

Creating Custom Color Palettes

This is not a supported feature of Tableau. Instructions are provided as is. No guarantee of future compatibility is expressed or implied.

It is simple to change colors in Tableau using the color editor. However, often users want to create their own palette that matches their corporate identity or describes common data better. Tableau users can create custom palettes by adding the colors to a preferences file using a text editor.

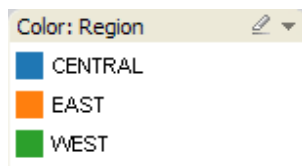
Requirements:

- Text editor (Notepad works well)
- Your chosen colors in HTML format (#RRGGBB)

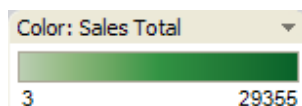
To change the color, you must first decide what color types and values to use and modify the default Preference file to include the custom colors. Then you can apply the colors in Tableau.

Picking Color

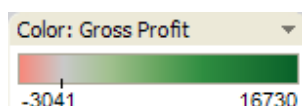
Based on the type of data being presented, Tableau will automatically choose between 3 different types of color palettes. For categorical data – such as your typical dimension – Tableau chooses a categorical encoding. This is where you see the typical blue, orange and green colors. Below, the 'Region' dimension is on the color shelf and we get this legend:



This is the most common palette that people want to change. There are two other types of palettes – sequential and diverging. Both are used for continuous variables (typically measures). Sequential starts with a light color and moves toward green, blue or some other value. Here 'Sales Total' is on the color shelf:

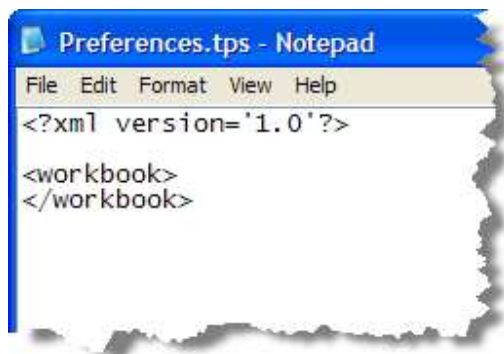


Diverging is used by default when the range of a measure includes both positive and negative values. Here 'Gross Profit' is on the color shelf:



Changing the Preferences File

Use a text editor to open the Tableau preferences file (\\My Documents\\My Tableau Repository\\Preferences.tps). For best results, right click on the file and choose 'open with' and select 'Notepad'. The file should look like this:

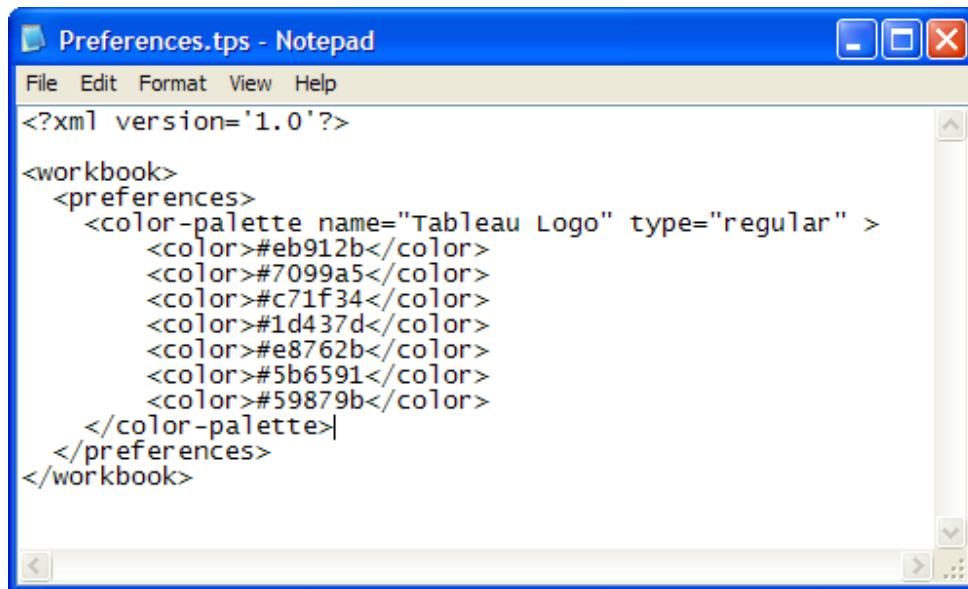


This is a basic XML file that you can modify to add a custom color palette. You simply need to add the correct color tags between those 'workbook' tags and then launch Tableau.

Add the XML below between the workbook tags.

```
<color-palette name="Tableau Logo" type="regular" >  
    <color>#eb912b</color>  
    <color>#7099a5</color>  
    <color>#c71f34</color>  
    <color>#1d437d</color>  
    <color>#e8762b</color>  
    <color>#5b6591</color>  
    <color>#59879b</color>  
</color-palette>
```

The final file should look like below:



```
<?xml version='1.0'?>
<workbook>
  <preferences>
    <color-palette name="Tableau Logo" type="regular" >
      <color>#eb912b</color>
      <color>#7099a5</color>
      <color>#c71f34</color>
      <color>#1d437d</color>
      <color>#e8762b</color>
      <color>#5b6591</color>
      <color>#59879b</color>
    </color-palette>
  </preferences>
</workbook>
```

You can add as many palettes as you like by making additional sets of "color-palette" tags. Make sure each has a unique name.

Each palette can have as many colors as you see fit.

If you want to add a sequential or diverging palette, do so by changing the 'type' attribute from "regular" to one of these values:

ordered-sequential

ordered-diverging

Using Your Palette in Tableau

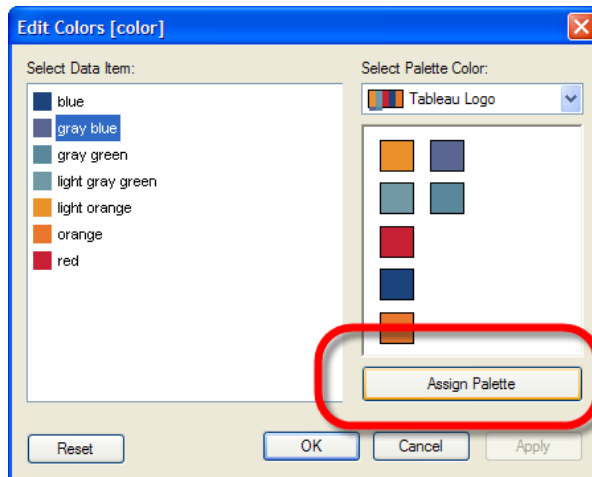
1. Launch Tableau and add a dimension to the color shelf.
2. Double click in the color legend to launch the color editor



3. Select your new palette from the list. Custom palettes will always be at the end of the list, in the order they appear in the preferences file.



4. Click 'Assign Palette' to use the palette in its default order. The order the colors are used is based on the order they appear in the preferences file.



5. You can assign any color to any member by selecting the member and then the color

When you save the file the color information is embedded in the Tableau file. However, the color palette is not included as a reusable item. This means that any colors that are in use will be shown for any person opening the Tableau workbook regardless of whether or not they have the modified preferences file.

Other viewers will not be able to choose the custom palette for new encodings unless they have the preferences file in their Tableau Repository.