



Data Visualizations: Creation & Consumption

PsyF First Year Fest '24
Regina Lisinker



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01

What is Data Visualization?





What is Data Visualization?



- **Simply: a graphic or visual representation of data**
- **Goes by many names:**
 - **Graphical representation**
 - **Information visualization**
 - **Visual data communication**
- **The goal: facilitate understanding**

(Anuncia et al., 2020; Bolch & Crippen, 2022)





What is Data Visualization?



- “Data visualizations can also play a critical role when it is time to disseminate and communicate” (Azzam et al., 2013)
 - “Proper data visualization facilitates the recognition of patterns and relationships to communicate a message in a more compelling and interesting way” (Archambault et al., 2015)
 - While “ineffectively designed visualizations can cause confusion, misunderstanding, or even distrust—especially among viewers with low graphical literacy” (Franconeri et al., 2021)
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What is Data Visualization?

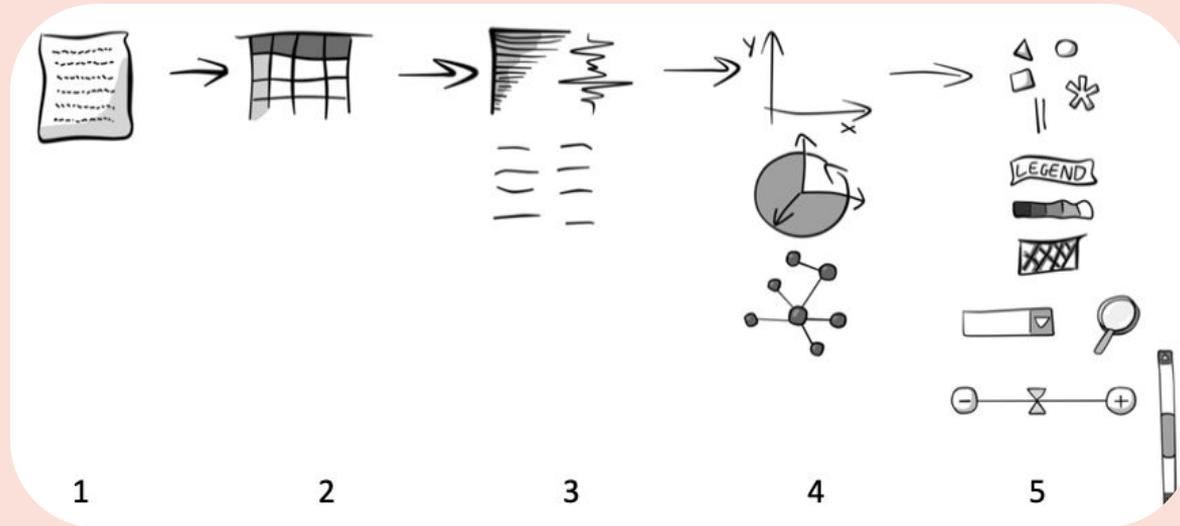


Figure 1. The five phases of visualization process: data gathering, processing, preparation, reduction and visual layout design. (Osinska, 2018)

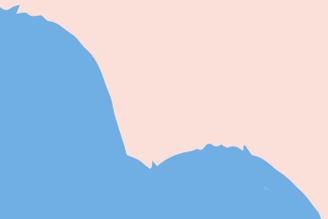
- When data visualization is defined as a process, consumption is rarely included :(



02

Current Work:

**Are creators encouraged to
keep consumers in mind?**



What kind of advice is out there for creators of data visualization?

Tips: do's and don'ts for data visualization

Do's:

- ✓ Pass the squint test: Is the information conveyed without reading any text? Does the right color pop out? Are the labels clear? Try printing out your visualization in black and white, or make a copy in gray scale to check for visibility (Clayton, 2014).
- ✓ Show restraint and limit the data to your main point so you do not overwhelm the audience (Dando, 2014, p. 74).
- ✓ Organize: group, prioritize and sequence data to help viewers understand.
- ✓ Provide a key to your visualization if necessary for the viewer to understand your data (Dando, 2014, p. 81).
- ✓ Have a colleague preview your data visualization for clarity (Dando, 2014, pp. 80-81).
- ✓ Round to the nearest significant digit for clarity in labels, but use decimal places for accuracy in calculating and plotting the graphs (Wong, 2010, p. 22).
- ✓ Frame your data in a context that your audience can relate to and offer relevant reference points (Dando, 2014, p. 77).
- ✓ Use colors sparingly and to help convey meaning rather than for decoration (Dando, 2014, p. 81). Similarly, use as few font styles as

Don'ts

- × Do not manipulate data to tell a story it does not actually tell. Tufte (2001, pp. 55-77) calls this “graphical integrity”.
- × Do not use 3D or a “blow apart” effect – this reduces comprehension and makes it hard to compare elements (Few, 2012, p. 197).
- × Visualize all of the important relationships and make large data sets coherent (Tufte, 2001, p. 13).
- × Do not put a box around your graph. This is an unnecessary ink that will visually distract the viewer (Tufte, 2001, p. 127).
- × Do not use red/green or blue/yellow combinations because the lack of contrast in lightness makes it unreadable for the color-blind (Wong, 2010, p. 44).

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creators of data
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Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something

The use of color in visualization can be incredibly powerful, and there is rarely a reason not to use color. Even if authors do not wish to pay for color figures in print, most journals still permit free color figures in digital formats. In a large study²⁰ of what

Principle #5 Include Uncertainty

Not only is uncertainty an inherent part of understanding most systems, failure to include uncertainty in a visual can be misleading. There exist two primary challenges with including uncertainty in visuals: failure to include uncertainty and misrep-

creators of data visualization?



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creators of data visualization?

