



# **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

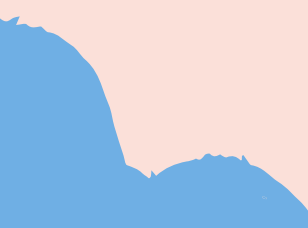

(Anuncia et al., 2020; Bolch & Crippen, 2022)





# 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?

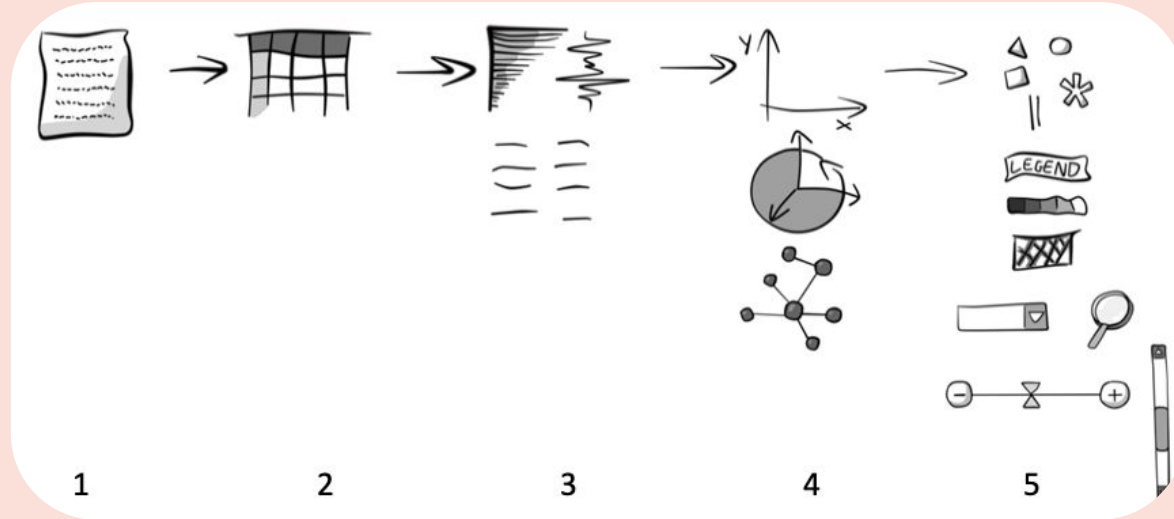


Figure 1. The five phases of visualization process: data gathering, processing, preparation, reduction and visual layout design. (Osinska, 2018)


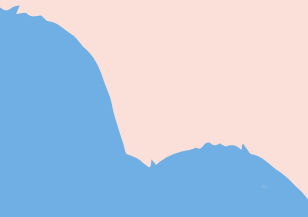


- When data visualization is defined as a process, consumption is rarely included :(



**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 study<sup>20</sup> 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 visualization.



