Data Visualization With Stata

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Introduction

- Stata is a powerful and intuitive data analysis program.
- Learning how to graph in Stata is an important part of learning how to use Stata.
- Yet, the default graphs in Stata can sometimes be less than optimal.
- This document is an introduction to (a) basic graphing ideas in Stata; and (b) some simple ways to make your Stata graphs look more professional.

What are Variables?

- By variables, I simply mean the columns of data that you have.
- For our purposes, you may think of variables as synonymous with questionnaire items, or columns of data.

Variable Types

- *categorical variables* represent unordered categories like *neighborhood*, or *religious affiliation*, or *place of residence*.
- *continuous variables* represent a continuous scale like a *mental health scale*, or a *measure of life expectancy*.

A Data Visualization Strategy

Once we have discerned the type of variable that have, there are two followup questions we may ask before deciding upon a chart strategy:

- Is our graph about **one thing at a time**?
  - How much of x is there?
  - What is the distribution of x?
- Is our graph about **two things at a time**?
  - What is the relationship of x and y?
  - How are x and y associated?

Data

We are going to use the famous "iris" data collected by Edgar Anderson in the early 20th Century.

```
. use "iris.dta", clear
.
. summarize
```

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Sepal_Length	150	5.843333	.8280661	4.3	7.9
Sepal_Width	150	3.057333	.4358663	2	4.4
Petal_Length	150	3.758	1.765298	1	6.9
Petal_Width	150	1.199333	.7622377	.1	2.5
Species	150	2	.8192319	1	3

The `iris` data set has 5 variables.

Species of Iris

Iris species images courtesy Wikipedia.

Figure 1: Iris Species

Petals and Sepals

Basic Graphs

Continuous Variable `histogram`

```
. histogram Petal_Length
(bin=12, start=1, width=.49166667)
```

