



DEPARTMENT *of* COMPUTING
College of Business & Technology
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

CSCI 1100

Using Information Technology

Data Literacy

Professor Ryan Haas

What is data literacy?

Data literacy:

The ability to **read**, **understand**, **create**, and **communicate** data.

- Enables **informed decision-making** based on data analysis.

Key concerns:

- Understanding data sources and data types.
- Understanding the context in which data is used.
- Accurately interpreting trends and behaviors and making informed inferences.

Lion moms sometimes eat their cubs when prey is scarce



... The context we use to understand and present data matters



So. Much. Data...

Every day on the Internet...

*34 million videos are posted on
TikTok. [1]*



*1.3 billion photos are shared on
Instagram. [2]*

*An estimated 402.74 million
terabytes of data are created. [3]*



1. Sendshort.ai. [TikTok Statistics](#)

2. Omnicoreagency.com. [Instagram Statistics](#)

3. Explodingtopics.com. [How Much Data Is Generated Per Day?](#)

Defining Data



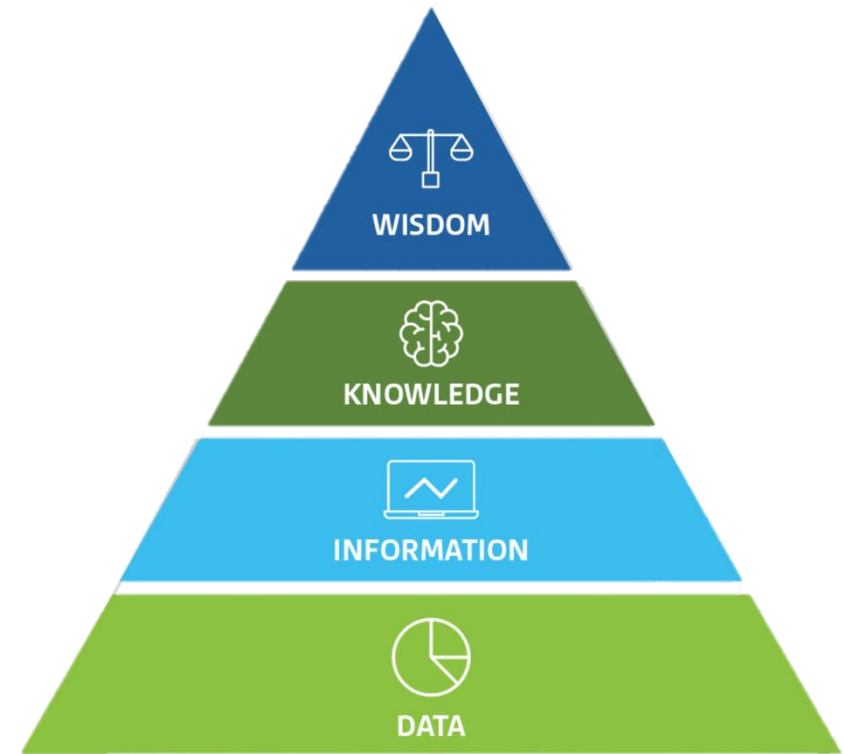
Defining data

Data Definitions:

1. Values representing a specific concept or concepts. [1]
 2. “raw figures, numbers, or text that serve as the starting point of analysis.” [2]
- Data becomes information when we **analyze** it and possibly **combine** it with other data to derive **meaning** and **context**. [1]

[1] Data.gov. [Glossary: Data vs. information](#).

[2] Kalé Nitin and Nancy Jones (2020). *Practical Analytics* (2nd ed.).



Above: The DIKW model, which we will explore in more detail.

Defining data: Qualitative vs. Quantitative

Qualitative data

Descriptive data that cannot be measured numerically, categories.

Ex.: Opinions, observations, experiences, months, demographic groups.

Quantitative data

Numerical data that can be measured and analyzed statistically.

Ex.: Sales figures, test scores, experiment results.



%

Defining data: Qualitative, Quantitative – What's the use?



Qualitative

Allows for rich, in-depth insights into behaviors, attitudes and experiences.



Quantitative

Allows for statistical analysis, trend identification, and data-driven decision-making.



Combining both!?

Allows for deeper, more comprehensive understanding of a topic.

Defining data: Structured vs. unstructured



Structured data

Typically **quantitative**—highly organized (standard formats).

Ex.: Dates, names, addresses, credit card numbers.

Unstructured data

Typically **qualitative**—lacks a predefined format.

Ex.: text and social media posts, Internet of Things (IoT) sensor data.



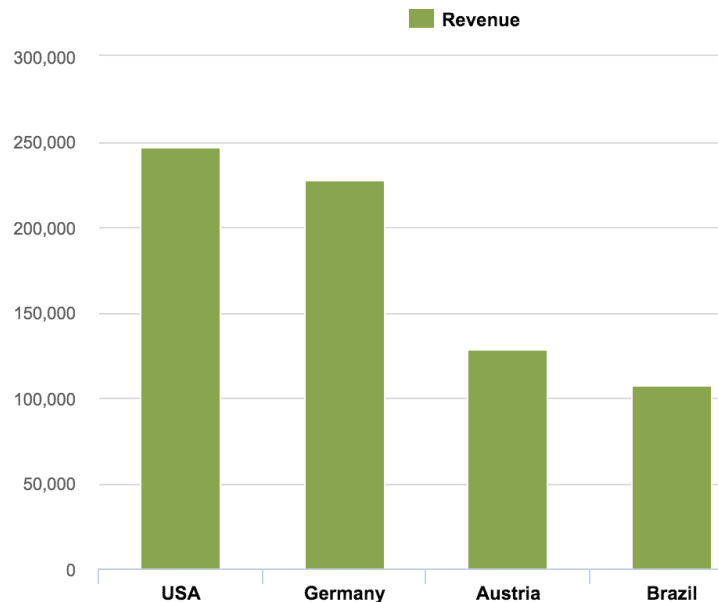
Visualizing Data



Common chart types

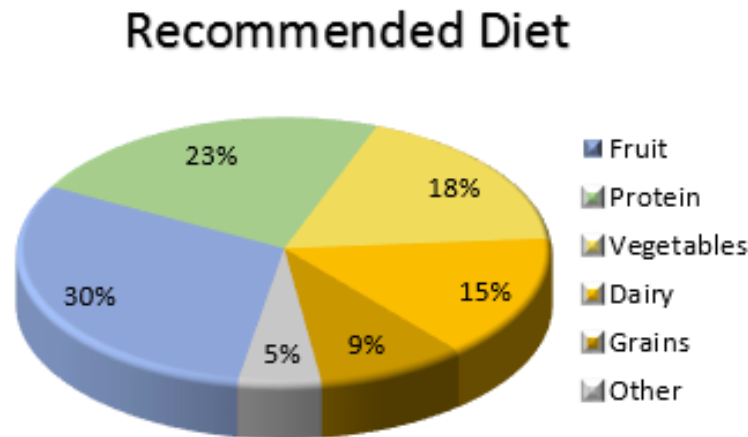
Column/bar Chart

Compare values for different categories or compare value changes over a period of time for a single category.



