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Interactive Media

Blog post 5

Close reading and reflection on Knaflic's 'Dissecting model visuals - Chapter 6'

In this chapter of “*Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals*” by Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic, there is the discussion of data visualization and what classifies it as good visualization. As well as the design process that has been thought of and implemented into creating different forms of data visualization.

It is important when planning graphs to know what piece of data would need emphasis and what can be used to catch the audience’s attention too. In this chapter, Knaflic creates different types of graphs that portray data differently and which are more effective when it comes to data visualization. What can also be criticised to be an example of good data visualization can include visible fonts and specific colour schemes, as well as extra information that can be helpful to a reader, but the reader is not dependent on this information in order to read the graph.

In the first visual, there is a line graph that plots a certain set of data, in this case it is a company’s charity campaign. The way that the data is portrayed is simple, as it is easy to read. What makes it easy to read is the way that data is spaced out in increments on the x and y-axis. Knaflic states that there is no right way to plot data into a graph, as it depends on how the creator wants the graph to be and what aspect they want emphasis on, which aspect that they want the audience to focus on (Knaflic, 2015 ).

Moving on to the second line graph, this shows a company’s sales over time and a forecast assumption of what will be made in the years to come. Knaflic mentions that very often there are cases where companies use this method, but they plot both sets of data on line, this can be misleading and even difficult to read (Knaflic, 2015 ). Although, putting the information in one line can still be effective by making the predicted forecast of sales line a broken line.

The third graph can be seen as a stacked bar graph, with information of goals that have been missed, achieved and exceeded. What stands out in this bar graph is the missed goals, as it is in a dark red, which draws attention to the audience, meaning that the emphasis was on the missed goals. The rest of the graph easily depicts what has been met with goals, although the trend is a lot more difficult to read as it becomes harder to read and track percentages when a reader is further away from the y-axis.

There are a few other graphs that are discussed with similar properties and why they could be good visualizations of data, and how they could possibly be improved for better audience reading, as well as keeping track of information.

In conclusion, graphs really depend on who is making them, plotting the data and the target audience. There are many aspects that can make the graphs look good or bad, such as colour schemes, spacing of information, method of plotting information and even the way that the data is being measured along the x and y-axis. What does tend to matter is more is the usability of the graph and its effectiveness, where it simple to read from the audience perspective, this can be the main aspect as to what makes a graph a good form of data visualization.

# References

Knaflic, C. N., 2015 . Chapter 6 - Dissecting Model Visuals. In: *Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professional.* s.l.:John Wiley & Sons, pp. 151 - 163.