DataTables example Complex headers with column visibility

Complex headers (using colspan / rowspan) can be used to group columns of similar information in DataTables, creating a very powerful visual effect.

In addition to the basic behaviour, DataTables can also take colspan and rowspans into account when working with hidden columns. The colspan and rowspan attributes for each cell are automatically calculated and rendered on the page for you. This allows the [columns.visible](http://datatables.net/reference/option/columns.visible) option and [column().visible()](http://datatables.net/reference/api/column().visible()) method to take into account rowspan / colspan cells, drawing the header correctly.

Note that each column must have at least one unique cell (i.e. a cell without colspan) so DataTables can use that cell to detect the column and use it to apply ordering.

The example below shows a header spanning multiple cells over the contact information, with one of the columns that the span covers being hidden.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | HR Information | | Contact | | |
| Position | Salary | Office | Extn. | E-mail |
| Name | Position | Salary | Office | Extn. | E-mail |
| Tiger Nixon | System Architect | $320,800 | Edinburgh | 5421 | t.nixon@datatables.net |
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| Colleen Hurst | Javascript Developer | $205,500 | San Francisco | 2360 | c.hurst@datatables.net |
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| Michael Silva | Marketing Designer | $198,500 | London | 1581 | m.silva@datatables.net |
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| Gloria Little | Systems Administrator | $237,500 | New York | 1721 | g.little@datatables.net |
| Bradley Greer | Software Engineer | $132,000 | London | 2558 | b.greer@datatables.net |
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| Jenette Caldwell | Development Lead | $345,000 | New York | 1937 | j.caldwell@datatables.net |
| Yuri Berry | Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) | $675,000 | New York | 6154 | y.berry@datatables.net |
| Caesar Vance | Pre-Sales Support | $106,450 | New York | 8330 | c.vance@datatables.net |
| Doris Wilder | Sales Assistant | $85,600 | Sidney | 3023 | d.wilder@datatables.net |
| Angelica Ramos | Chief Executive Officer (CEO) | $1,200,000 | London | 5797 | a.ramos@datatables.net |
| Gavin Joyce | Developer | $92,575 | Edinburgh | 8822 | g.joyce@datatables.net |
| Jennifer Chang | Regional Director | $357,650 | Singapore | 9239 | j.chang@datatables.net |
| Brenden Wagner | Software Engineer | $206,850 | San Francisco | 1314 | b.wagner@datatables.net |
| Fiona Green | Chief Operating Officer (COO) | $850,000 | San Francisco | 2947 | f.green@datatables.net |
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| Michelle House | Integration Specialist | $95,400 | Sidney | 2769 | m.house@datatables.net |
| Suki Burks | Developer | $114,500 | London | 6832 | s.burks@datatables.net |
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| Howard Hatfield | Office Manager | $164,500 | San Francisco | 7031 | h.hatfield@datatables.net |
| Hope Fuentes | Secretary | $109,850 | San Francisco | 6318 | h.fuentes@datatables.net |
| Vivian Harrell | Financial Controller | $452,500 | San Francisco | 9422 | v.harrell@datatables.net |
| Timothy Mooney | Office Manager | $136,200 | London | 7580 | t.mooney@datatables.net |
| Jackson Bradshaw | Director | $645,750 | New York | 1042 | j.bradshaw@datatables.net |
| Olivia Liang | Support Engineer | $234,500 | Singapore | 2120 | o.liang@datatables.net |
| Bruno Nash | Software Engineer | $163,500 | London | 6222 | b.nash@datatables.net |
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| Finn Camacho | Support Engineer | $87,500 | San Francisco | 2927 | f.camacho@datatables.net |
| Serge Baldwin | Data Coordinator | $138,575 | Singapore | 8352 | s.baldwin@datatables.net |
| Zenaida Frank | Software Engineer | $125,250 | New York | 7439 | z.frank@datatables.net |
| Zorita Serrano | Software Engineer | $115,000 | San Francisco | 4389 | z.serrano@datatables.net |
| Jennifer Acosta | Junior Javascript Developer | $75,650 | Edinburgh | 3431 | j.acosta@datatables.net |
| Cara Stevens | Sales Assistant | $145,600 | New York | 3990 | c.stevens@datatables.net |
| Hermione Butler | Regional Director | $356,250 | London | 1016 | h.butler@datatables.net |
| Lael Greer | Systems Administrator | $103,500 | London | 6733 | l.greer@datatables.net |
| Jonas Alexander | Developer | $86,500 | San Francisco | 8196 | j.alexander@datatables.net |
| Shad Decker | Regional Director | $183,000 | Edinburgh | 6373 | s.decker@datatables.net |
| Michael Bruce | Javascript Developer | $183,000 | Singapore | 5384 | m.bruce@datatables.net |
| Donna Snider | Customer Support | $112,000 | New York | 4226 | d.snider@datatables.net |