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

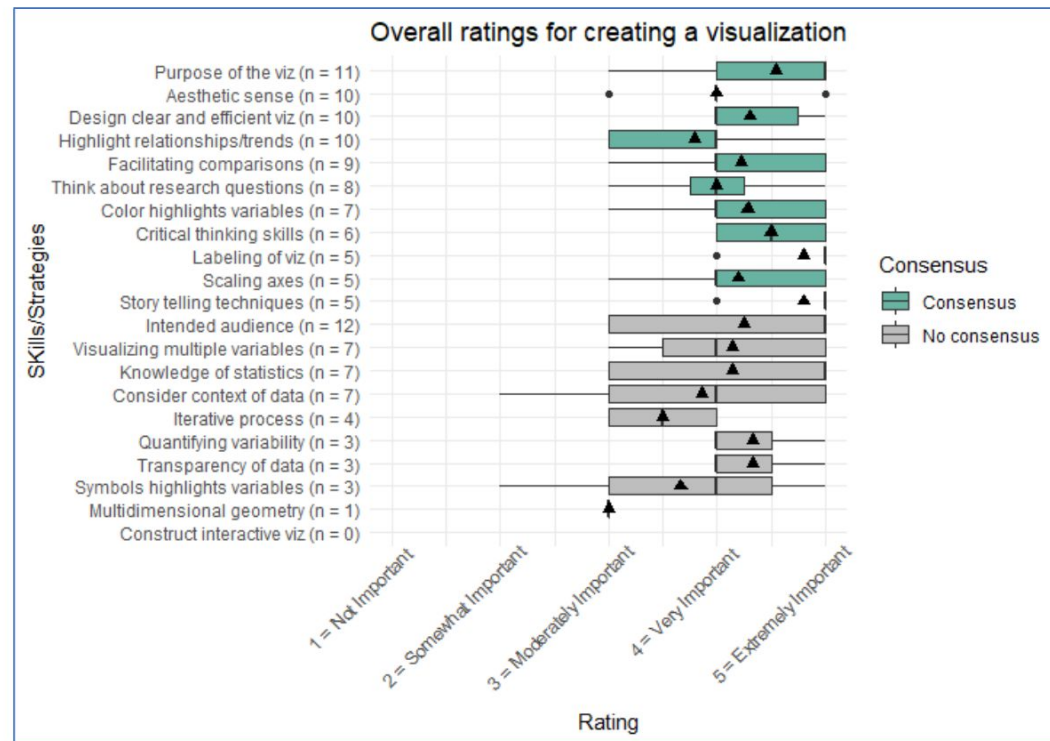
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## Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something



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.

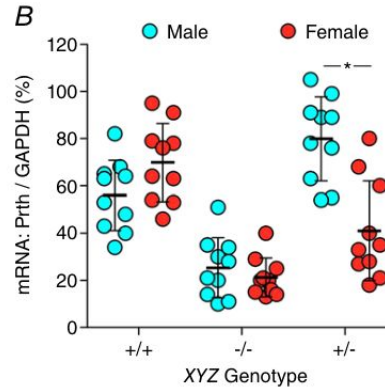
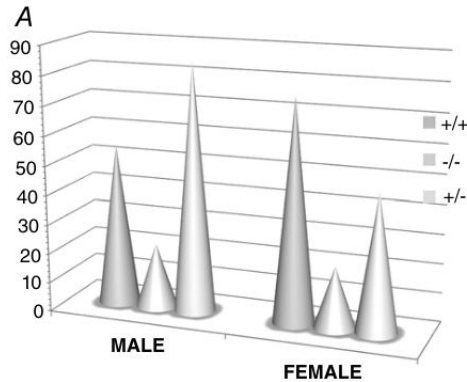
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### Do's:

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- ✓ Show restraint: Don't overwhelm your main message (Dando, 2014, p. 81)
- ✓ Organize: Organize your data in a way that is easy to understand. Provide a key if necessary to understand the data (Dando, 2014, p. 81)
- ✓ Have a clear data visualization (Dando, 2014, p. 81)
- ✓ Round to the nearest digit 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

### Don'ts

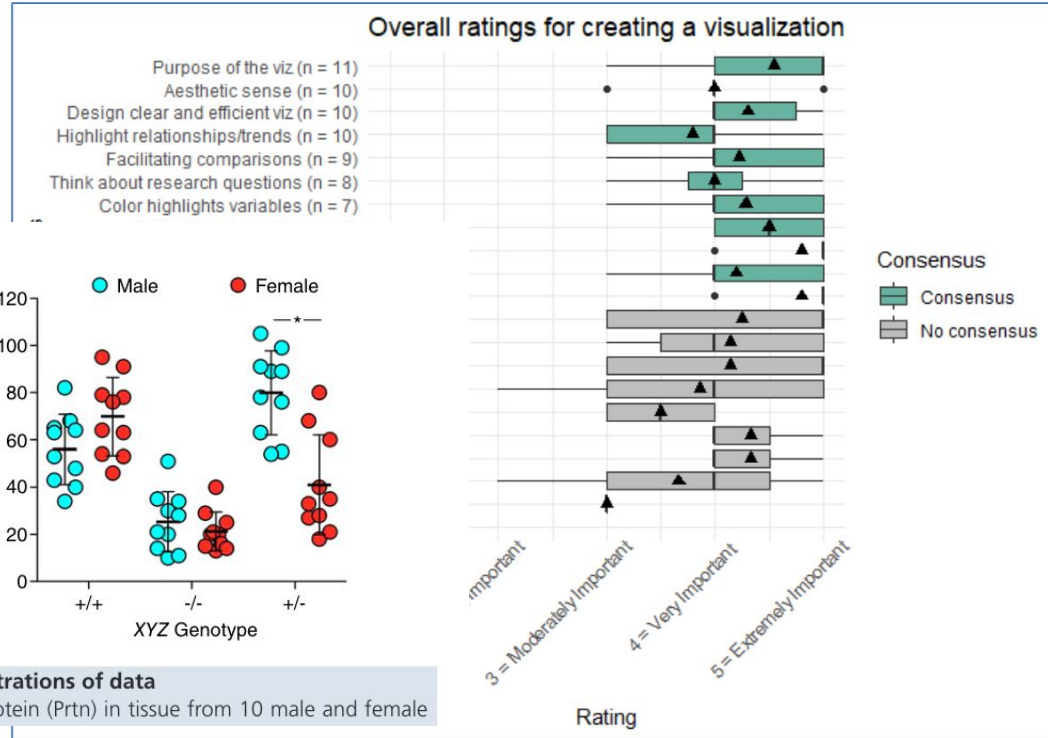
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- × Do not use 3D or a "pull apart" effect – this reduces comprehension and makes it hard to compare elements (Few, 2012,



**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



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

## Mini

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

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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 audience with too much information (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Organize your visualization: Sequence elements to help your audience understand the story (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Provide a legend: If needed, provide a legend to help your audience understand the data (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Have a consistent data visualization style: Use a consistent style for your data visualization (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Round to the nearest digit for decimal values: Round to the nearest digit for decimal values (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Frame your visualization: Frame your visualization to offer relevant information (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)
- ✓ Use color to convey information: Use color to convey information (Clayton, 2014, p. 74)

### 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).



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.

