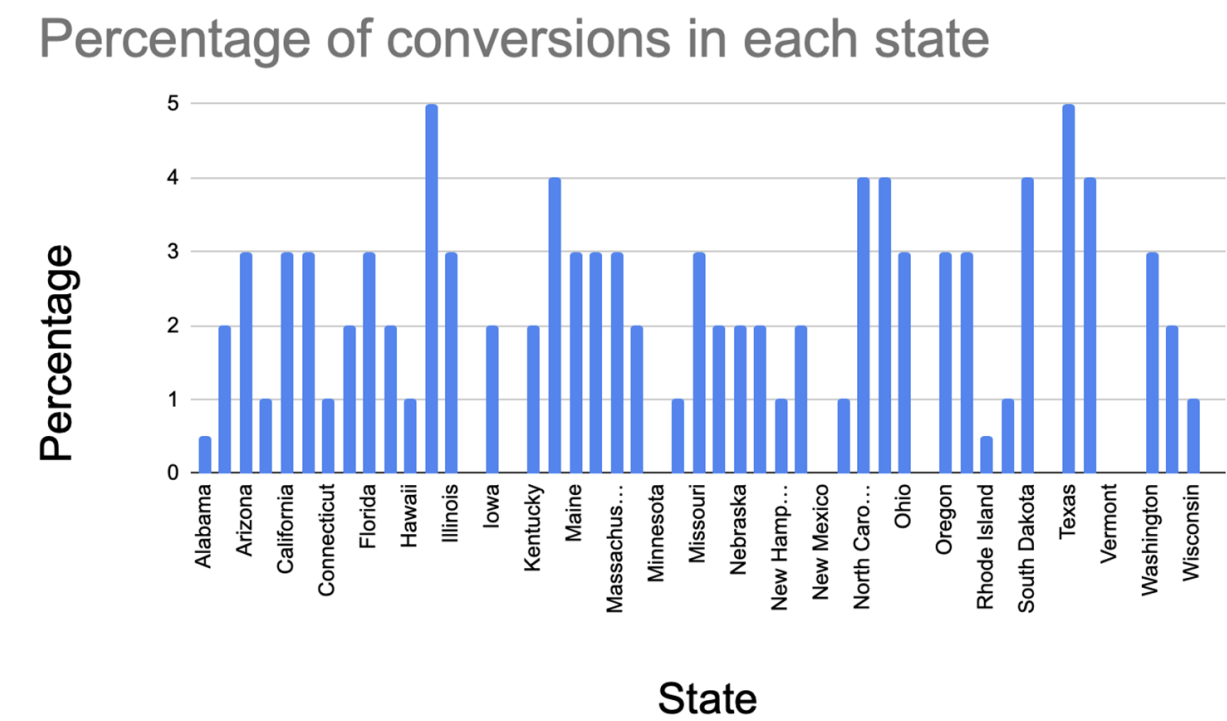# Data visualization in spreadsheets: charts

