to make analysis faster, easier, and more intuitive. Tableau builds visual best practices into the software—from hand-selected color palettes that remove the natural bias of the human eye to automatic suggestions for effective chart types based on the data you're analyzing.

Get to “aha” moments even faster

- Surface popular and Certified Data Sources as recommendations to users, as well as recommended tables and smart joins, backed by machine learning.
- See optimal visualization types based on the data you’re using with Show Me.
- Customize how dashboards are viewed on tablets and mobile devices with the Device Designer.
- Filter published content and save a personalized view as your default. Additionally, leverage user permissions to automatically create custom filtered views of content.
- Configure event-driven alerts and subscribe yourself and others to content on any desired notification schedule.

Advanced, statistical analytics

Tableau not only connects to file outputs from MATLAB, R, SAS, and SPSS as data sources, but supports direct integration with R and Python. You can run code directly inside Tableau, as well as visualize and manipulate model results from predictive services such as Rserve and TabPy.

“ I can tell you that easily it runs into 10,000–20,000 man hours in terms of productivity generated because of the automation and standardization you get out of Tableau. But more than that, to me it’s the business value—and you cannot really put a price on it.

— PREETHAM SHANBHAG, SENIOR DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL PLANNING & ANALYSIS,
OPERATIONS AND TRANSFORMATION, HONEYWELL INDIA

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From the individual analyst to your entire organization, Tableau delivers the most value with powerful analytics tailored to meet users’ needs across all skill levels. Casual data users have a clear path to move to more feature-rich offerings as their skills grow, rather than leaping to a high-priced license full of capabilities they aren’t ready for. This also helps your IT and line of business leaders to better forecast licensing needs and learning plans for users.

Tableau users are the most passionate and empowered

Our mission to help people see and understand data means we are focused on customer success. Tableau is focused exclusively on the BI market and since our foundation in 2003, we've continuously invested in research and development at an unrivaled pace. At the same time, we recognize that our customers are smarter and more knowledgeable about what they need than we ever will be. Much of our innovation is driven by customer feedback so we can continue to release features that are deeply impactful instead of just shiny or trendy.

Tableau 10 was built with the help of more than 75,000 passionate community members, including 14,000 beta testers. More than 30 features from the release were a direct result of the Community Ideas Forum.

A community that “will not allow you to fail”

Evaluating a solution doesn't stop at the software. You should also consider how it will be rolled out, enabled, scaled, and supported to ensure adoption and engagement. One of the most valuable assets that differentiates Tableau, speeds up time to market, and ensures lasting engagement is our community. The unmatched passion and enthusiasm are a direct indication of the success these users have had with the product, and this type of support is incredibly useful to all types of Tableau customers.

We often hear from our customers, “the community will not allow you to fail.” Tableau has more than 150,000 active participants in our Community Forums and more than 165,000 participants in 500 user groups worldwide. The Tableau community is active, diverse, creative, and supportive of one another on and offline. These people are committed to helping others see the value in Tableau they've personally experienced, and love to share their experiences and best practices. One of the greatest opportunities to do so is at our annual Tableau Conference, where more than 15,000 live attendees (and still growing!) gather to learn and network.

Standout members receive special recognition for their skills, participation, and contributions to the community as Tableau Ambassadors or Tableau Zen Masters. Individuals can also pass a Certification exam for professional recognition. Certifications have helped our expert users differentiate themselves, master new skills to progress their careers, and build credibility and equity with clients and coworkers alike.

Of course, Tableau also offers a host of support resources like online help articles and how-to videos, live training opportunities, and more. We're committed to helping you deepen the value of your modern analytics investment—from building a center of excellence to fostering an internal community.



The exponential growth in Tableau adoption required us to rethink our capacity planning and support model. We developed an approach that supports both the experienced analysts as well as novice business users, advancing our data-driven culture.

— ANDREW SALESKY, GLOBAL DATA OFFICER, CHARLES SCHWAB

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Doing good with data

Every day, Tableau users improve people's lives by making better use of data. From disease research, education patterns, and industrial efficiency to patient care and government spending, the opportunities to do good with data are endless.

Tableau Foundation

Tableau Foundation matches employee donations dollar for dollar, and matches community volunteering time with financial support to the nonprofits they work with.

Our grants combine our two most valuable resources—our people and our products—with financial support to non-profits reshaping our world.

Through the Tableau Service Corps, non-profits can connect with Tableau staff and partners looking to volunteer their data skills to help organizations have a greater impact.

Tableau Academic

To date, *Tableau Academic Programs* have helped more than half a million students and instructors use Tableau in classrooms worldwide.

Tableau Public

Each week on *Tableau Public* more than 7,000 new visualizations are shared with the world by nonprofits, journalists, bloggers, political enthusiasts, and more.

Why IT professionals choose Tableau

Now you have a better idea of what makes Tableau the market-leading choice in modern business intelligence. Our customers have given us a multitude of reasons as to why Tableau is their choice for visual analytics, but we hear these most often:

Flexibility and choice Whatever data, infrastructure, and strategy	Complete platform Security, governance, management, reliability	Transformation Improved communication and data-driven decision making
Time savings Faster to create analytical content and faster to get to insights	Ease of use Powerful self-service and data discovery for all skill levels	Fewer resources Doing more with less (including support) at scale

“ We started off with a very narrow business use-case and then it just quickly spread. Tableau makes it simple and simplicity, everyone wants talk about big data analytics but Tableau simplifies it.

—ASHISH BRAGANZA, DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE, LENOVO

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If you ask us, we think the number one reason customers choose Tableau is because they try it out with their own data and experience the magic themselves. We don't just want you to take our word—or our customers' word—for it.

Tableau Prep Visually combine, shape, and clean disparate data to prepare for analysis.	Tableau Desktop Connect to data in a few clicks. Visualize and create interactive dashboards with a few more.
Tableau Server Visual analysis at scale, deployed on-premises or in the cloud.	Tableau Online Tableau Server as a fully hosted SaaS platform.

[Start your trial](#) of Tableau Server or Tableau Online with Tableau Prep and Tableau Desktop today to experience governed data access using Data Server and Published Data Sources.

About Tableau

Tableau is a complete, easy-to-use, enterprise-ready visual business intelligence platform that helps people see and understand data through rapid-fire, self-service analytics at scale. Whether on-premises or in the cloud, on Windows or Linux, Tableau leverages your existing technology investments and scales with you as your data environment shifts and grows. Unleash the power of your most valuable assets: your data and your people.

Additional resources

[Tableau for the Enterprise: IT Overview](#)

[Modern BI & Analytics Evaluation Guide](#)

[Compare Tableau](#)

[Customer Stories](#)

