

# Lecture IX - Data Visualization

## Programming with Python

Dr. Tobias Vlček

Kühne Logistics University Hamburg - Fall 2025

### Quick Recap of the last Lecture

#### Pandas: Data Analysis

- Powerful library for data manipulation and analysis
- Built on top of NumPy, providing additional functionality
- Key features of Pandas include:
  - Data loading from various file formats
  - Data cleaning and preprocessing
  - Powerful grouping and aggregation operations
  - Merging and joining datasets

#### Why NumPy and Pandas are Essential

- Basic tools for scientific computing and data analysis
- Efficient data structures and operations for large data
- Integration with other scientific Python libraries
- Used in data science, machine learning, and research

...



Tip

You might also need them in future lectures here!

### Data Visualization

Question: What is  
data visualization?

#### Visual Representations of Data

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import numpy as np
```

```
# Generate data
np.random.seed(42)
```

```

x = np.linspace(0, 10, 50)
y = 3 + 2*x + np.random.randn(50)
sizes = np.random.randint(20, 200, 50)
colors = np.random.rand(50)

# Create the plot
plt.figure(figsize=(12, 5))
scatter = plt.scatter(x, y, c=colors, s=sizes, alpha=0.6, cmap='viridis')

# Add trend line
z = np.polyfit(x, y, 1)
p = np.poly1d(z)
plt.plot(x, p(x), "r--", alpha=0.8, linewidth=2)

# Customize the plot
plt.title("ScatterPlot with Trend Line", fontsize=16)
plt.xlabel("X-axis", fontsize=12)
plt.ylabel("Y-axis", fontsize=12)
plt.colorbar(scatter, label="Color Scale")

# Add a text annotation
plt.annotate("Interesting point", xy=(8, 21), xytext=(6.5, 23),
            arrowprops=dict(facecolor='black', shrink=0.05))

plt.grid(True, alpha=0.3)
plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()

```



## Importance of Data Visualization

- Communicates complex information clearly
- Helps in decision-making processes
- Reveals hidden patterns and relationships in data
- Makes data more accessible and engaging

...



Tip

Helps to convince stakeholders!

## Common Types of Data Visualizations

### Bar Charts and Histograms

- Bar charts: Compare quantities across categories
- Histograms: Show distribution of a continuous variable

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import numpy as np

# Bar chart
categories = ['A', 'B', 'C', 'D']
values = [4, 7, 2, 8]

plt.figure(figsize=(12, 3))
plt.subplot(121)
plt.bar(categories, values)
plt.title('Bar Chart')

# Histogram
data = np.random.randn(1000)

plt.subplot(122)
plt.hist(data, bins=30)
plt.title('Histogram')

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()
```



### Line Charts and Area Charts

- Line charts: Show trends over time or continuous data
- Area charts: Similar to line charts, but with filled areas

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import numpy as np

x = np.linspace(0, 10, 100)
```

```

y1 = np.sin(x)
y2 = np.cos(x)

plt.figure(figsize=(12, 3))
plt.subplot(121)
plt.plot(x, y1, label='sin(x)')
plt.plot(x, y2, label='cos(x)')
plt.title('Line Chart')
plt.legend()

plt.subplot(122)
plt.fill_between(x, y1, label='sin(x)')
plt.fill_between(x, y2, label='cos(x)', alpha=0.5)
plt.title('Area Chart')
plt.legend()

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()

```



## Scatter Plots and Bubble Charts

- Scatter plots: Show relationship between two variables
- Bubble charts: Adds dimension with varying point sizes

```

import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import numpy as np

x = np.random.rand(50)
y = np.random.rand(50)
sizes = np.random.rand(50) * 500

plt.figure(figsize=(12, 3))
plt.subplot(121)
plt.scatter(x, y)
plt.title('Scatter Plot')

plt.subplot(122)
plt.scatter(x, y, s=sizes, alpha=0.5)
plt.title('Bubble Chart')

