Effective Programming Practices for Economists

Plotting

What to plot?

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Reading list

- Calling Bullshit (Carl Bergstrom & Jevin West), Chapter 7
- How Charts Lie (Alberto Cairo).
- Better Data Visualizations (Jonathan Schwabish)
- The Functional Art (Alberto Cairo)
- Show Me the Numbers (Stephen Few)

Data types (Schwabish)

- Categorical
  - unordered
  - ordered
- Quantitative
  - discrete
  - continuous
    - interval scale
    - ratio scale

Some (too) simple recipes

- Raw data (continuous): Scatterplots
- Fractions of categorical / discrete variables: Bar charts, potentially stacked
- Levels: Bar charts (including zeros!), unless interval scale
- Changes over time: Line charts
- ...

Five guidelines (Schwabish)

1. Show the Data
2. Reduce the Clutter
3. Integrate the Graphics and Text
   - Label data directly (remove legend)
   - Write the title like a newspaper headline
   - Add explainers
4. Avoid the Spaghetti Chart
5. Start with Grey