

# Getting Started with Palladio

Palladio ([palladio.designhumanities.org](http://palladio.designhumanities.org)), a product of Stanford's Humanities + Design Lab, is a web-based visualization tool for complex humanities data. Think of Palladio as a sort of Swiss Army knife for humanities data. It's one package that includes a number of tools, each of which allows you to get a different angle on the same data.

Palladio is relatively new and still under active development — which means that you will almost certainly encounter bugs! Still, it's a very useful tool for getting a handle on a complicated dataset.

## When Might Palladio be the Right Tool for You?

### **You have structured data.**

Here, “structured data” means “data in a spreadsheet”: categorized, sorted, and stored in an Excel document or some other kind of spreadsheet application.

### **You're interested in time, space, and relationships.**

That's where Palladio excels: showing you how various entities are connected across time and space.

### **Your data has many attributes.**

Palladio's really good at helping you uncover relationships among disparate attributes over time and space — for example, it can help you see that a diarist was especially interested in trees as he traveled through North Carolina, and especially interested in bats as he traveled through Arizona. Palladio allows you to drill down through your data using faceted browsing.

## We Might Palladio Not be the Right Tool for You?

### **You have unstructured data.**

If you're trying to analyze a long text — like a poem or a novel — Palladio won't help you much. You'll want to look for text analysis tools, like Voyant (<http://voyant-tools.org/>).

### **You just want to count things.**

If you just want to make relatively simple charts and graphs, like a bar or pie chart, Palladio is too much tool for you! Instead, try using Excel's built-in functions, or check out ManyEyes ([www-958.ibm.com/manyeyes](http://www-958.ibm.com/manyeyes)).



**You want to present an interactive visualization.**

One big limitation of Palladio is that you can't embed or share the visualizations you create, except in static form. So while Palladio can help you explore and understand your data, it's not great for presentation, at least not yet. Instead, try Google Fusion Tables, ManyEyes, or Tableau.

**You want to create complex, fine-tuned maps and networks graphs.**

While Palladio can produce maps and network graphs, you can't customize them to any great extent, and you can't perform sophisticated network analysis, such as calculating centrality. Instead, you might consider more sophisticated mapping tools, such as CartoDB or ArcGIS, and more sophisticated network analysis tools, such as Gephi and Cytoscape.

**You hate bugs.**

Palladio is still a baby, and you will almost certainly encounter some bugs. If you prefer not to use unstable software, you might investigate Google Fusion Tables or Tableau.

