Assignment 5.3, Project Task 4: Infographic

Scott Breitbach
DSC640: Data Presentation & Visualization
18-February-2022

After experiencing only limited traffic to the informational blog post, our company (Southwest Airlines) has decided that a shareable infographic may be a better way to proceed in order to get our message out to the general public that flying is a safe way to travel. In this infographic I tried to stick to basic, yet interesting facts that might help to comfort and ease the concerns of those who are hesitant to fly. I also used the Southwest Airlines color scheme throughout.

In the first section, I wanted to portray that fear of flying is not uncommon, with the goal to reassure worried individuals that they are not alone. There is also some subtle imagery with the 6.5% bar chart in that the bar is filled in to 6.5% of the total. In the second section, I tried to emphasize the sheer volume of air traffic and contrast that with the relatively low risk of dying in a plane crash, emphasizing other more common activities with higher risk. Finally in section 3 I discussed how the industry continues to get safer over time, with a bit of information specifically about Southwest Airlines excellent safety record.

One design issue I ran into was with the bar graph showing Odds of Death in a given year. Initially I used the values of the millions (0.58, 1.2, 3.7, 11), but this made the flight bar the tallest, which gave the impression that airlines were the least safe. I replaced these values with 1 / the value (1/0.58, 1/1.2, etc) to make the airline bar the smallest, visually indicating lowest risk. There is some ethical concern here due to manipulation of the data, but the goal is to show relative risk and without units on the graph I think this seems like a reasonable decision.

Another ethical consideration was around some data that I left out. I had rates of fatality risk for different regions of the world, with the US being among the safest nations, another group of "advancing" nations, and a third group of developing countries. While this would have made the US seem safer by contrast, I didn't want to denigrate the other parts of the world or make it seem as though they aren't safe (especially when the ultimate goal here is to portray flying as a safe means of travel).

Additional Sources:

Fly Fright Staff. "Plane Crash Statistics: What Are Your Chances of Dying on a Flight?" *FlyFright*, 16 Apr.
2020, https://flyfright.com/statistics/.

Haltiwanger, John, and Lilli Petersen. "If You're Afraid of Flying, the Odds of a Plane Crash Will Reassure
You." *Elite Daily*, Elite Daily, 16 Apr. 2021, https://www.elitedaily.com/news/world/people-
terrified-plane-crashes-even-though-rare/977885.

Quail, Eden. "Is Southwest Airlines Safe? (Yes, It Is.)." *KN Aviation*, 25 Aug. 2021,
https://knaviation.net/is-southwest-airlines-safe/.

Seaney, Rick. "Fear of Flying? Some Good Things to Know." *ABC News*, ABC News Network, 7 Oct. 2013,
https://abcnews.go.com/Travel/fear-flying-good-things/story?id=20471481.