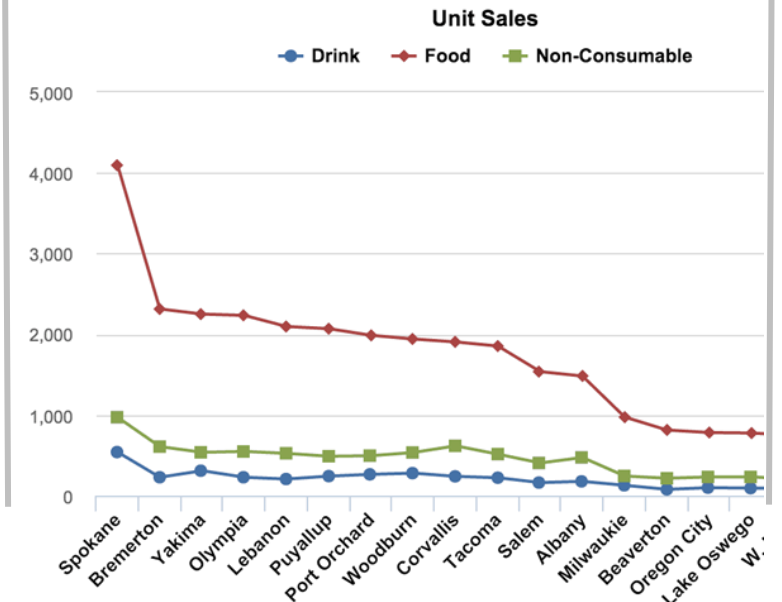
Pie Chart

Visualize parts of a whole (percentages), when comparing exact values is not the goal.



Line Chart

Emphasize the continuation/flow of values (trends) over time (time series data).



When to use different chart types

Column/bar Chart

Best for: Comparing values across categories.

Dos and Don'ts:

- Start the numerical axis at zero! Our eyes are sensitive to height.
- Don't use for more than 5-7 categories.
- If you represent time, always put it on the x-axis. Progress from left to right.

Pie Chart

Best for: Showing proportional relationship of parts of a whole.

Dos and Don'ts:

- Ensure the sum of the segments is 100 percent.
- Don't use for more than 5 categories, ideally, only two categories E.g., men compared to women; market share and compared to whole market.
- Don't use a pie chart if category values are very similar or completely unrelated.

Line Chart

Best for: Showing trends over time.

Dos and Don'ts:

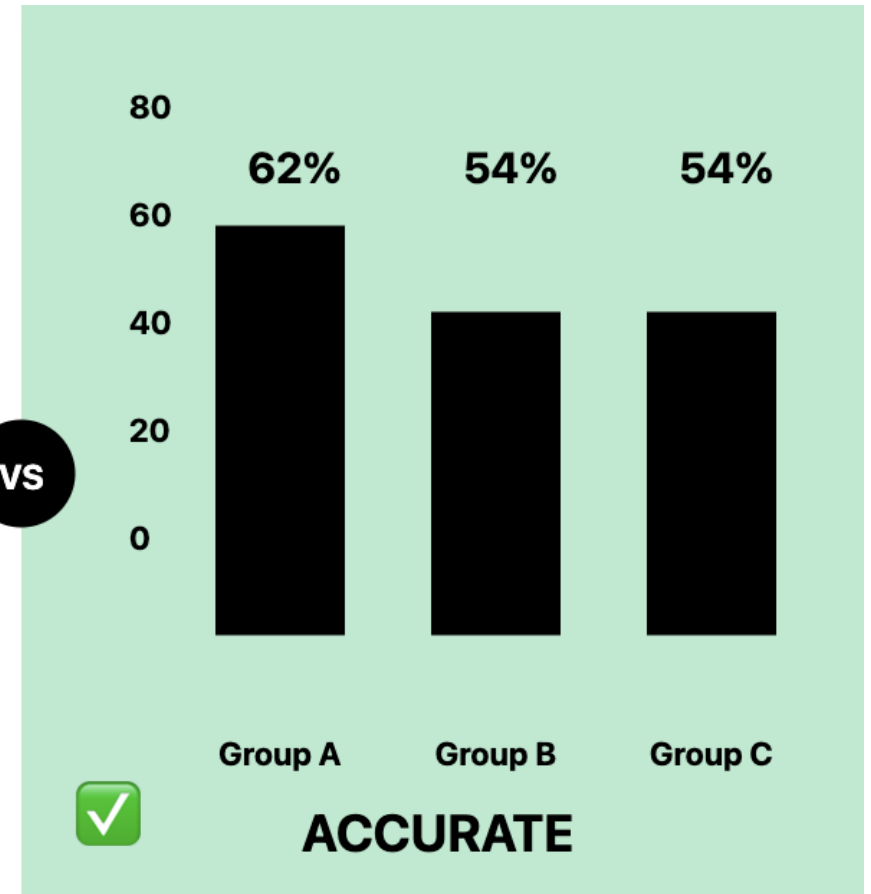
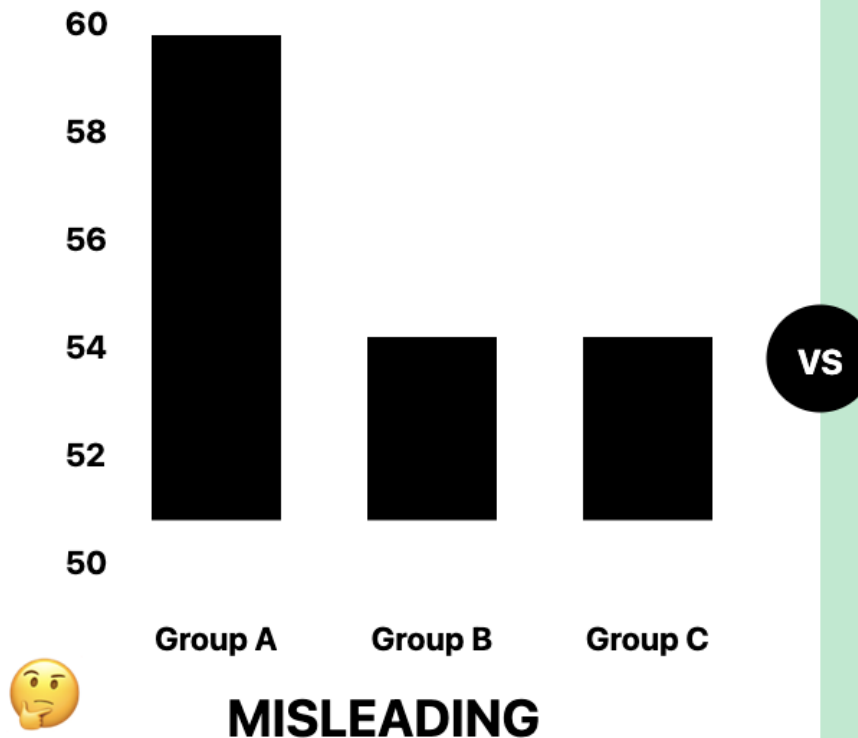
- Typically, start the axis at zero.
- Don't skip values for consistent data intervals that present trend information. E.g., don't skip days with zero values.
- Once again, time goes on the x-axis and should progress from left to right.