* Javascript
* HTML
* CSS
* Ajax
* Server-side script

The Javascript shown below is used to initialise the table shown in this example:

$(document).ready(function() { $('#example').DataTable( { "columnDefs": [ { "visible": false, "targets": -1 } ] } ); } );

In addition to the above code, the following Javascript library files are loaded for use in this example:

* [//code.jquery.com/jquery-1.12.3.min.js](http://code.jquery.com/jquery-1.12.3.min.js)
* [../../media/js/jquery.dataTables.js](http://docs.google.com/media/js/jquery.dataTables.js)

The HTML shown below is the raw HTML table element, before it has been enhanced by DataTables:

This example uses a little bit of additional CSS beyond what is loaded from the library files (below), in order to correctly display the table. The additional CSS used is shown below:

The following CSS library files are loaded for use in this example to provide the styling of the table:

* [../../media/css/jquery.dataTables.css](http://docs.google.com/media/css/jquery.dataTables.css)

This table loads data by Ajax. The latest data that has been loaded is shown below. This data will update automatically as any additional data is loaded.

The script used to perform the server-side processing for this table is shown below. Please note that this is just an example script using PHP. Server-side processing scripts can be written in any language, using [the protocol described in the DataTables documentation](http://datatables.net/manual/server-side).

Other examples

[**Basic initialisation**](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/index.html)

* [Zero configuration](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/zero_configuration.html)
* [Feature enable / disable](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/filter_only.html)
* [Default ordering (sorting)](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/table_sorting.html)
* [Multi-column ordering](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/multi_col_sort.html)
* [Multiple tables](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/multiple_tables.html)
* [Hidden columns](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/hidden_columns.html)
* [Complex headers (rowspan and colspan)](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/complex_header.html)
* [DOM positioning](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/dom.html)
* [Flexible table width](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/flexible_width.html)
* [State saving](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/state_save.html)
* [Alternative pagination](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/alt_pagination.html)
* [Scroll - vertical](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/scroll_y.html)
* [Scroll - vertical, dynamic height](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/scroll_y_dynamic.html)
* [Scroll - horizontal](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/scroll_x.html)
* [Scroll - horizontal and vertical](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/scroll_xy.html)
* [Language - Comma decimal place](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/comma-decimal.html)
* [Language options](http://docs.google.com/basic_init/language.html)

[**Advanced initialisation**](http://docs.google.com/index.html)

* [DOM / jQuery events](http://docs.google.com/events_live.html)
* [DataTables events](http://docs.google.com/dt_events.html)
* [Column rendering](http://docs.google.com/column_render.html)
* [Page length options](http://docs.google.com/length_menu.html)
* [Multiple table control elements](http://docs.google.com/dom_multiple_elements.html)
* [Complex headers with column visibility](http://docs.google.com/complex_header.html)
* [Read HTML to data objects](http://docs.google.com/object_dom_read.html)
* [HTML5 data-\* attributes - table options](http://docs.google.com/html5-data-options.html)
* [HTML5 data-\* attributes - cell data](http://docs.google.com/html5-data-attributes.html)
* [Language file](http://docs.google.com/language_file.html)
* [Setting defaults](http://docs.google.com/defaults.html)
* [Row created callback](http://docs.google.com/row_callback.html)
* [Row grouping](http://docs.google.com/row_grouping.html)
* [Footer callback](http://docs.google.com/footer_callback.html)
* [Custom toolbar elements](http://docs.google.com/dom_toolbar.html)
* [Order direction sequence control](http://docs.google.com/sort_direction_control.html)

[**Styling**](http://docs.google.com/styling/index.html)

* [Base style](http://docs.google.com/styling/display.html)
* [Base style - no styling classes](http://docs.google.com/styling/no-classes.html)
* [Base style - cell borders](http://docs.google.com/styling/cell-border.html)
* [Base style - compact](http://docs.google.com/styling/compact.html)
* [Base style - hover](http://docs.google.com/styling/hover.html)
* [Base style - order-column](http://docs.google.com/styling/order-column.html)
* [Base style - row borders](http://docs.google.com/styling/row-border.html)
* [Base style - stripe](http://docs.google.com/styling/stripe.html)
* [Bootstrap 3](http://docs.google.com/styling/bootstrap.html)
* [Foundation](http://docs.google.com/styling/foundation.html)
* [jQuery UI ThemeRoller](http://docs.google.com/styling/jqueryUI.html)
* [Bootstrap 4 (Tech. preview)](http://docs.google.com/styling/bootstrap4.html)
* [Semantic UI (Tech. preview)](http://docs.google.com/styling/semanticui.html)
* [Material Design (Tech. preview)](http://docs.google.com/styling/material.html)
* [UIKit (Tech. preview)](http://docs.google.com/styling/uikit.html)

