

Contents

Introduction	xiv
1 The Building Blocks of Data Visualization	1
Spatial Organization of Stimuli	4
Seeing Abstract Concepts	6
Charts	7
Networks	9
Maps	10
Volume: Figurative Visualizations	11
Visualization in Excel	12
Retinal Variables	12
From Concepts to Charts	16
The Proto-Chart	17
Chart Effectiveness	18
Takeaways	23
2 Visual Perception	24
Perception and Cognition	25
Cognitive Offloading	26
A False Dichotomy	27
Charts and Tables	27
Eye Physiology	29
The Retina	29
Cones	30
The Arc of Visual Acuity	31
Saccades	32
Impact of Eye Physiology on Visualization	34
Pre-Attentive Processing	36
Salience	36
Impact of Pre-Attentive Processing and Salience on Visualization	37
Working Memory	40
Impact of Working Memory on Visualization	41
Gestalt Laws	43
Law of Proximity	47
Law of Similarity	47

Law of Segregation	48
Law of Connectivity	48
Law of Common Fate	49
Law of Closure	50
Law of Figure/Ground	50
Law of Continuity	51
Impact of Gestalt Laws on Visualization	52
The Limits of Perception	53
Why We Need Grid Lines and Reference Lines: Weber's Law	55
Being Aware of Distortions: Stevens' Power Law	56
Context and Optical Illusions	58
Impact of the Limits of Perception on Visualization	59
Takeaways	60
Beyond Visual Perception	62
Social Prägnanz	63
Breaking the Rules	64
The Tragedy of the Commons	65
Color Symbolism	68
Representing Time	69
Axis Folding	69
Don't Make Me Think!	70
Literacy and Experience	71
Graphic Literacy	71
Familiarity with the Subject	74
Information Asymmetry	75
Organizational Contexts	75
Wrong Messages from the Top	76
Impression Management	77
Takeaways	78
Data Preparation	79
Problems with the Data	80
Structure without Content	80
Content without Structure	81
What Does "Well-Structured Data" Mean, Anyway?	83
A Helping Hand: Pivot Tables	84
Extracting the Data	86
The PDF Plague	88
"Can It Export to Excel?"	89

Cleansing Data	90
Transforming Data	90
Loading the Data Table	91
Data Management in Excel	91
Organizing the Workbook	93
Links Outside of Excel	93
Formulas	93
Cycles of Production and Analysis	94
Takeaways	95
 5 Data Visualization	 96
From Patterns to Points	97
Shape Visualization	99
Point Visualization	103
Outlier Visualization	104
Data Visualization Tasks	106
The Construction of Knowledge	106
Data	107
Information	108
Knowledge	108
Wisdom	109
Defining Data Visualization	110
Languages, Stories, and Landscapes	111
Graphical Literacy	112
Graphical Landscapes	113
Profiling	113
Dashboards	114
Infographics	116
A Crossroad of Knowledge	120
Statistics	120
Design	120
Applications	120
Content and Context	121
Data Visualization in Excel	121
The Good	122
The Bad	122
The Ugly	124
Beyond the Excel Chart Library	125
Don't Make Excel Charts	128
Takeaways	131

6	Data Discovery, Analysis, and Communication	132
	Where to Start?	133
	The Visual Information-Seeking Mantra	134
	Focus plus Context	137
	Asking Questions	138
	A Classification of Questions	139
	Selecting and Collecting the Data	140
	Searching for Patterns	142
	Setting Priorities	147
	Reporting Results	148
	Clarification	148
	The Human Dimension	149
	The Design	150
	Project: Monthly Births	151
	Defining the Problem	151
	Collecting the Data	152
	Assessing Data Availability	152
	Assessing Data Quality	154
	Adjusting the Data	154
	Exploring the Data	155
	Embracing Seasonality	156
	Communicating Our Findings	161
	Takeaways	162
7	How to Choose a Chart	163
	Task-Based Chart Classification	166
	Audience Profile	170
	Sharing Visualizations	173
	Screens and Projectors	173
	Smartphones and Vertical Displays	174
	PDF Files	174
	Excel Files	175
	Sharing Online	175
	Takeaways	176