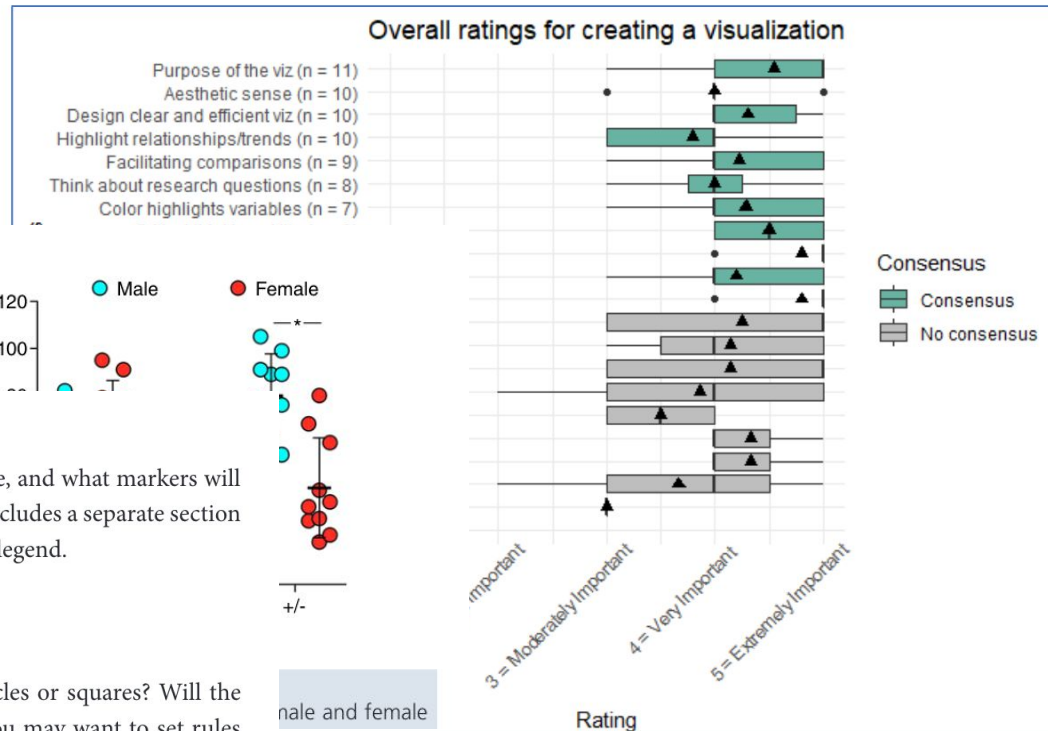
## 12. DATA MARKERS

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

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

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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

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Principle #4 Colors Always Mean Something

- Purpose
- Aesthetic
- Design clear and effective
- Highlight relationships
- Facilitating comprehension
- Think about research
- Color highlights

The 3 Cs for Better Charts

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

- Context
- Clutter-free
- Contrast

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.

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.

Visualization of Delphi Panel 3 results for creating skills/strategies

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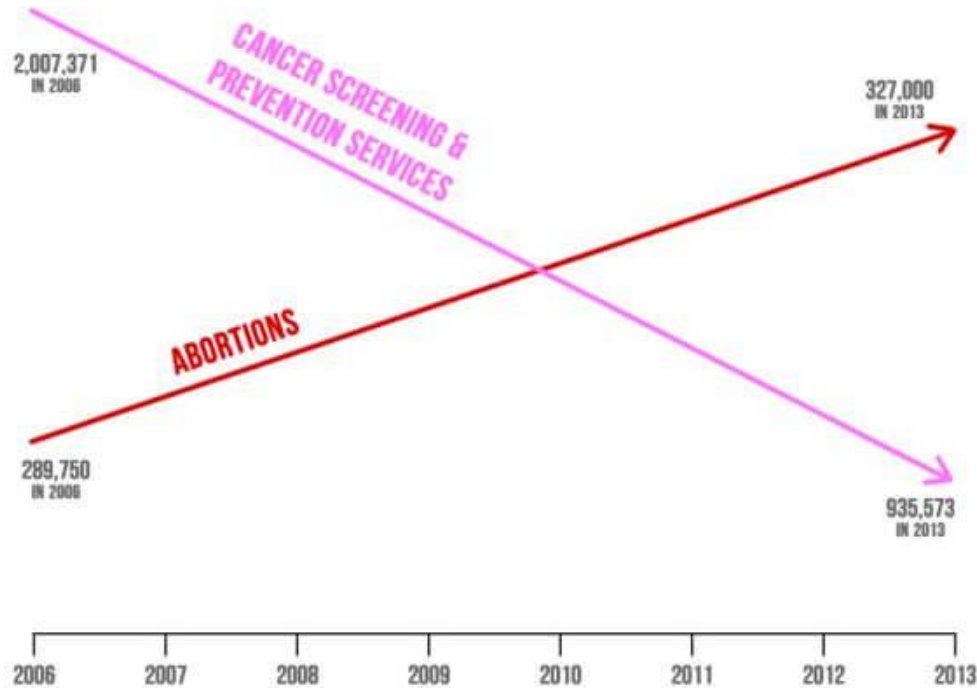
Consensus  
Consensus  
No consensus



