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Reflection

The Interactive Data Visualization course this semester was a class I was looking forward to taking. The course taught me how to build a website and create interactive visualizations. Some general challenges I felt I came across in the course were learning the syntax for five different programming languages, building code from scratch without using an example code, and debugging issues that happen. Although these were my challenges throughout the semester, I can say that I am better now than I was in the beginning.

For project 1, which was the exploratory visualization project, I explored a dataset that had some popularly known caffeinated beverages with their nutrition facts from the website Information is Beautiful As a graduate student, I found this to be an interesting dataset to explore because students, like myself, are always trying to make sure we stay wired and awake to get what needs to be done. However, sometimes we may not necessarily think about our calorie intake when drinking that caramel macchiato. I decided to go with a scatter plot that you could filter the drink types: chocolate, coffee, non-drinks, soft drinks, and teas. If I could have done this visualization differently, I would have loved to make a table that had a lists of all the drink's names and have it be able to interact with the scatter plot by highlighting the point it corresponds to while also giving the calories and caffeine content of that drink. My challenge in trying to execute the clickable table was trying to figure out how the click function would work with the scatter plot. I felt like making the scatter plot itself was easy since I had an example code to reference to. It was trying to make a table interact with scatter plot was what became the more

complex task since it was an original idea that was hard to find an example on. The critiques I received for this visualization was mainly regarding the color scheme I had chosen and also a bug my code had with how the hover worked with the labels of each data points. I decided to edit the color scheme and I fixed the bug to the best of my abilities the only bug remaining now is an issue with the font when you select a category for the first time. The labels on the data points get bolded in black when you make a first selection but then returns to normal for every other selection.

For project 2, which was the narrative visualization, I created a visualization that portrays the Gender Pay Gap in the US. My visualization is based off a similar visualization that uses the same dataset from the website Information is Beautiful. The data was collected from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016. The data used was for full-time employees only. Part-time employment and freelance work were not included. The first two graphs in this project show the average annual salaries of specific occupational categories for both men and women. The third one shows the gap between the two. It becomes apparent that the jobs that generally pay the most are the ones where the pay gap between men and women is the largest. If I could have done this visualization differently, I would have added more graphs or make each of the graphs able to be filtered by occupational categories. This would allow users to see the jobs listed in each subgroup. The challenges I faced creating this visualization was getting the graphs to display the way they were meant to as a dashboard.

Overall, I am happy with how much I was able to accomplish this semester. The portfolio may not be exactly how I wanted it, but I am determined to work on it this summer to make it how I want. This class was definitely a really great experience and I would love to continue learning more about web development so that I can keep improving my visualizations.