

VISUAL FINANCIAL EXPLORER

Turn your General Ledger into Interactive Insight

Inside ActivityHD

Marvin Crossnoe | Senior Solutions Consultant | InterActiv 2026





Marvin Crossnoe

Senior Solutions Consultant,
AccountingWare

1813

Spring. New York. You write for a newspaper.

What is the biggest story out of Europe this past year?

1813



Painted in 1812 - the year it happened.

He left his army at Smorgoni on 5 December and was in Paris by the 18th. The army was not.

The New-York Times

VOL. I. NO. 37.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 27, 1813.

PRICE SIX CENTS.

NAPOLEON'S GRAND ARMY DESTROYED IN RUSSIA

*Of Four Hundred Thousand Men Who Crossed the Niemen in June, Scarcely Ten Thousand Are Returned. -
The Emperor Reaches Paris Alone.*

Intelligence received by an arrival from Liverpool confirms the reports which have for some weeks agitated this city. The French army which entered Russia in June last, reckoned at more than four hundred thousand men of every nation of the Continent, has been all but annihilated in its retreat from Moscow.

The city was entered on the 14th of September and found in flames. After five weeks of waiting upon a peace that never came, the retreat began on the 19th of October, by the same road the army had come.

The Emperor quitted his army at Smorgoni on the 5th of December and travelled by sleigh through Warsaw and Dresden, arriving at Paris on the night of the 18th. The Twenty-Ninth Bulletin, published there, admits the loss of the greater part of the horses and of the artillery, and speaks of a cold of sixteen and eighteen degrees below freezing which set in about the 7th of November.

Of the passage of the Berezina, where the bridges were burned behind the army, the accounts are dreadful.

Of the whole force, it is computed that scarcely ten thousand effective men recrossed the Niemen at Kowno in the last days of December. The Cossacks harass the remnant without cessation.

The Prussian corps under General Yorck has concluded a convention with the Russians and withdrawn from the French service. In every capital of Europe the question is now asked whether the Emperor can raise another army before the spring, and whether the Powers will wait for him to do so.

What happened here?

Metric	Spreadsheet result
Total soldiers at outset	422,000
Main force reaching Moscow	100,000
Combined final survivors	10,000
Overall survival rate	2.4%
Coldest recorded temperature	-30 C
Rows needed to represent troop movement	51
Temperature observations	9
Named locations	20

Executive Summary

Every number on this sheet is correct.

Read it for twenty seconds.

Then tell me what happened, and where.

Here is all of it.

Seq	Long	Lat	Soldiers	Direction	Group	Temp C
1	24.0	54.9	340,000	Advance	1	
4	26.0	54.7	320,000	Advance	1	
7	28.5	55.0	240,000	Advance	1	
9	30.0	55.2	180,000	Advance	1	
11	32.0	54.8	145,000	Advance	1	
14	35.5	55.4	100,000	Advance	1	
16	37.6	55.8	100,000	Advance	1	
17	37.7	55.7	100,000	Retreat	1	0
22	34.3	55.2	55,000	Retreat	1	
24	32.0	54.6	24,000	Retreat	1	-21
30	26.8	54.3	12,000	Retreat	1	-30
33	24.4	54.4	4,000	Retreat	1	
36	24.0	55.1	60,000	Advance	2	
45	28.3	54.3	28,000	Retreat	2	
51	24.1	54.4	6,000	Retreat	3	

51 rows of troop movement

... and that is only the first table.

9 temperature readings on a second sheet, keyed by longitude

20 named places on a third sheet, keyed by coordinates

Three tables. One story. Nobody in this room can see it.