Figure 2: Petals and Sepals

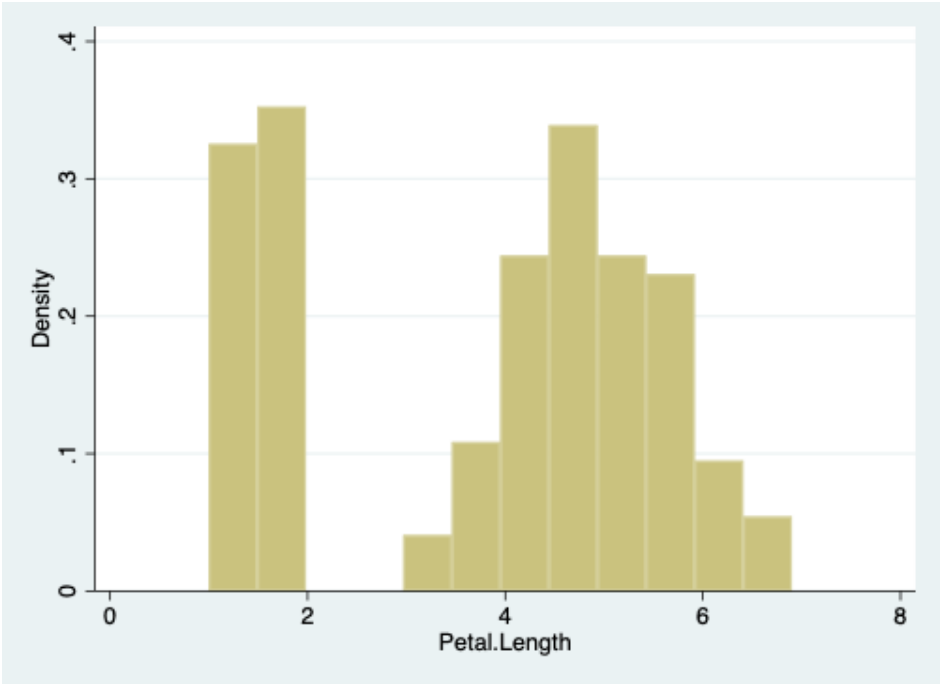

Figure 3: Histogram of Petal Width

Categorical Variable `graph bar`

```
. graph bar, over(Species)
```

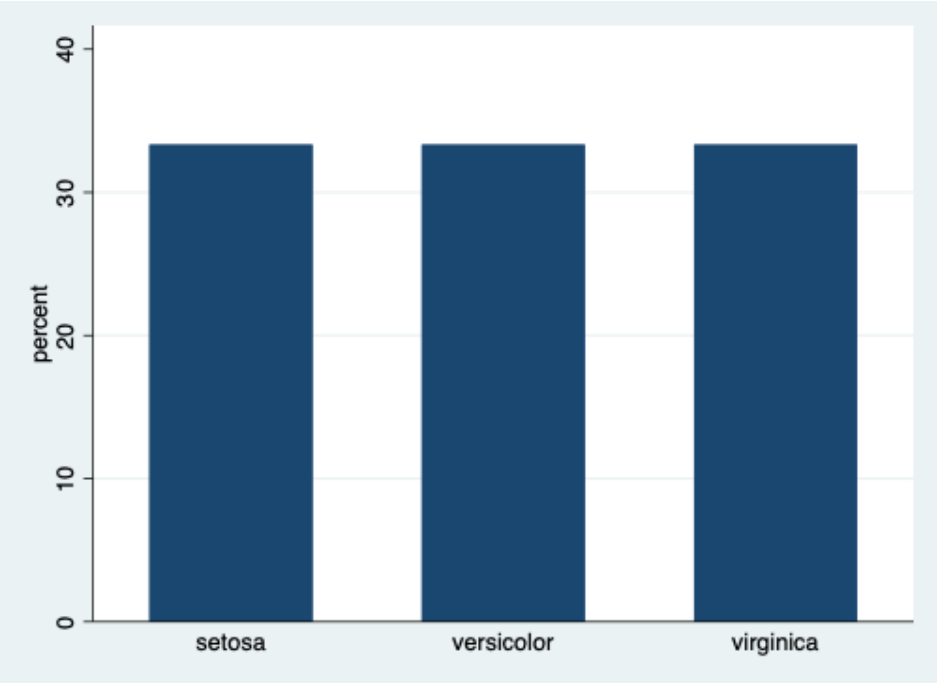

Figure 4: Bar Graph of Species

Continuous by Continuous `twoway`

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width
```

Categorical by Categorical `graph bar`

```
. recode Petal_Length ///
> (min/3.758 = 0 "below mean") ///
> (3.758/max = 1 "above mean"), ///
> generate(Petal_Group) // dichotomize Petal_Length
(150 differences between Petal_Length and Petal_Group)
.
. graph bar, over(Species) over(Petal_Group)
```

Continuous by Categorical `graph bar`