Minimalism

A second important philosophy is that of minimalism. Visualizations can be evaluated in their signal-to-noise ratio, in which signal is the information being conveyed and noise is anything else. The most effective communication maximizes the signal-to-noise ratio by minimizing visual clutter that might interfere with the signal. An extreme version of this argument is that one should justify every single pixel in the v

Tips: do's and don'ts for data visualization

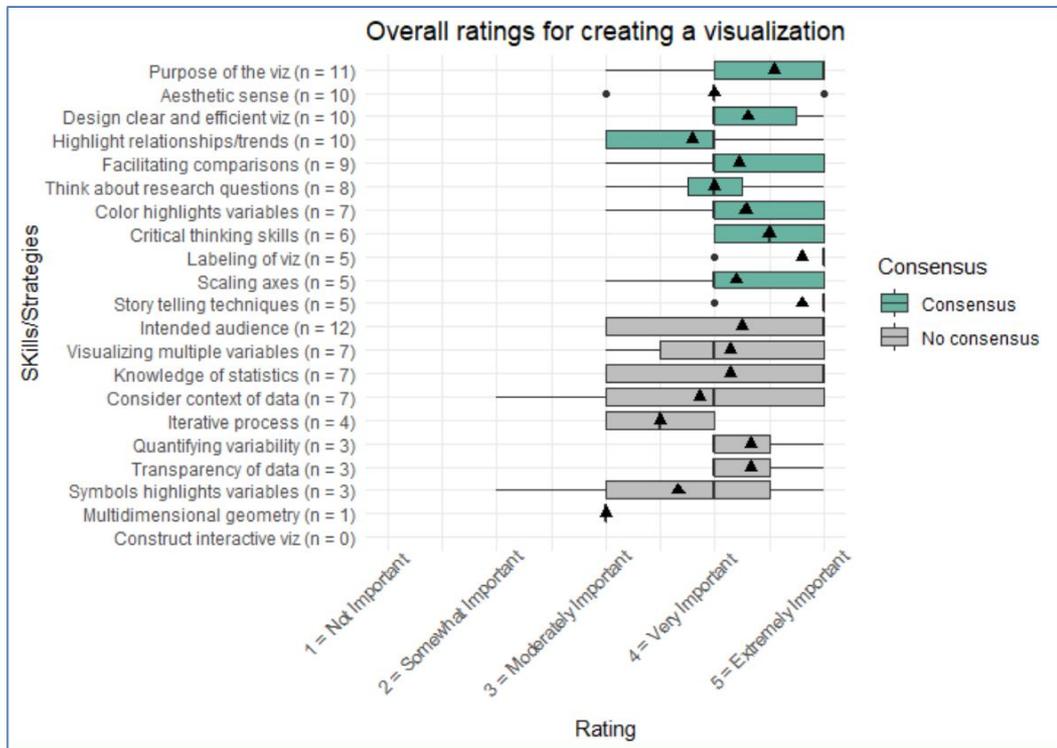
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Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something



Note: ▲ indicate mean values for each skill/strategy; “viz” is visualization.

Mini

Figure 3. Visualization of Delphi Panel 3 results for creating skills/strategies

A second important philosophy is that of minimalism. Visualizations can be evaluated in their signal-to-noise ratio, in which signal is the information being conveyed and noise is anything else. The most effective communication maximizes the signal-to-noise ratio by minimizing visual clutter that might interfere with the signal. An extreme version of this argument is that one should justify every single pixel in the visualization.

Tips: do's and don'ts for data visualization

Do's:

- ✓ Pass the squint test: Is the information conveyed without reading any text? Does the right color pop out? Are the labels clear? Try printing out your visualization in black and white and in gray scale (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Show restraint: Don't overwhelm your main message with too much detail (Dando, 2014, p. 81)
- ✓ Organize: Organize your data in a sequence that makes sense and is easy to understand. Provide a key if necessary to understand the data (Dando, 2014, p. 81)
- ✓ Have a consistent color scheme for your data visualization (Dando, 2014, p. 81)
- ✓ Round to a reasonable number of digits for clarity (Wong, 2010, p. 22)
- ✓ Frame your data in a context that your audience can relate to and offer relevant reference points (Dando, 2014, p. 77)
- ✓ Use colors sparingly and to help convey meaning rather than for decoration (Dando, 2014, p. 81). Similarly, use as few font styles as possible.

Don'ts

- × Do not manipulate data to tell a story it does not actually tell. (2001, pp. 55-77) calls this "graphical integrity".
- × Do not use 3D or a "pull apart" effect – this reduces comprehension and makes it hard to compare elements (Few, 2012, p. 100)

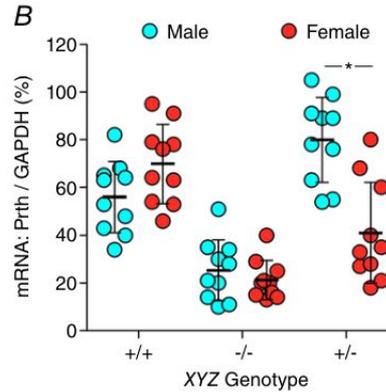
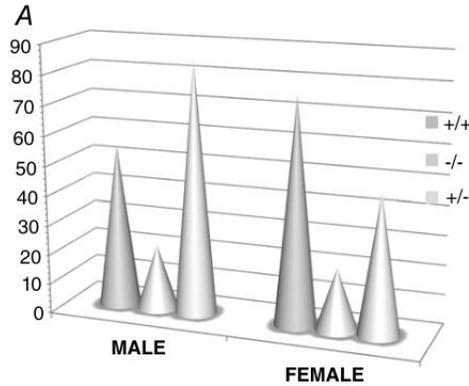
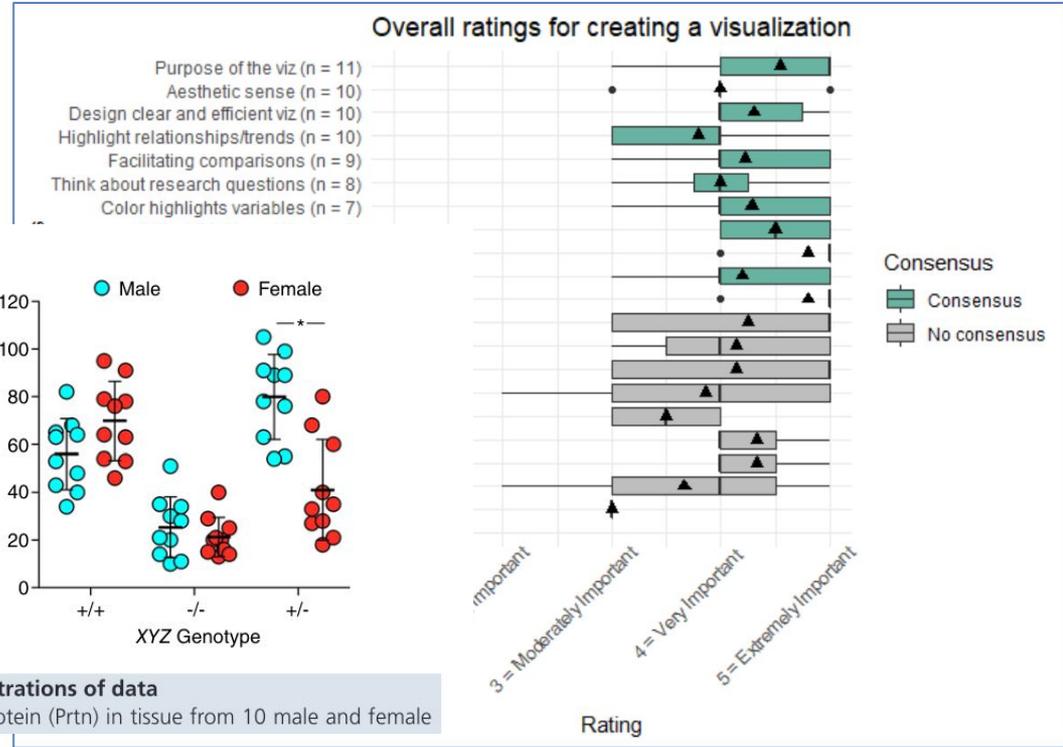