**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

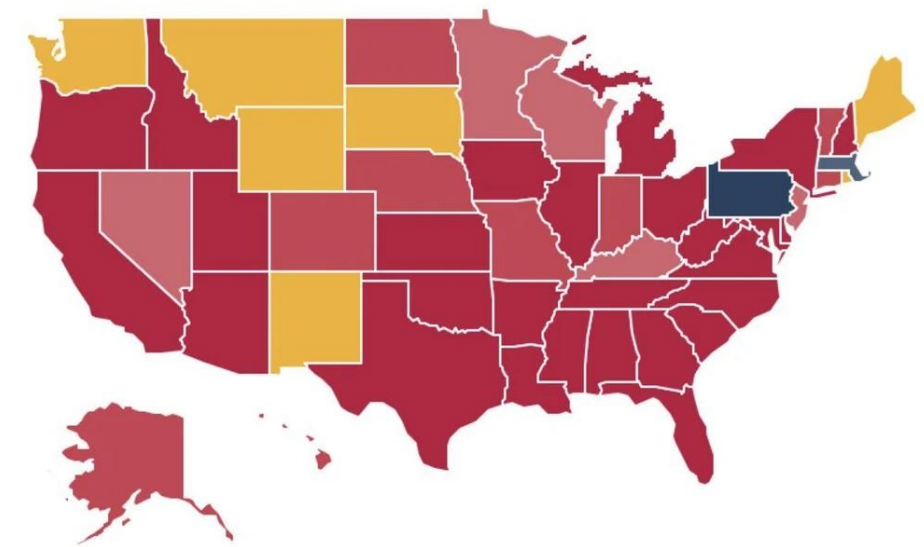


Sources: Kennel Club; *The Economist*

\*Where at least 100 are registered per year    †Where at least 50 are registered per year