```
. graph bar Petal_Length, over(Species)
```

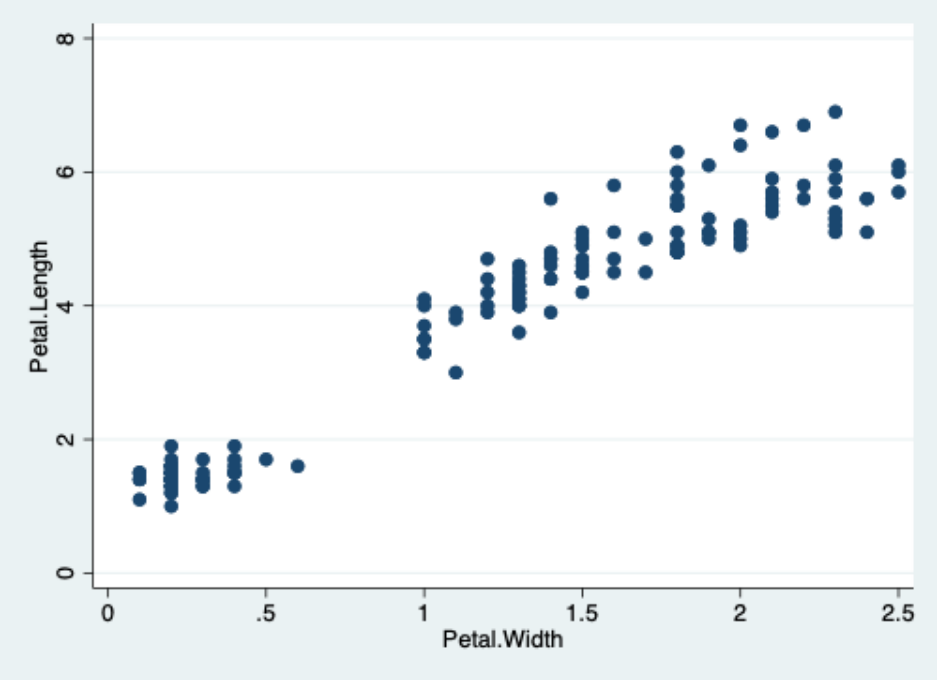

Figure 5: Scatterplot

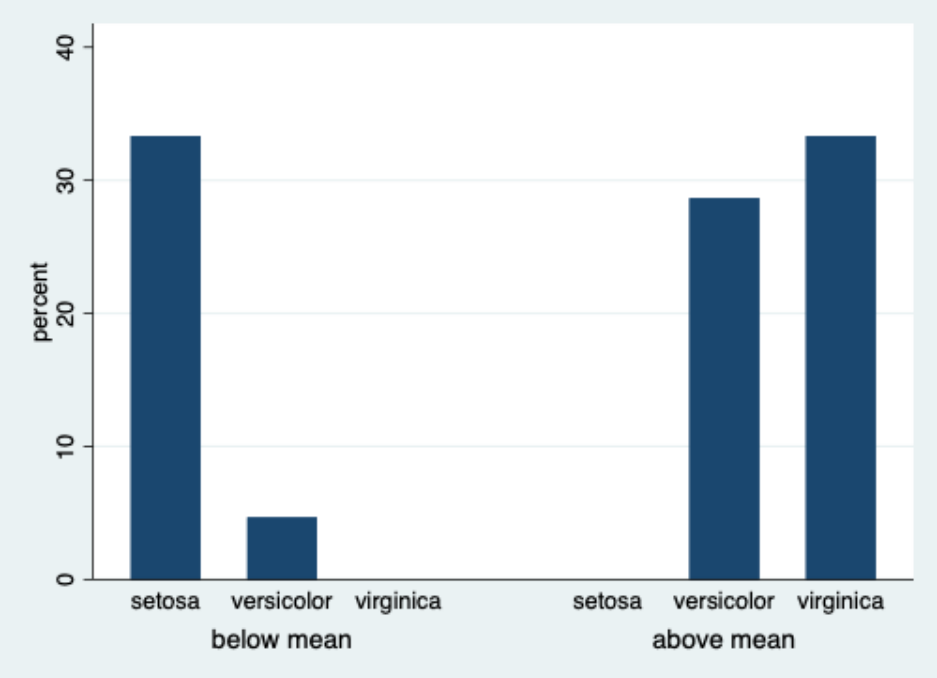

Figure 6: Bar Graph of Species by Category of Petal Length

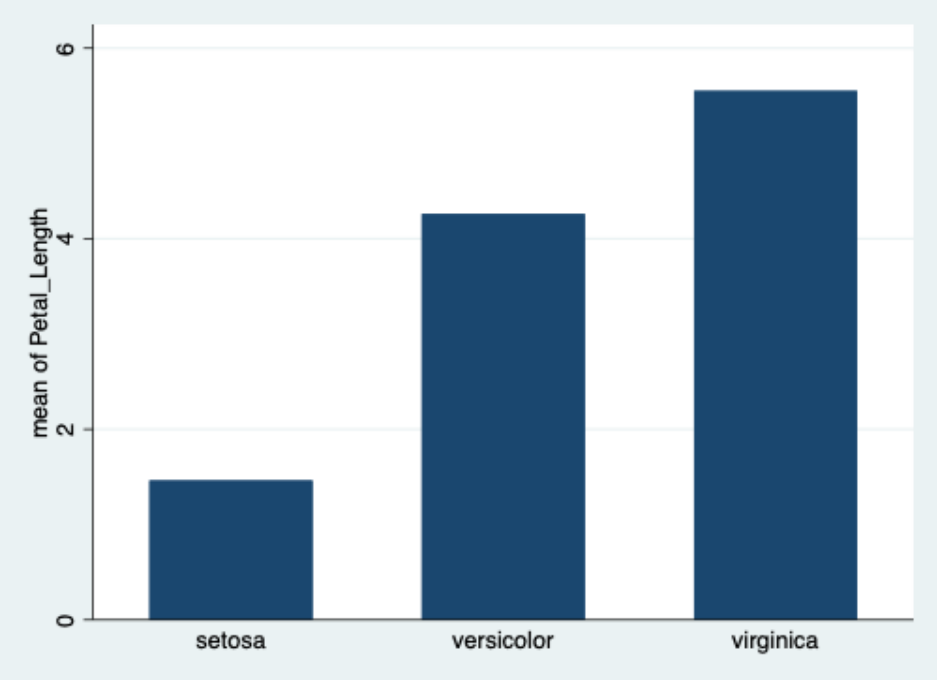

Figure 7: Bar Graph of Petal Length by Species

Titles and Labels , `title(...) xtitle(...) ytitle(...)`

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, scheme(s1rcolor) ///
> title("Petal Length by Petal Width") ///
> xtitle("Petal Width") ytitle("Petal Width") ///
> caption("Iris Data")
```

