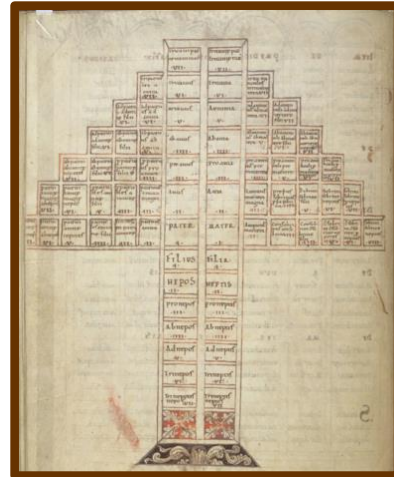# Visualizing Information for Genealogists

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Information Design and Genealogy are both multi-disciplinary, drawing on research from many areas of knowledge. What follows is a selective bibliography of sources for genealogists interested in visualizing information as well as some tips for using Word to create visually appealing documents.

BOOKS/ARTICLES

Arons, Ron. *Mind Maps for Genealogy*. Oakland, California: Criminal Research Press, 2014. Applies research problem data from Mills and Jones to create mind maps.

Acampora, Jon. Excel Campus. Introduction to Pivot Tables, Charts, and Dashboards in Excel (Part 1) https://www.excelcampus.com/charts/pivot-tables-dashboards-part-1/.

———. Excel Campus. Introduction to Pivot Tables, Charts, and Dashboards in Excel (Part 2) https://www.excelcampus.com/charts/pivot-tables-dashboards-part-2/.

———. Excel Campus. Introduction to Pivot Tables, Charts, and Dashboards in Excel (Part 3) https://www.excelcampus.com/charts/pivot-tables-dashboards-part-3/.

Buzan, Tony. *The Mind Map Book.* New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

Conklin, Honor. "Illuminating Manuscripts: The Interrelationship of Maps and Text in Genealogical Research." *NGS Quarterly 80* (December 1992). All of 1992 is found in one PDF; this article is located on pp. 280-286.

Hoter, Danny and Jonathan Sanito. edX. *Introduction to Data Analysis using Excel*. Free online course.

Kashuba, Melinda. "Charting a Research Course Using Maps and Geography." *NGS NewsMagazine* 31 (October-December 2005).

———. *Walking With Your Ancestors: A Genealogist's Guide to Using Maps and Geography*. Cincinnati: Family Tree Books, 2005.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "QuickLesson 6: Mindmapping Records." *Evidence Explained: Historical Analysis, Citation & Source Usage*. www.evidenceexplained.com/content/quicklesson-6-mindmapping-records.

Norman, Don. *The Design of Everyday Things: Revised and Expanded Edition.* New York: Basic Books, 2013.

Ovans, Andrea. "What Makes the Best Infographics So Convincing." 22 April 2014. *HBR Blog Network*. https://hbr.org/2014/04/what-makes-the-best-infographics-so-convincing.

Tufte, Edward R. *Beautiful Evidence.* Cheshire, Connecticut: Graphics Press LLC, 2006.

———. *Visual Explanations.* Cheshire, Connecticut: Graphics Press LLC, 1997.

———. *Envisioning Information.* Cheshire, Connecticut: Graphics Press LLC, 1990.

———. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information.* Cheshire, Connecticut: Graphics Press LLC, 1983.

———. *Visual Explanations*. Cheshire, Connecticut: Graphics Press LLC, 1997.

Von Laken, Lisa. *The Shy Genealogist*. "Working It Wednesday–Timeline in Excel, Part 1," "Timeline in Excel, Part 2," and "Timeline in Excel, Part 3." Many other applications of Excel to genealogy. https://theshygenealogist.wordpress.com.

WEBSITES

Chart Porn. Chartporn.org. "data visualizations you just gotta love."

Gapminder. www.gapminder.org. Want to see the rate of child mortality in the 19th century in the US? In Ireland? This free tool converts boring numbers into enjoyable, animated and interactive graphics and makes data useful to genealogists accessible.

Information is beautiful. www.informationisbeautiful.net.

WEBINARS/VIDEO

These include some stunning examples of data visualization.

MacEntee, Thomas*. Mind Mapping Your Research Plans and Results*. Legacy Family Tree. 2013.

McCandless, David. "The beauty of data visualization." TED Talk. 2010.

Michel, Jean-Baptiste and Erez Lieverman Aiden. "What we learned from 5 million books." TED Talk. 2011.

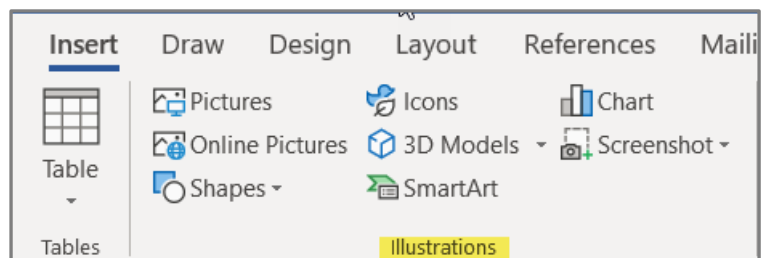Rosling, Hans. "The best stats you've ever seen." TED Talk. 2006.

Tufte, Edward. "The Art of Data Visualization." PBS Digital Studios. 2013

USEFUL MICROSOFT WORD* FEATURES

The best way to work with these features is use some data already captured and try several different ways to display it. Experiment. See what works, and what doesn't.