A video on data visualizations in this course introduced a variety of charts that can be created from data in a spreadsheet. When you share data visualizations to help stakeholders consume metrics and data, it's important for them to be able to scan through them to get the main points in a few seconds. This reading provides examples of when you might need to adjust or regroup data to create a chart that's easier for stakeholders to read and understand.
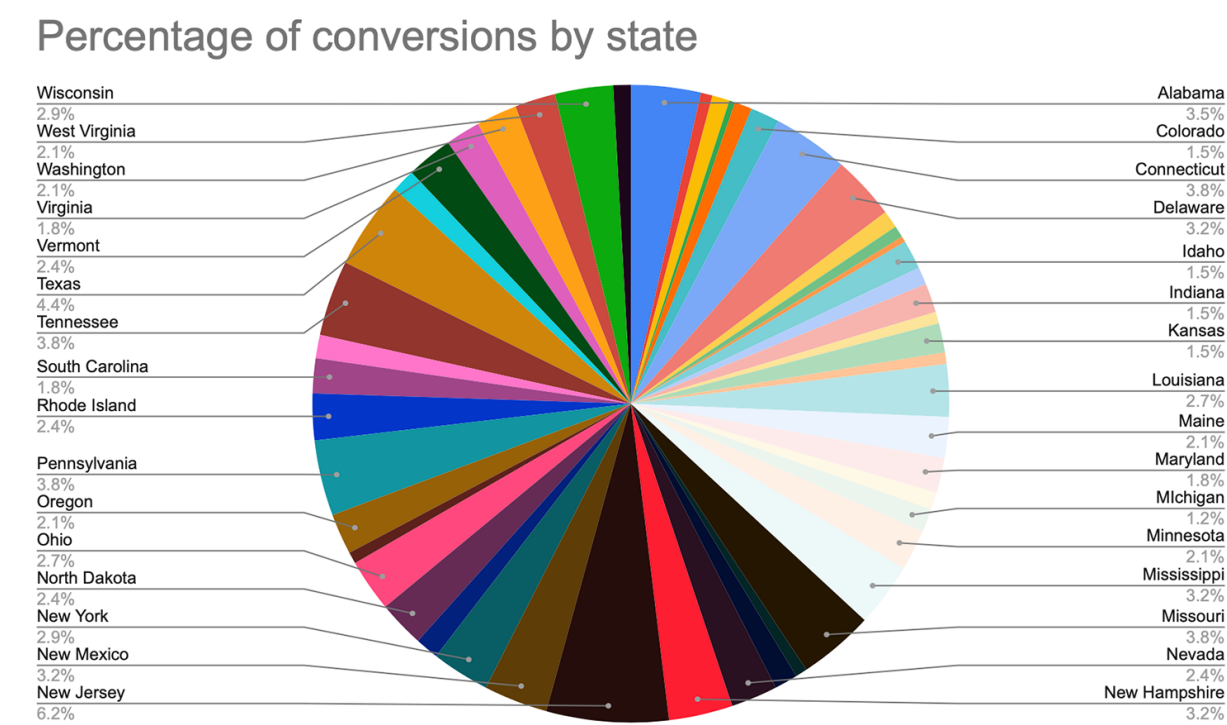
Avoid crowded charts

If a chart shows many categories, it can look crowded. For example, suppose you need to show the percentage of conversions in each state in the United States for a national marketing campaign.

A column chart doesn't have enough room to label the data for all 50 states.
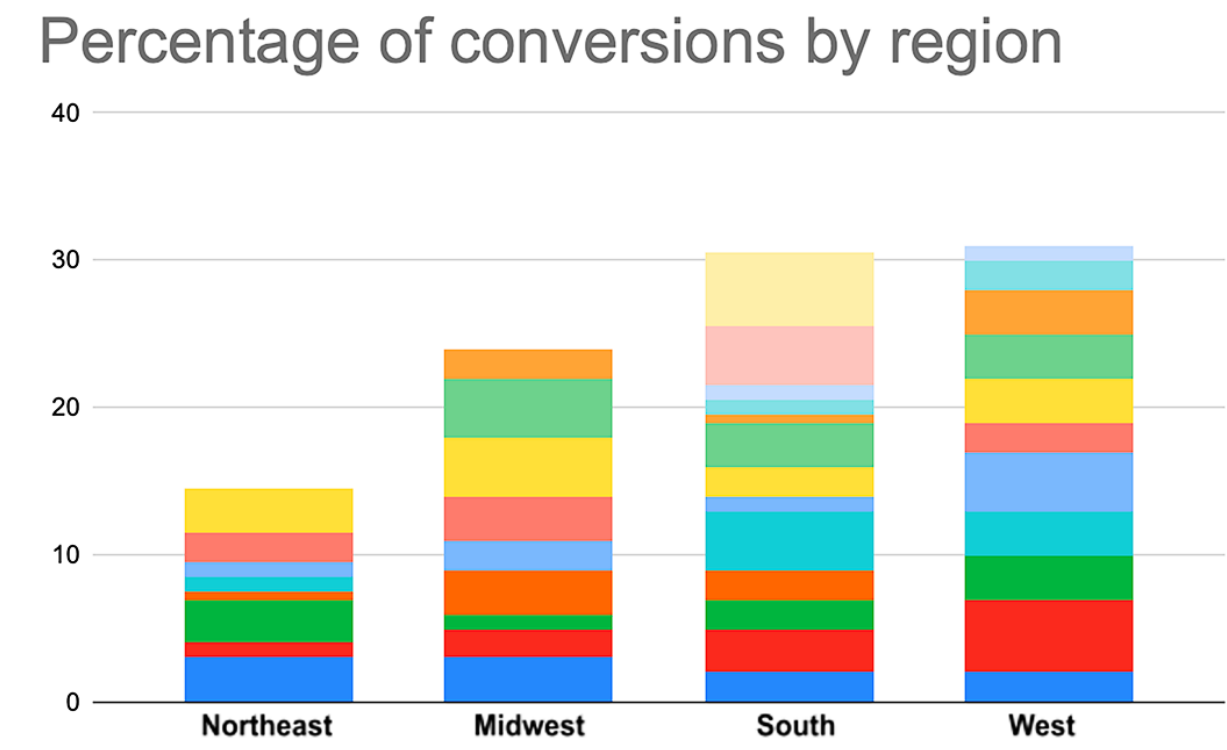

A pie chart has too many slices that can't be clearly labeled and displayed.