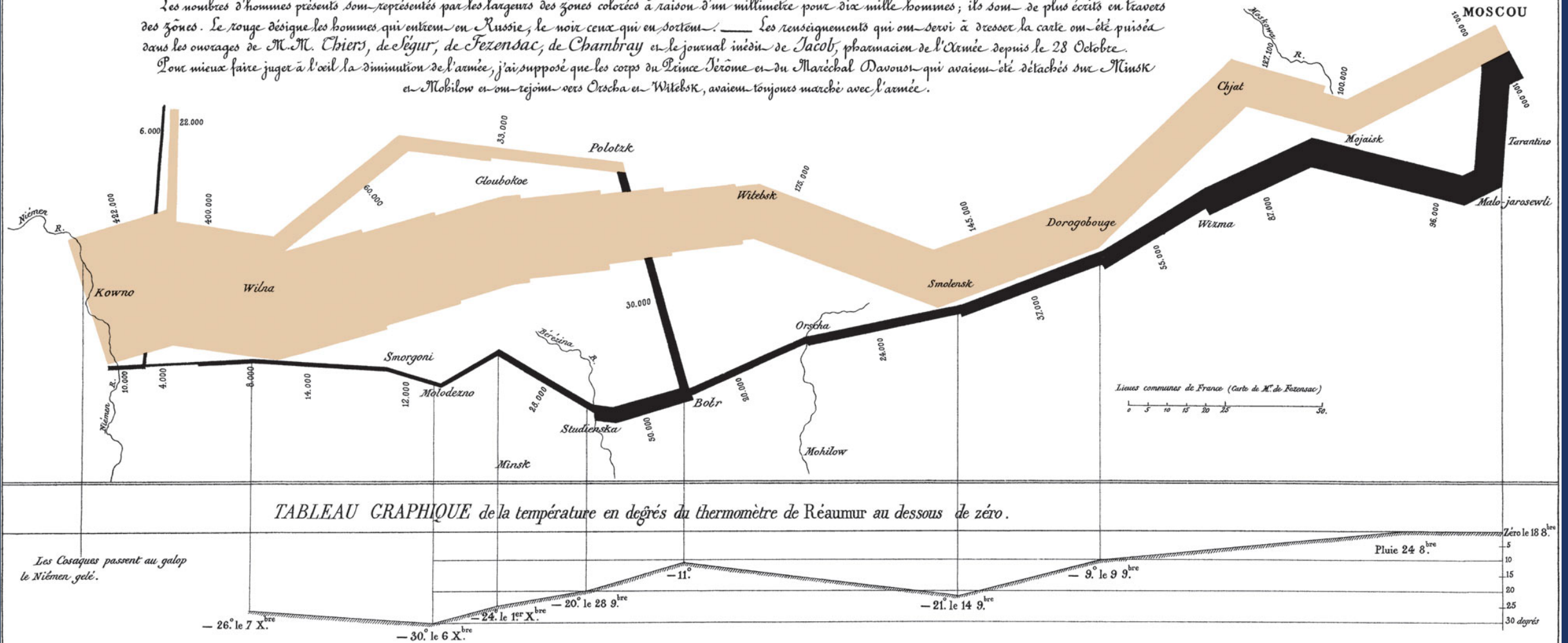
[Open the full workbook](#)

Carte Figurative des pertes successives en hommes de l'Armée Française dans la campagne de Russie 1812-1813.

Pressée par M. Minard, Inspecteur Général des Ponts et Chaussées en retraite Paris, le 20 Novembre 1869.

Les nombres d'hommes présents sont représentés par les largeurs des zones colorées à raison d'un millimètre pour dix mille hommes; ils sont de plus écrits en travers des zones. Le rouge désigne les hommes qui entrent en Russie, le noir ceux qui en sortent. — Les renseignements qui ont servi à dresser la carte ont été puisés dans les ouvrages de M. M. Chiens, de Ségur, de Fezensac, de Chambray et le journal inédit de Jacob, pharmacien de l'Armée depuis le 28 Octobre.

Pour mieux faire juger à l'œil la diminution de l'armée, j'ai supposé que les corps du Prince Jérôme et du Maréchal Davout qui avaient été détachés sur Minsk et Mobilow en ont rejoint vers Orscha et Witebsk, avaient toujours marché avec l'armée.



Autog. par Regnier, 8. Pas. 5^{te} Marie St G^{ain} à Paris.

Imp. Lith. Regnier et Dourdet.

The data did not change.
The presentation did.

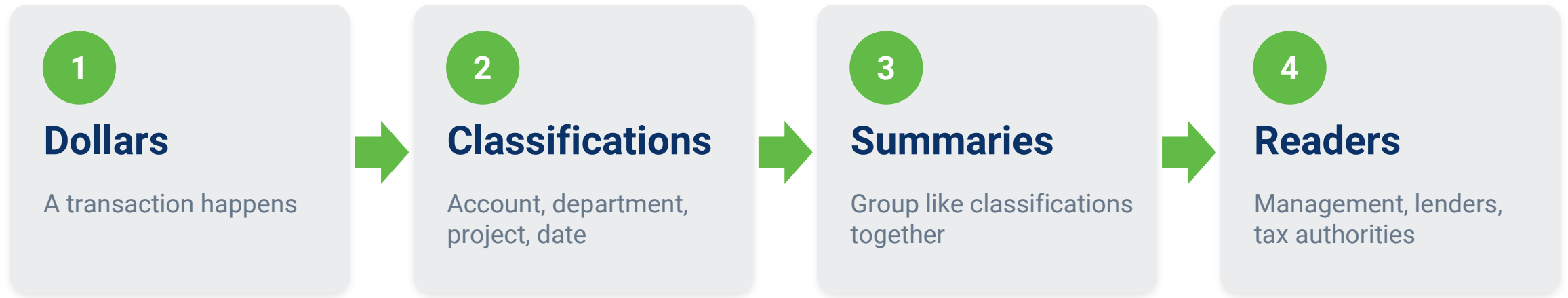
"It may well be the best statistical graphic ever drawn." - Edward Tufte

Minard worked from fifty-one rows, transcribed by hand.
The small opera company in this demo posted nineteen thousand
lines last year.