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()

```



## Pie Charts and Donut Charts

- Pie charts: Show composition of a whole
- Donut charts: Similar to pie charts, but with a hole

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

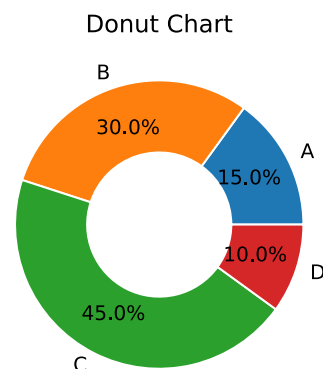
labels = 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D'
sizes = [15, 30, 45, 10]

plt.figure(figsize=(12, 3))

# Pie chart (left subplot)
plt.subplot(121)
plt.pie(sizes, labels=labels, autopct='%1.1f%%')
plt.title('Pie Chart')

# Donut chart (right subplot)
plt.subplot(122)
plt.pie(sizes, labels=labels, autopct='%1.1f%%',
        pctdistance=0.7, labeldistance=1.1,
        wedgeprops=dict(width=0.5, edgecolor='white'))
plt.title('Donut Chart')

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()
```



## Box Plots and Violin Plots

- Box plots: Show distribution of data through quartiles
- Violin plots: Combine box plot with kernel density

```

import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import seaborn as sns
import numpy as np

data = [np.random.normal(0, std, 100) for std in range(1, 5)]

plt.figure(figsize=(12, 3))
plt.subplot(121)
plt.boxplot(data)
plt.title('Box Plot')

plt.subplot(122)
sns.violinplot(data)
plt.title('Violin Plot')

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()

```



## Network Graphs and Trees

- Network graphs: Show relationships between entities
- Tree diagrams: Display hierarchical structures

```

import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import networkx as nx
import numpy as np

# Create figure
plt.figure(figsize=(12, 3))

# Network graph (left subplot)
plt.subplot(121)
G = nx.random_geometric_graph(15, 0.3) # Reduced nodes for clarity
pos = nx.spring_layout(G, k=1, seed=42) # Better layout with fixed seed
nx.draw_networkx_nodes(G, pos,
                        node_color='lightblue',
                        node_size=500,
                        edgecolors='navy',
                        linewidths=1)
nx.draw_networkx_edges(G, pos,
                        edge_color='gray',
                        width=1,
                        alpha=0.5)
nx.draw_networkx_labels(G, pos,

```

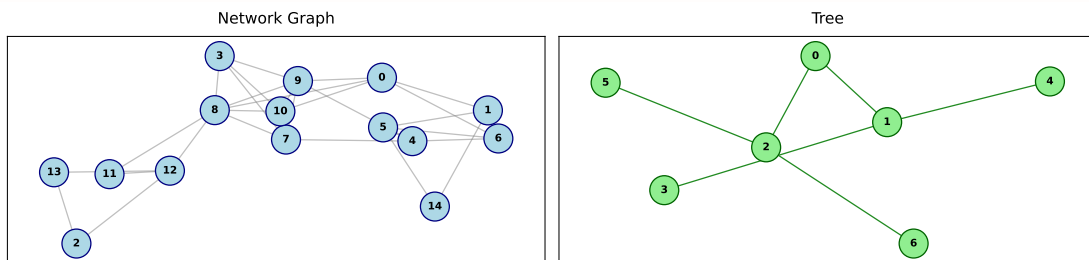
```

        font_size=8,
        font_weight='bold')
plt.title('Network Graph', pad=10)

# Tree diagram (right subplot)
plt.subplot(122)
T = nx.balanced_tree(2, 2) # Create a balanced tree with 2 children, depth
2
pos_tree = nx.spring_layout(T, k=1.5, seed=42)
nx.draw_networkx_nodes(T, pos_tree,
                        node_color='lightgreen',
                        node_size=500,
                        edgecolors='darkgreen',
                        linewidths=1)
nx.draw_networkx_edges(T, pos_tree,
                        edge_color='forestgreen',
                        width=1)
nx.draw_networkx_labels(T, pos_tree,
                        font_size=8,
                        font_weight='bold')
plt.title('Tree', pad=10)

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()

```



## Ridgeline Plots

- Ridgeline plots: Show distribution of data across categories

```

import numpy as np
import pandas as pd
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import joypy

# Create realistic temperature distributions
np.random.seed(42)
months = ['Jan', 'Feb', 'Mar', 'Apr', 'May', 'Jun', 'Jul', 'Aug', 'Sep',
          'Oct', 'Nov', 'Dec']
data = []

# Temperature parameters for Helsinki, Finland (as an example)
mean_temps = [
    -3.5, # Jan
    -4.5, # Feb