You can create a stacked chart, or reduce the number of categories, to have a more visually appealing chart that's easier to read.
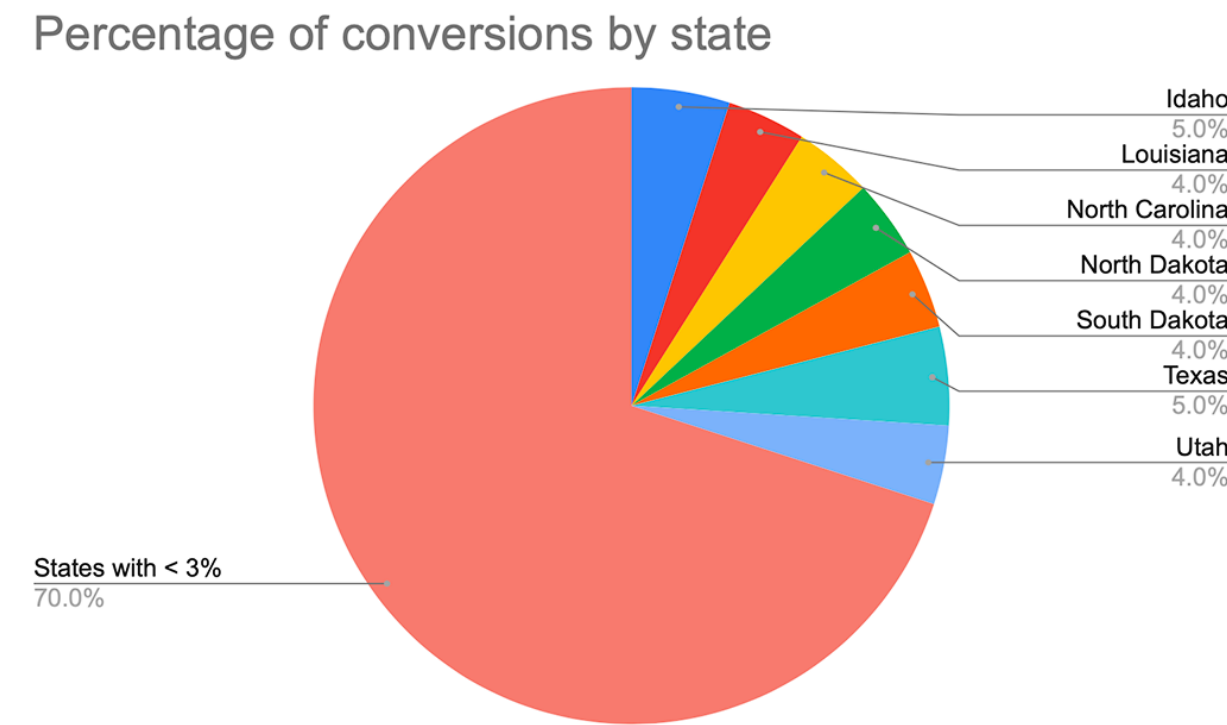
Create stacked charts by region

If you stick with a column chart, you can group states by region (such as Northeast, Midwest, South, and West). Then, you can create a stacked column chart. Each column cumulatively shows the data for each state in the region. The resulting chart has four instead of 50 columns.

Display states with most conversions and combine others

If you stick with a pie chart, you can reduce the number of categories. You can show the states with the largest percentages of conversions and put all other states in a grouped category, such as states with less than 3% of conversions. The resulting pie chart has eight instead of 50 slices which is much easier to read.

Key takeaway

When you create a chart to share with stakeholders, you need to select the most appropriate chart type for your data. Sometimes you have to try different charts to find out which looks the best. Other times you need to adjust the data to create a more visually-appealing chart.

Bonus guide to creating charts

How to choose a data visualization 🡕 : Refer to this pictorial guide for help selecting the right type of chart for your data. You may download and keep it for reference.

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