Daniel Sanchez

MIS 505

Dr. Christopher Sibona

Module 3 Assignment 4 - Reflection

July 19th, 2020

This week I experienced learning challenges with three elements. The first two were theoretical, and the third was more technical in nature. First, I spent some time reconsidering tables as an effective data visualization. Second, I struggled with turning a very minimal data set into a graphic representation that would tell an effective story. Third, I spent a significant amount of time in Excel and Tableau, exploring the best way to format and structure my data and visualizations.

Viewing and reading the material for this week, I found that I had previously taken table design best practices for granted. For me, it has always been easier to spot design issues with charts or graphs, but more difficult to identify issues with tables. I think part of this has to do with the expectation of having a lot of time to digest the information provided in a table. I was pleased to find the line- and data-spacing comparisons in Stephen Few’s book; this really helped me understand the right and wrong ways to show data in a table. The conditional formatting in this class has also really helped me how effective tables can really be.

Another conceptual challenge for me this week had to do with determining the elements of my story from the cell phone market data set. I found that it can be difficult to tell a meaningful story when I’m limited to just a couple of variables. I decided to look at the overall comparison between the two years, in addition to the comparisons across the companies. I then needed to figure out how to manipulate settings in Tableau to effectively communicate this story.

In this sense, having a small data set was actually helpful for playing around with the settings in Tableau. I tried a whole lot that didn’t work, using the “Show Me” feature, adding different elements to the different mark aspects, and formatting the colors and axis labels. The tutorial videos helped immensely with this assignment. I still feel as though there is a ton to learn in Tableau, but I’m looking forward to continuing to explore. Similarly, in Excel, I still feel as though I need more exposure with some of the intermediate concepts of drilling-down and sorting within a pivot chart.