(Mis) Interpreting Charts



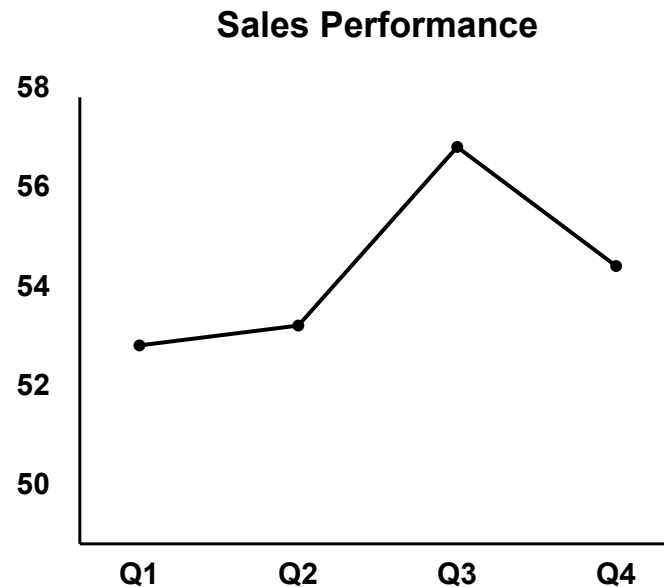
Misleading charts: Omitting the Baseline

- Starting with a vertical axis at 50 stretches the trend making the difference among the groups seem massive.
- We are only looking at an 8% difference!

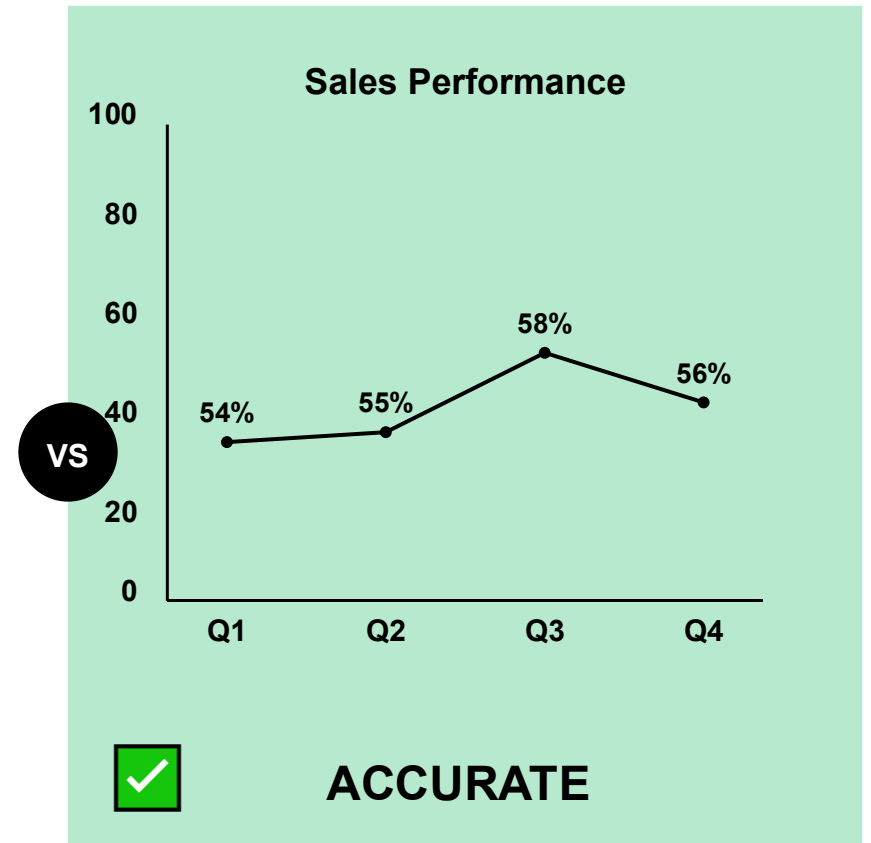


Misleading charts: Manipulating the y-axis

- This time, the trick is not removing the baseline but using the scale to make the performance look steeper.
- So we could exaggerate a spike if or flatten it, depending on what we were trying to “sell”.

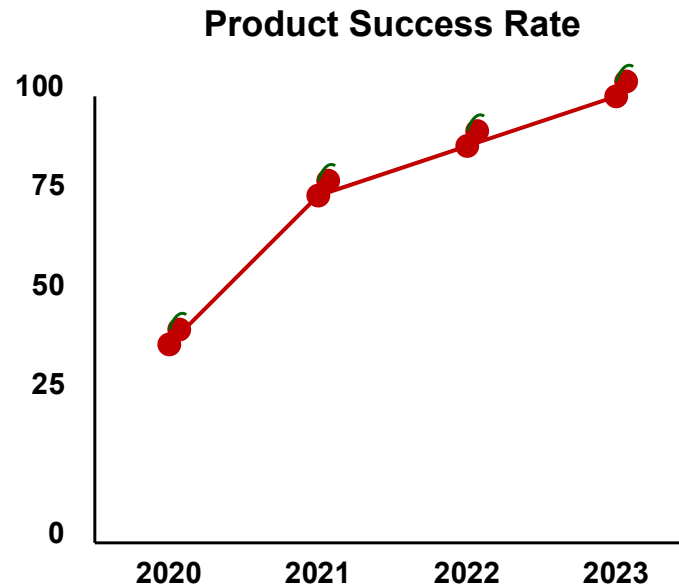


MISLEADING



Misleading charts: Cherry-picking

- 4 carefully selected data points: strong upward trend.
- Doesn't quite resemble the average shown by our linear regression (blue) trendline, does it?



"Our success is improving every year!"