Figure 1. Examples of bad (panel A) and good (panel B) illustrations of data
The graphs illustrate hypothetical normalized mRNA levels of a protein (Prtn) in tissue from 10 male and female

Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something



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Tips: do's and don'ts for data visualization

Do's:

- ✓ Pass the squint test: Is the information conveyed without reading any text? Does the right color pop out? Are the labels clear? Try printing out your visualization in black and white and in gray scale (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Show restraint: Don't overwhelm your main message (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Organize your data: Sequence elements to help the viewer understand the story (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Provide a legend: If needed, provide a legend that specifies font sizes for other elements of graphs, including the legend.
- ✓ Have a consistent data visualization style (Dando, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Round to the nearest digit for decimal values (Wong, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Frame your visualization: Offer a clear context for your data (Dando, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Use color to convey information, not decoration: Similarly

Don'ts

- × Do not manipulate data to tell a story it does not actually tell. (2001, pp. 55-77) calls this "graphical integrity".
- × Do not use 3D or a "pull apart" effect – this reduces comprehension and makes it hard to compare elements (Few, 2012, p. 100)



11. LEGEND

Will a legend be used and if so, where will it go, what size will it be, and what markers will be used? It is not labeled on this image, but the Urban style guide includes a separate section that specifies font sizes for other elements of graphs, including the legend.

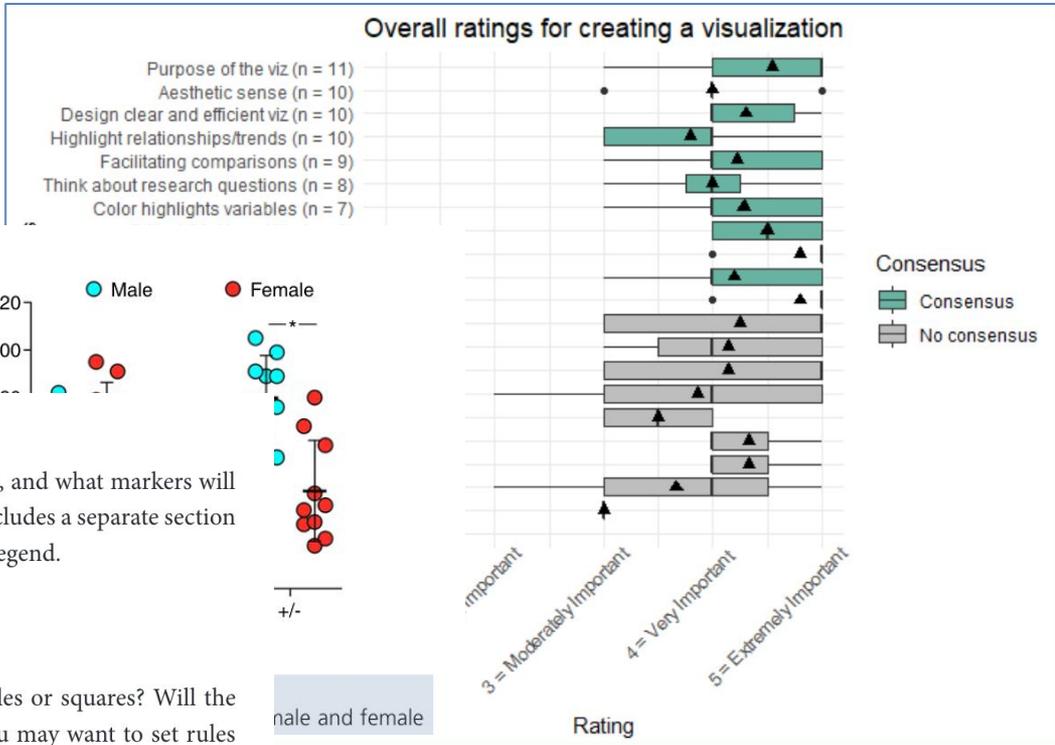
12. DATA MARKERS

Will graphs, especially line graphs, include data markers, like circles or squares? Will the markers be filled or hollow? When will data values be labeled? You may want to set rules about using data markers for graphs with some number of values.

13. DATA LABELS

Determine when data points should be labeled and how they should be placed and formatted. The Urban guide has a separate table of font sizes that describes how these labels should appear.

Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something



male and female

for each skill/strategy; "viz" is visualization.

Visualization of Delphi Panel 3 results for creating skills/strategies

One of the main reasons visualizations can be evaluated in their own right is that they are designed to convey information being conveyed and noise is anything else. The most effective way to improve the signal-to-noise ratio by minimizing visual clutter that might interfere with the message. This argument is that one should justify every single pixel in the visualization.

Tips: do's and don'ts for data visualization

Do's:

- ✓ Pass the squint test: Is the information conveyed without reading any text? Does the right color pop out? Are the labels clear? Try printing out your visualization

Don'ts

- × Do not manipulate data to tell a story it does not actually tell. (2001, pp. 55-77) calls this "graphical integrity".
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Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something

What are the 3 C's of data visualization?

If you're going to make the most of data visualization, an essential step is to avoid the drawbacks highlighted above. Follow the three C's of data visualization to clearly and accurately present your data.

Clarity

Be clear about the message you're conveying with your visualization. What does the data mean? How does it provide value to the audience? Eye-catching graphs may be good to look at, but they're of no use to stakeholders unless they present important information.

Consistency

It's easy to misread and misinterpret information when there's no consistency in your visualization. The same rules and visual styles should apply across the board.

If you're using one color to represent something in one bar chart, the meaning should be similar across other graphs and charts. For example, if green represents an increase in sales in one chart, it should represent a decline in negative sentiment in another chart.