# Where cursive writing is taught in the US

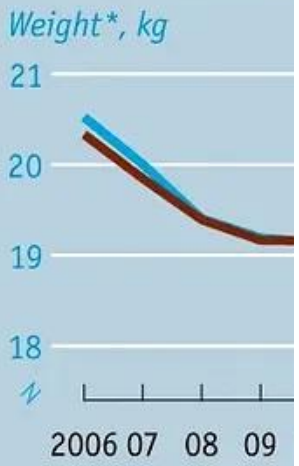
★★★★★



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

## Fit as a butcher

Characteristics of dog  
Kennel Club, average



Sources: Kennel Club;  
*The Economist*

atter

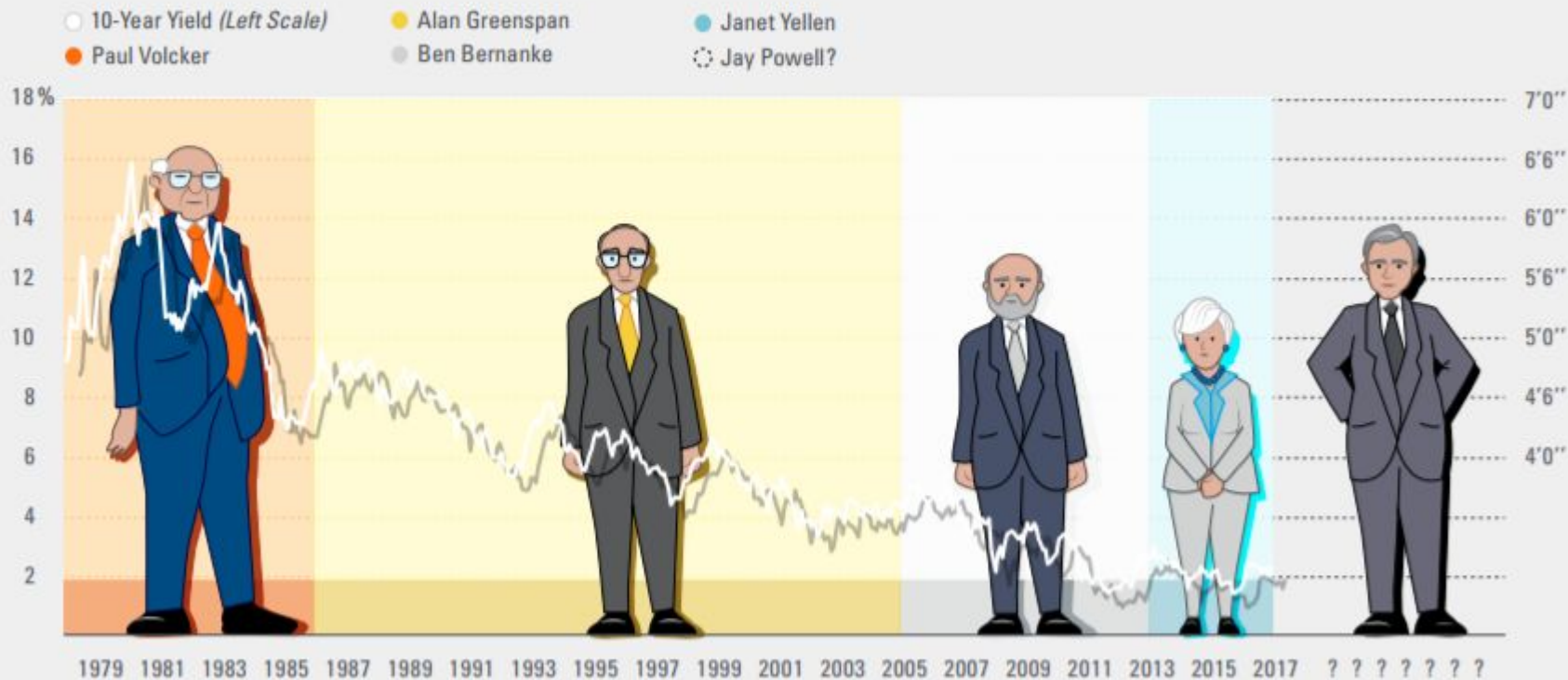
## log

registered with the UK's  
when fully grown



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.



# 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.

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T

## 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

E  
A  
S  
T

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  
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T

