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