The **Illustrations** section of the **Insert** tab on the Toolbar has several features that make it easy to add images to a document.
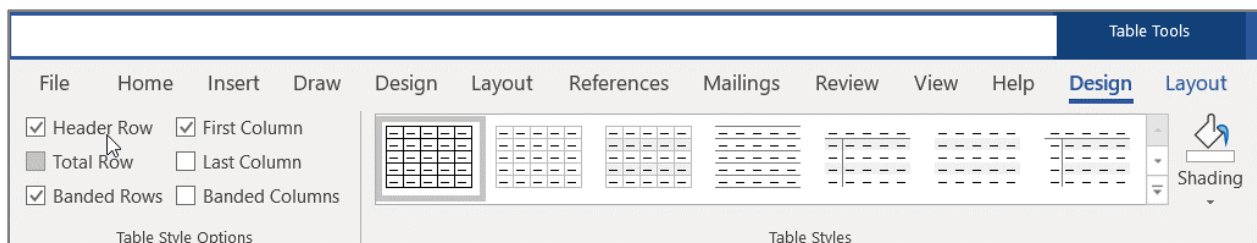
- Pictures: from your computer.
- Online Pictures: from a variety of online sources.
- Shapes: ready-made shapes, such as circles, squares, and arrows.

- SmartArt: graphics range from graphical lists and process diagrams to more complex graphics, such as Venn diagrams and organization charts.
- Chart: Column, line, pie, bar charts and more. Enter your data into the spreadsheet that opens or copy from Excel.
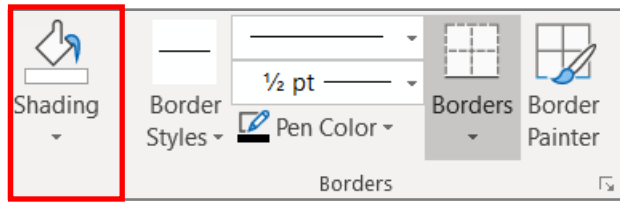- Screenshot: capture a snapshot of any window open on your desktop.

The **Tables** section of the **Insert** tab on the Toolbar has several table options. Tables are a good way to organize the data for analysis and/or presentation. You can add a table, draw a table, insert an Excel Spreadsheet, or use a pre-formatted table.
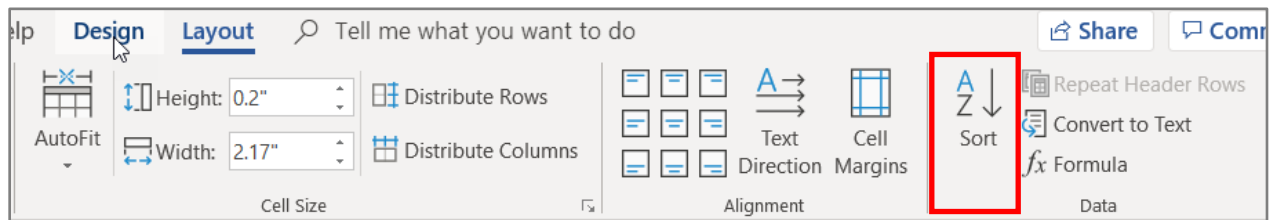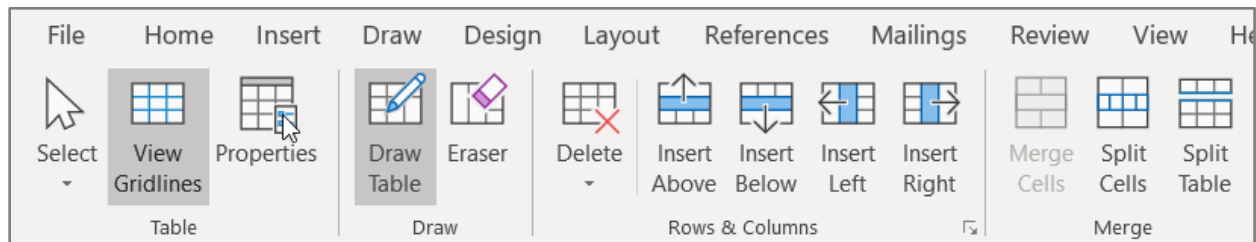
Once inserted the **Table Tools** tab pops up when you select the table. **Design** and **Layout** choices appear under the tab.

The **Design** toolbar is shown below split into two images due to the width.
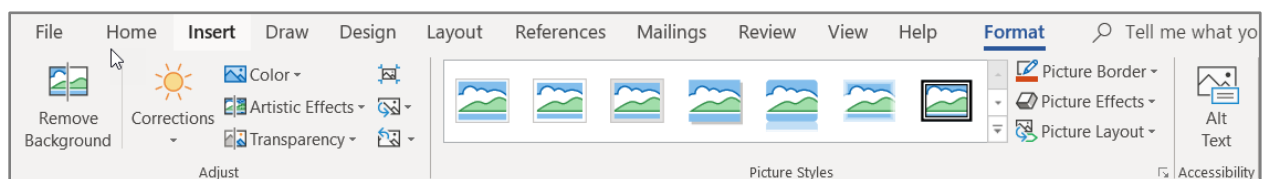
The **Layout** toolbar is shown below split into two images due to the width.

The most useful features are **Shading** (Design) to break up rows of data or to highlight key information, and **Sort** (Layout) which rearranges data and allows patterns to emerge.

When you have images, maps, photos, drawings, etc. use features on the **Picture Tools Format** tab to give your report a polished look.

Change a color image to black and white or sepia, sharpen the image or change the contrast. Add a pre-formatted frame or customize a frame. Adding a consistent border to all your images will help unify the document.

*All screenshots from Office 365 version of Word.

Web addresses verified as of 28 December 2018.