Context

On its own, data can only tell you so much. It doesn't tell you if a number is good or bad. For example, if your click-through rate is 4.5%, is that a good number? Adding context to your visualization is crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of the data.

The 3 Cs for Better Charts

The 3 Cs are an easy way to remember the most important aspects of

- Context
- Clutter-free
- Contrast

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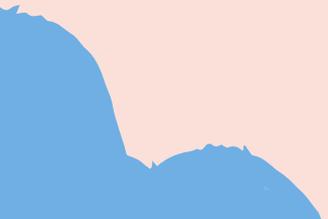
Determine when data points should be labeled and how they should be placed and formatted. The Urban guide has a separate table of font sizes that describes how these labels should appear.

(Dando, 2001)
 Round to the nearest digit for decimal calculations (Wong, 2001)
 Frame your audience's offer (Dando, 2001)
 Use color to convey information similarly

Consensus
 No consensus

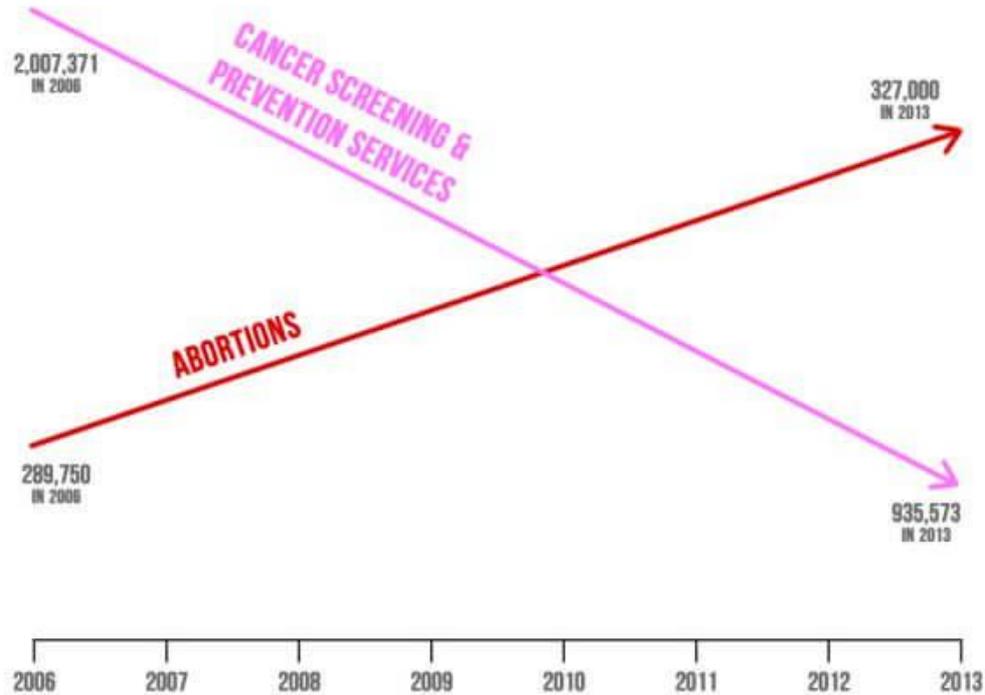
ization of Delphi Panel 3 results for creating skills/strategies

formation being conveyed and noise is anything else. The most effective signal-to-noise ratio by minimizing visual clutter that might interfere with this argument is that one should justify every single pixel in the v



Why should we care?

PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA: ABORTIONS UP — LIFE-SAVING PROCEDURES DOWN



SOURCE: AMERICANS UNITED FOR LIFE

Original

Fit as a butcher's dog

Characteristics of dogs registered with the UK's Kennel Club, average when fully grown

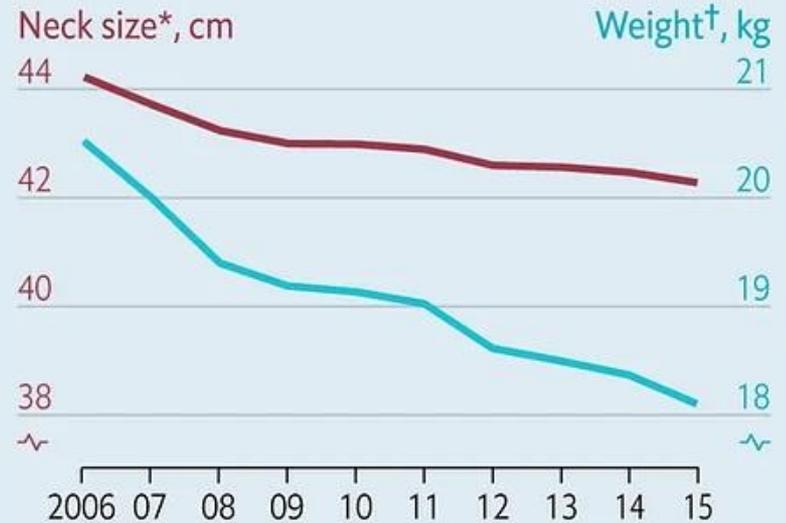


Sources: Kennel Club; *The Economist* *Where at least 50 are registered per year †Where at least 100 are registered per year

Better

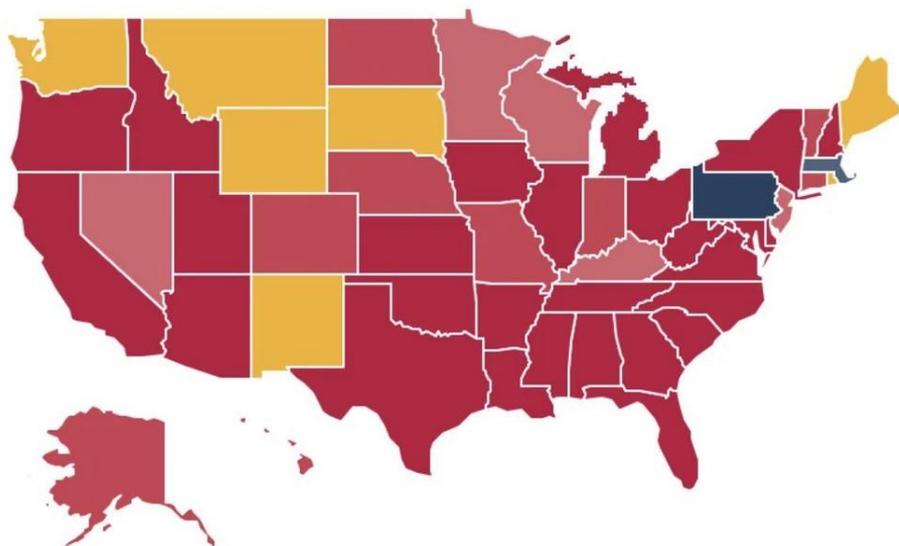
Fit as a butcher's dog

Characteristics of dogs registered with the UK's Kennel Club, average when fully grown