MISLEADING

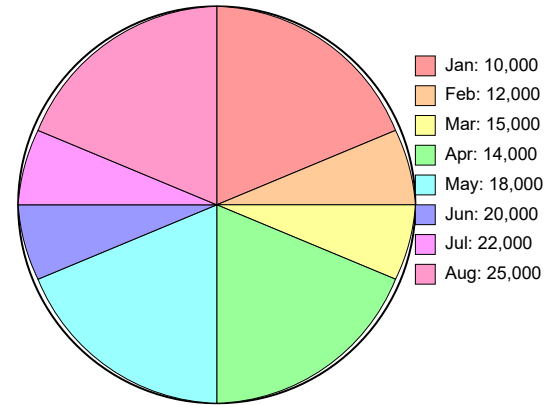


"Results vary with slight overall improvement"

Misleading charts: Wrong chart type!

- August does account for most traffic, but you wouldn't know it by looking at the pie chart on the left.
- A trend over time should be represented with a line chart!

Monthly Website Traffic



"August accounts for most traffic!"

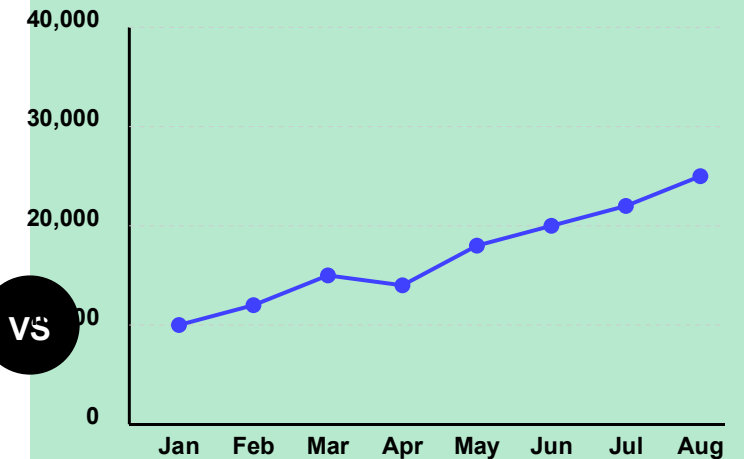
Pie charts show parts of a whole,
not trends over time!



MISLEADING

VS

Monthly Website Traffic



"Traffic has consistently increased over time"

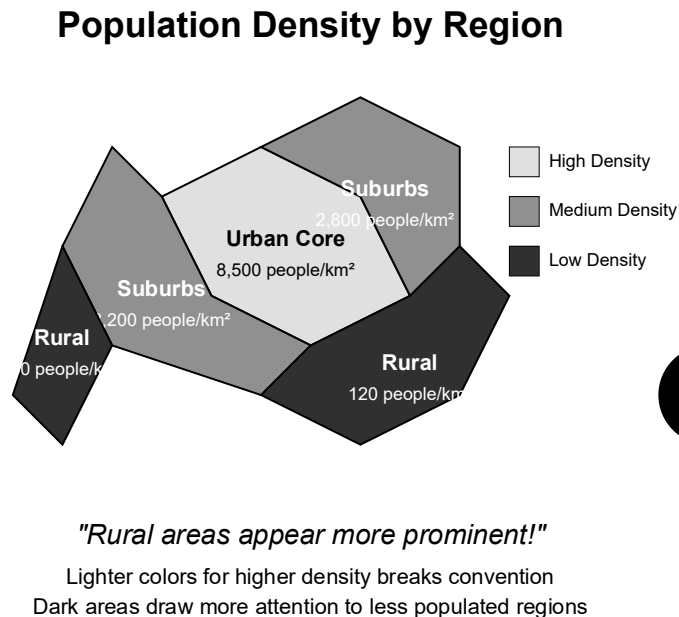
Line charts clearly show trends and changes
in values over a time period



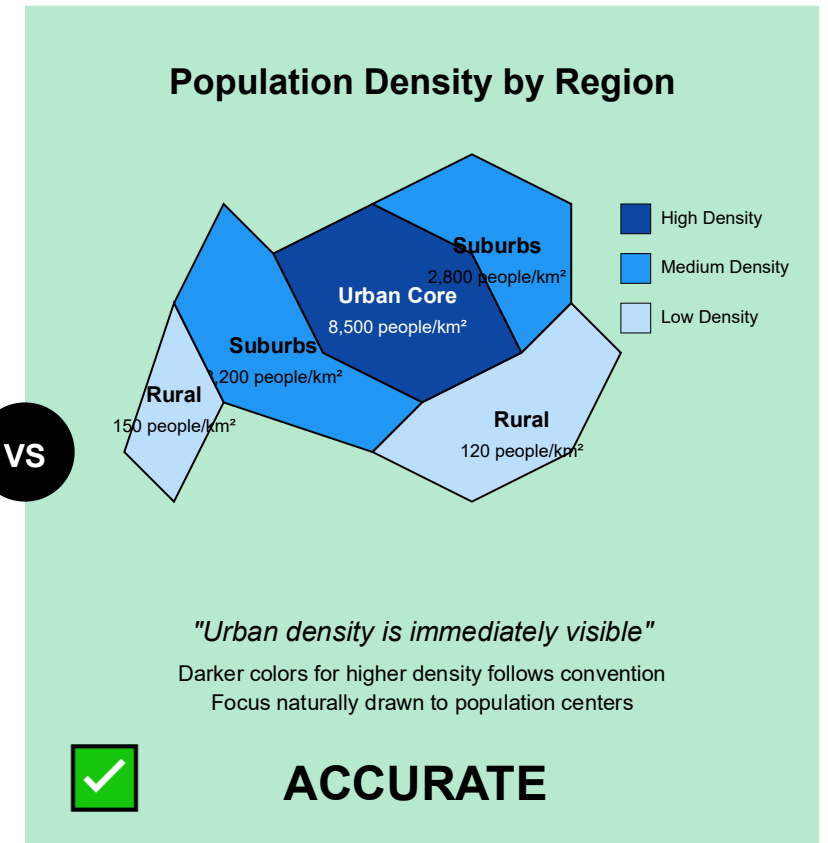
ACCURATE

Misleading charts: Wrong chart type!