- PHARMACEUTICAL
- MARIJUANA
- METHAMPHETAMINE
- HEROIN
- COCAINE

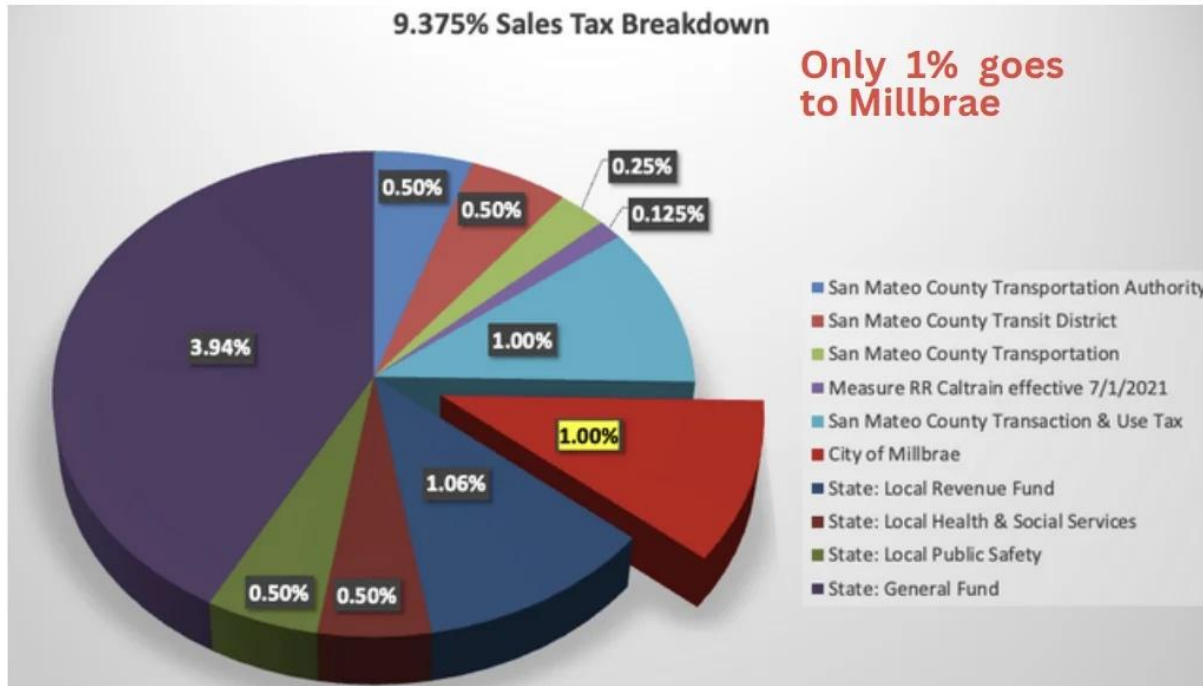


SOURCE: Department of Justice

# 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  
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T

7'0"

6'6"

6'0"

5'6"

5'0"

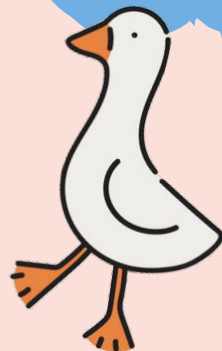
4'6"

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 loosest goosiest step)

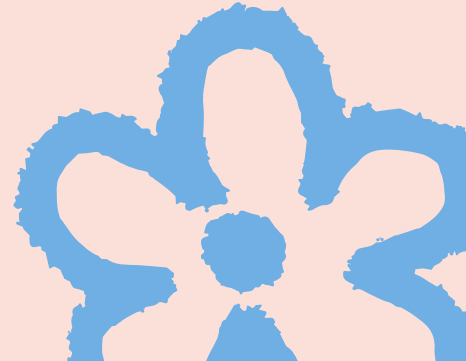
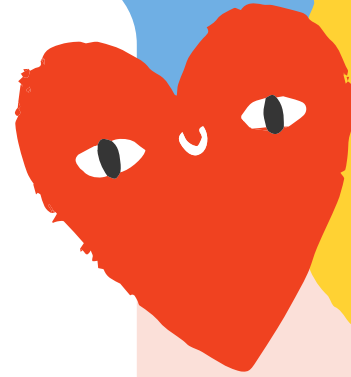
05

Do this on a larger scale



03

**End Goal:**  
**A framework built  
around consumption**





# Consumption of Data Visualization

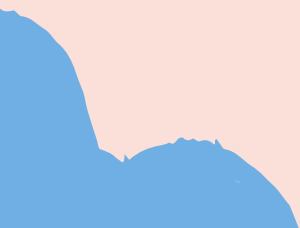
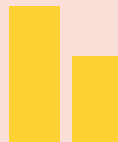
**Warning:**  
VERY much a work in  
progress

(References on final slide)



# Consumption of Data Visualization

**Visual Perception**



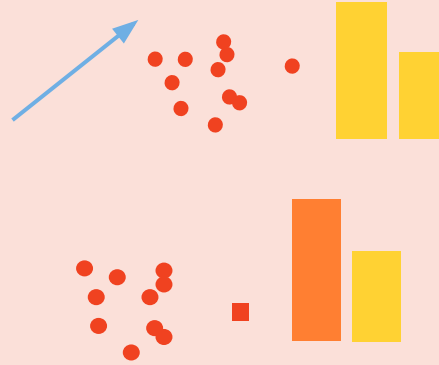
(References on final slide)