```

```

-1.0, # Mar
4.5, # Apr
10.8, # May
15.5, # Jun
18.0, # Jul
16.3, # Aug
11.5, # Sep
6.6, # Oct
1.6, # Nov
-2.0 # Dec
]

# Winter months have more variance than summer months
variances = [
    2.5, # Jan
    2.5, # Feb
    2.2, # Mar
    2.0, # Apr
    1.8, # May
    1.5, # Jun
    1.2, # Jul
    1.5, # Aug
    1.8, # Sep
    2.0, # Oct
    2.2, # Nov
    2.5 # Dec
]

for month, mean_temp, variance in zip(months, mean_temps, variances):
    # Add some random noise to make it more natural
    distribution = np.random.normal(loc=mean_temp, scale=variance,
size=1000)
    # Add slight skewness to winter months (more extreme cold than warm
days)
    if mean_temp < 5:
        distribution = distribution - 0.3 * np.abs(distribution)
    data.append(pd.DataFrame({
        'temperature': distribution,
        'month': month
    })))

df = pd.concat(data, ignore_index=True)

# Create the ridgeline plot
joyplot.joyplot(
    data=df,
    by="month",
    column="temperature",
    colormap=plt.cm.viridis,
    title="Monthly Temperature Distributions",
    labels=months,
    range_style='all',
    tails=0.2,
    overlap=0.7,

```



```

    grid=True,
    figsize=(12, 4)
)

plt.xlabel("Temperature (°C)")
plt.show()

```



## How to Plot in Python

### Python Plotting Libraries

- There are many libraries for data visualization in Python
  - Matplotlib: The foundation for most Python plotting libraries
  - Seaborn: Interface for statistical data visualization
  - Plotly: Interactive and customizable plotting library
  - Bokeh: Interactive and complex plots
  - Joypy: Easy ridgeline plots

### Matplotlib Module

- Matplotlib is the foundation for most Python plotting libraries
- Customizable and suitable for high-quality figures
- Provides easy to use functions for plotting
- Works well with Pandas DataFrames

### Basic Matplotlib Example

```

import matplotlib.pyplot as plt # .pyplot is the main module in the package
plt.plot([1, 2, 3, 4], [10, 20, 25, 30]) # first is x-axis, second is y-axis
plt.show()

```

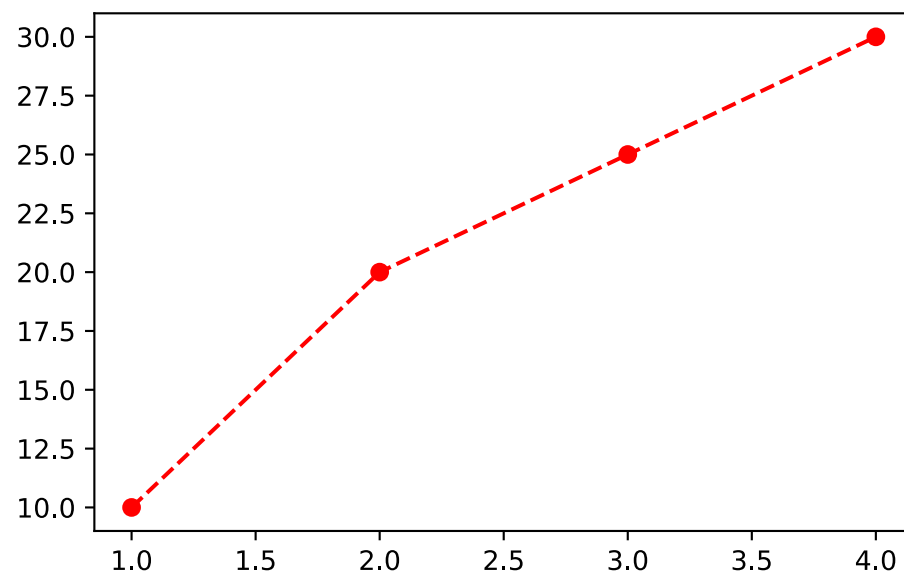


## Customizing Plots

- Line Types: with `ls=`
  - `-`, `--`, `-.`, `:`, `None`;
- Colors: with `color=`
  - `r`, `g`, `b`, `c`, `m`, `y`, `k`, ...
- Markers: with `marker=`
  - `o`, `s`, `D`, `p`, `*`, `x`, ...
- Labels: with `label=`, `title=`, `xlabel=`, `ylabel=`

## Red dashed line with circles

```
plt.plot(  
    [1, 2, 3, 4],  
    [10, 20, 25, 30],  
    color='red',  
    linestyle='--',  
    marker='o')  
plt.show()
```

