Assignment 4

Source: - http://formula1.ferrari.com/en/inforacing-2015-red-season/

When we think of sports data visualizations, the first thing that pops into your mind are comparison visuals where two teams are against each other. Not that often we find visualizations that have taken a different spin on the data. Through this visualization, Ferrari has managed to take us through the entire 2015 Formula 1 season while also conveying to us very vital information that helps us understand how things unfolded over the course of the season.

Since the visualization is on the Formula 1 section of Ferrari's website, the primary audience of this interactive graphic is Formula 1 enthusiasts. Many car magazine and websites have also referenced this visualization on articles, so automotive fans come as a secondary audience.

The graphic doesn't mention its data source explicitly. But, since Ferrari is a participant in Formula 1, it collects data. Also, the graphic portrays publicly available information such as race results, lap times, the points table, and other general information about each race. Thus, the dataset can be easily fetched from internet sources.

Strengths

- The choice of design [1]. The visualization correctly portrays the essence of Formula 1. The way they have tried to depict the data is ingenious. Gives you useful information and highlights of races in 2015.
- Clear, detailed, and thorough labeling [1]. The annotations and symbols they've used are self-explanatory (for the target audience) conveying information such pit stops, winners and crashes.
- Principle of Clear understanding [2]. Data is very accurately represented and easily understandable.

Weaknesses

- Principle of clear vision - Do not allow data labels in the data region to interfere with the quantitative data or to clutter the graph [2]. The symbols used occupy a lot of space and their animations overlap
- Principle of clear understanding [2]. No legend for car colors. Color representation of the teams is not accurate.
- Principle of Proportion and Scale [2]. Poor use of space, too clustered. There is a big blank red bar at the bottom which can be removed/shrunk to make room for the visualization. The flags on the X-axis could be spaced for clarity.

My opinions

The visualization is a very innovative, giving the user the feeling that he is experiencing a Formula 1 race live. The user can go into details of every race, and see the highlights of the race, with important events being depicted. The visualization is one of its kind, which would surely captivate the user to follow the formula 1 race throughout the season. The visualization needs some subtle changes to be more informative and captivating.

What would I do differently?

The visualization requires a lot of human interaction (the constant scrolling), hence I would have added an option of "auto-play". I would have used a better representation of the colors for the teams and arranged them in a better way, i.e., make better use of the empty space. In order to see a particular race, you have to scroll to the very bottom and click on the particular race. Its cumbersome, my alternative would be to make the flags clickable and they will redirect you to the respective race.

Principles used are given in the following books: -
[1] Edward Tufte (The Visual Display of Quantitative Information (2nd ed.)
[2] The Elements of Graphing Data (1985)

Visualization: -