Data viz and humor talk

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Starts off w/ a chart of his the Visual Display of Quantitative Information guy, Tufte, was mad at.

Context matters! E.g., overly busy infographics can be fine if interactive and can zoom in, but not so good in print

Where and how you xp a viz makes a lot of diff

Always ask: who’s the audience? You are likely going to make things that are not aimed at academics. Such things should be interesting and attention-grabbing – and simple

It’s easy to make graphics too complicated to understand. Beautiful but useless.

Consider two camps

Data visualizer: what’s the data?

Infographics designer: what’s the *story?*

This is an impt difference!

Cites Norretranders! Limits to cog bandwidth.

Holmes made a short film for Adobe based on it for a conference

Vision 10 mil -> 40 bits per second

Hearing 100,000 -> 30 bits per second

“Exformation” – input that gets discarded

Less is clearer.

Only include the bits that matter to target audience. Make it useful for the user!

Be judicious – choose what to put in. e.g. for tourist map, include what can find at each relevant subway stop

Why add humor? Aim for smile of recognition. Helps reader relax, makes them willing to spend more time w/ your viz. Want to be friendly to the reader, make them want to engage.

Don’t have to be grim to be authoritative. Light-hearted stuff can convey info just as well.

Context – need to put unfamiliar things next to things people do understand to make them clear

Cf million, billion, trillion – we’re bad at orders of magnitude

$1m stack of $100 bills is waist-high.

$1b fits into 8.5^3 feet cube

$1t would fill main hall of Grand Central Station. 80x100x48 ft

Isotypes – small figures of people w/ some humanity to them. (Otto Neuwrath?) responsible for it.

Gerd Arntz was an artist who partly inspired. Both were 20s-30s era