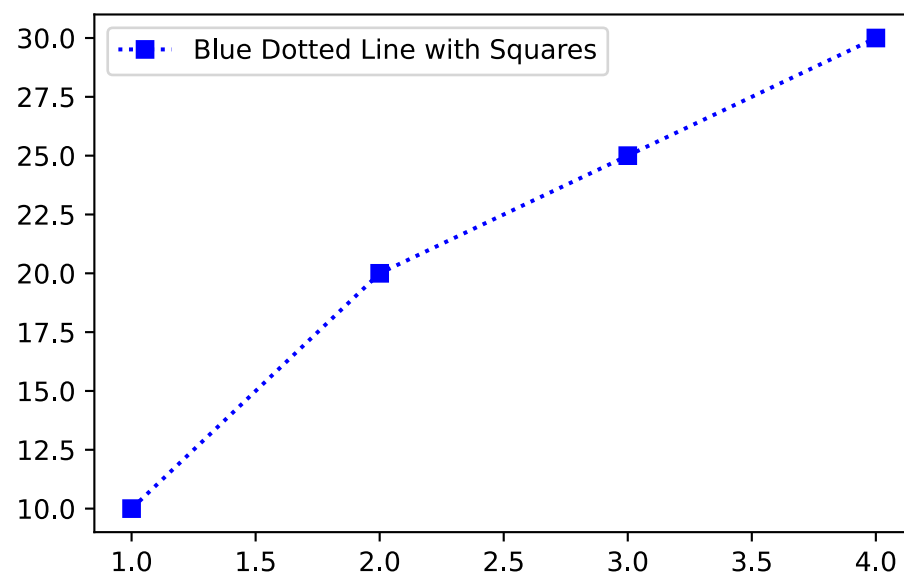


### Blue dotted line with squares

Question: How can we create such a plot?

...

```
plt.plot(  
    [1, 2, 3, 4],  
    [10, 20, 25, 30],  
    color='blue',  
    linestyle=':',  
    marker='s',  
    label='Blue Dotted Line with Squares')  
plt.legend()  
plt.show()
```



## Multiple Plots

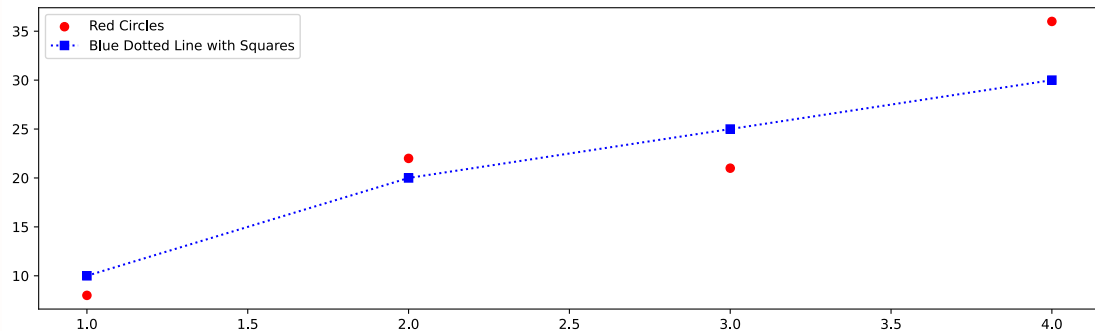
```
plt.plot(
    [1, 2, 3, 4],
    [8, 22, 21, 36],
    color='red',
    linestyle='--',
    marker='o',
    label='Red Dashed Line with Circles')
plt.plot(
    [1, 2, 3, 4],
    [10, 20, 25, 30],
    color='blue',
    linestyle=':',
    marker='s',
    label='Blue Dotted Line with Squares')
plt.legend()
plt.show()
```



## Type and Size of the Plot

```
plt.figure(figsize=(14, 4))
plt.scatter(
    [1, 2, 3, 4],
    [8, 22, 21, 36],
    color='red',
    marker='o',
    label='Red Circles')
plt.plot(
    [1, 2, 3, 4],
    [10, 20, 25, 30],
    color='blue',
    linestyle=':',
    marker='s',
```

```
label='Blue Dotted Line with Squares')
plt.legend()
plt.show()
```



## Plots in Action

Task: Create two line plots of the following data:

```
# Make sure to label the plots! Color and marker are optional.
import numpy as np

x = np.linspace(0, 10, 100) # 100 points between 0 and 10
y1 = np.sin(x) # sine function
y2 = np.cos(x) # cosine function
```

## Solution



## Plotting the Right Way

### The Message Matters

- Making beautiful plots is rather easy<sup>1</sup>

- It is important to understand the underlying data
- What kind of plots are appropriate for your data?
- What is the message you want to convey?