Better Graphing With Schemes ,`scheme(...)`

The easiest method to make better Stata graphs is through the use of predefined Stata graphing schemes.

Pre-Defined Schemes

Some schemes, e.g. `economist`, `sj`, `s1color`, and `s1rcolor` are pre-installed with Stata.

Economist Scheme

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, scheme(economist)
```

Stata Journal Scheme

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, scheme(sj)
```

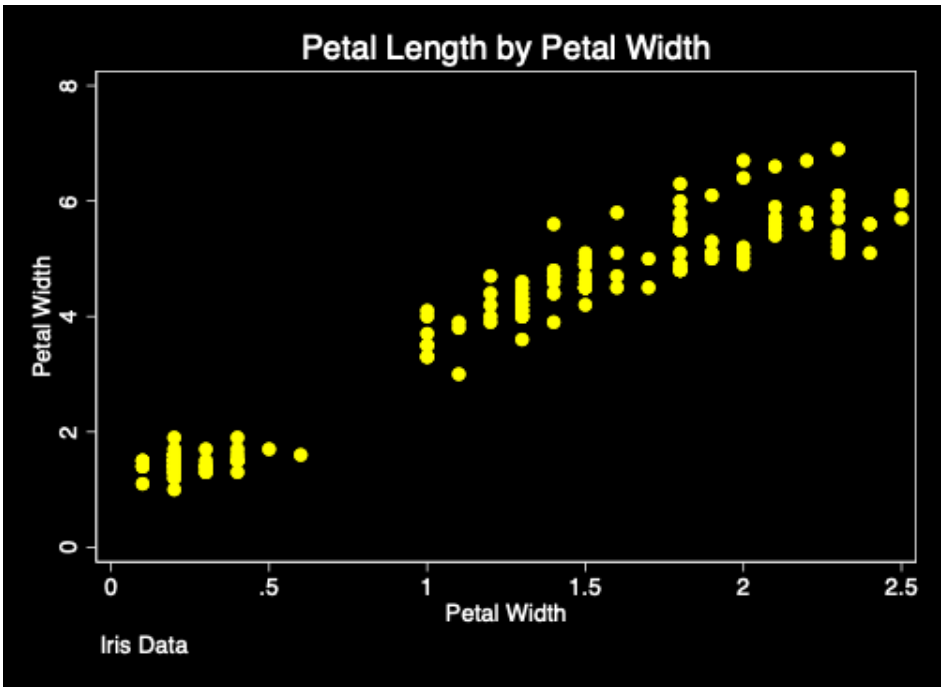

Figure 8: Graph With Titles and Labels

`s1color` Scheme

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, scheme(s1color)
```

`s1rcolor` Scheme

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, scheme(s1rcolor)
```

User Written Schemes

Two of the best user written schemes are `plottig` and `lean2`.

Use the `findit` command e.g. `findit lean2` to find these schemes.

`lean2` Scheme

```
. twoway scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, scheme(lean2)
```

Michigan graph scheme

I have written a `michigan` graph scheme described here.

```
. twoway (scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width) ///
> (lfit Petal_Length Petal_Width), scheme(michigan)
```

