Problem 1: Design critique

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This visualization shows the rating Hollywood movies from 2007-2011 have been given by critics and the audience.

The difference between the audience and the critics' ratings seems to be the main focus of this visualization. However, besides this difference the visualization shows a lot more. The budget, profit, and other statistics about the movies in their first weekend can be shown. The movies can be sorted by actors, budgets and genres as well.

The scales are only labelled on the y-axis, showing the ratings of the movies. The x-axis is not labelled, but should be labelled with the difference between the critics' rating and that of the audience.
The graphic effect of this visualization is proportional to the data it's representing. However when using the resize button to resize the circles according to other variables, the graph can get quite messy making the graph hard to read.
This graph is quite hard to read since there are so many circles stacked on top of each other and the black/grey background doesn't really add anything to the graph either. The data density is very high in this graph, but in this case I wouldn't call it a good thing.

The contrast between the rating of the critic or the audience isn't that big. The purple and pink blend quite well in this graph and are hard to distinguish at a few points.

The proximity between two circles here indicates how much the critics and the audience agree on the rating of the movie. In this case this graph uses the proximity between the circles nicely to see the difference between the two.

Visual encoding applies to this graph when resizing the circles according to other variables. When the circles don't overlap it shows nicely the biggest and the smallest circles in the visualization. In this case the resizing is appropriate, but in some cases, as noted before, the circles overlap the the whole graph actually becomes quite unreadable.

Aesthetically this graph looks okay with the purple/pink on the black background, but as a whole the graph looks pretty messy, which is not pleasant to see.
Once the user reads the introduction on beneath the graph, the visualization can be used. While it's fun to scroll through the visualization and see the circles light up it is pretty hard to select a specific value. If you are really into movies I can imagine someone would explore the visualization more to look up specific movies, but for the average user I don't think this interface encourages exploration a lot.

The goal of the visualization would be to show the difference between critics and the audience and how good the rating was in general, but I don't think the correlation between the two has been shown well.

I would have used more distinct colours to see the difference between the critics and the audience and make the background one colour. Maybe you could make the difference between the critic and the audience be a variable dependant on the overall rating of the movie to make the visualization more clear but I am not entirely sure it would improve things.

Problem 2: Rainbow colour map

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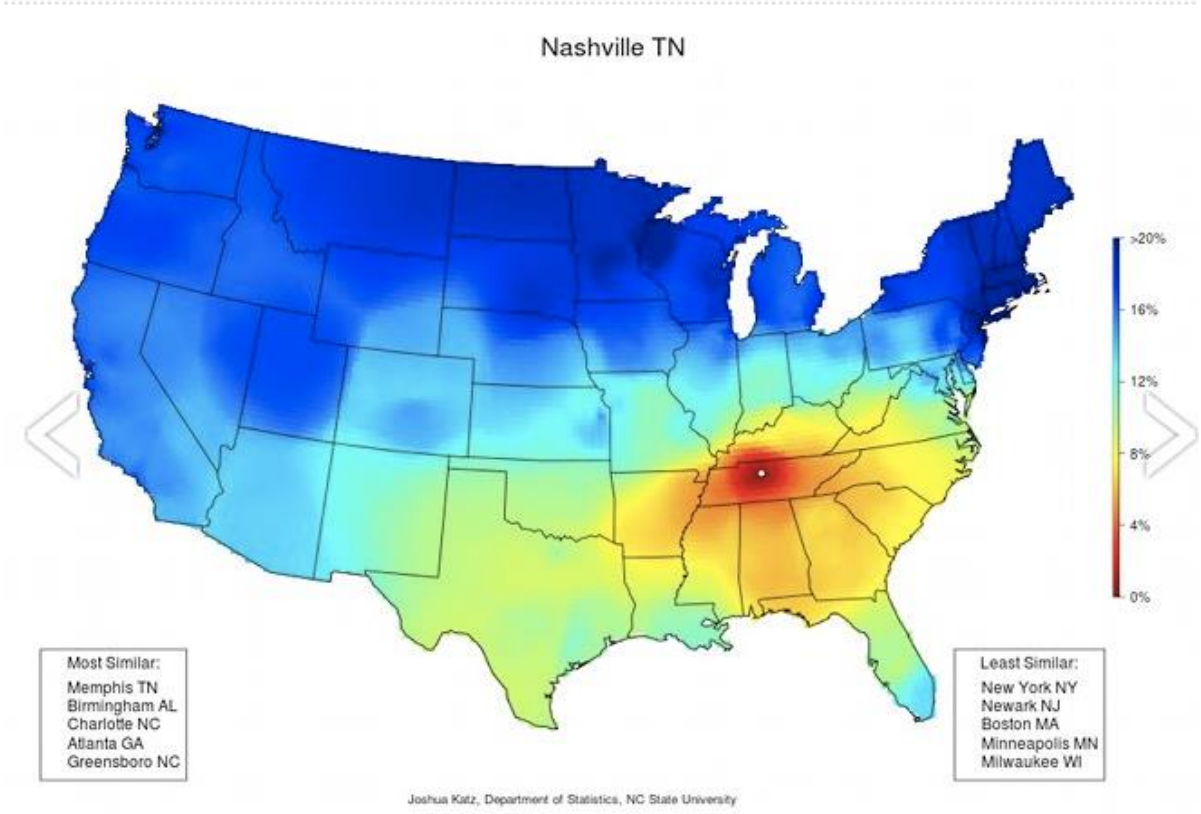

An interactive color-coded map shows regional dialect variations in the continental United States. JOSHUA KATZ

The objective of this visualization is to show the dialect variations in different regions in the United States. The graph doesn't fail to convey its information per se, but it has the same flaws that Borland lays out in his article. A greyscale would be better here. Is blue more or less than red, and why? You have to look up the legend very carefully first to try and interpret the data. It looks nicer than grayscale, yes, but it's a lot more confusing and can lead to people misinterpreting the data.