eCornell

Tool: Professor Haeger's Checklist of Visual Integrity

As you've seen, there are several steps you can take to ensure that your visual presentations of data have integrity, meaning they're accurate, clear, and unencumbered by so much ink that the meaning is getting lost.

Check your work before sharing your presentation. Use this checklist to ensure that you're meeting Professor Haeger's recommended guidelines. Add your notes regarding any opportunities you see for improvement.

Is your illustration accurate?

The illustration must be truthful. It must be accurate. As you have seen, "graphical integrity" refers to how accurately the visual elements represent the data.

Notes:

Are you showing the data?

Go back to your key objective: What are you trying to accomplish by sharing this visual presentation? Is that meaning coming across clearly?

Notes:

Are you overpowering the data with too much "ink"?

You want the audience to remain focused on the message. You have to be sure you're not overpowering the meaning by adding so much color (or "ink,") to the illustration that meaning becomes obscured.

Notes:

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Have you included too many labels in your image?

Again, this will overpower the meaning of your message. You want people to be focused on the key meaning of your illustration and not distracted by extra labels.

Notes:

Have you erased any extra ink and redundant data?

Every single element should provide value. If it's not adding value, remove it. If the data is presented twice, erase the redundancy.

Notes:

Is your image too colorful, too flashy?

If you include too much color, flash, decoration, and/or effects, you may actually degrade the message you're trying to send. This is what's meant by "chart junk."

Notes:

Have you revised and edited it, shown it to others, walked away from it for awhile, and checked it again with fresh eyes?

You want to review the presentation a final time. Make sure you have met your objective with your visuals.

Notes: