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## Free Training Transcript: The Output Step

Welcome to this video on the Output Step in Tableau Prep. You can download the packaged flow file underneath the video to follow along in your own copy of Tableau Prep.

## Files Generated by Tableau Prep

When we build a flow, we're not directly manipulating the data. Saving the flow file (by going to the File menu and saving, or save as) creates a .tfl file. This stores the information about the flow itself (what data connections are there, the changes made to prepare the data, etc) but nothing else. To save the flow and extracts of the original data sets (flat files only), it's possible to save a packaged Tableau flow file, or .tflx. Neither of these is the prepared data, however. To actually push the data through the steps in the flow and generate a prepped data set, we must create an output and run the flow.

## The Output Step

To add an output step, click the plus icon on the previous step and select Add Output. This will create a new step in the flow. Below, the output pane will appear. This is where we can configure the output itself.

First, we need to choose if we want to save a file or publish a data source.

If we save a file, we can give it a name and choose how to output it. The options are a .hyper extract, a .tde extract, or a .csv. We can also specify where the file will be saved-- the default is the data sources folder in the Tableau Prep Repository.

## Running the Flow

Once the output type and location have been configured, the flow must be run. This is the process of actually taking all the original data and putting it through the flow to create the finished data set. Only after the output has been configured and the flow is run is the prepped data ready for use.

To regenerate or update the data output (say, after adding new data to the flow), simply rerun the flow. We can choose to override the original file, or set a different name to create a new output.

## Multiple Outputs

A flow can contain multiple output steps. If there is a place along the flow where the data may be useful as an output, for example, here where we have the fully combined and cleaned Bestseller data for three months, we can add an output. The flow branches and continues on with the later joins of other data sets, and we have another output at the end of the flow. We can run either of these flows independently of each other. This can be useful if, say, we want to update the Bestsellers data source weekly, but only generate the final data set once a month.

## Opening a Sample in Tableau Desktop

If at any time we don't want to create an output step and generate a formal data output, we can check our progress by right clicking on any step and saying "Preview in Tableau Desktop". That will bring the data as it stands at that step directly into Tableau Desktop. We can verify the data in an analysis context and easily drop back into Tableau Prep to continue the flow or to generate the output.

## Conclusion

Thank you for watching this video on creating an output in Tableau Prep. We invite you to continue with the free training videos to learn more about using Tableau.