## Temperature Dataset

Let's load the temperature dataset from our last tutorial.

```
import pandas as pd
df = pd.read_excel('supplementary/lec_09/temp_anomaly_data.xlsx')
print(df.head())
```

	Year	Month	Anomaly
0	1880	Jan	-0.18
1	1881	Jan	-0.20
2	1882	Jan	0.16
3	1883	Jan	-0.29
4	1884	Jan	-0.13

## Example of a bad plot

```
import pandas as pd
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

# Convert Month to numeric for proper ordering
month_map = {'Jan': 1, 'Feb': 2, 'Mar': 3, 'Apr': 4, 'May': 5, 'Jun': 6,
             'Jul': 7, 'Aug': 8, 'Sep': 9, 'Oct': 10, 'Nov': 11, 'Dec': 12}
df['Month_num'] = df['Month'].map(month_map)

# Sort by Year and Month
df = df.sort_values(['Year', 'Month_num'])

# Create the plot
plt.figure(figsize=(12, 4))

# Plot each year as a separate line
for year in df['Year'].unique():
    year_data = df[df['Year'] == year]
    plt.plot(year_data['Month_num'], year_data['Anomaly'], label=str(year),
            marker='o')

# Customize the plot
plt.title('Temperature Anomalies by Month for Each Year')
plt.xlabel('Month')
plt.ylabel('Temperature Anomaly (°C)')
plt.grid(True, linestyle='--', alpha=0.7)

# Set x-axis ticks to show month names
plt.xticks(range(1, 13), ['Jan', 'Feb', 'Mar', 'Apr', 'May', 'Jun',
                          'Jul', 'Aug', 'Sep', 'Oct', 'Nov', 'Dec'])
```

---

<sup>1</sup>At least nowadays with the assistance of AI!

```
# Adjust layout to prevent legend cutoff
plt.tight_layout()

plt.show()
```



## An okay plot

```
import pandas as pd
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

# Define correct month order
month_order = ['Jan', 'Feb', 'Mar', 'Apr', 'May', 'Jun',
               'Jul', 'Aug', 'Sep', 'Oct', 'Nov', 'Dec']

# Pivot the data and reorder columns
pivot_df = df.pivot(index='Year', columns='Month', values='Anomaly')
pivot_df = pivot_df[month_order] # Reorder columns according to
month_order

# Create the plot with a blue-to-red gradient for winter-to-summer
fig, ax = plt.subplots(figsize=(12, 4)) # Create figure and axes objects

# Create color gradient
colors = []
for i in range(12):
    if i <= 5: # January to June
        r = i / 5
        b = 1 - (i / 5)
        colors.append((r, 0, b))
    else: # July to December
        r = 1 - ((i-6) / 5)
        b = (i-6) / 5
        colors.append((r, 0, b))

pivot_df.plot(ax=ax, marker='x', linewidth=1, alpha=0.5, color=colors)

plt.title('Temperature Anomalies by Month for Each Year')
plt.xlabel('Month')
plt.ylabel('Temperature Anomaly (°C)')
plt.grid(True, linestyle='--', alpha=0.7)
```

```
plt.legend(bbox_to_anchor=(1.05, 1), loc='upper left', title='Year')
plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()
```



## A better plot

```
# Calculate yearly averages
yearly_means = df.groupby('Year')['Anomaly'].agg(['mean', 'std'])

# Create the plot
plt.figure(figsize=(12, 4))

# Plot mean values as a line
plt.plot(yearly_means.index, yearly_means['mean'],
         color='navy', linewidth=2, marker='o',
         label='Mean Temperature Anomaly')

# Add shaded area for standard deviation
plt.fill_between(yearly_means.index,
                 yearly_means['mean'] - yearly_means['std'],
                 yearly_means['mean'] + yearly_means['std'],
                 color='lightblue', alpha=0.3,
                 label='±1 Standard Deviation')

# Customize the plot
plt.title('Yearly Average Temperature Anomalies with Confidence Interval')
plt.xlabel('Year')
plt.ylabel('Temperature Anomaly (°C)')
plt.grid(True, linestyle='--', alpha=0.7)
plt.legend()

# Add zero reference line
plt.axhline(y=0, color='red', linestyle='--', alpha=0.3)

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()
```