- Convention:
 - └ lower value = greater density
 - └ higher value = lesser density
- Can't help but perceive the rural areas as most dense, urban areas as least.
- We love when you're creative, just not with your charts 😊



MISLEADING

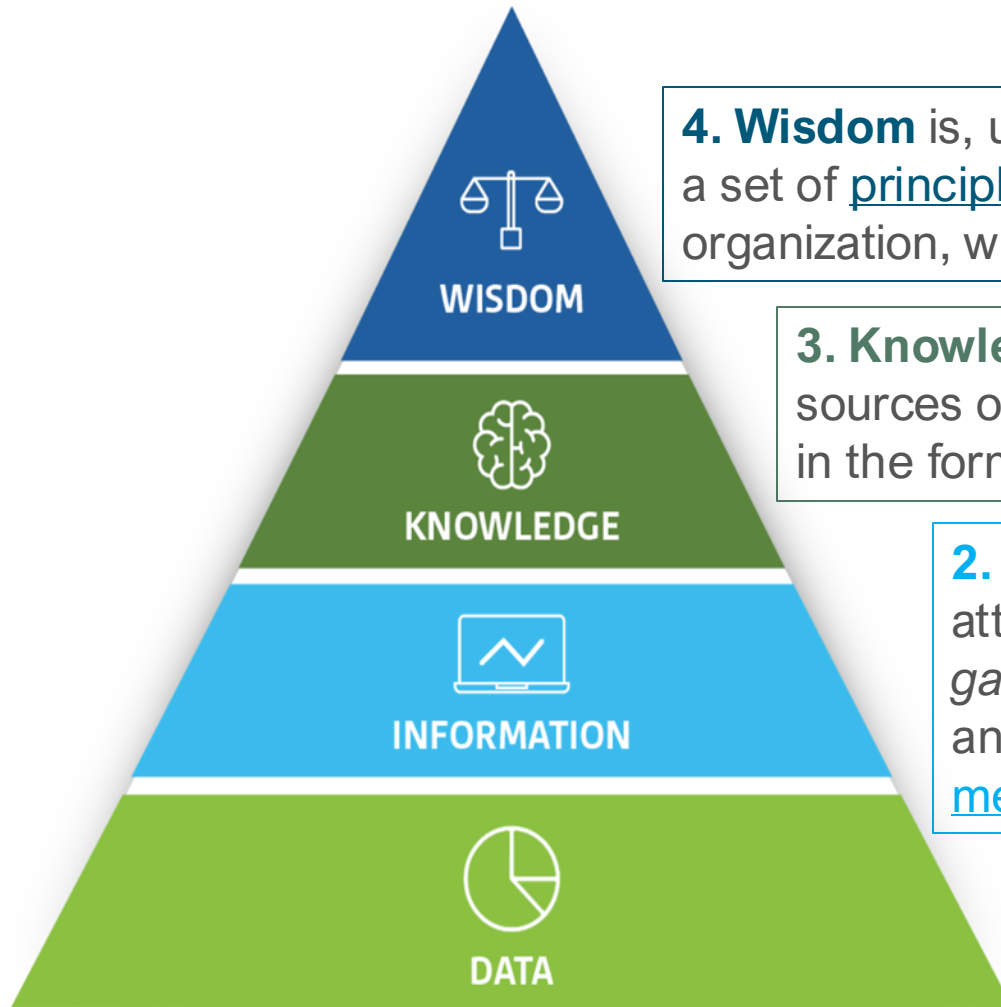


ACCURATE

The Big Picture



The big picture: Why we care about data



Above: The DIKW Model

4. Wisdom is, ultimately, a state of awareness. It's a set of principles by which a person, or organization, will act.

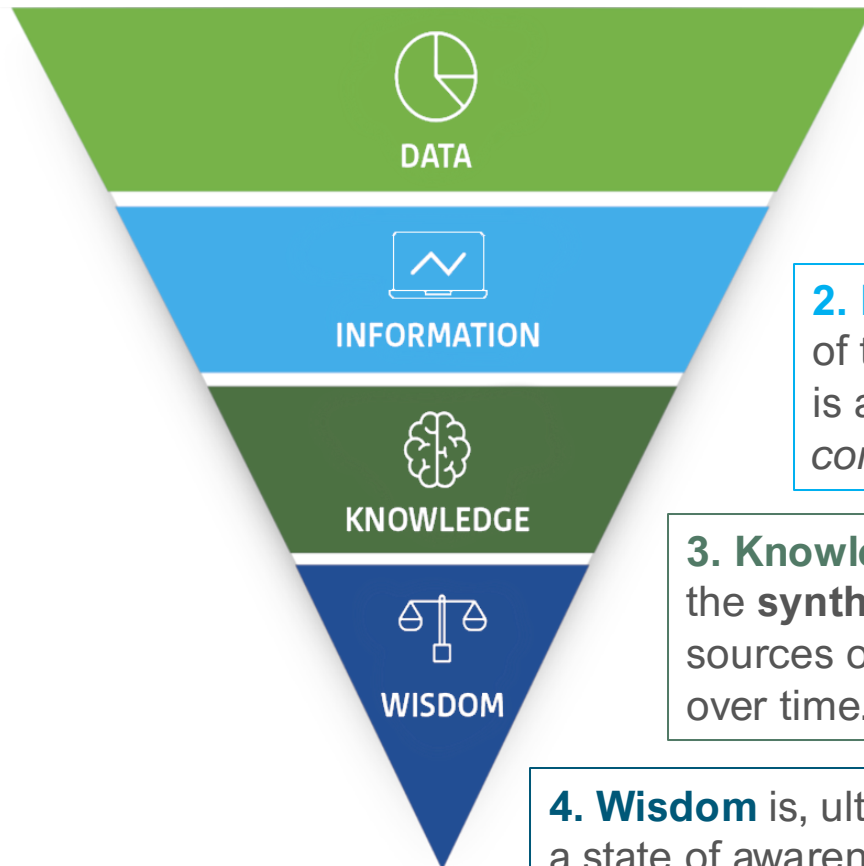
3. Knowledge represents the **synthesis** of multiple sources of information over time. Knowledge often comes in the form of frameworks and theories.

2. Information sits on top of the data foundation and is attained by providing *context* to data. Information is *gathered* via an **analytics platform** or *deciphered* by an **analytics team** which begins to give the data meaning and purpose.

1. Data are the raw figures, numbers, or text that serve as the starting point of analysis.

Kalé Nitin and Nancy Jones (2020). *Practical Analytics* (2nd ed.).

The big picture: A process of synthesis



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Above: A sales funnel, sometimes divided into more stages.