# Consumption of Data Visualization

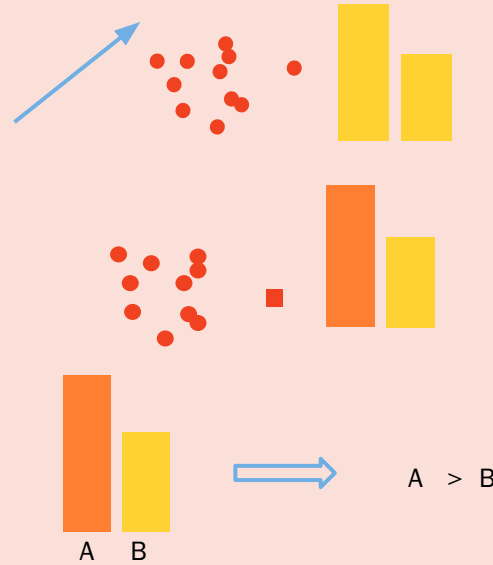
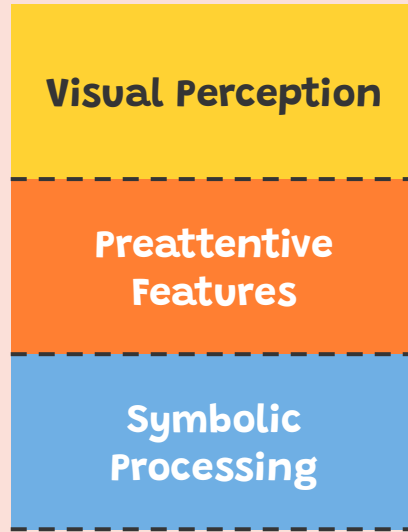
**Visual Perception**

**Preattentive  
Features**

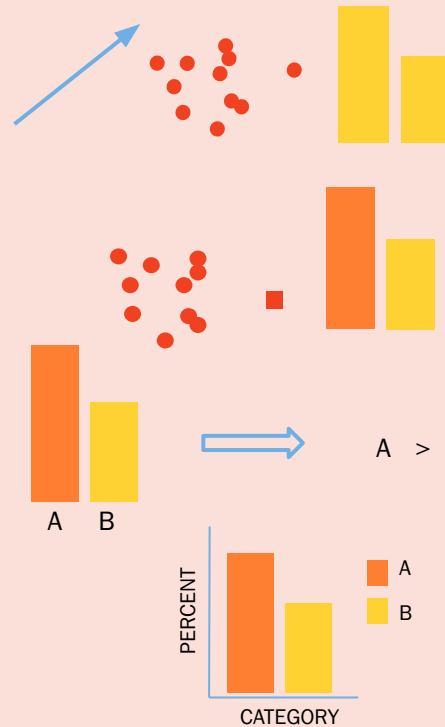
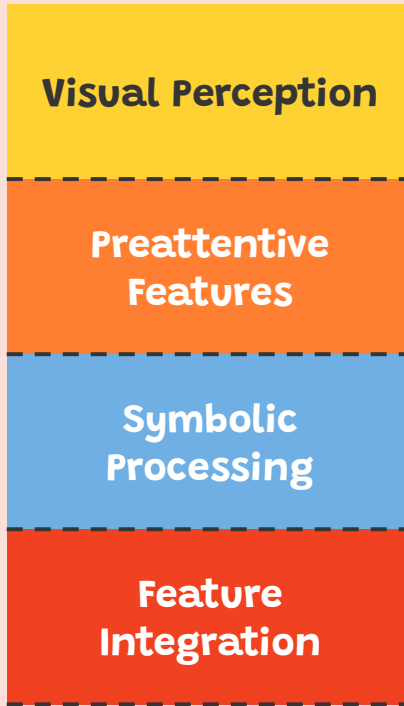


(References on final slide)

# Consumption of Data Visualization



# Consumption of Data Visualization



(References on final slide)





**Questions?**



# Thank You!

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# References

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