Nobody has drawn yours.

Before we can, we have to be precise about what is in it.

Accounting is classifying dollars.



The whole job is reporting. Reporting has exactly two levers: what goes together, and when.

The classifications: three kinds, and only three.

Segments

Identity

The account key itself. 10000-20-A: natural, department, ledger. A transaction has exactly one item per segment, forever.

Rollups

Analysis

Groupings of accounts for presentation. Twelve bank accounts become Cash. Hierarchical; many rollups over one chart.

Attributes

Tags on the line

Carried by the transaction, not the account. Project, grant, position. One value per attribute, any number of attributes.

These are exactly the three choices in the Visual Financial Explorer: **Segments** | **Rollups** | **Attributes**

Segments: the account key.

43001

Natural

Primary - exactly one
Contract Wages - Art

20

Dept

Auxiliary - up to ten
Artistic

A

Ledger

Ledger - exactly one
Actual (B = Budget)

43001-20-A

The code is the key

The account code is the segment codes joined together - unique, and the address every posting is filed under.

One item, forever

A transaction lands in exactly one item of each segment, and once posted that never changes. This is what makes the ledger trustworthy.

The Ledger is a segment

Actual and Budget are the same account with a different last letter. That is what VFE overlays when you pick more than one Ledger Basis.

Rollups: many accounts, one line.



1

A namespace

Within one rollup an account lands in exactly one item. The software refuses ambiguity.

2

Hierarchical

Rollups of rollups, to any depth. Ships that way.

3

Many over one chart

Balance sheet, income statement, functional view - the same accounts, organized three ways at once.

Attributes: the tags are pencil.

One journal line

Account
5010-20-A

Post date
14 Oct 2025

Amount
12,480.00

Project
Mainstage

Position
Seasonal

Carved in stone

Once posted, the account, date, reference and amount never change. Corrections are made by reversal. This is what makes the ledger trustworthy.

Pencil

Attribute tags on a posted line can still be changed. Re-tag for analysis without reopening the ledger. Structurally different from segments; queried identically.

The second lever: time.

The day is the atom.

Every posting has a date. The Actual ledger balances to the day - not the month, the day. Calendars then chunk days into periods, and periods into years. Periodicity is what makes comparison possible, and comparison is what a chart is for.



Ten calendar shapes ship

Monthly

13-period four-week

4-4-5

5-4-4

4-5-4

Quarterly

Semi-monthly

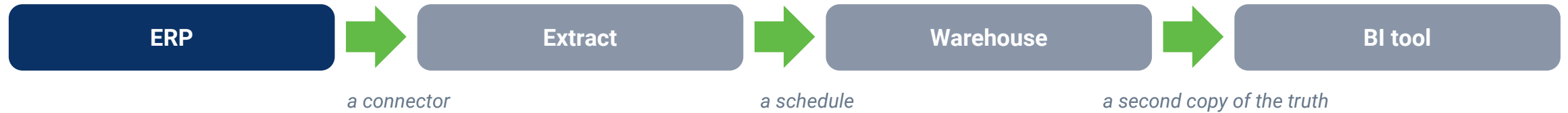
Weekly

Bi-weekly

Daily

Periods are stored date ranges, so anything else can be entered by hand.

The conventional path runs outside.



Your picture is exactly as fresh as your last refresh.

And no bar in it can lead you back to the transaction that made it. A copy has no road home.