[**Data sources**](http://docs.google.com/data_sources/index.html)

* [HTML (DOM) sourced data](http://docs.google.com/data_sources/dom.html)
* [Ajax sourced data](http://docs.google.com/data_sources/ajax.html)
* [Javascript sourced data](http://docs.google.com/data_sources/js_array.html)
* [Server-side processing](http://docs.google.com/data_sources/server_side.html)

[**API**](http://docs.google.com/api/index.html)

* [Add rows](http://docs.google.com/api/add_row.html)
* [Individual column searching (text inputs)](http://docs.google.com/api/multi_filter.html)
* [Individual column searching (select inputs)](http://docs.google.com/api/multi_filter_select.html)
* [Highlighting rows and columns](http://docs.google.com/api/highlight.html)
* [Child rows (show extra / detailed information)](http://docs.google.com/api/row_details.html)
* [Row selection (multiple rows)](http://docs.google.com/api/select_row.html)
* [Row selection and deletion (single row)](http://docs.google.com/api/select_single_row.html)
* [Form inputs](http://docs.google.com/api/form.html)
* [Index column](http://docs.google.com/api/counter_columns.html)
* [Show / hide columns dynamically](http://docs.google.com/api/show_hide.html)
* [Using API in callbacks](http://docs.google.com/api/api_in_init.html)
* [Scrolling and Bootstrap tabs](http://docs.google.com/api/tabs_and_scrolling.html)
* [Search API (regular expressions)](http://docs.google.com/api/regex.html)

[**Ajax**](http://docs.google.com/ajax/index.html)

* [Ajax data source (arrays)](http://docs.google.com/ajax/simple.html)
* [Ajax data source (objects)](http://docs.google.com/ajax/objects.html)
* [Nested object data (objects)](http://docs.google.com/ajax/deep.html)
* [Nested object data (arrays)](http://docs.google.com/ajax/objects_subarrays.html)
* [Orthogonal data](http://docs.google.com/ajax/orthogonal-data.html)
* [Generated content for a column](http://docs.google.com/ajax/null_data_source.html)
* [Custom data source property](http://docs.google.com/ajax/custom_data_property.html)
* [Flat array data source](http://docs.google.com/ajax/custom_data_flat.html)
* [Deferred rendering for speed](http://docs.google.com/ajax/defer_render.html)

[**Server-side**](http://docs.google.com/server_side/index.html)

* [Server-side processing](http://docs.google.com/server_side/simple.html)
* [Custom HTTP variables](http://docs.google.com/server_side/custom_vars.html)
* [POST data](http://docs.google.com/server_side/post.html)
* [Automatic addition of row ID attributes](http://docs.google.com/server_side/ids.html)
* [Object data source](http://docs.google.com/server_side/object_data.html)
* [Row details](http://docs.google.com/server_side/row_details.html)
* [Row selection](http://docs.google.com/server_side/select_rows.html)
* [JSONP data source for remote domains](http://docs.google.com/server_side/jsonp.html)
* [Deferred loading of data](http://docs.google.com/server_side/defer_loading.html)
* [Pipelining data to reduce Ajax calls for paging](http://docs.google.com/server_side/pipeline.html)

[**Plug-ins**](http://docs.google.com/plug-ins/index.html)

* [API plug-in methods](http://docs.google.com/plug-ins/api.html)
* [Ordering plug-ins (with type detection)](http://docs.google.com/plug-ins/sorting_auto.html)
* [Ordering plug-ins (no type detection)](http://docs.google.com/plug-ins/sorting_manual.html)
* [Custom filtering - range search](http://docs.google.com/plug-ins/range_filtering.html)
* [Live DOM ordering](http://docs.google.com/plug-ins/dom_sort.html)

Please refer to the [DataTables documentation](http://www.datatables.net) for full information about its API properties and methods.

Additionally, there are a wide range of [extensions](http://www.datatables.net/extensions) and [plug-ins](http://www.datatables.net/plug-ins) which extend the capabilities of DataTables.

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