Sources: Kennel Club; *The Economist* *Where at least 100 are registered per year †Where at least 50 are registered per year

Where cursive writing is taught in the US

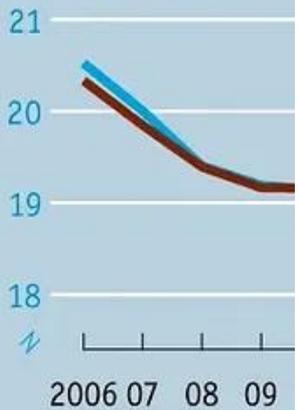


- Teaches
- Does not teach
- Legislation pending
- Depends on district
- Teaches some
- Legislation introduced

Fit as a butcher

Characteristics of dog registered with the UK's Kennel Club, average

Weight*, kg



Sources: Kennel Club; *The Economist*

tter

log

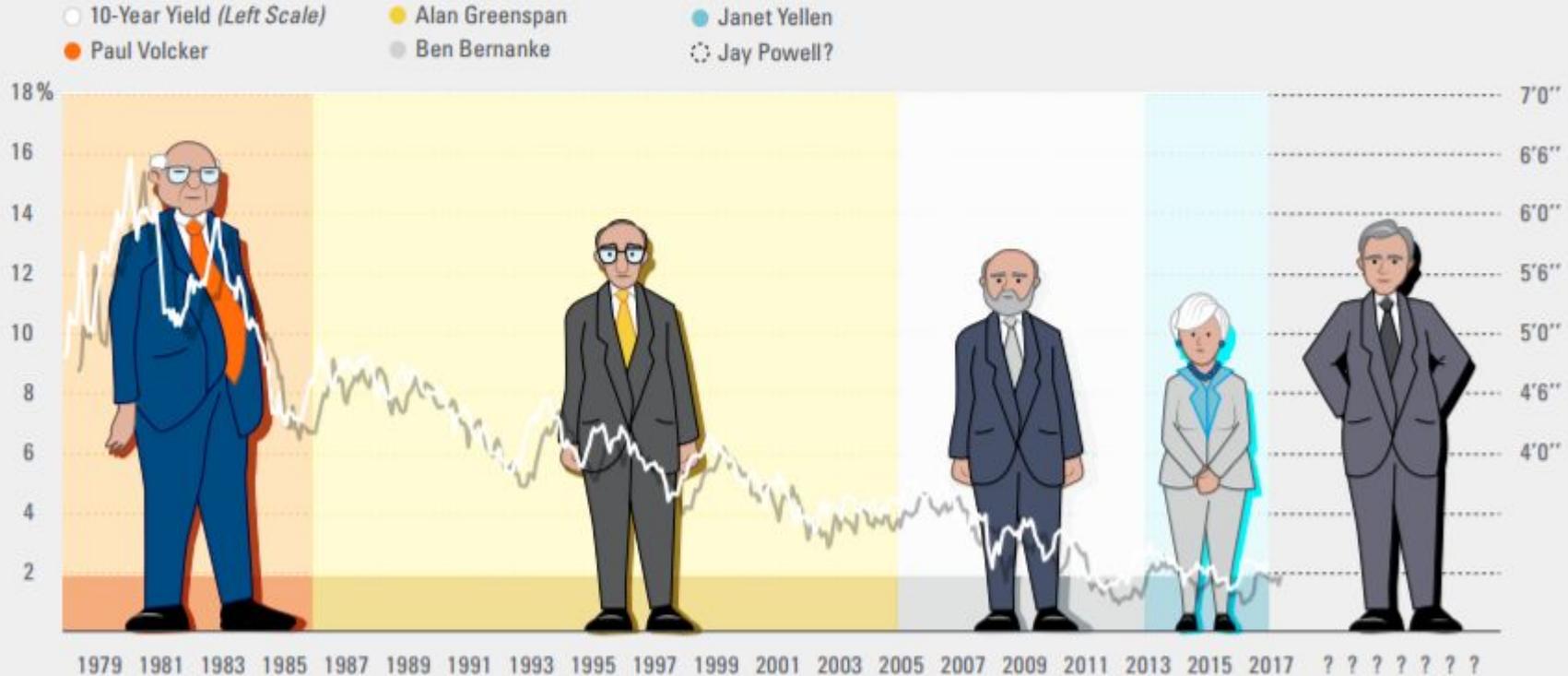
registered with the UK's Kennel Club when fully grown

Weight†, kg



at least 100 are registered per year
at least 50 are registered per year

BOTH THE HEIGHT OF THE FED CHAIR AND RATES HAVE FALLEN OVER TIME, COULD A TALLER FED CHAIR MEAN RATES RISE?



Source: LPL Research, Bloomberg 10/22/17

We don't actually believe that interest rates are determined by the height of the Fed chair, but it has been an interesting coincidence.

Depends on district

reaches some

Legislation introduced

Our Favorite Drugs

The war on drugs keeps law enforcement busy—13 percent of all arrests made in 2007 were drug related—but the kinds of battles police are fighting vary widely across the country, from meth labs in California to cocaine dealers in Florida. This is a look at what drugs local law enforcement officials said were posing the greatest dangers to their communities, when asked by the Department of Justice.

WEST

WEST/ISLANDS

ALASKA, AMERICAN SAMOA, CENTRAL CALIFORNIA, GUAM, HAWAII, IDAHO, NEVADA, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, OREGON, WASHINGTON

NORTH/MIDWEST

COLORADO, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, MONTANA, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS, UTAH, WYOMING

MIDWEST

INDIANA, KENTUCKY, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, NORTHERN ILLINOIS, OHIO, WISCONSIN

SOUTHWEST

ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, TEXAS

SOUTHEAST

ALABAMA, ARKANSAS, GEORGIA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE

FLORIDA/ISLANDS

FLORIDA, PUERTO RICO, THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

MID-ATLANTIC

DELAWARE, MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA, WASHINGTON, D.C., WEST VIRGINIA

NORTHEAST

NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK

NEW ENGLAND

CONNECTICUT, MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT

EAST

7'0"

6'6"

6'0"

5'6"

5'0"

4'6"

4'0"