8	A Sense of Order	177
	The Bar Chart	180
	Vertical and Horizontal Bars	181
	Color Coding	182
	Ordering	182
	Chart Size	185
	Breaks in the Scale	187
	Changing Metrics to Avoid Breaks in the Scale	188
	Evolution and Change	190
	A Special Bar Chart: The Population Pyramid	190
	Dot Plots	192
	Slope Charts	194
	Strip Plots	195
	Speedometers	196
	Bullet Charts	197
	Alerts	198
	Takeaways	199
9	Parts of a Whole: Composition Charts	200
	What Is Composition?	202
	Composition or Comparison?	202
	Pie Charts	205
	Critique	205
	Damage Control	206
	Donut Charts	210
	Donuts as Multi-Level Pies	212
	Actual Hierarchical Charts: Sunburst Charts and Treemaps	213
	Stacked Bar Chart	217
	Pareto Chart	218
	Takeaways	221
10	Scattered Data	222
	The Data	225
	Distribution	227
	Showing Everything: Transparencies and Jittering	227
	Quantifying Impressions	228
	Mean and Standard Deviation	229
	The Median and the Interquartile Range	229
	Outliers	230
	Box-and-Whisker Plots	232
	Z-Scores	233

The Pareto Chart Revisited	235
Excel Maps	238
Histograms	240
Bin Number and Width	242
Histograms and Bar Charts	245
Cumulative Frequency Distribution	246
Takeaways	248
Change Over Time	249
Focus on the Flow: The Line Chart	250
Scales and Aspect Ratios	254
Focus on the Relationships: Connected Scatter Plots	256
Sudden Changes: The Step Chart	259
Seasonality: The Cycle Plot	261
Sparklines	263
Animation	266
Takeaways	270
12 Relationships	271
Understanding Relationships	273
Curve Fitting	274
The Scatter Plot	276
Scatter Plot Design	279
Clusters and Groupings	281
Multiple Series and Subsets	282
Profiles	284
Bubble Charts	286
Takeaways	291
13 Profiling	292
The Need to Solve	295
Panel Charts	295
Bar Charts with Multiple Series	298
Horizon Chart	299
Reorderable Matrix	304
Small Multiples	307
Profiling in Excel	310
Takeaways	311

14	Designing for Effectiveness	312
	The Aesthetic Dimension	315
	A Wrong Model	316
	The Design Continuum	318
	Tools Are Not Neutral: Defaults	320
	Reason and Emotion	321
	A.I.D.A.	321
	Does Reason Follow Emotion?	326
	Emotion and Effectiveness	328
	Occam's Razor	329
	Designing Chart Components	332
	Pseudo-3D	333
	Textures	337
	Titles	338
	Fonts	339
	Annotations	339
	Grid Lines	342
	Clip Art	343
	The Secondary Axis	344
	Legends	346
	Backgrounds	347
	Ordering the Data	347
	Number of Series	351
	Chart Type	352
	Grouping	352
	Residual Category	353
	Context	353
	Small Multiples	354
	Lying and Deceiving with Charts	355
	Data, Perception, and Cognition	356
	Exaggerating Differences	356
	Distorting Time Series	357
	Aspect Ratio	357
	Omitting Points	358
	Mistaking Variation for Evolution	358
	Double Axes	359
	Pseudo 3D	359
	Context	360
	When Everything Goes	362
	Takeaways	364

15	Color: Beyond Aesthetics	365
	Quantifying Color	367
	The RGB Model	368
	The HSL Model	368
	Stimuli Intensity	370
	The Functional Tasks of Color	372
	Categorize	373
	Group	376
	Emphasize	378
	Sequence	378
	Diverge	382
	Alert	386
	Color Symbolism	386
	The Role of Gray	387
	Color Staging	389
	Color Harmony	392
	General Principles	392
	The Classical Rules	393
	Complementary Colors	394
	Split Complementary Colors	394
	Triadic Harmony	396
	Analogous Colors	396
	Rectangle	396
	Warm Colors and Cool Colors	398
	Sources for Color Palettes	399
	Excel	399
	Beyond Excel	402
	Color Blindness	403
	Takeaways	405
16	Conclusion	406
	It's All About Pragmatism, Not Aesthetics	407
	Say Goodbye to the Old Ways	407
	Find Your Own Data Visualization Model	408
	In Business Visualization, Hard Work Is Not Always the Best Work	408
	Organizational Literacy	409
	Reason and Emotion	409
	Play with Constraints	410
	The Tools	411
	Index	412