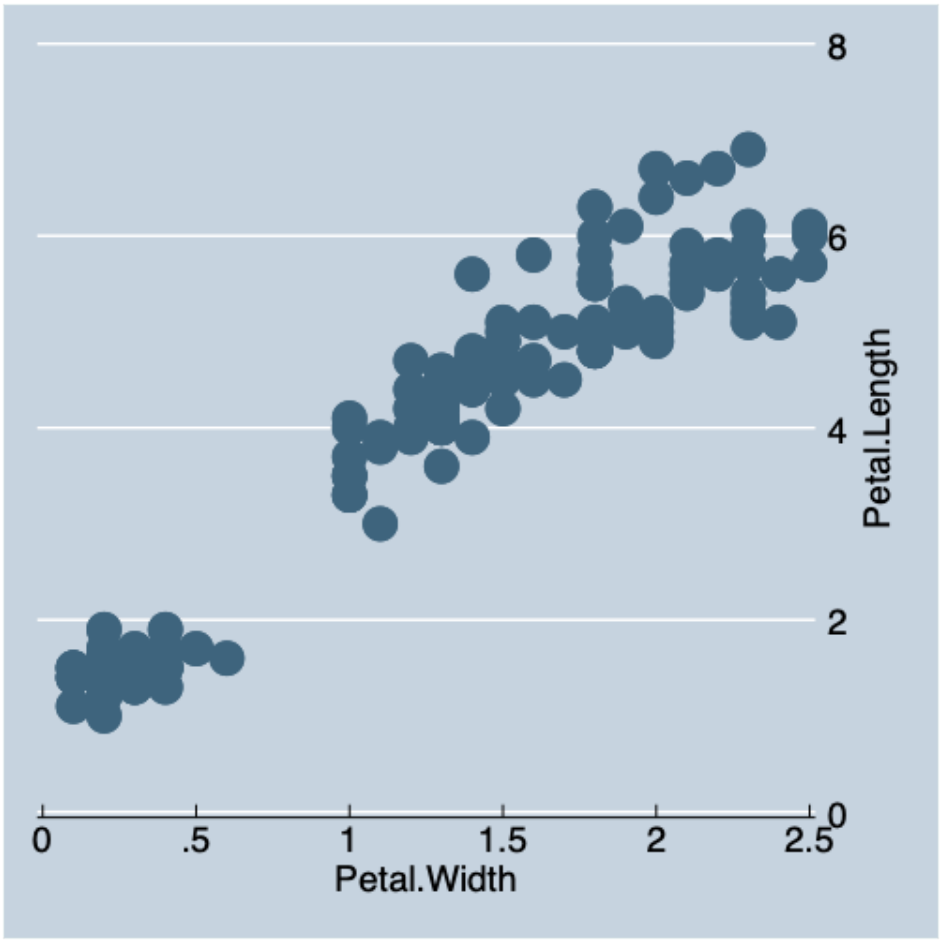

Figure 9: Scatterplot with Economist Scheme

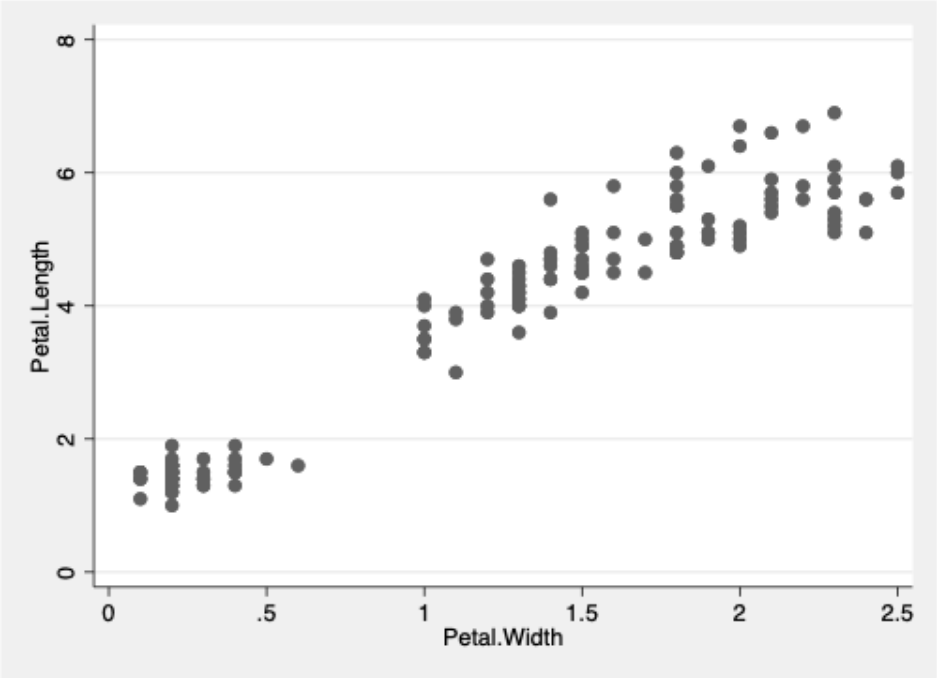

Figure 10: Scatterplot with *Stata Journal* Scheme

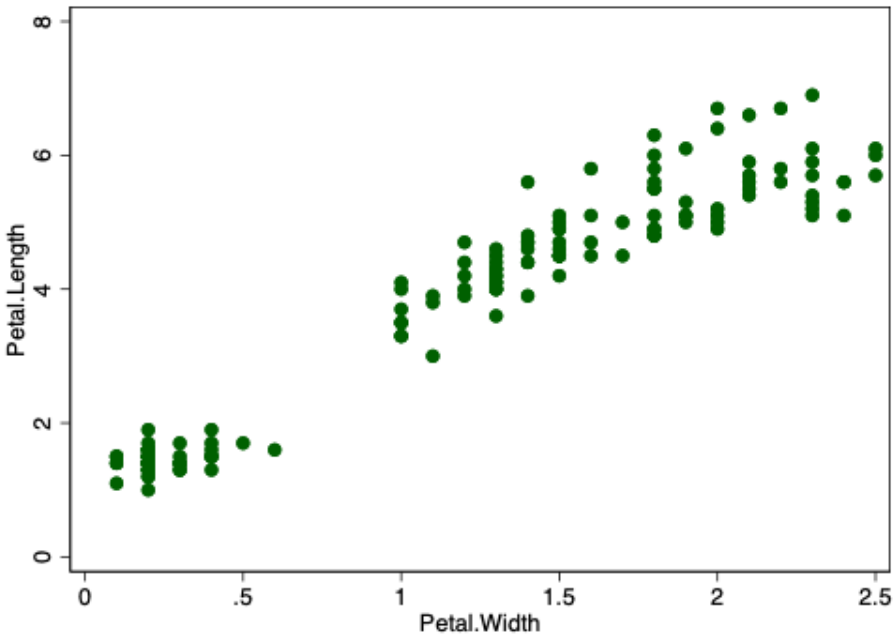

Figure 11: Scatterplot with `s1color` Scheme

