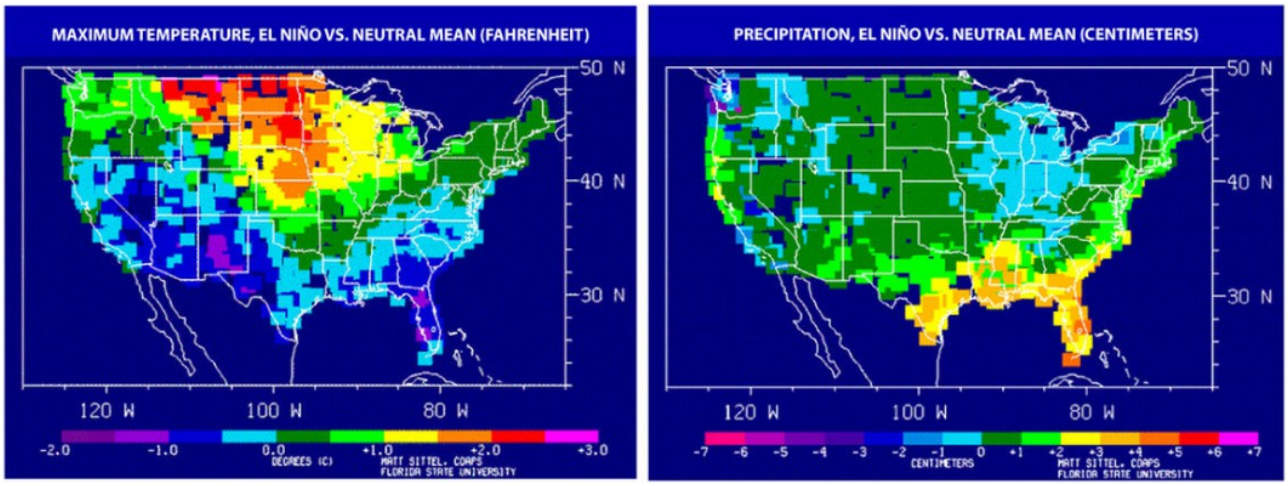
Problem 1: Rainbow color map



Taken from http://www.livescience.com/45831-how-el-nino-causes-wild-weather-all-over-the-globe-infographic.html

The site livescience.com aims to provide science-based information to people regardless of their background; thus the intended audience of this visualization could be categorized as interested laymen. In this specific case these charts aim to show the impact of Ill Niño on the weather conditions temperature and precipitation. While the information can be extracted from these charts with some effort, there are some hurdles that need to be taken to do so:

- The colors for highest and lowest are quite similar, especially in the second graph. Not only does this potentially confuse which of the two is indicated, it also makes mental ordering of the colors more difficult
- The background color is very close to one of the colors used to indicate data, which needlessly obfuscates. Also, the background color of the title is -slightly- different from the rest.
- Both graphs use a similar color scheme while presenting completely different data.
- The lack of gradient gives the impression that temperature/precipitation shifts drastically adjacent to borders.
- The chosen colors do not take colorblindness into account.
- When viewed in isolation, it is easy to mistakenly assume that the second graph describes temperature, rather than precipitation.
- The first graph's title indicate the data to be in Fahrenheit, while the legend indicates Celcius.

The choice for a rainbow color scheme was probably not even made consciously, but simply copied from one of the more standard ways of showing weather data/temperature. However, this leads to a map which needs to be worked at in order to get coherent information and is therefor definitely not the right choice.

Problem 2: Patterns and colors in maps

Comparing Google maps to Harvard's own map site

- The map that promotes an easier visual search for Harvard's buildings is Harvard's own map site. Not only are all the buildings labeled from a lower level of zoom, they are red-bordered, making them immediately discernible from other buildings. The saturation of the green representing greenery surrounding Harvard buildings is also higher, making them contrast more.

- For routing Google maps is better, for two reasons. The first is the addition of a route finding functions, which colors your route on the map. The second is the choice made on the Harvard site to make roads and streets a different color than other paths, whereas on Google maps all paths are similarly colored.

- Overall Google maps is clearer: its color scheme feels more natural and unlike Harvard's site it does not draw focus to specific areas, nor does it represent similar features diffirently simply because one is part of Harvard and the other is not.