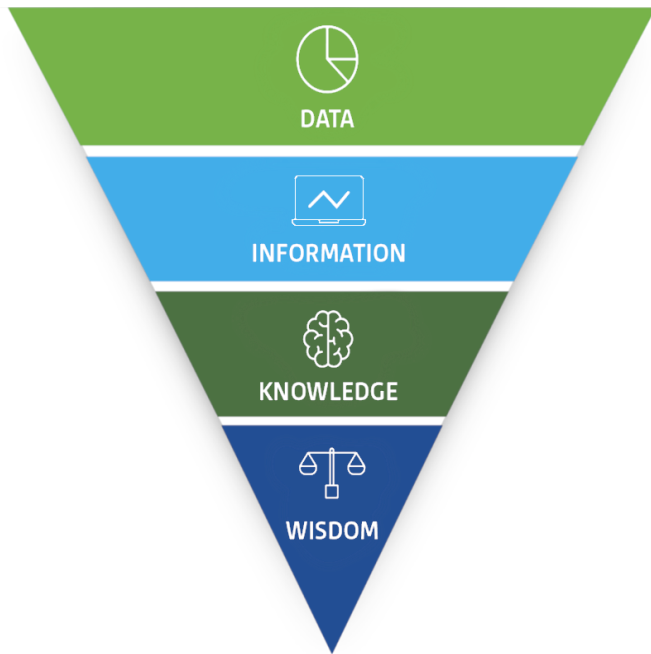
Similar to how the volume of people diminishes at each stage in sales toward a customer's action, each level in DIKW is a further abstraction from the original data.

DIKW scenario: Eggs and milk

When a customer comes to the store to buy eggs and milk, they're seeing the result of this entire DIKW process.

The store's ability to have the right products available at the right time is the culmination of:

- **data** collection,
- processing that data into useful **information**,
- applying **knowledge** to predict demand and manage stock, and...
- using **wisdom** to make strategic decisions that satisfy customer needs while optimizing operations.



DIKW scenario: Data

Raw facts: The grocery store collects data such as:

- The number of eggs and milk cartons sold each day.
- Dates and times of sales.
- Inventory levels.
- Delivery schedules.
- Customer preferences (e.g., organic vs. conventional products).
- External factors like weather reports that might impact shopping habits.



DIKW scenario: Information

Processed data → information: The store processes the raw data to generate:

- **Sales reports:** Summarizing the daily, weekly, or monthly sales of eggs and milk.
- **Inventory status:** Current stock levels and the rate at which they are depleting.
- **Customer trends:** Identifying patterns, such as a higher demand for eggs on weekends or an increased purchase of milk during colder months.
- **Supplier performance:** Tracking the delivery times and quality of shipments from suppliers.



DIKW scenario: Knowledge

Understanding and insights: The store applies knowledge by:

- **Forecasting demand:** Using historical sales data to predict future needs, ensuring that enough eggs and milk are stocked without overstocking.
- **Stock management:** Knowing when to reorder products based on the rate of sale and lead time from suppliers.
- **Customer behavior:** Understanding that promotions or seasonal events (like baking during holidays) might increase demand for eggs and milk.



Examples: Understanding Customer Behavior Matters!

Market Basket Analysis

- Optimized store layout + targeted promotions = 💰



KROGEMART

Machine Learning in

[View Document](#) ➔

Customer Segmentation

- Targeted promotions + customer loyalty = 💰



KROGEMART

Machine Learning in

[View Document](#) ➔

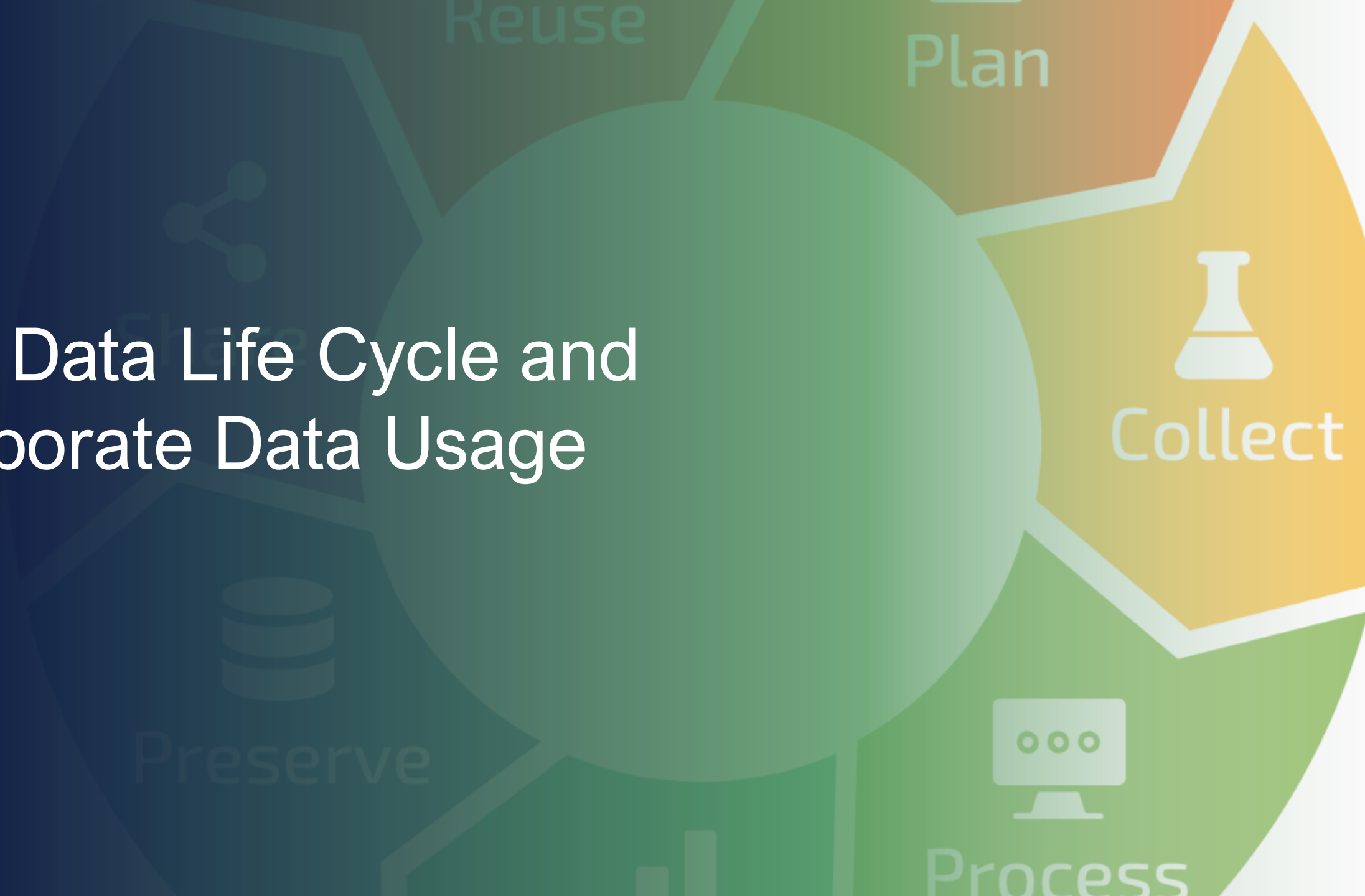
DIKW scenario: Wisdom

Decision-making and strategy: The store uses wisdom to make informed decisions, such as:

- **Optimizing inventory:** Deciding to stock more of certain types of milk (e.g., lactose-free) if customer preferences shift, or adjusting order quantities based on upcoming holidays.
- **Supplier relationships:** Choosing to partner with suppliers who provide the best balance of cost, quality, and reliability to meet customer demands efficiently.
- **Sustainability practices:** Implementing strategies to reduce waste, like using data to track expiration dates and optimize the supply chain, minimizing spoilage.