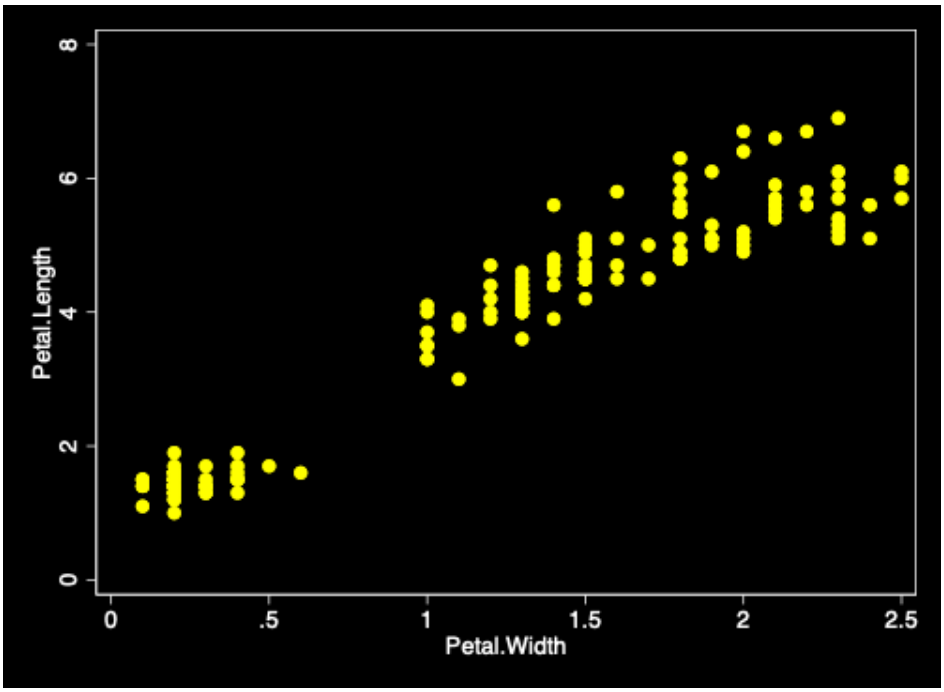

Figure 12: Scatterplot with `s1rcolor` Scheme

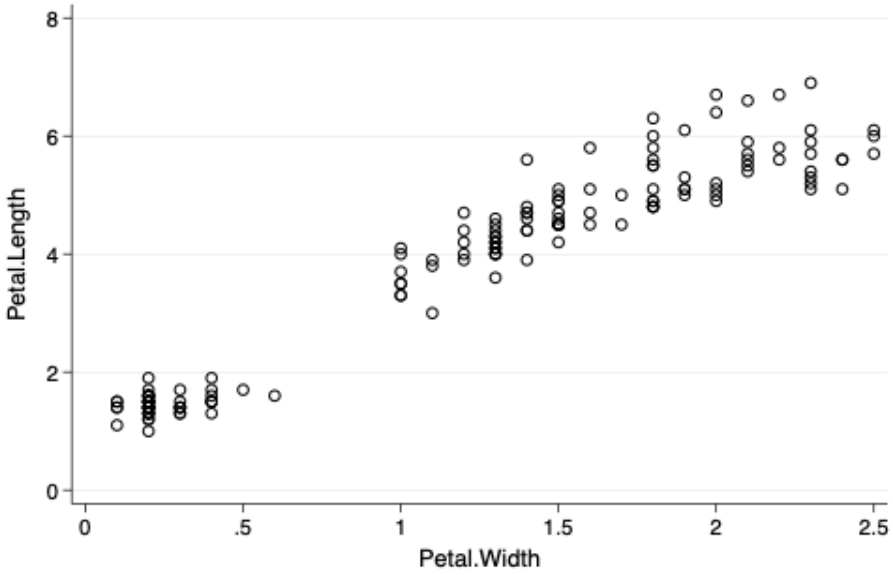

Figure 13: Scatterplot with `lean2` Scheme

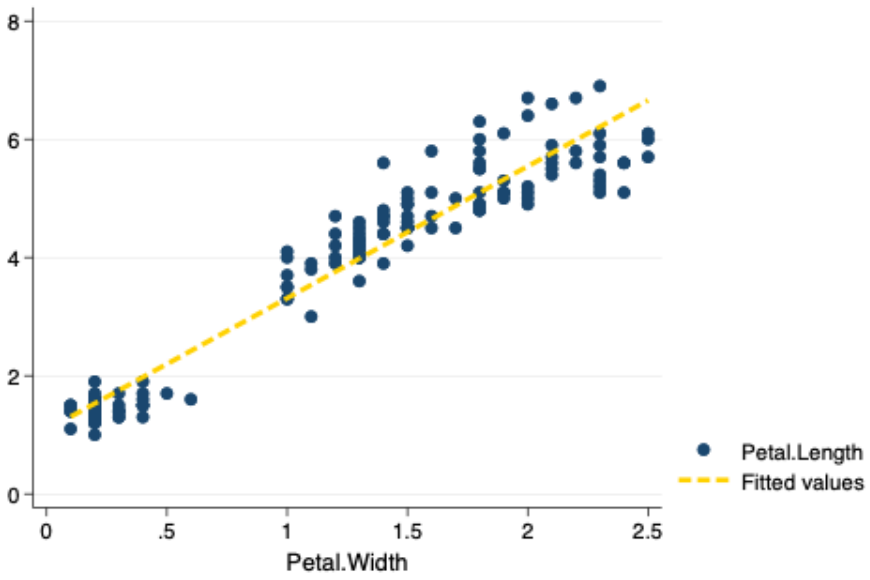

Figure 14: Scatterplot with `michigan` Scheme

Schemes as a Base for Further Tweaking

Schemes can be used as a base that can then be further modified.

```
. twoway (scatter Petal_Length Petal_Width, msymbol(0) mcolor(red)) ///
> (lfit Petal_Length Petal_Width), ///
> scheme(lean2)
(note:  named style 0 not found in class symbol, default attributes used)
```

