Data Flow Diagram Template

Data flow diagrams and layers

When you create a data flow diagram, Visio places the 2-D data flow shapes on a layer called Flowchart and the connector shapes on a layer called Connector. A layer is a named category of shapes. When shapes are assigned to separate layers, you can work with them separately. For example, you can hide or lock all layers except the one you want to work on, or print shapes based on their layer assignments.

See also:
About layers

Fitting a data flow diagram on a page

In Visio, you can draw a data flow diagram first, letting shapes fall in the area outside the drawing page, and then adjust the fit of the diagram and the drawing page.

To fit the drawing page to the data flow diagram:

1. Draw a data flow diagram and connect the shapes. Choose File > Page Setup.

2. On the Page Size tab, under Page Size, check Size Page To Fit Drawing, then click OK.

   The drawing page resizes to enclose the diagram. Even though the shapes may touch the edges of the drawing page, they still print within the edges of the printed page.

To fit the data flow diagram to the drawing page:

1. Draw a data flow diagram and connect the shapes. Choose File > Page Setup.

2. In the Drawing Scale dialog box, under Drawing Scale, choose a smaller drawing scale.

   For example, if the unscaled drawing is larger than the drawing page, change the scale so that .75 units on the page equals 1 unit in the real world. If the drawing is still too large, try different scales until the diagram fits on the page.

Tip: When you scale a data flow diagram, the text doesn't scale with the shapes. You may need to change the font size so that the text fits properly within the flowchart shapes. To change the font size, double-click a shape to select its text, then choose the size you want from the font size list on the Text toolbar.

Data flow shape properties

By default, Visio associates three custom-property fields-Cost, Duration, and Resources-with each 2-D data flow shape. You can enter data into the fields by right-clicking any shape, then choosing Properties from the shortcut menu.

If you want to associate additional data with your data flow shapes, you can run the Custom Properties Editor to add property fields to the masters.

To run the Custom Properties Editor:

• Choose Tools > Macro > Custom Properties Editor.

See also:
Adding, editing, and deleting custom-property fields

Generating reports from properties

If you've entered data for the properties associated with your data flow shapes, you can run the Property Reporting Wizard to generate inventory or numerical reports based on the data. For example, you could

calculate the average cost for a specific process or you could create a cost and duration summary for all the steps in the chart.

To run the Property Reporting Wizard:

- Choose Tools > Property Report.

See also:
Creating reports from custom data

Linking data flow shapes to other drawing pages, other files, or World Wide Web locations

You can add navigational links to any shape in your diagram, so that users of the diagram can right-click the shape to jump to separate drawing pages, separate files, or documents on an intranet or the Web. For example, you can link a Data Process shape to another drawing page, where the process is described in detail.

To add links to shapes:

- Choose Insert > Hyperlink.

See also:
About using hyperlinks

Creating a database from a data flow diagram

If the shapes in your diagram contain custom-property data, you can run the Flowchart Database Wizard to create a Microsoft Access 7.0 database from the drawing. You can either create a new database or insert new tables into an existing database. To run the Flowchart Database Wizard, you must have Microsoft Access 7.0 installed on your computer.

To run the Flowchart Database Wizard:

- Choose Tools > Flowchart Database Wizard.

    Note: This command is available on the Tools menu only if you started with the Data Flow Diagram Template.