The Data Life Cycle and Corporate Data Usage



What is the Data Life Cycle?

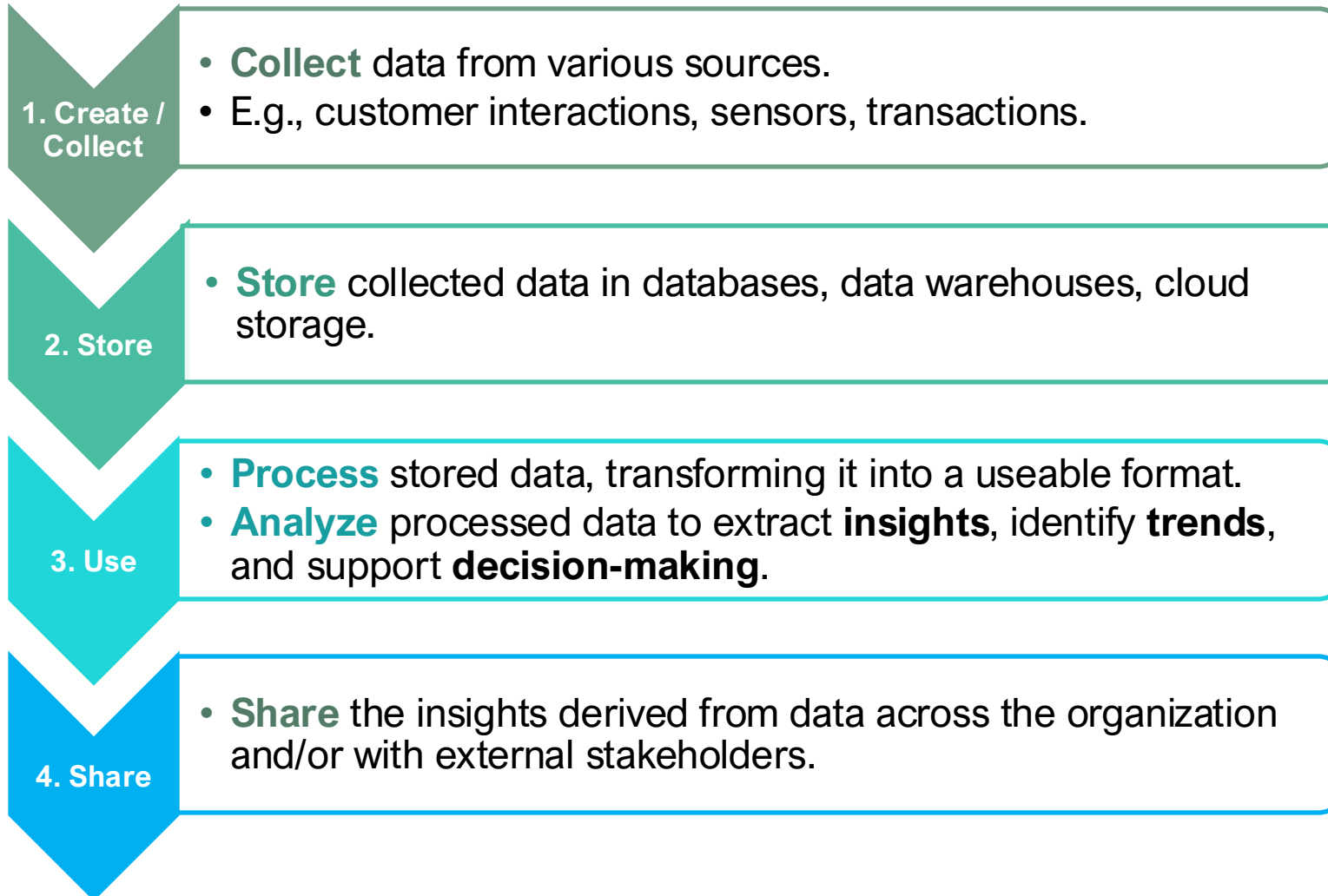
Data Life Cycle (DLC): The stages that data goes through from its initial creation or collection to its eventual disposal.

- It's a systematic process that ensures data is properly managed, used, and protected throughout its life.
- Understanding the DLC is crucial for organizations to harness data effectively and comply with regulations.



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Stages of the Data Life Cycle



Stages of the Data Life Cycle

5. Archive

- **Store** data that is no longer actively used for the long term, typically for legal, historical, and recovery purposes.

6. Destroy

- **Destroy** or delete data that is no longer needed. Data should be securely destroyed to protect sensitive information.

? How do you think the DIKW model aligns with these stages?

- Where is information, knowledge, and wisdom created in this life cycle?

Why we care about the DLC

1. Efficiency:

Proper management of data throughout its life cycle ensures that data is always available when needed, reducing delays in **decision-making**.

2. Compliance:

Adhering to the data life cycle helps organizations comply with legal and regulatory requirements, such as **data protection** laws.

3. Cost management:

Effective data management **reduces costs** associated with storage, processing, and data breaches.

4. Security:

Managing data through its life cycle ensures that sensitive data is **protected** from unauthorized access and misuse.



Case study: Data-driven decision-making



Amazon uses vast amounts of data to optimize its supply chain, personalize customer recommendations, and improve delivery efficiency.

- **Example:** Amazon's **predictive analytics** allow it to anticipate customer orders and stock items in warehouses close to the customers **before** they even place the order!
- **Impact:** Reduced delivery times, greater **customer satisfaction**, and **competitive edge** in the retail market.

Amulyaa Vaishnavi Kalvakuntla (2023). [How Amazon Uses Data Analytics to Deliver Packages Faster](#).

Greg Bensinger (2014). Wall Street Journal. [Amazon Wants to Ship Your Package Before You Buy It](#).



Storytelling with Data

Storytelling with data



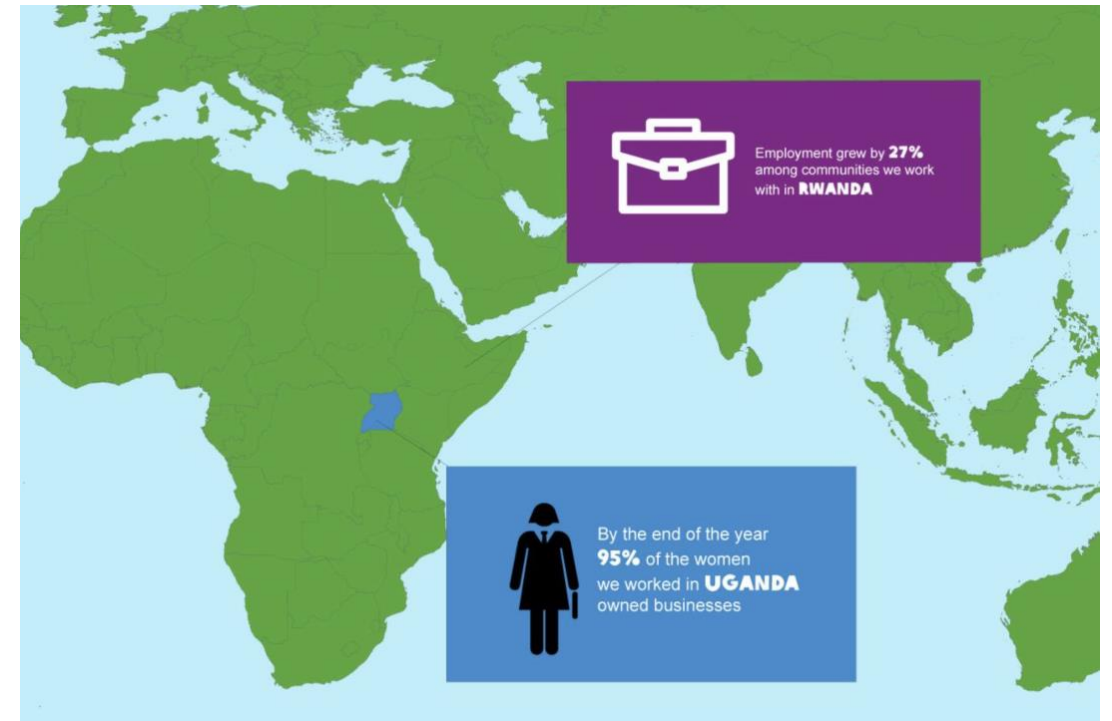
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Incorporating data visualizations into stories can make data more engaging, understandable, and memorable.

- Narratives simplify complex trends, making them easier to understand and interpret.
- Stories are persuasive!

Storytelling with data: Elements of a data story

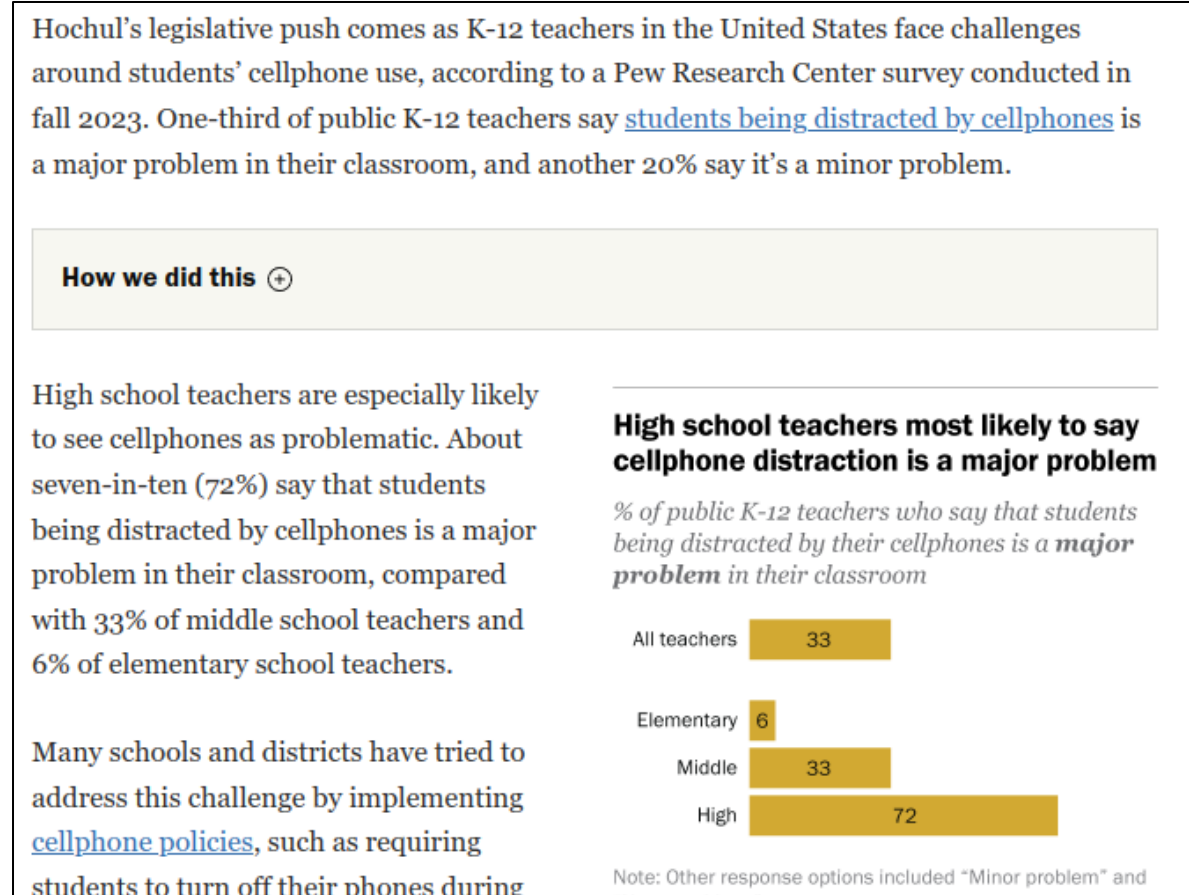
- A **clear storyline** guides the audience through the data.
- **Visualizations** support the narrative, highlighting key insights.
- A **call to action** compels the audience to act on the information.



Above: NGO Oxfam Ireland track and report on their goals using an [interactive annual impact report](#) to tell their year's story with data.

Storytelling with data: Example

- The article tells the story of K-12 teachers “fac[ing] challenges” concerning student cellphone use.
- The charts help us see why certain cellphone policies may be implemented.



Above: A June 2024 [Pew Research article](#) tells the story of how smartphone use is perceived by teachers and students in public schools amidst K-12 teachers’ challenges with student cellphone use.

Storytelling with data: Best practices



Keep it simple

Avoid overwhelming your audience with too much data; focus on key insights.



Use consistent visuals

Ensure your visualizations are clear and aligned with the narrative.



Focus on storyline

Make sure the data supports the story, not the other way around.