Even More Tweaks

Based upon an example at https://blog.stata.com/2018/10/02/scheming-your-way-to-your-favorite-graph-style/

```
. twoway scatter Sepal_Length Sepal_Width Petal_Width Petal_Length, ///
> color(%50 %50 %50) /// transparency
> title("Multiple Iris Characteristics") /// title
> scheme(s1rcolor) // scheme
```

More Information

See also Two Page Stata

Created by agrogan@umich.edu

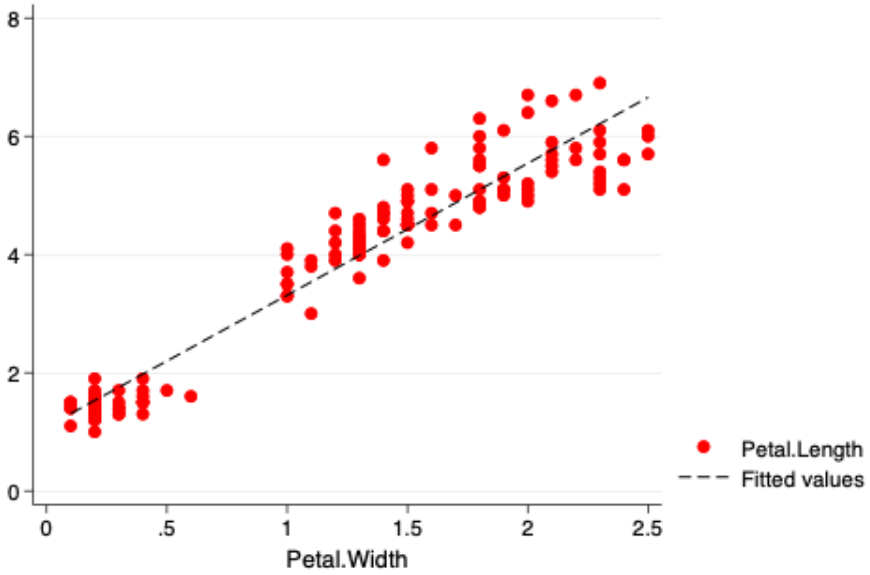

Figure 15: Modified Scatterplot with `lean2` Scheme as a Base

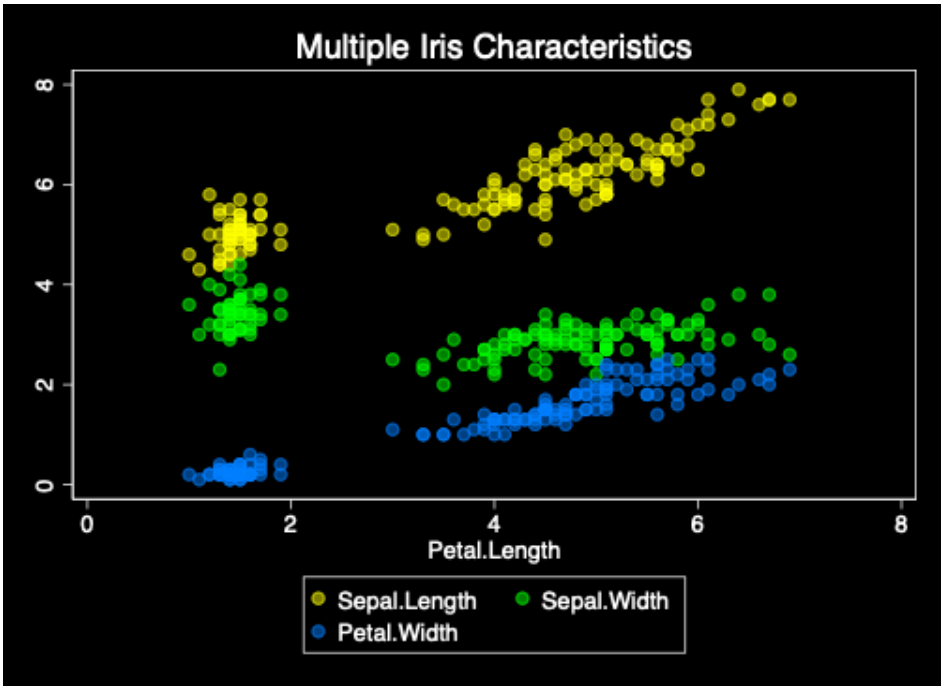

Figure 16: Modified Scatterplot with `s1rcolor` Scheme as a Base