Inside ActivityHD, the chart is the query.



the same engine behind Financial Designs and F9

No extract

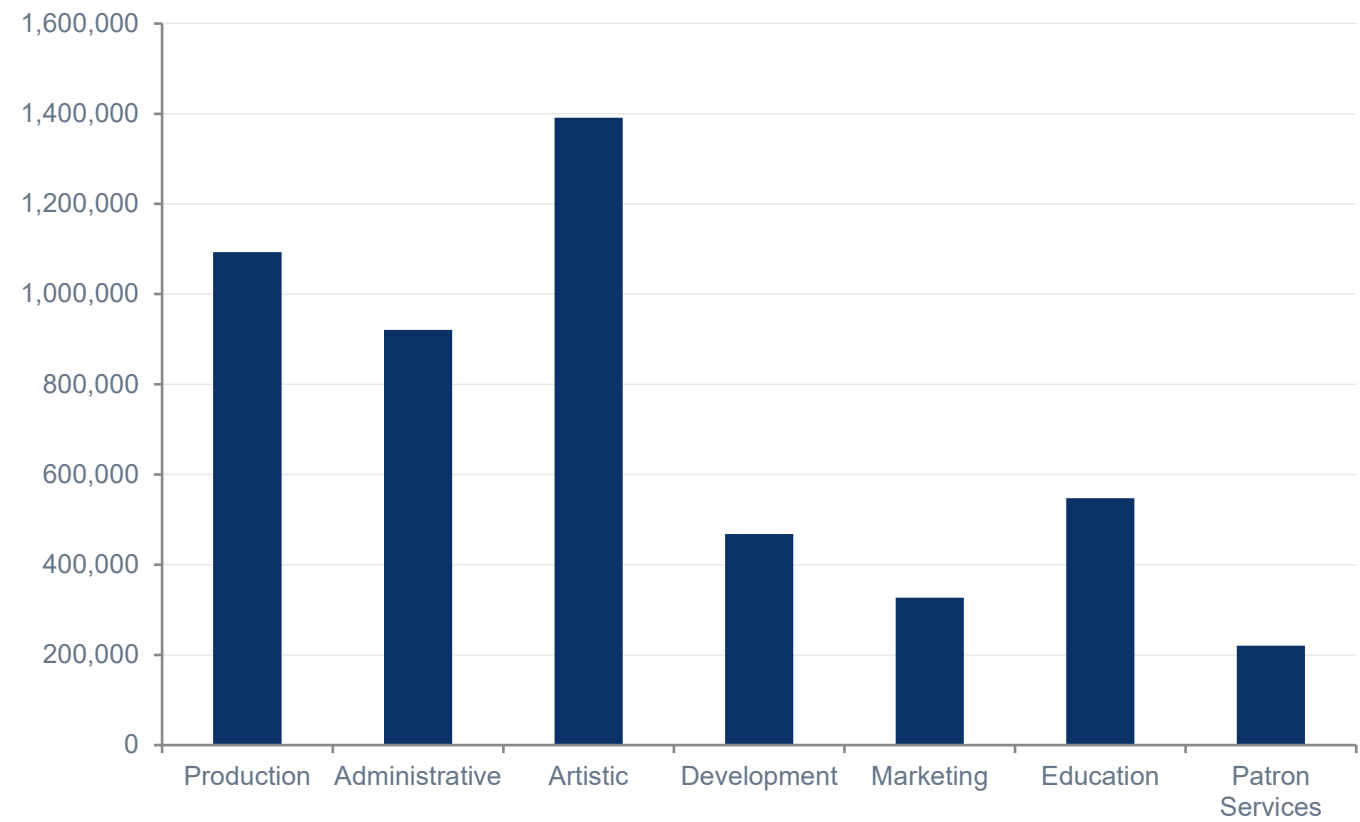
No staging table

No refresh schedule

No add-on

Every bar is a live call to the ledger. It is a gadget on the dashboard you already open.

And you can click through it.



Journal detail

Date	Reference	Amount
03 Oct	Payroll 2025-20	48,210.15
10 Oct	Payroll 2025-21	47,905.60
17 Oct	Contract labor	6,400.00
24 Oct	Payroll 2025-22	49,112.33
31 Oct	Accrual	3,875.20

Illustrative rows. In the demo, the real ones.

**A bar is a door. Behind it, the postings
- live, to the cent.**

Let's open it.

VFE 0 Showcase > VFE 1 Build > VFE 2 Encodings > VFE 3 Doors > VFE 4 Ticket Flow

Fiscal year 2026, Actual ledger, monthly calendar

How it got here.

It started with a realization.

The dashboard was already a browser, and we were using a fraction of what it could do. William Tucker moved us onto the current Chrome engine, and real charting inside ActivityHD became possible.

The first attempts were rough.

That was a couple of years ago, and they looked it. The idea was right long before the execution was.

Trent Bell took it over.

He turned it into a product - and built most of the rest of what you have seen in Dashboard 2.0 today.

Ships with ActivityHD 9.30, alongside the rest of Dashboard 2.0.

About six weeks away.

Your general ledger becomes interactive insight every time you open the dashboard.

And it was inside ActivityHD the whole time.

What is your ledger trying to tell you that a table has been hiding?



Thank You!

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