- PHARMACEUTICALS
- MARIJUANA
- METHAMPHETAMINE
- HEROIN
- COCAINE



SOURCE: Department of Justice

Our Fa

The war on drugs keeps police are fighting vary local law enforcement c

W
E
S
T

- PHARMACEUTICAL
- MARIJUANA
- METHAMPHETAMINE
- HEROIN
- COCAINE

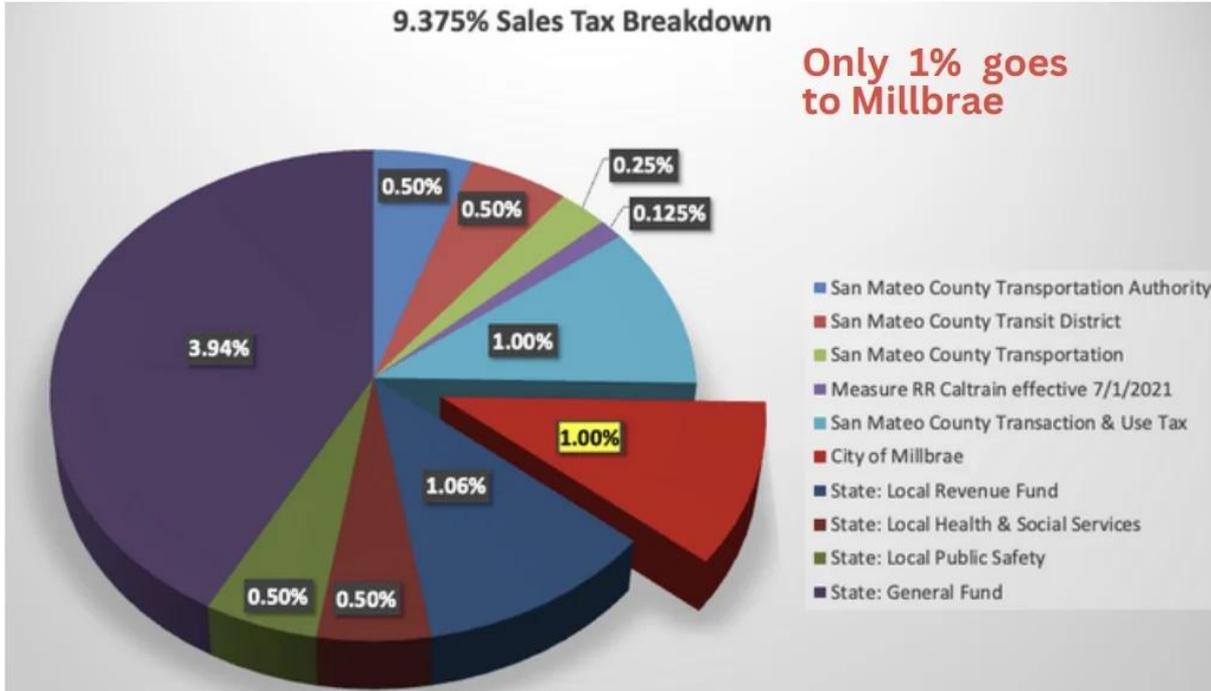


SOURCE: Department of Justice

Do you know where your taxes go in the City of Millbrae?

We have broken down Sales Tax and Property Tax so that you know where your tax dollars are going.

Chart 1



NEW ENGLAND
CONNECTICUT, MAINE,
MASSACHUSETTS, NEW
HAMPSHIRE, RHODE ISLAND,
VERMONT

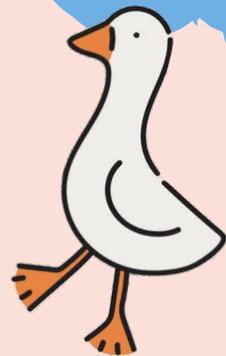
E
A
S
T

7'0"
6'6"
6'0"
5'6"
5'0"
4'6"
4'0"



My ~loosey goosey~ plan

(input and suggestions greatly appreciated)



01

Collect recommendations/guidelines/advice for the creation of data visualization

02

Identify individual recommendations within each (and how these are justified: are they evidence-based?)

03

Map recommendations to visual cognitive processes

04

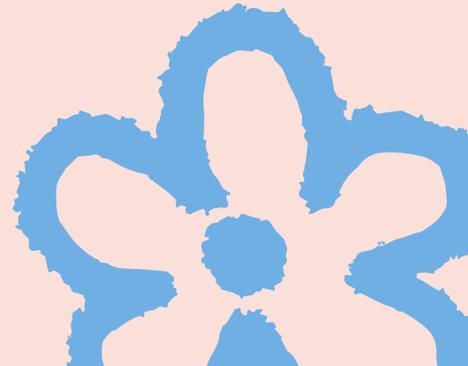
Bring computation into the mix (this is the loosiest goosiest step)

05

Do this on a larger scale

03

End Goal:
A framework built
around consumption



Consumption of Data Visualization

Warning:
VERY much a work in
progress

(References on final slide)

Consumption of Data Visualization

Visual Perception



(References on final slide)

Consumption of Data Visualization

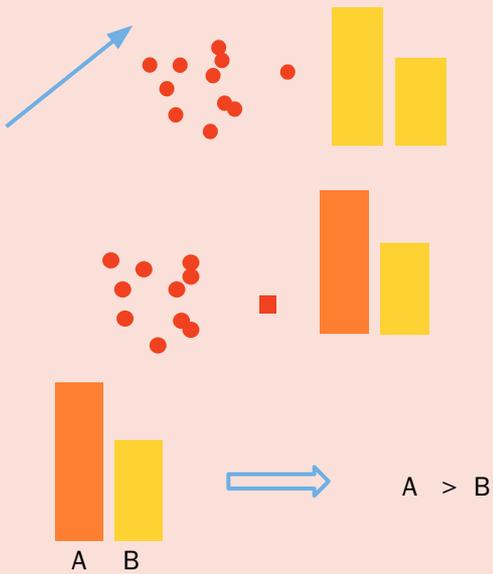
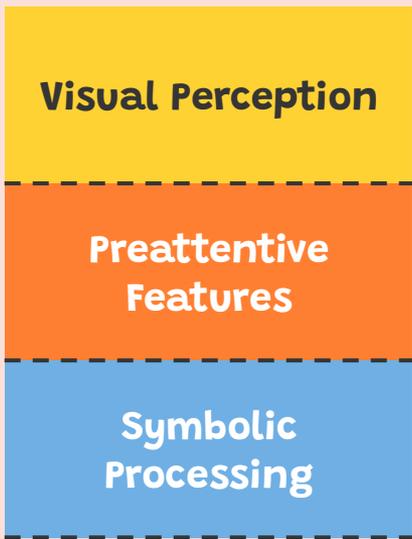
Visual Perception

