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**Track National Unemployment, Job Gains and Job Losses**

This essay is about the national unemployment visualization by Andrew Van Dam and Renee Lightner. This visualization is split in two different visualisations, one about the job gains and losses per sector and one about the national employment.

The first visualization, the one showing the job gains and losses per sector, is visualized with a colored stack graph and a table showing the details for a sector in a certain timespan. The stacked graph feels intuitive with the highest gains on top and the highest losses on the bottom. This is supported by the colors, which vary in transparency. Less intuitive are the dots that show when hovering over the graph, it is not immediately clear you’re looking at the same sector. Missing data is clearly shown on the bottom, not interfering with the graph itself, while still being interactive.

The accompanying table with the stacked graph is showing the sector and the details. The “Months rising” and “Months falling” are over the complete timespan and won’t change. When clicking on a point in the graph, the table changes to this particular timespan. Of this I am not sure, since the title of the table remains “Job Gains and Losses for November 2015” and it is not clear to which month and year you switched, unless you are going to count it in the graph. The sorting of this table they are showing is initially done by the monthly change in percentages. However, when sorting by “Sector name”, “Sector size”, “Months rising” or “Months falling”, first come the sectors that gained and afterwards the sectors that lost. This can be rather confusing, because it is not what you expect at first.

The second part of the visualization is a matrix graph (?) about the national unemployment for various groups of people. This is graph has two axes of which both are time-related, which is not very common or familiar. It is hard to read because it goes from top to bottom, left to right. The bigger trends are clearly showing however and below this graph is a simple line graph. This line graph should have been on top, as it is much easier to read and shows at first a very clear and simple picture of how unemployment went through the years instead of adding a lot of detail to it.

In the line graph, there is a word “RECESSION” draw into it. I believe this is supposed to be in one of the gray areas, but since it so small, you can’t associate it with those areas. Rather they should have added at least explanation in text about this.

The menu for the second visualization is simple and clear. I like how it is added completely at the bottom, so everyone can first familiarize themselves with the initial data, rather than diving into the complete data at the start. The option “Some college” however is rather unclear, is this data from a single college or multiple, or are it maybe some college students? Clicking on one of the options changes the line and matrix graphs. The line graphs adds a blue line in addition to the overall black line and one or more gray lines, for the other options in the same category. These could have been colored however, as it is not clear what the other lines are, unless you go through the complete category.

The color goes from low to high in the order blue, green, yellow and red. I believe it is well chosen because it is something everyone is familiar with, examples are temperatures maps or height maps. However, in the first graph they chose to use red for low values and blue for higher values, which they later on change in the next graph. This is because they associate high unemployment (which are basically losses in the first graph) to be the “higher” value.

A nice addition to this visualization would be a add news articles or more information about those time periods in it. Most will know why the unemployment rate was high in 2010, but what happened in the seventies, eighties or nineties? This could more meaning to this visualization in terms of seeing patterns.

Niet genoeg tijd om dit af te maken ☹