## A good plot

```
# Read the data
df = pd.read_excel('supplementary/lec_09/temp_anomaly_data.xlsx')

# Aggregate to yearly averages
yearly_df = df.groupby('Year')['Anomaly'].mean().reset_index()

# Set the style
fig, ax = plt.subplots(figsize=(12, 4))

# Create the main line plot
plt.plot(yearly_df['Year'], yearly_df['Anomaly'],
         color='FF5733',
         linewidth=1.5,
         alpha=0.7)

# Calculate rolling mean on yearly data
rolling_mean = yearly_df['Anomaly'].rolling(window=10, center=True,
min_periods=5).mean()
plt.plot(yearly_df['Year'], rolling_mean,
         color='C70039',
         linewidth=2.5,
         label='10-year Moving Average')

# Fill between the line and zero
plt.fill_between(yearly_df['Year'], yearly_df['Anomaly'], 0,
                 where=(yearly_df['Anomaly'] >= 0),
                 color='FF5733',
                 alpha=0.3,
                 label='Positive Anomaly')
plt.fill_between(yearly_df['Year'], yearly_df['Anomaly'], 0,
                 where=(yearly_df['Anomaly'] < 0),
                 color='3498DB',
                 alpha=0.3,
                 label='Negative Anomaly')

# Customize the plot
plt.title('Global Temperature Anomalies (1880-2023)',
         fontsize=14,
         pad=15)
```

```
plt.xlabel('Year', fontsize=12)
plt.ylabel('Temperature Anomaly (°C)', fontsize=12)
plt.grid(True, alpha=0.3)
plt.legend()

# Add a horizontal line at y=0
plt.axhline(y=0, color='black', linestyle='--', alpha=0.3)

# Add text annotation for context
plt.text(1890, 1.15,
        'Temperature anomalies relative to\n1951-1980 average',
        fontsize=10,
        alpha=0.7)

plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()
```



## How to build such a plot?

- Think: about what you want to build
- Describe: what you want to build in detail
- Use AI: to build the plot for you
- Use Libraries: documentation to fine-tune the plot

...

### 💡 Tip

As usual, the best way to learn is by doing! AI makes it very easy to get started.

## Good Plotting in Action

Task: Create a plot of your own for the data.

...

```
# TODO: Load the data from the 'temp_anomaly_data.xlsx' file you have saved
last lecture yourself and plot the temperature anomaly data. Find a way to
make the plot meaningful and attractive in order to tell a story for the
```

```
reader.  
# YOUR CODE HERE
```

## Creating Dashboards

### Dash for Dashboards

- **Dash** is a framework for building web applications
- It is built on top of **Flask**, **Plotly.js**, and **React.js**
- This lecture is build on top of React.js
- It is very customizable and has a lot of examples

### Panel for Dashboards

- **Panel** is built on top of Bokeh (instead of Plotly.js)
- Reasonably easy to use, but not super easy
- Highly customizable, also for multiple pages
- Good performance even for more complex dashboards

### Streamlit for Dashboards

- **Streamlit** is a rather new and popular library
- Very easy and fast way to build dashboards
- Performance only good on simpler dashboards
- Not as many examples and as customizable

### NiceGUI for Dashboards

- **NiceGUI** is also a relatively new library
- Very customizable and a large fan base
- Not as many examples and as easy to use as Streamlit
- Allows building web-based desktop applications

### Which one to choose?

- Streamlit: if you want to build a dashboard fast
- Dash: if you want more flexibility and Plotly.js
- Panel: if you want a Bokeh-based solution with more flexibility
- NiceGUI: if you want to build a desktop-like application

...

#### Tip

There are many opinions on which tool is the best one. My approach is usually just to try the main contenders to see which one suits my workflow best.

### How to build a dashboard

- We won't go into details on how to build dashboards
- The best way to learn is by doing!

- Use AI and the libraries documentation as starting points
- We will also build a dashboard in today's tutorial

## Creating GUIs

### PySide6 for GUIs

- Here, the recommendation is much easier!
- In the past, `tkinter` was often the way to go
- But currently, my recommendation is `PySide6`
- It's a mature library we can use to build cross-platform desktop applications

...

#### Note

And that's it for today's lecture!  
You now have the basic knowledge to start working with Plots, Dashboards and GUIs!.

## Literature

### Interesting Books

- Wilke, C. (2019). Fundamentals of data visualization: A primer on making informative and compelling figures (First edition). O'Reilly Media.
  - A book that is highly recommended to understand the principles of data visualization and how to create effective visualizations.
  - [Link to the free book website](#)

...

For more interesting literature to learn more about Python, take a look at the [literature list](#) of this course.