Preattentive
Features



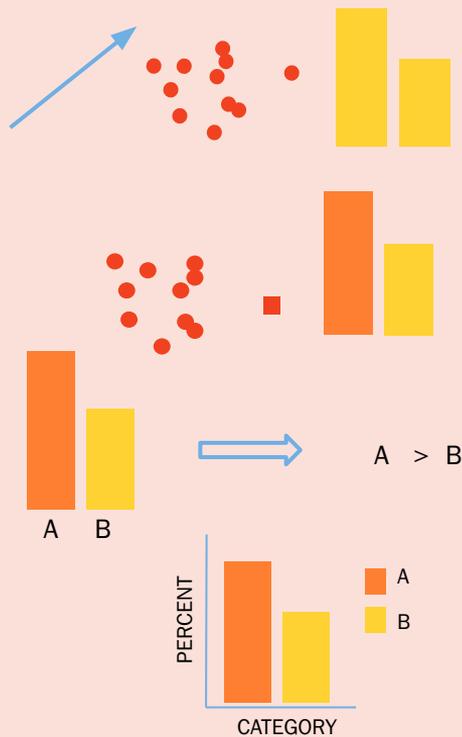
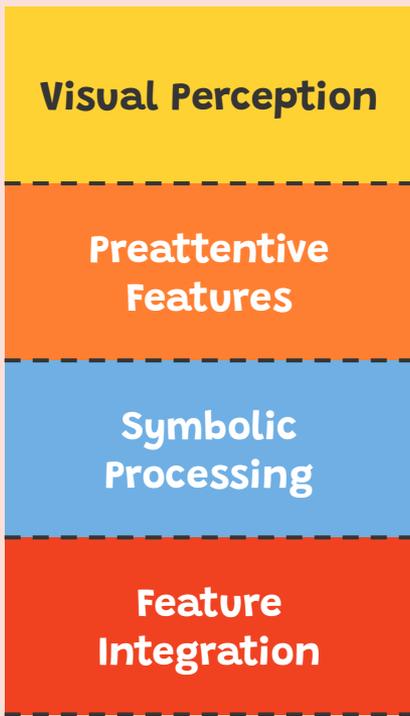
(References on final slide)

Consumption of Data Visualization



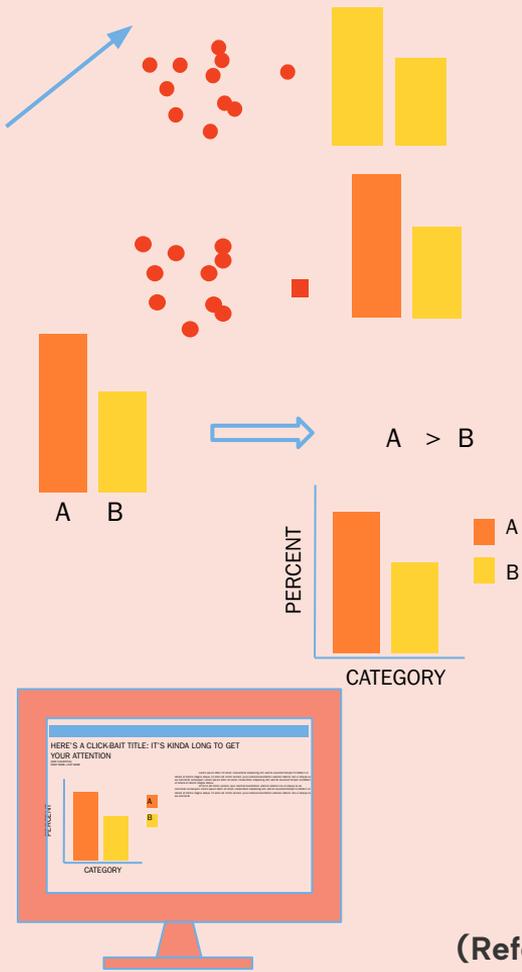
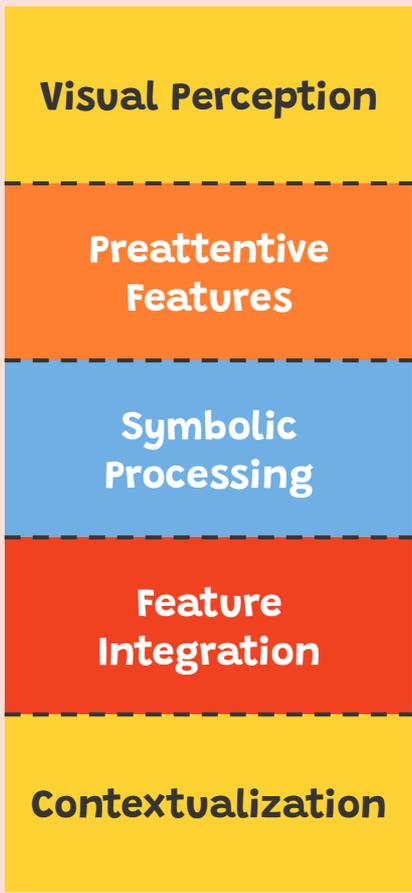
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Consumption of Data Visualization

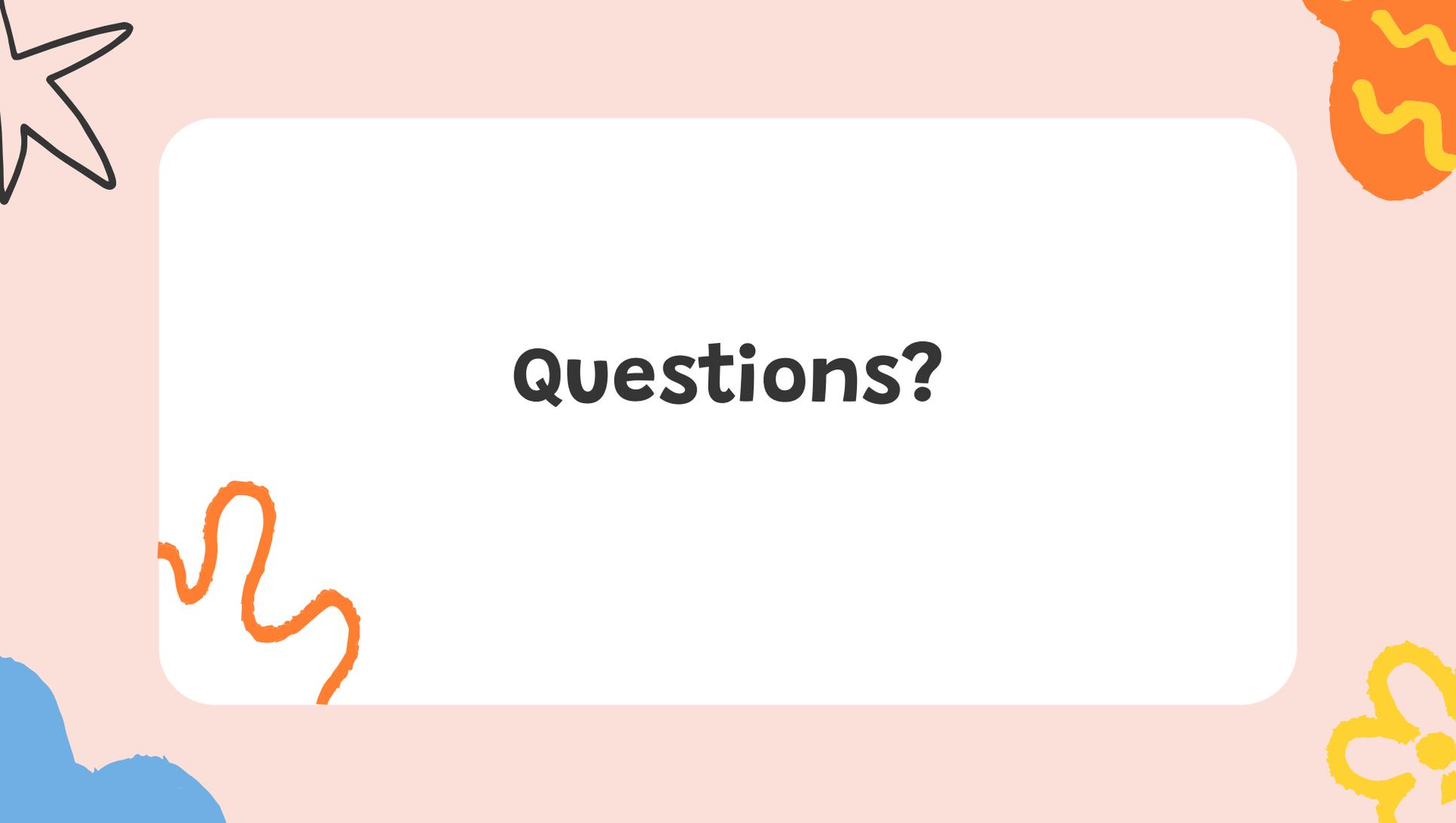


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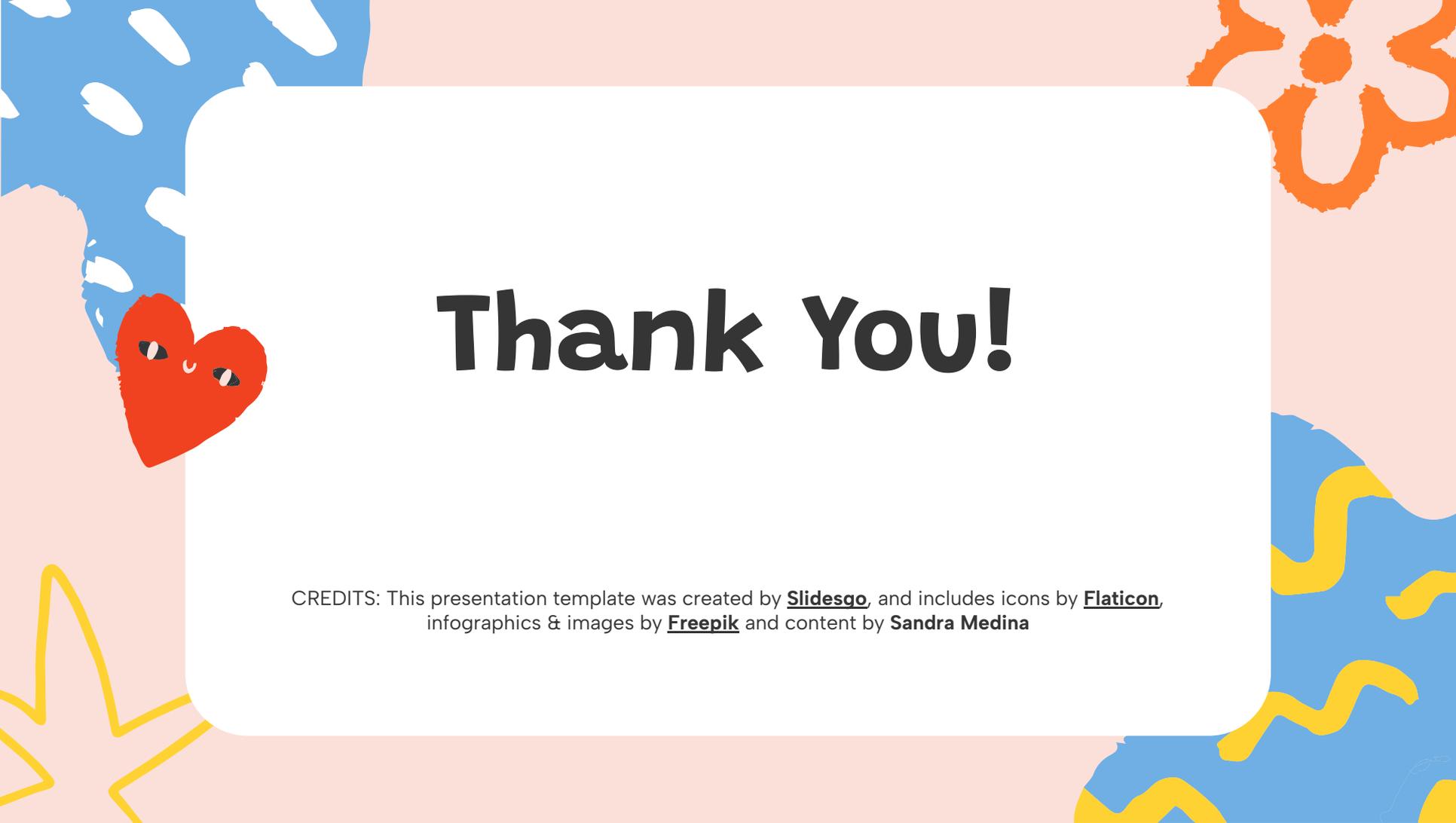
Consumption of Data Visualization



(References on final slide)



Questions?



Thank You!

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