

Chapter 9. Updates, Transitions, and Motion

Until this point, we have used only static datasets. But real-world data almost always *changes* over time. And you might want your visualization to reflect those changes.

In D3 terms, those changes are handled by *updates*. The visual adjustments are made pretty with *transitions*, which can employ *motion* for perceptual benefit.

We'll start by generating a visualization with one dataset, and then changing the data completely.

Modernizing the Bar Chart

Let's revisit our trusty old bar chart in [Figure 9-1](#).

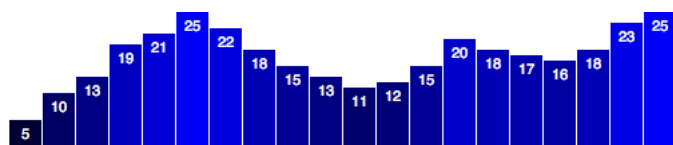


Figure 9-1. The bar chart, as seen last

If you examine the code in `01_bar_chart.html`, you'll see that we used this static dataset:

```
var dataset = [ 5, 10, 13, 19, 21, 25, 22, 18, 15, 13,
                11, 12, 15, 20, 18, 17, 16, 18, 23, 25 ];
```

Since then, we've learned how to write more flexible code, so our chart elements resize to accommodate different sized datasets (meaning shorter or longer arrays) and different data values (smaller or larger numbers). We accomplished that flexibility using D3 scales, so I'd like to start by bringing our bar chart up to speed.

Ready? Okay, just give me a sec...

Aaaaaand, done! Thanks for waiting.

[Figure 9-2](#) looks pretty similar, but a lot has changed under the hood. You can follow along by opening up `02_bar_chart_with_scales.html`.

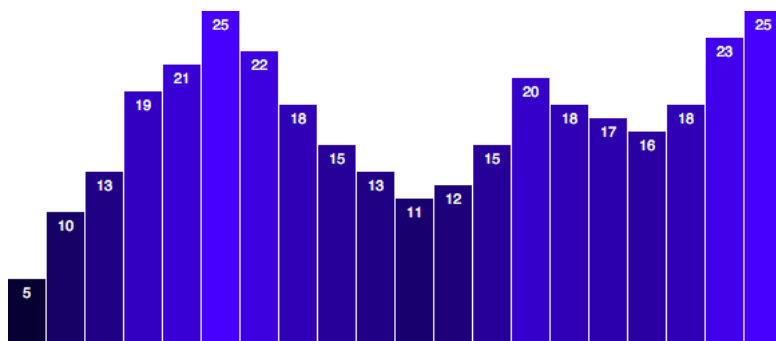


Figure 9-2. A scalable, flexible bar chart

To start, I adjusted the width and height, to make the chart taller and wider:

```
var w = 600;
var h = 250;
```

Next, I introduced an *ordinal scale* to handle the left/right positioning of bars and labels along the x-axis:

```
var xScale = d3.scale.ordinal()
```

```
.domain(d3.range(dataset.length))  
.rangeRoundBands([0, w], 0.05);
```

This may seem like gobbledegook, so I'll walk through it one line at a time.

Ordinal Scales, Explained

First, in this line:

```
var xScale = d3.scale.ordinal()
```

we declare a new variable called `xScale`, just as we had done with our scatterplot. Only here, instead of a *linear* scale, we create an *ordinal* one. Ordinal scales are typically used for ordinal data, typically categories with some inherent *order* to them, such as:

- freshman, sophomore, junior, senior
- grade B, grade A, grade AA
- strongly dislike, dislike, neutral, like, strongly like

We don't have true ordinal data for use with this bar chart. Instead, we just want the bars to be drawn from left to right using the same order in which values occur in our dataset. D3's ordinal scale is useful in this situation, when we have many visual elements (vertical bars) that are positioned in an arbitrary order (left to right), but must be evenly spaced. This will become clear in a moment.

```
.domain(d3.range(dataset.length))
```

This next line of code sets the input domain for the scale. Remember how linear scales need a two-value array to set their domains, as in `[0, 100]`? For a linear scale, that array would set the low and high values of the domain. But ordinal domains are, well, ordinal, so they don't think in linear, quantitative terms. To set the domain of an ordinal scale, you typically specify an array with the category names, as in:

```
.domain(["freshman", "sophomore", "junior", "senior"])
```

For our bar chart, we don't have explicit categories, but we could assign each data point or bar an ID value corresponding to its position within the `dataset` array, as in 0, 1, 2, 3, and so on. So perhaps our domain statement could read:

```
.domain([0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,  
        10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19])
```

It turns out there is a very simple way to quickly generate an array of sequential numbers: the `d3.range()` method.

While viewing `o2_bar_chart_with_scales.html`, go ahead and open up the console, and type the following:

```
d3.range(10)
```

You should see the following output array:

```
[0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

How nice is that? D3 saves you time once again (and the hassle of extra `for()` loops).

Coming back to our code, it should now be clear what's happening here:

```
.domain(d3.range(dataset.length))
```

1. `dataset.length`, in this case, is evaluated as 20, because we have 20 items in our dataset.
2. `d3.range(20)` is then evaluated, which returns this array: `[0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19]`.
3. Finally, `domain()` sets the domain of our new ordinal scale to those values.

This might be somewhat confusing because we are using numbers (0, 1, 2...) as ordinal values, but ordinal values are typically nonnumeric.

Round Bands Are All the Range These Days

The great thing about `d3.scale.ordinal()` is it supports *range banding*. Instead of returning a continuous range, as any quantitative scale (like `d3.scale.linear()`) would, ordinal scales use *discrete* ranges, meaning the output values are determined in advance, and could be numeric or not.

We could use `range()` like everyone else, *or* we can be smooth and use `rangeBands()`, which takes a low and high value, and automatically divides it into even chunks or “bands,” based on the length of the domain. For example:

```
.rangeBands([0, w])
```

this says “calculate even bands starting at 0 and ending at `w`, then set this scale’s range to those bands.” In our case, we specified 20 values in the domain, so `D3` will calculate:

```
(w - 0) / xScale.domain().length
(600 - 0) / 20
600 / 20
30
```

In the end, each band will be 30 “wide.”

It is also possible to include a second parameter, which includes a bit of spacing between each band. Here, I’ve used 0.2, meaning that 20 percent of the width of each band will be used for spacing in between bands:

```
.rangeBands([0, w], 0.2)
```

We can be even smoother and use `rangeRoundBands()`, which is the same as `rangeBands()`, except that the output values are rounded to the nearest whole pixel, so 12.3456 becomes just 12, for example. This is helpful for keeping visual elements lined up precisely on the pixel grid, for clean, sharp edges.

I’ll also decrease the amount of spacing to just 5 percent. So, our final line of code in that statement is:

```
.rangeRoundBands([0, w], 0.05);
```

This gives us nice, clean pixel values, with a teensy bit of visual space between them.

Referencing the Ordinal Scale

Later in the code (and I recommend viewing the source), when we create the `rect` elements, we set their horizontal, x-axis positions like so:

```
//Create bars
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset)
  .enter()
```

```
.append("rect")
.attr("x", function(d, i) {
  return xScale(i);           // <-- Set x values
})
...

```

Note that, because we include `d` and `i` as parameters to the anonymous function, D3 will automatically pass in the correct values. Of course, `d` is the current datum, and `i` is its index value. So `i` will be passed 0, 1, 2, 3, and so on.

Coincidentally (hmmm!), we used those same values (0, 1, 2, 3...) for our ordinal scale’s input domain. So when we call `xScale(i)`, `xScale()` will look up the ordinal value `i` and return its associated output (band) value. (You can verify all this for yourself in the console. Just try typing `xScale(0)` or `xScale(5)`.)

Try It Now!

Try entering the following `xScale` statements in the console below to see the results:

- `xScale(0)`
- `xScale(5)`

JS BinSaveHTMLCSSJavaScriptConsoleOutputHelp

ConsoleRunClear

>

Even better, setting the widths of these bars just got a lot easier. Before using the ordinal scale, we had:

```
.attr("width", w / dataset.length - barPadding)
```

We don’t even need `barPadding` anymore because now the padding is built into `rangeRoundBands()`. Setting the width of each `rect` needs only this:

```
.attr("width", xScale.rangeBand())
```

Isn’t it nice when D3 does the math for you?

Other Updates

I’ve made several other updates in `02_bar_chart_with_scales.html`, including creating a new linear scale `yScale` to calculate vertical values. You already know how to use linear scales, so you can skim the source and note how that’s being used to set the bar heights.

Updating Data

Okay, once again, we have the amazing bar chart shown in [Figure 9-3](#), flexible enough to handle any data we can throw at it.

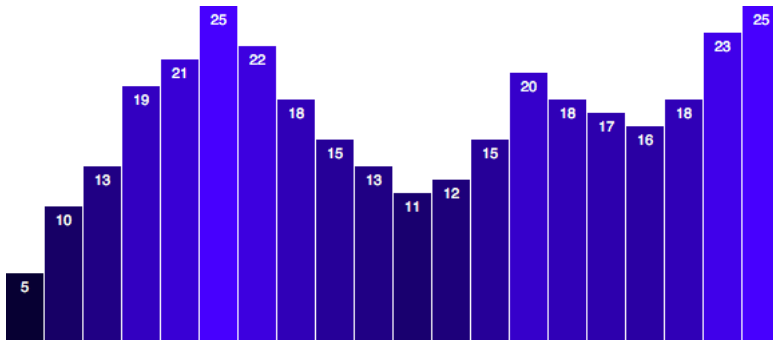


Figure 9-3. The bar chart

Or is it? Let's see.

The simplest kind of update is when all data values are updated at the same time *and* the number of values stays the same.

The basic approach in this scenario is this:

1. Modify the values in your dataset.
2. Rebind the new values to the existing elements (thereby overwriting the original values).
3. Set new attribute values as needed to update the visual display.

Before any of those steps can happen, though, some *event* needs to kick things off. So far, all of our code has executed immediately on page load. We *could* have our update run right after the initial drawing code, but it would happen imperceptibly fast. To make sure we can observe the change as it happens, we will separate our update code from everything else. We will need a “trigger,” something that happens *after* page load to apply the updates. How about a mouse click?

Interaction via Event Listeners

Any DOM element can be used, so rather than design a fancy button, I'll add a simple `p` paragraph to the HTML's body:

```
<p>Click on this text to update the chart with new data values (once).</p>
```

Then, down at the end of our D3 code, let's add the following:

```
d3.select("p")
  .on("click", function() {
    //Do something on click
  });
```

This selects our new `p`, and then adds an *event listener* to that element. Huh?

In JavaScript, events are happening all the time. Not exciting events, like huge parties, but really insignificant events like `mouseover` and `click`. Most of the time, these insignificant events go ignored (just as in life, perhaps). But if someone is *listening*, then the event will be *heard*, and can go down in posterity, or at least trigger some sort of DOM interaction. (Rough JavaScript parallel of classic koan: if an event occurs, and no listener hears it, did it ever happen at all?)

An event *listener* is an anonymous function that *listens* for a specific event *on* a specific element or elements.

D3's method `selection.on()` provides a nice shorthand for adding event listeners. As you can see, `on()` takes two arguments: the event *type* ("click") and the listener itself (the anonymous function).

In this case, the listener listens for a `click` event occurring on our selection `p`. When that happens, the listener function is executed. You can put whatever code you want in between the brackets of the anonymous function:

```
d3.select("p")
  .on("click", function() {
    //Do something mundane and annoying on click
    alert("Hey, don't click that!");
  });
```

We'll talk a lot more about interactivity in [Chapter 10](#).

Changing the Data

Instead of generating annoying pop-ups, I'd rather simply update `dataset` by overwriting its original values. This is step 1, from earlier:

```
dataset = [ 11, 12, 15, 20, 18, 17, 16, 18, 23, 25,
           5, 10, 13, 19, 21, 25, 22, 18, 15, 13 ];
```

Step 2 is to rebind the new values to the existing elements. We can do that by selecting those `rects` and simply calling `data()` one more time:

```
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset);    //New data successfully bound, sir!
```

Updating the Visuals

Finally, step 3 is to update the visual attributes, referencing the (now-updated) data values. This is super easy, as we simply copy and paste the relevant code that we've already written. In this case, the `rects` can maintain their horizontal positions and widths; all we really need to update are their heights and `y` positions. I've added those lines here:

```
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset)
  .attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);
  })
  .attr("height", function(d) {
    return yScale(d);
  });
```

Notice this looks almost exactly like the code that generates the `rects` initially, only without `enter()` and `append()`.

Putting it all together, here is all of our update code in one place:

```
//On click, update with new data
d3.select("p")
  .on("click", function() {
```

```
//New values for dataset
dataset = [ 11, 12, 15, 20, 18, 17, 16, 18, 23, 25,
           5, 10, 13, 19, 21, 25, 22, 18, 15, 13 ];

//Update all rects
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset)
  .attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);
  })
  .attr("height", function(d) {
    return yScale(d);
  });

});
```

Check out the revised bar chart in *o3_updates_all_data.html*. It looks like [Figure 9-4](#) to start.

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values (once).

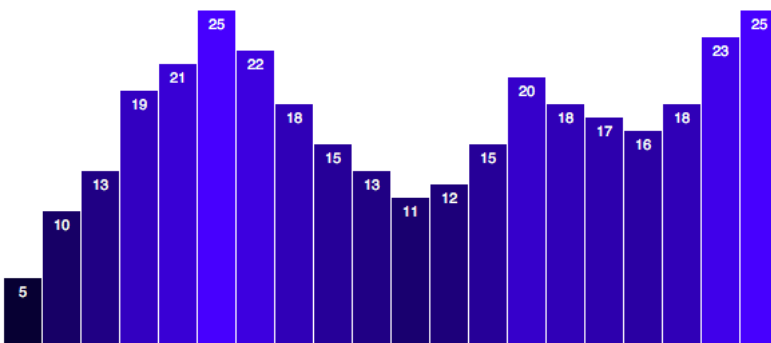


Figure 9-4. Updatable bar chart

Then click anywhere on the paragraph, and it turns into [Figure 9-5](#).

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values (once).

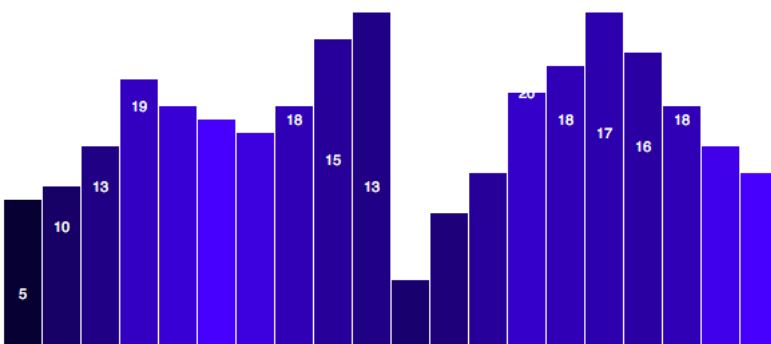


Figure 9-5. Bar chart, data updated

Good news: the values in `dataset` were modified, rebound, and used to adjust the `rects`. Bad news: it looks weird because we forgot to update the labels, and also the bar colors. Good news (because I always like to end with good news): this is easy to fix.

To ensure the colors change on update, we just copy and paste in the line where we set the `fill`:

```
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset)
```

```

.attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);
})
.attr("height", function(d) {
    return yScale(d);
})
.attr("fill", function(d) {    // <-- Down here!
    return "rgb(0, 0, " + (d * 10) + ")";
});

```

To update the labels, we use a similar pattern, only here we adjust their text content and x/y values:

```

svg.selectAll("text")
    .data(dataset)
    .text(function(d) {
        return d;
    })
    .attr("x", function(d, i) {
        return xScale(i) + xScale.rangeBand() / 2;
    })
    .attr("y", function(d) {
        return h - yScale(d) + 14;
    });

```

Take a look at *o4_updates_all_data_fixed.html*. You'll notice it looks the same to start, but click the trigger and now the bar colors and labels update correctly, as shown in [Figure 9-6](#).

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values (once).

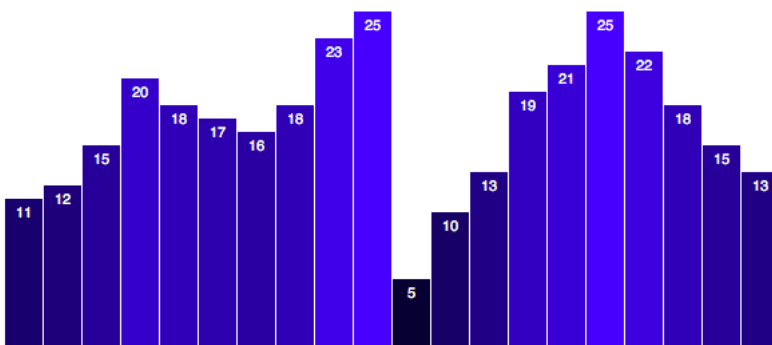
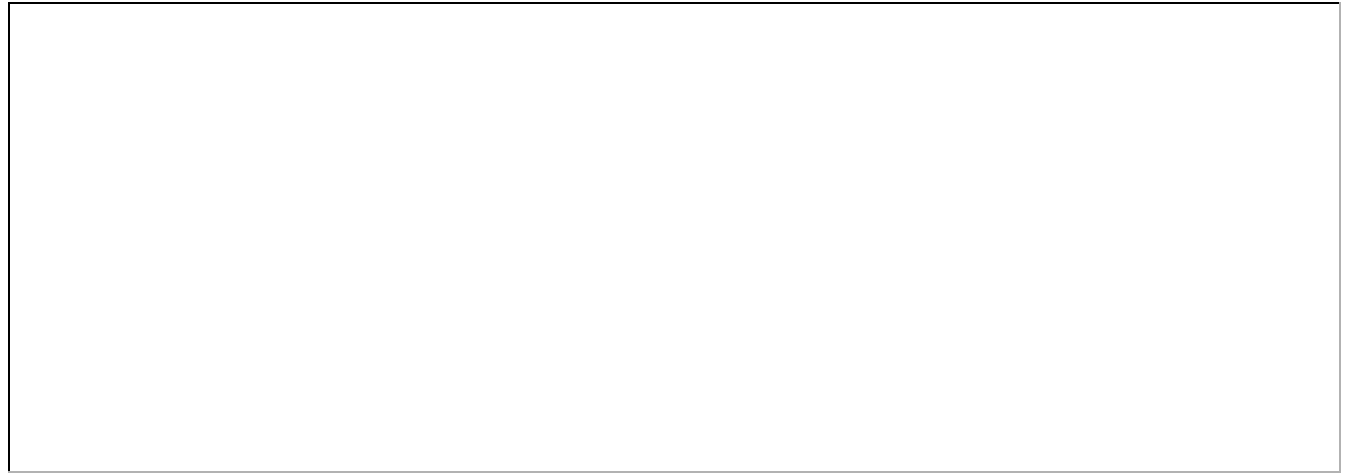


Figure 9-6. Updated chart with correct colors and labels
Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



Transitions

Life transitions can be scary: the first day of school, moving to a new city, quitting your day job to do freelance data visualization full-time. But D3 transitions are fun, beautiful, and not at all emotionally taxing.

Making a nice, super smooth, animated transition is as simple as adding one line of code:

```
.transition()
```

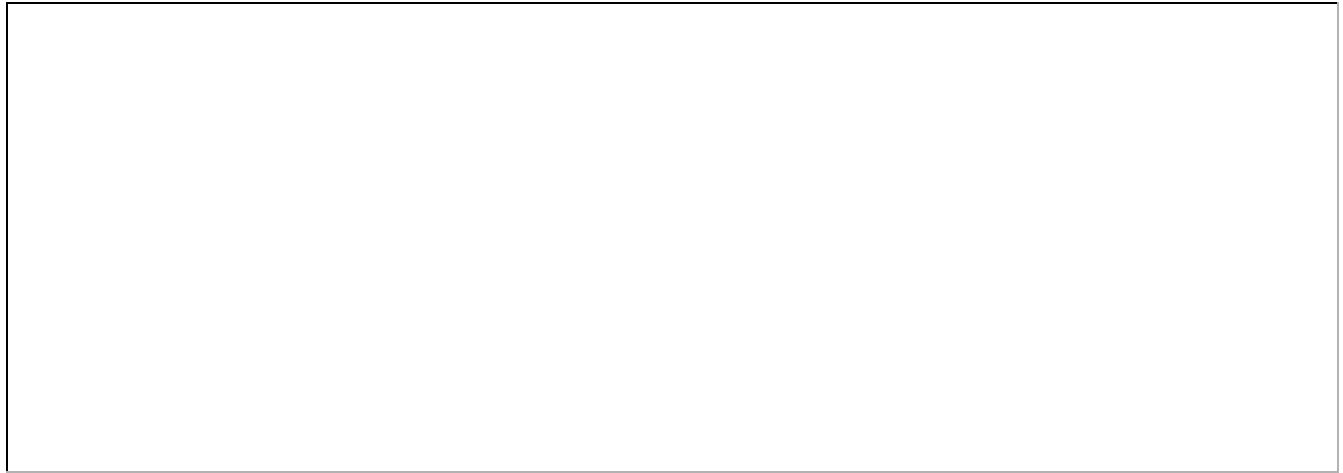
Specifically, add this link in the chain below where your selection is made, and *above* where any attribute changes are applied:

```
//Update all rects
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset)
  .transition()    // <-- This is new! Everything else here is unchanged.
  .attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);
  })
  .attr("height", function(d) {
    return yScale(d);
  })
  .attr("fill", function(d) {
    return "rgb(0, 0, " + (d * 10) + ")";
  });
```

Now run the code in *05_transition.html*, and click the text to see the transition in action. Note that the end result looks the same visually, but the transition from the chart's initial state to its end state is much, much nicer.

Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



Isn't that *insane*? I'm not a psychologist, but I believe it is literally insane that we can add a single line of code, and D3 will *animate* our value changes for us over time.

Without `transition()`, D3 evaluates every `attr()` statement immediately, so the changes in height and fill happen right away. When you add `transition()`, D3 introduces the element of time. Rather than applying new values all at once, D3 *interpolates* between the old values and the new values, meaning it normalizes the beginning and ending values, and calculates all their in-between states. D3 is also smart enough to recognize and interpolate between different attribute value formats. For example, if you specified a height of 200px to start but transition to just 100 (without the px). Or if a blue fill turns `rgb(0,255,0)`. You don't need to fret about being consistent; D3 takes care of it.

Do you believe me yet? This is really insane. And super helpful.

duration(), or How Long Is This Going to Take?

So the `attr()` values are interpolated over time, but how *much* time? It turns out the default is 250 milliseconds, or one-quarter second (1,000 milliseconds = 1 second). That's why the transition in *05_transition.html* is so fast.

Fortunately, you can control how much time is spent on any transition by—again, I kid you not—adding a single line of code:

```
.duration(1000)
```

The `duration()` must be specified *after* the `transition()`, and durations are always specified in milliseconds, so `duration(1000)` is a one-second duration.

Here is that line in context:

```
//Update all rects
svg.selectAll("rect")
  .data(dataset)
  .transition()
  .duration(1000) // <-- Now this is new!
  .attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);
  })
  .attr("height", function(d) {
    return yScale(d);
```

```
    })
    .attr("fill", function(d) {
        return "rgb(0, 0, " + (d * 10) + ")";
    });
```

Open up *o6_duration.html* and see the difference. Now make a copy of that file, and try plugging in some different numbers to slow or speed the transition. For example, try 3000 for a three-second transition, or 100 for one-tenth of a second.

The actual durations you choose will depend on the context of your design and what triggers the transition. In practice, I find that transitions of around 150 ms are useful for providing minor interface feedback (such as hovering over elements), and about 1,000 ms is ideal for many more significant visual transitions, such as switching from one view of the data to another. 1,000 ms (one second) is not too long, not too short.

In case you're feeling lazy, I made *o7_duration_slow.html*, which uses 5000 for a five-second transition.

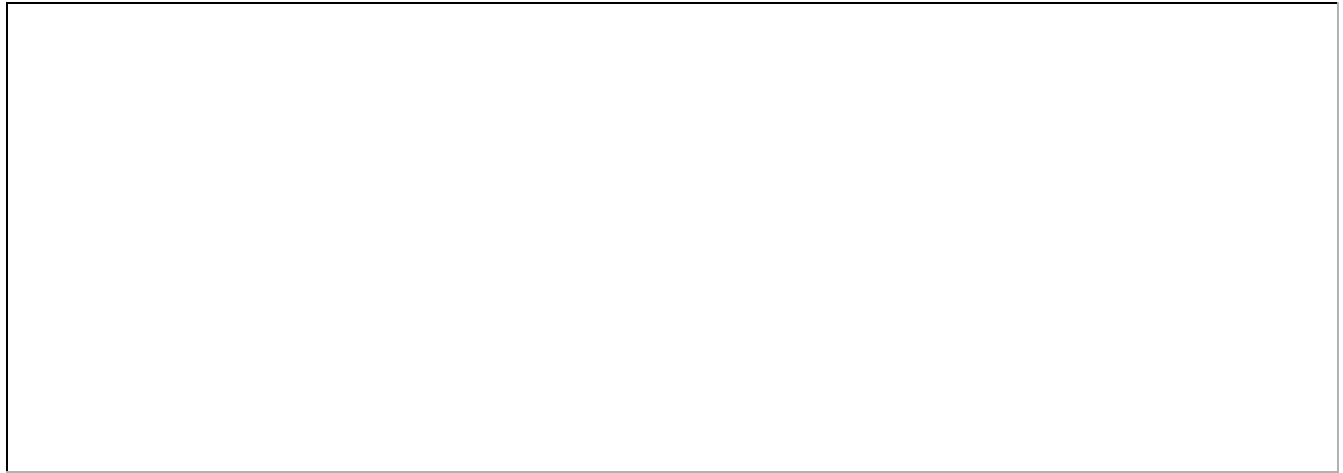
With such a slow transition, it becomes obvious that the value labels are not transitioning smoothly along with the bar heights. As you now know, we can correct that oversight by adding only two new lines of code, this time in the section where we update the labels:

```
//Update all labels
svg.selectAll("text")
  .data(dataset)
  .transition()           // <-- This is new,
  .duration(5000)         //      and so is this.
  .text(function(d) {
    return d;
  })
  .attr("x", function(d, i) {
    return xScale(i) + xScale.rangeBand() / 2;
  })
  .attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d) + 14;
  });
```

Much better! Note in *o8_duration_slow_labels_fixed.html* how the labels now animate smoothly along with the bars.

Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



ease()-y Does It

With a 5,000-ms, slow-as-molasses transition, we can also perceive the *quality* of motion. In this case, notice how the animation begins very slowly, then accelerates, then slows down again as the bars reach their destination heights. That is, the rate of motion is not *linear*, but *variable*.

The quality of motion used for a transition is called *easing*. In animation terms, we think about elements *easing* into place, moving from here to there.

With D3, you can specify different kinds of easing by using `ease()`. The default easing is "cubic-in-out", which produces the gradual acceleration and deceleration we see in our chart. It's a good default because you generally can't go wrong with a nice, smooth transition.

Contrast that smoothness to `09_ease_linear.html`, which uses `ease("linear")` to specify a linear easing function. Notice how the rate of motion is constant. That is, there is no gradual acceleration and deceleration—the elements simply begin moving at an even pace, and then they stop abruptly. (Also, I lowered the duration to 2,000 ms.)

`ease()` must also be specified after `transition()`, but before the `attr()` statements to which the transition applies. `ease()` can come before or after `duration()`, but this sequence makes the most sense to me:

```
... //Selection statement(s)
.transition()
.duration(2000)
.ease("linear")
... //attr() statements
```

Fortunately, there are several other built-in easing functions to choose from. Some of my favorites are:

`circle`

Gradual ease in and acceleration until elements snap into place.

`elastic`

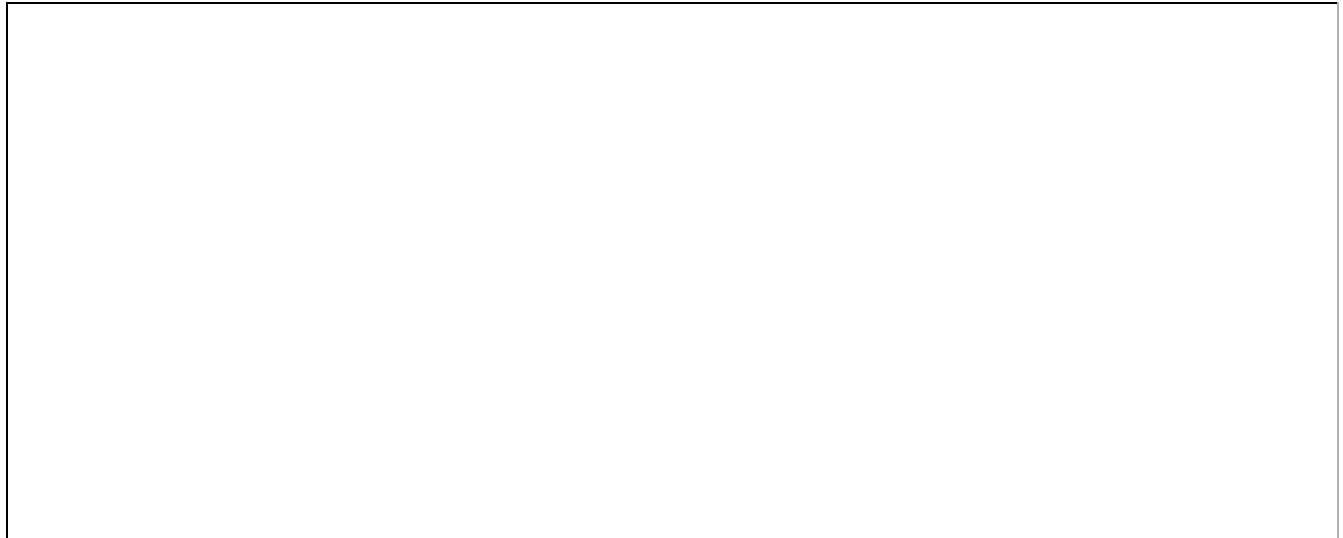
The best way to describe this one is “sproingy.”

`bounce`

Like a ball bouncing, then coming to rest.

Sample code files `10_ease_circle.html`, `11_ease_elastic.html`, and `12_ease_bounce.html` illustrate these three functions. The complete list of easing functions is on [the D3 wiki](#).

Try It Now!



Wow, I already regret telling you about `bounce`. Please use `bounce` only if you are making a satirical infographic that is mocking other bad graphics. Perceptually, I don't think there is a real case to be used for `bounce` easing in visualization. `cubic-in-out` is the default for a reason.

Please Do Not `delay()`

Whereas `ease()` controls the quality of motion, `delay()` specifies when the transition begins.

`delay()` can be given a static value, also in milliseconds, as in:

```
...  
.transition()  
.delay(1000)      //1,000 ms or 1 second  
.duration(2000)   //2,000 ms or 2 seconds  
...
```

As with `duration()` and `ease()`, the order here is somewhat flexible, but I like to include `delay()` before `duration()`. That makes more sense to me because the delay happens first, followed by the transition itself.

See *13_delay_static.html*, in which clicking the text triggers first a 1,000-ms delay (in which nothing happens), followed by a 2,000-ms transition.

Static delays can be useful, but more exciting are delay values that we calculate dynamically. A common use of this is to generate staggered delays, so some elements transition before others. Staggered delays can assist with perception, as it's easier for our eyes to follow an individual element's motion when it is slightly out of sync with its neighboring elements' motion.

To do this, instead of giving `delay()` a static value, we give it a function, in typical D3 fashion:

```
...  
.transition()  
.delay(function(d, i) {  
    return i * 100;  
})  
.duration(500)  
...
```

Just as we've seen with other D3 methods, when given an anonymous function, the datum bound to the current

element is passed into `d`, and the index position of that element is passed into `i`. So, in this case, as `D3` loops through each element, the delay for each element is set to `i * 100`, meaning each subsequent element will be delayed 100 ms *more* than the preceding element.

All this is to say that we now have staggered transitions. Check out the beautifully animated bars in [14_delay_dynamic.html](#) and see for yourself.

Note that I also decreased the duration to 500 ms to make it feel a bit snappier. Also note that `duration()` sets the duration for each *individual transition*, not for all transitions in aggregate. So, for example, if 20 elements have 500-ms transitions applied with no delay, then it will all be over in 500 ms, or one-half second. But if a 100-ms delay is applied to each subsequent element (`i * 100`), then the total running time of all transitions will be 2,400 ms:

```
Max value of i times 100ms delay plus 500ms duration =  
19 * 100 + 500 =  
2400
```

Because these delays are being calculated on a per-element basis, if you added more data, then the total running time of all transitions will increase. This is something to keep in mind if you have a dynamically loaded dataset with a variable array length. If you suddenly loaded 10,000 data points instead of 20, you could spend a long time watching those bars wiggle around (1,000,400 ms or 16.67 minutes to be precise). Suddenly, they're not so cute anymore.

Fortunately, we can *scale* our delay values dynamically to the length of the dataset. This isn't fancy `D3` stuff; it's just math.

See [15_delay_dynamic_scaled.html](#), in which 30 values are included in the dataset. If you get out your stopwatch, you'll see that the total transition time is 1.5 seconds, or around 1,500 ms.

Now see [16_delay_dynamic_scaled_fewer.html](#), which uses exactly the same transition code, but with only 10 data points. Notice how the delays are slightly longer (well, 200 percent longer), so the total transition time is the same: 1.5 seconds! How is this possible?

Try It Now!

```
...  
.transition()
```

```
.delay(function(d, i) {
  return i / dataset.length * 1000;    // <-- Where the magic happens
})
.duration(500)
...
```

The two preceding sample pages use the same delay calculations here. Instead of multiplying `i` by some static amount, we first divide `i` by `dataset.length`, in effect normalizing the value. Then, that normalized value is multiplied by 1000, or 1 second. The result is that the maximum amount of delay for the last element will be 1000, and all prior elements will be delayed by some amount less than that. A max delay of 1000 plus a duration of 500 equals 1.5 seconds total transition time.

This approach to delays is great because it keeps our code *scalable*. The total duration will be tolerable whether we have only 10 data points or 10,000.

Randomizing the Data

Just to illustrate how cool this is, let's repurpose our random number generating code from [Chapter 5](#) here, so we can update the chart as many times as we want, with new data each time.

Down in our click-update function, let's replace the static `dataset` with a randomly generated one:

```
//New values for dataset
var numValues = dataset.length;           //Count original length of dataset
dataset = [];                             //Initialize empty array
for (var i = 0; i < numValues; i++) {     //Loop numValues times
  var newNumber = Math.floor(Math.random() * 25); //New random integer (0-24)
  dataset.push(newNumber);                //Add new number to array
}
```

This will overwrite `dataset` with an array of random integers with values between 0 and 24. The new array will be the same length as the original array.

Then, I'll update the paragraph text:

```
<p>Click on this text to update the chart with new data values
as many times as you like!</p>
```

Now open up `17_randomized_data.html`, and you should see something like [Figure 9-7](#).

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values as many times as you like!

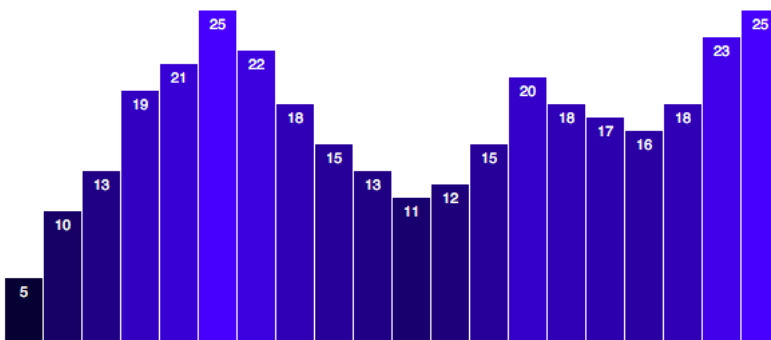
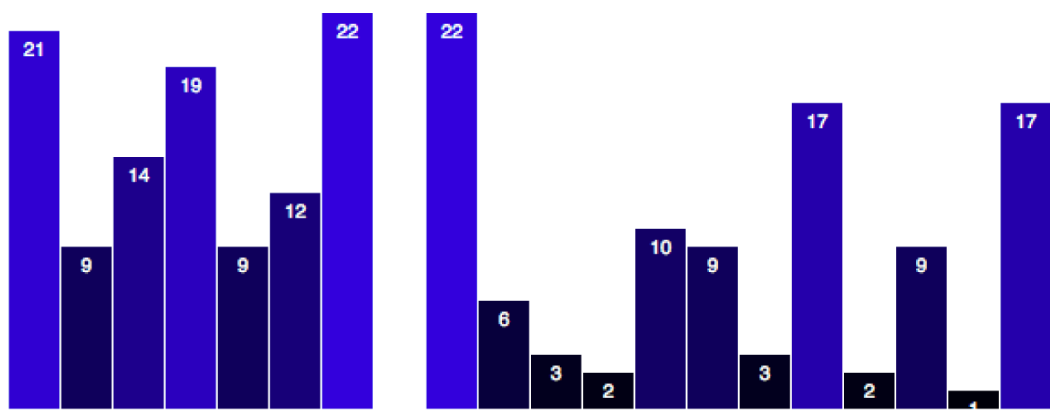


Figure 9-7. Initial view

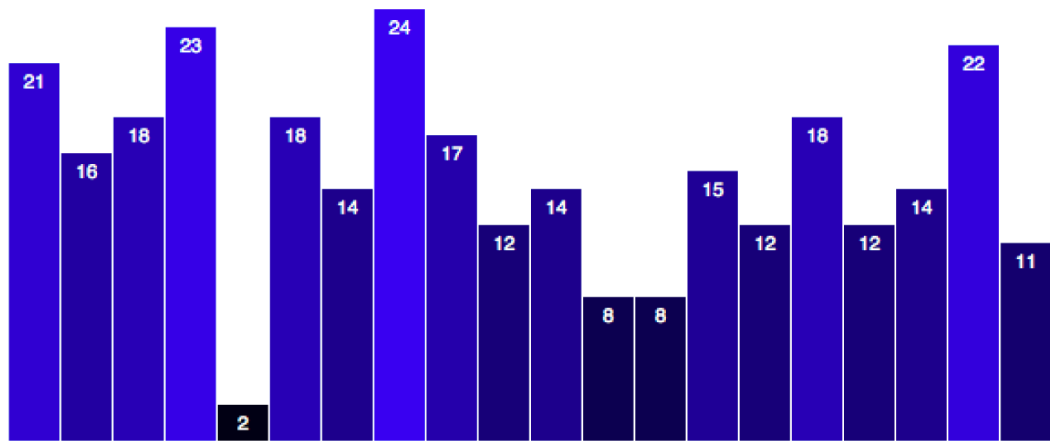
Every time you click the paragraph at top, the code will do the following:

1. Generate new, random values.
2. Bind those values to the existing elements.
3. Transition elements to new positions, heights, and colors, using the new values (see [Figure 9-8](#)).

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values as many times as you like!



Click on this text to update the chart with new data values as many times as you like!



Click on this text to update the chart with new data values as many times as you like!

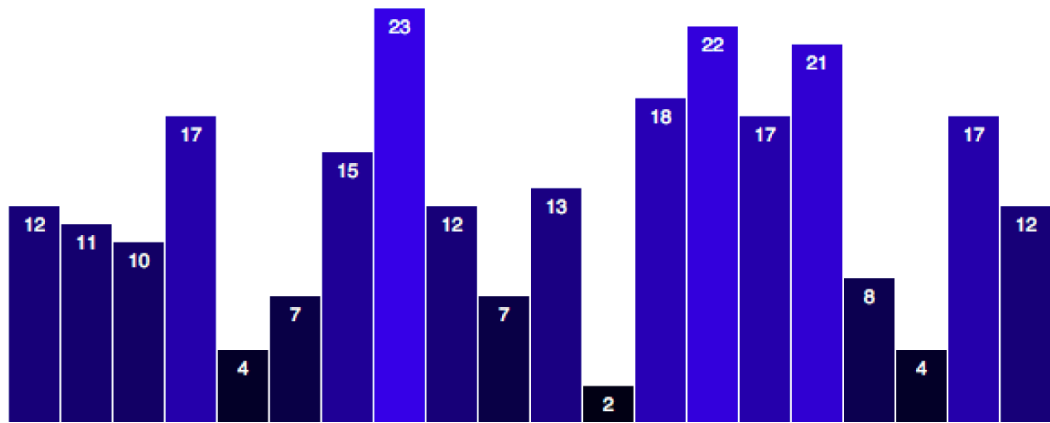
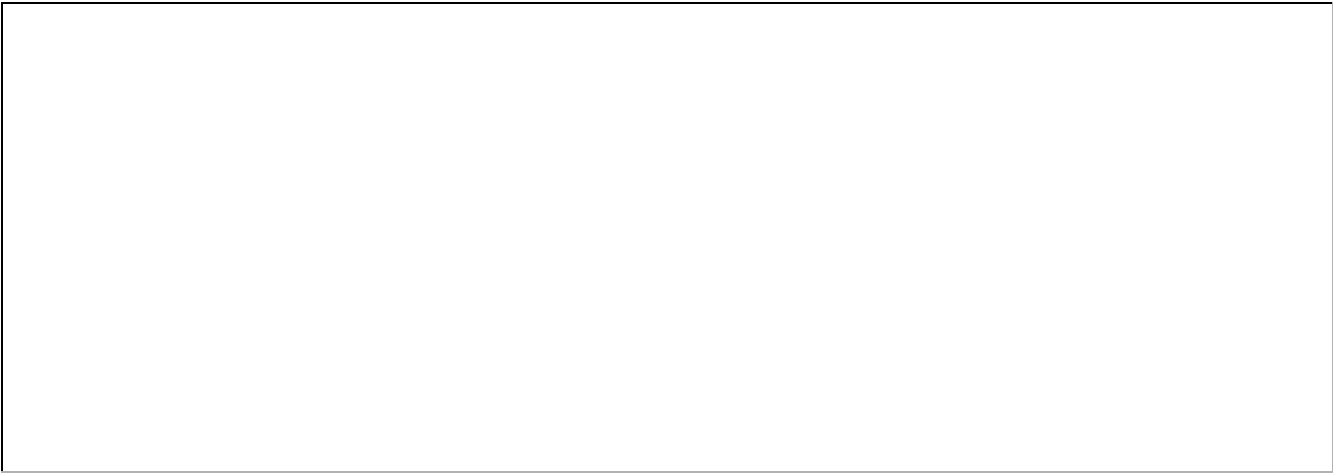


Figure 9-8. Random data applied
Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



Pretty cool! If this does not feel pretty cool or even a little cool to you, please turn off your computer and go for a short walk to clear your head, thereby making room for all the coolness to come. If, however, you are sufficiently cooled by this knowledge, read on.

Updating Scales

Astute readers might take issue with this line from earlier:

```
var newNumber = Math.floor(Math.random() * 25);
```

Why 25? In programming, this is referred to as a *magic number*. I know, it sounds fun, but the problem with magic numbers is that it’s difficult to tell why they exist (hence, the “magic”). Instead of 25, something like `maxValue` would be more meaningful:

```
var newNumber = Math.floor(Math.random() * maxValue);
```

Ah, see, now the magic is gone, and I can remember that 25 was acting as the *maximum value* that could be calculated and put into `newNumber`. As a general rule, it’s best to avoid magic numbers, and instead store those numbers inside variables with meaningful names, like `maxValue` or `numberOfTimesWatchedTheMovieTopSecret`.

More important, I now remember that I arbitrarily chose 25 because values larger than that exceeded the range of our chart’s scale, so those bars were cut off. For example, in [Figure 9-9](#), I replaced 25 with 50.

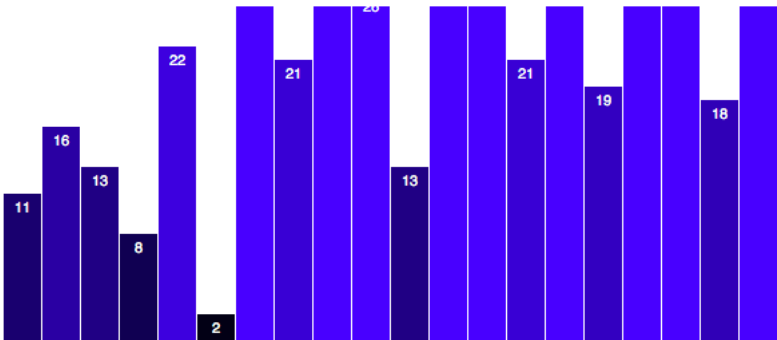


Figure 9-9. Too tall! We used the wrong magic number!

The real problem is not that I chose the *wrong* magic number; it’s that our *scale* needs to be updated whenever the dataset is updated. Whenever we plug in new data values, we should also recalibrate our scale to ensure that bars don’t get too tall or too short.

Updating a scale is easy. You’ll recall we created `yScale` with this code:

```
var yScale = d3.scale.linear()
    .domain([0, d3.max(dataset)])
    .range([0, h]);
```

The *range* can stay the same (as the visual size of our chart isn't changing), but after the new dataset has been generated, we should update the scale's *domain*:

```
//Update scale domain
yScale.domain([0, d3.max(dataset)]);
```

This sets the upper end of the input domain to the largest data value in `dataset`. Later, when we update all the bars and labels, we already reference `yScale` to calculate their positions, so no other code changes are necessary.

Check it out in `18_dynamic_scale.html`. I went ahead and replaced our magic number 25 with `maxValue`, which I set here to 100. So now when we click to update, we get random numbers between 0 and 100. If the *maximum* value in the dataset is 100, then `yScale`'s domain will go up to 100, as we see in [Figure 9-10](#).

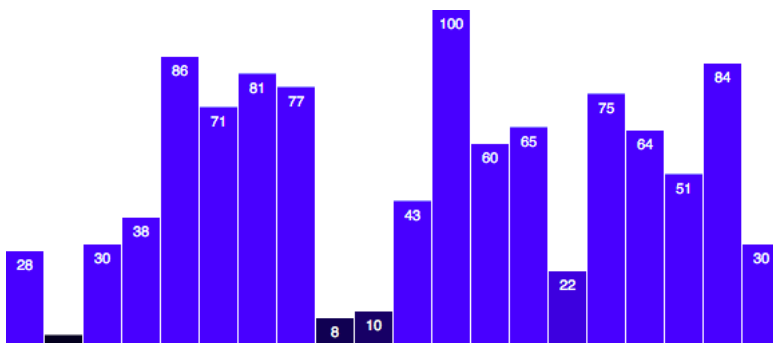


Figure 9-10. Random data, but the y-axis scale automatically accommodates

But because the numbers are random, they won't always reach that maximum value of 100. In [Figure 9-11](#), they top out at 85.

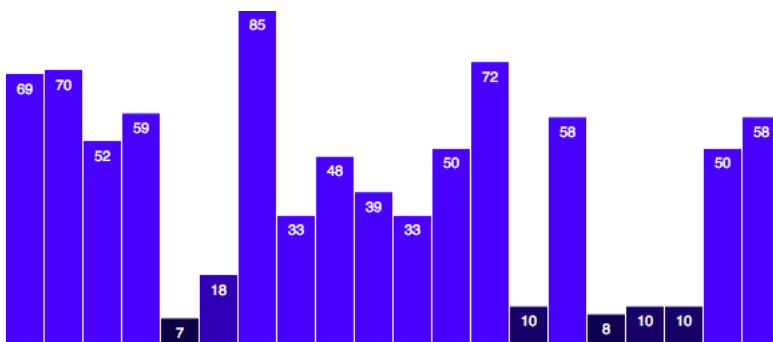


Figure 9-11. A slightly different scale, due to slightly different data

Note that the height of the 100 bar in the first chart is *the same* as the height of the 85 bar here. The data is changing; the scale input domain is changing; the output visual range does *not* change.

Updating Axes

The bar chart doesn't have any axes, but our scatterplot from the last chapter does ([Figure 9-12](#)). I've brought it back, with a few tweaks, in `19_axes_static.html`.

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values as many times as you like!

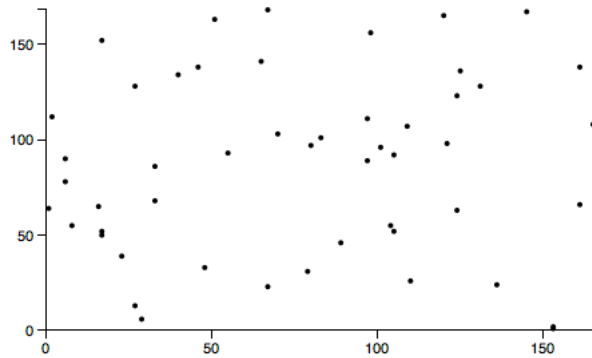


Figure 9-12. Updated scatterplot, now with data updates and dynamic scales

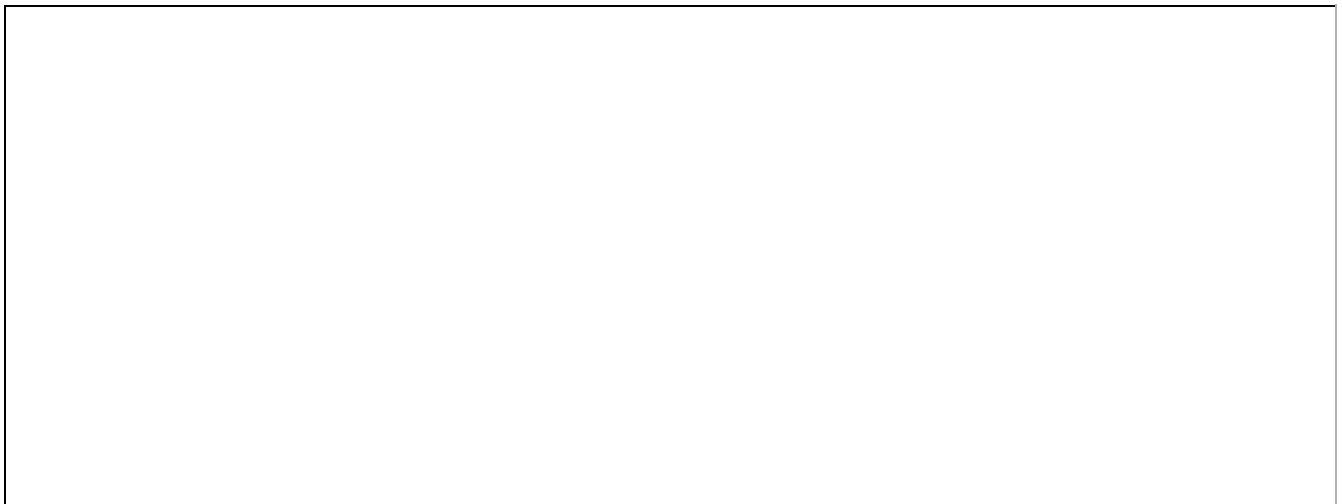
To summarize the changes to the scatterplot:

- You can now click the text at top to generate and update with new data.
- Animated transitions are used after data updates.
- I eliminated the staggered delay, and set all transitions to occur over a full second (1,000 ms).
- Both the x- and y-axis scales are updated, too.
- Circles now have a constant radius.

Try clicking the text and watch all those little dots zoom around. Cute! I sort of wish they represented some meaningful information, but hey, random data can be fun, too.

Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



What's *not* happening yet is that the axes aren't updating. Fortunately, that is simple to do.

First, I am going to add the class names `x` and `y` to our x- and y-axes, respectively. This will help us select those axes later:

```
//Create x-axis
svg.append("g")
  .attr("class", "x axis")    // <-- Note x added here
  .attr("transform", "translate(0," + (h - padding) + ")")
  .call(xAxis);
```

```
//Create y-axis
svg.append("g")
  .attr("class", "y axis")    // <-- Note y added here
  .attr("transform", "translate(" + padding + ",0)")
  .call(yAxis);
```

Then, down in our click function, we simply add:

```
//Update x-axis
svg.select(".x.axis")
  .transition()
  .duration(1000)
  .call(xAxis);

//Update y-axis
svg.select(".y.axis")
  .transition()
  .duration(1000)
  .call(yAxis);
```

For each axis, we do the following:

1. Select the axis.
2. Initiate a transition.
3. Set the transition's duration.
4. Call the appropriate axis generator.

Remember that each axis generator is already referencing a scale (either `xScale` or `yScale`). Because those scales are being updated, the axis generators can calculate what the new tick marks should be.

Open up *20_axes_dynamic.html* and give it a try.

Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



Once again, `transition()` handles all the interpolation magic for you—watch those ticks fade in and out. Just beautiful, and you barely had to lift a finger.

each() Transition Starts and Ends

There will be times when you want to make something happen at the start or end of a transition. In those times, you can use `each()` to execute arbitrary code for each element in the selection.

`each()` expects two arguments:

- Either "start" or "end"
- An anonymous function, to be executed either at the start of a transition, or as soon as it has ended

For example, here is our circle-updating code, with two `each()` statements added:

```
//Update all circles
svg.selectAll("circle")
  .data(dataset)
  .transition()
  .duration(1000)
  .each("start", function() {      // <-- Executes at start of transition
    d3.select(this)
      .attr("fill", "magenta")
      .attr("r", 3);
  })
  .attr("cx", function(d) {
    return xScale(d[0]);
  })
  .attr("cy", function(d) {
    return yScale(d[1]);
  })
  .each("end", function() {      // <-- Executes at end of transition
    d3.select(this)
      .attr("fill", "black")
      .attr("r", 2);
  });
```

You can see this in action in [21_each.html](#).

Now you click the trigger, and immediately each circle's fill is set to magenta, and its radius is set to 3 (see [Figure 9-13](#)). Then the transition is run, per usual. When complete, the fills and radii are restored to their original values.

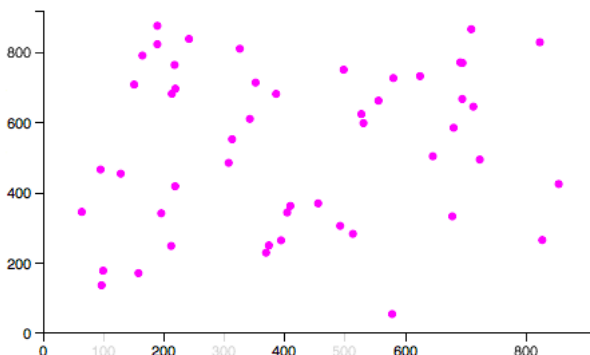


Figure 9-13. Hot pink circles, midtransition

Something to note is that within the anonymous function passed to `each()`, the context of `this` is maintained

as “the current element.” This is handy because then `this` can be referenced with the function to easily reselect the current element and modify it, as done here:

```
.each("start", function() {
  d3.select(this)           // Selects 'this', the current element
  .attr("fill", "magenta")  // Sets fill of 'this' to magenta
  .attr("r", 3);           // Sets radius of 'this' to 3
})
```

Warning: Start carefully

You might be tempted to throw another transition in here, resulting in a smooth fade from black to magenta. Don't do it! Or do it, but note that this will break:

```
.each("start", function() {
  d3.select(this)
  .transition()           // New transition
  .duration(250)          // New duration
  .attr("fill", "magenta")
  .attr("r", 3);
})
```

If you try this, and I recommend that you do, you'll find that the circles do indeed fade to pink, but they no longer change positions in space. That's because, by default, only one transition can be active on any given element at any given time. Newer transitions interrupt and override older transitions.

This might seem like a design flaw, but D3 operates this way on purpose. Imagine if you had several different buttons, each of which triggered a different view of the data, and a visitor was clicking through them in rapid succession. Wouldn't you want an earlier transition to be interrupted, so the last-selected view could be put in place right away?

If you're familiar with jQuery, you'll notice a difference here. By default, jQuery queues transitions, so they execute one after another, and calling a new transition doesn't automatically interrupt any existing ones. This sometimes results in annoying interface behavior, like menus that fade in when you mouse over them, but won't start fading out until *after* the fade-in has completed.

In this case, the code “breaks” because the first (spatial) transition is begun, then `each("start", ...)` is called on each element. Within `each()`, a second transition is initiated (the fade to pink), overriding the first transition, so the circles never make it to their final destinations (although they look great, just sitting at home).

Because of this quirk of transitions, just remember that `each("start", ...)` should be used only for immediate transformations, with no transitions.

End gracefully

`each("end", ...)`, however, *does* support transitions. By the time `each("end", ...)` is called, the primary transition has already ended, so initiating a new transition won't cause any harm.

See [22_each_combo_transition.html](#). Within the first `each()` statement, I bumped the pink circle radius size up to 7. In the second, I added two lines for transition and a duration:

```
.each("end", function() {
  d3.select(this)
```

```
    .transition()           // <-- New!  
    .duration(1000)         // <-- New!  
    .attr("fill", "black")  
    .attr("r", 2);  
  });
```

Watch that transition: so cool! Note the sequence of events:

1. You click the p text.
2. Circles turn pink and increase in size immediately.
3. Circles transition to new positions.
4. Circles transition to original color and size.

Also, try clicking on the p trigger several times in a row. Go ahead, just go nuts, click as fast as you can. Notice how each click interrupts the circles' progress. (Sorry, guys!) You're seeing each new transition request override the old one. The circles will never reach their final positions and fade to black unless you stop clicking and give them time to rest.

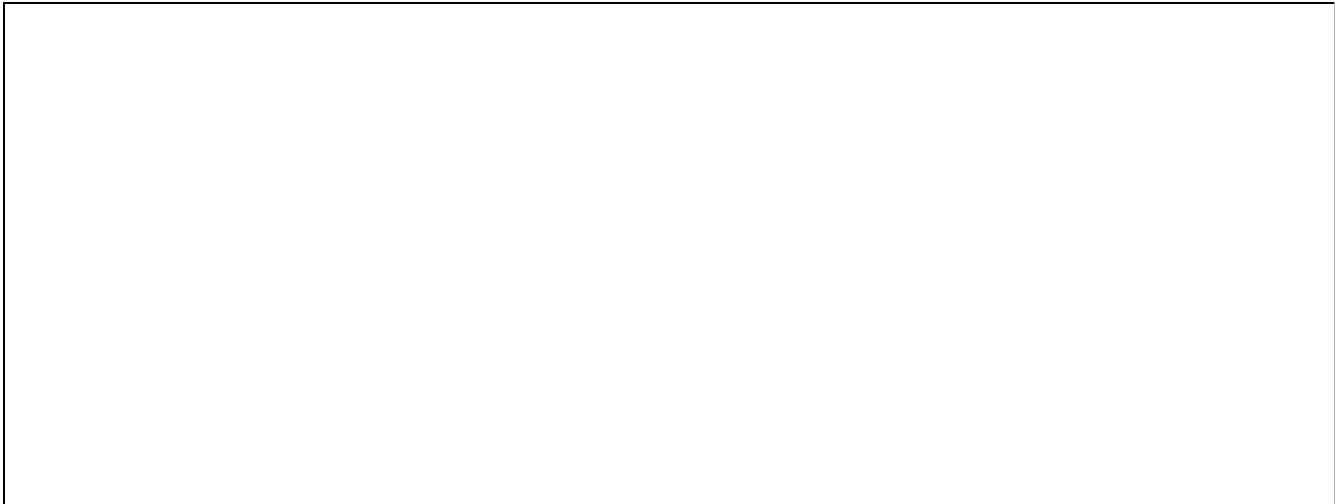
As cool as that is, there is an even simpler way to schedule multiple transitions to run one after the other: we simply chain transitions together. (This is a new feature in version 3.0 and won't work with older versions.) For example, instead of reselecting elements and calling a new transition on each one within each ("end", ...), we can just tack a second transition onto the end of the chain:

```
svg.selectAll("circle")  
  .data(dataset)  
  .transition()    // <-- Transition #1  
  .duration(1000)  
  .each("start", function() {  
    d3.select(this)  
      .attr("fill", "magenta")  
      .attr("r", 7);  
  })  
  .attr("cx", function(d) {  
    return xScale(d[0]);  
  })  
  .attr("cy", function(d) {  
    return yScale(d[1]);  
  })  
  .transition()    // <-- Transition #2  
  .duration(1000)  
  .attr("fill", "black")  
  .attr("r", 2);
```

Try that code out in *23_each_combo_transition_chained.html*, and you'll see it has the same behavior.

Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



When sequencing multiple transitions, I recommend this chaining approach. Then only use `each ()` for immediate (nontransitioned) changes that need to occur right before or right after transitions. As you can imagine, it's possible to create quite complex sequences of discrete and animated changes by chaining together multiple transitions, each of which can have its own calls to `each ("start", ...)` and `each ("end", ...)`.

Transitionless each()

You can also use `each ()` outside of a transition, just to execute arbitrary code for each element in a selection. Outside of transitions, just omit the "start" or "end" parameter, and only pass in the anonymous function.

Although I didn't do this here, you can also include references to `d` and `i` within your function definition, and `D3` will hand off those values, as you'd expect:

```
...
.each(function(d, i) {
  //Do something with d and i here
});
```

Containing visual elements with clipping paths

On a slightly related note, you might have noticed that during these transitions, points with low x or y values would exceed the boundaries of the chart area, and overlap the axis lines, as displayed in [Figure 9-14](#).

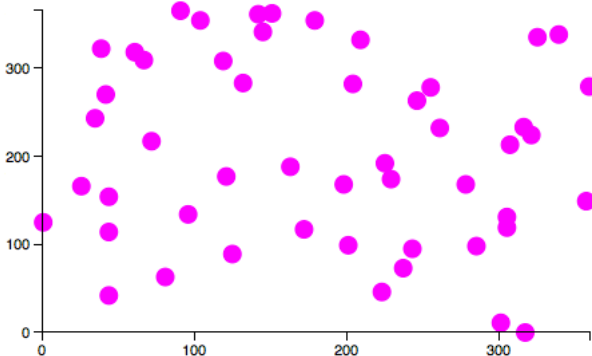


Figure 9-14. Points exceeding the chart area

Fortunately, SVG has support for *clipping paths*, which might be more familiar to you as *masks*, as in Photoshop or Illustrator. A clipping path is an SVG element that contains visual elements that, together, make up the clipping path or mask to be applied to other elements. When a mask is applied to an element, only the pixels that

land within that mask's shape are displayed.

Much like `g`, a `clipPath` has no visual presence of its own, but it contains visual elements (which are used to make the mask). For example, here's a simple `clipPath`:

```
<clipPath id="chart-area">
  <rect x="30" y="30" width="410" height="240"></rect>
</clipPath>
```

Note that the outer `clipPath` element has been given an ID of `chart-area`. We can use that ID to reference it later. Within the `clipPath` is a `rect`, which will function as the mask.

So there are three steps to using a clipping path:

1. Define the `clipPath` and give it an ID.
2. Put visual elements within the `clipPath` (usually just a `rect`, but this could be `circles` or any other visual elements).
3. Add a reference to the `clipPath` from whatever element(s) you wish to be masked.

Continuing with the scatterplot, I'll define the clipping path with this new code (steps 1 and 2):

```
//Define clipping path
svg.append("clipPath")           //Make a new clipPath
  .attr("id", "chart-area")       //Assign an ID
  .append("rect")                 //Within the clipPath, create a new rect
  .attr("x", padding)             //Set rect's position and size...
  .attr("y", padding)
  .attr("width", w - padding * 3)
  .attr("height", h - padding * 2);
```

I want all of the `circles` to be masked by this `clipPath`. I could add a `clipPath` reference to every single circle, but it's much easier and cleaner to just put all the `circles` into a `g` group, and then add the reference to that (this is step 3).

So, I will modify this code:

```
//Create circles
svg.selectAll("circle")
  .data(dataset)
  .enter()
  .append("circle")
  ...
```

by adding three new lines, creating a new `g`, giving it an arbitrary ID, and finally adding the reference to the `chart-area clipPath`:

```
//Create circles
svg.append("g")                 //Create new g
  .attr("id", "circles")        //Assign ID of 'circles'
  .attr("clip-path", "url(#chart-area)") //Add reference to clipPath
  .selectAll("circle")          //Continue as before...
  .data(dataset)
  .enter()
```

```
.append("circle")
...
```

Notice that the attribute name is `clip-path`, and the element name is `clipPath`. Argh! I know; it drives me crazy, too.

View the sample page [24_clip-path.html](#) and open the web inspector. Let's look at that new `rect` in [Figure 9-15](#).

Click on this text to update the chart with new data values as many times as you like!

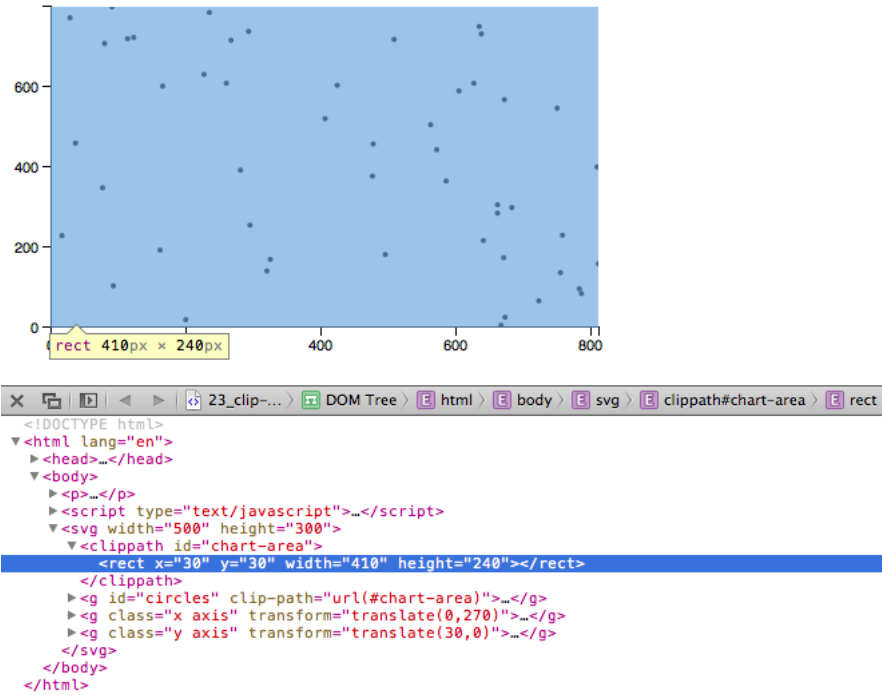


Figure 9-15. The dimensions of a `rect` within a `clipPath`

Because `clipPaths` have no visual rendering (they only mask other elements), it's helpful to highlight them in the web inspector, which will then outline the path's position and size with a blue highlight. In [Figure 9-15](#) we can see that the `clipPath rect` is in the right place and is the right size.

Notice, too, that now all the `circles` are grouped within a single `g` element, whose `clip-path` attribute references our new clipping path, using the slightly peculiar syntax `url(#chart-area)`. Thanks for that, SVG specification.

The end result is that our `circles`' pixels get clipped when they get too close to the edge of the chart area. Note the points at the extreme top and right edges.

The clipping is easier to see midtransition, as in [Figure 9-16](#).

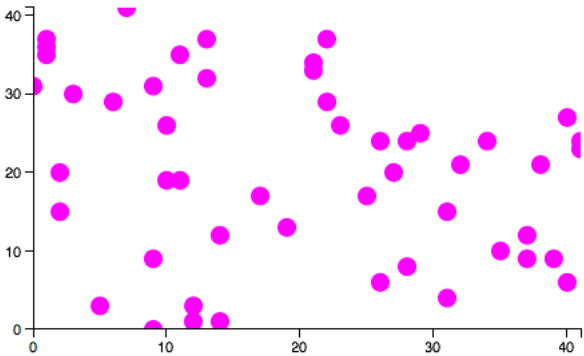


Figure 9-16. Points contained within the chart area

Voilà! The points no longer exceed the chart boundaries.

Other Kinds of Data Updates

Until now, when updating data, we have taken the “whole kit-and-kaboodle” approach: changing values in the dataset array, and then rebinding that revised dataset, overwriting the original values bound to our DOM elements.

That approach is most useful when *all* the values are changing, and when the length of the dataset (i.e., the number of values) stays the same. But as we know, real-life data is messy, and calls for even more flexibility, such as when you only want to update one or two values, or you even need to add or subtract values. D3, again, comes to the rescue.

Adding Values (and Elements)

Let’s go back to our lovely bar chart, and say that some user interaction (a mouse click) should now trigger adding a *new* value to our dataset. That is, the length of the array `dataset` will increase by one.

Well, generating a random number and pushing it to the array is easy enough:

```
//Add one new value to dataset
var maxValue = 25;
var newNumber = Math.floor(Math.random() * maxValue);
dataset.push(newNumber);
```

Making room for an extra bar will require recalibrating our x-axis scale. That’s just a matter of updating its input domain to reflect the new length of `dataset`:

```
xScale.domain(d3.range(dataset.length));
```

That’s the easy stuff. Now prepare to bend your brain yet again, as we dive into the depths of D3 *selections*.

Select

By now, you are comfortable using `select()` and `selectAll()` to grab and return DOM element selections. And you’ve even seen how, when these methods are chained, they grab selections within selections, and so on, as in:

```
d3.select("body").selectAll("p"); //Returns all 'p' elements within 'body'
```

When storing the *results* of these selection methods, the most specific result—meaning the result of the last selector in the chain—is the reference handed off to the variable. For example:

```
var paragraphs = d3.select("body").selectAll("p");
```

Now `paragraphs` contains a selection of all `p` elements in the DOM, even though we traversed through `body` to get there.

The twist here is that the `data()` method *also* returns a selection. Specifically, `data()` returns references to all elements to which data was just bound, which we call the *update* selection.

In the case of our bar chart, this means that we can select all the bars, then rebind the new data to those bars, and grab the update selection all in one fell swoop:

```
//Select...
var bars = svg.selectAll("rect")
    .data(dataset);
```

Now the update selection is stored in `bars`.

Enter

When we changed our data values, but not the *length* of the whole data set, we didn't have to worry about an update selection—we simply rebound the data, and transitioned to new attribute values.

But now we have *added* a value. So `dataset.length` was originally 20, but now it is 21. How can we address that new data value, specifically, to draw a new `rect` for it? Stay with me here; your patience will be rewarded.

The genius of the update selection is that it contains within it references to *enter* and *exit* subselections.

Entering elements are those that are new to the scene. It's considered good form to welcome such elements to the neighborhood with a plate of cookies.

Whenever there are more data values than corresponding DOM elements, the *enter* selection contains references to those elements *that do not yet exist*. You already know how to access the enter selection: by using `enter()` after binding the new data, as we do when first creating the bar chart. You have already seen the following code:

```
svg.selectAll("rect") //Selects all rects (as yet nonexistent)
    .data(dataset)     //Binds data to selection, returns update selection
    .enter()           //Extracts the enter selection, i.e., 20 placeholder elements
    .append("rect")    //Creates a 'rect' inside each of the placeholder elements
    ...
```

You have already seen this sequence of `selectAll()`→`data()`→`enter()`→`append()` many times, but only in the context of creating many elements at once, when the page first loads.

Now that we have added one value to `dataset`, we can use `enter()` to address the one new corresponding DOM element, without touching all the existing `rects`. Following the preceding `Select` code, I'll add:

```
//Enter...
bars.enter()
    .append("rect")
    .attr("x", w)
    .attr("y", function(d) {
        return h - yScale(d);
    })
    .attr("width", xScale.rangeBand())
    .attr("height", function(d) {
        return yScale(d);
    })
    .attr("fill", function(d) {
        return "rgb(0, 0, " + (d * 10) + ")";
    });
```

Remember, `bars` contains the update selection, so `bars.enter()` extracts the enter selection from that. In this case, the enter selection is one reference to one new DOM element. We follow that with `append()` to create the new `rect`, and all the other `attr()` statements as usual, except for the following line:

```
.attr("x", w)
```

You might notice that this sets the horizontal position of the new `rect` to be just past the far right edge of the SVG. I want the new bar to be created just out of sight, so I can use a nice, smooth transition to move it gently into view.

Update

We made the new `rect`; now all that's left is to update all `rect`'s visual attributes. Again, `bars` here stores the complete update selection (which includes the enter selection):

```
//Update...
bars.transition()
  .duration(500)
  .attr("x", function(d, i) {
    return xScale(i);
  })
  .attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);
  })
  .attr("width", xScale.rangeBand())
  .attr("height", function(d) {
    return yScale(d);
  });
```

This has the effect of taking *all* the bars and transitioning them to their new `x`, `y`, `width`, and `height` values. Don't believe me? See the working code in [25_adding_values.html](#).

[Figure 9-17](#) shows the initial chart.

Click on this text to add a new data value to the chart!

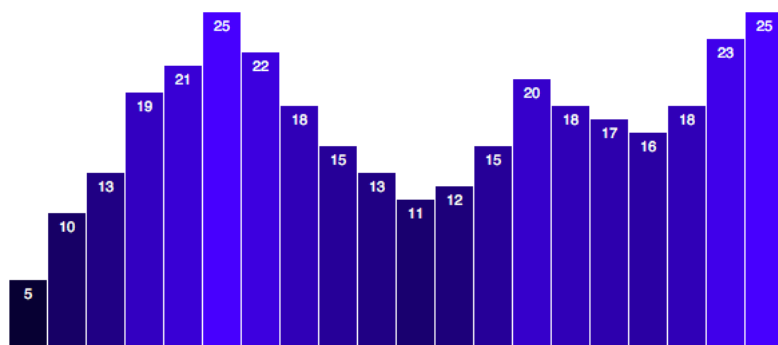


Figure 9-17. Initial bar chart

[Figure 9-18](#) shows the chart after one click on the text. Note the new bar on the right.

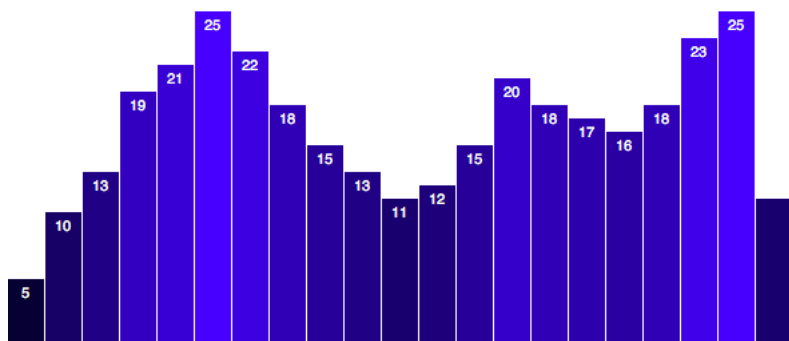


Figure 9-18. After one click

After two clicks, we get the chart shown in [Figure 9-19](#). [Figure 9-20](#) shows the result after three clicks.

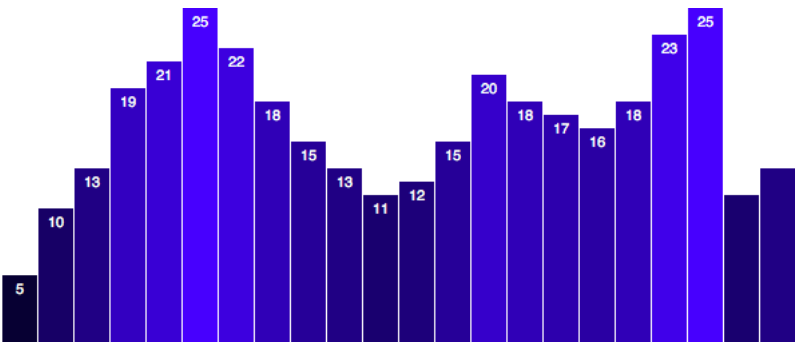


Figure 9-19. After two clicks

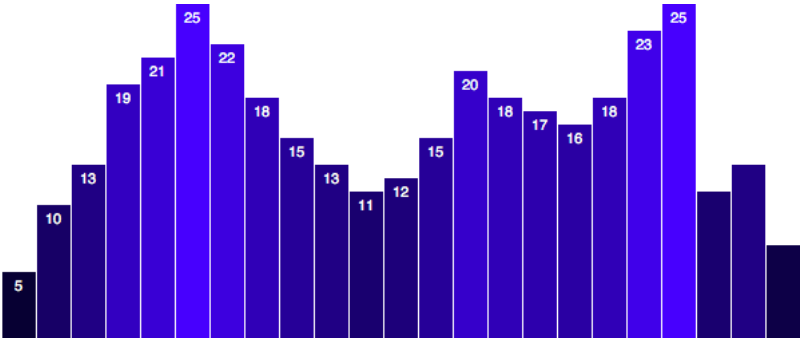


Figure 9-20. After three clicks

After several more clicks, you'll see the chart shown in [Figure 9-21](#).

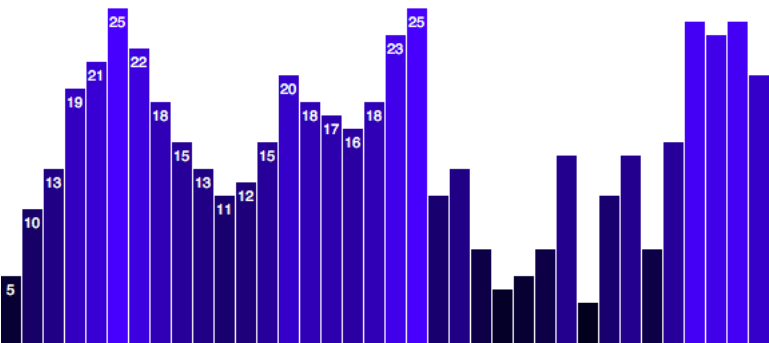


Figure 9-21. After many clicks

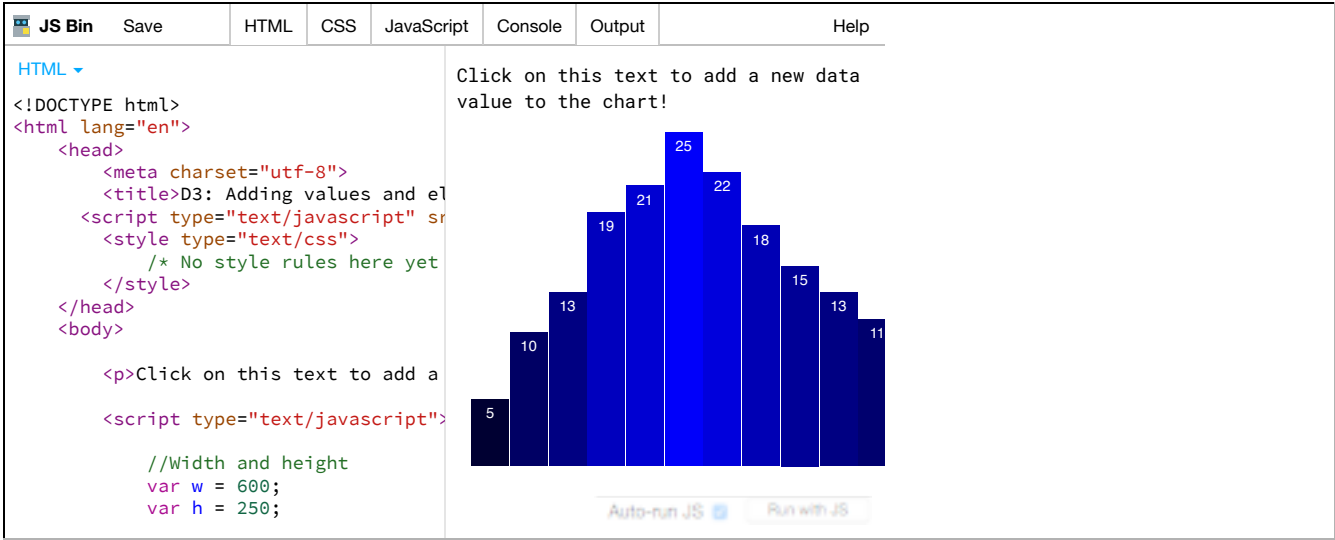
Not only are new bars being created, sized, and positioned, but on every click, *all other bars* are rescaled and moved into position as well.

What's *not* happening is that new value labels aren't being created and transitioned into place. I leave that as an exercise for you to pursue.

Exercise

Add code in the below-left panel to add labels to the newly created bars. Test your solution in the output panel at right

[Open in new window](#)



Removing Values (and Elements)

Removing elements is easier.

Whenever there are more DOM elements than data values, the *exit* selection contains references to those elements without data. As you’ve already guessed, we can access the exit selection with `exit()`.

First, I’ll change our trigger text to indicate we’re removing values:

```
<p>Click on this text to remove a data value from the chart!</p>
```

Then, on click, instead of generating a new random value and adding it to `dataset`, we’ll use `shift()`, which removes the first element from the array:

```
//Remove one value from dataset
dataset.shift();
```

Exit

Exiting elements are those that are on their way out. We should be polite and wish these elements a safe journey.

So we grab the exit selection, transition the exiting element off to the right side, and, finally, remove it:

```
//Exit...
bars.exit()
  .transition()
  .duration(500)
  .attr("x", w)
  .remove();
```

`remove()` is a special transition method that waits until the transition is complete, and then deletes the element from the DOM forever. (Sorry, there’s no getting it back.)

Making a smooth exit

Visually speaking, it’s good practice to perform a transition first, rather than simply `remove()` elements right away. In this case, we’re moving the bar off to the right, but you could just as easily transition `opacity` to zero, or apply some other visual transition.

That said, if you ever need to just get rid of an element ASAP, by all means, you can use `remove()` without calling a transition first.

Okay, now try out the code in `26_removing_values.html`. [Figure 9-22](#) shows the initial view.

Click on this text to remove a data value from the chart!

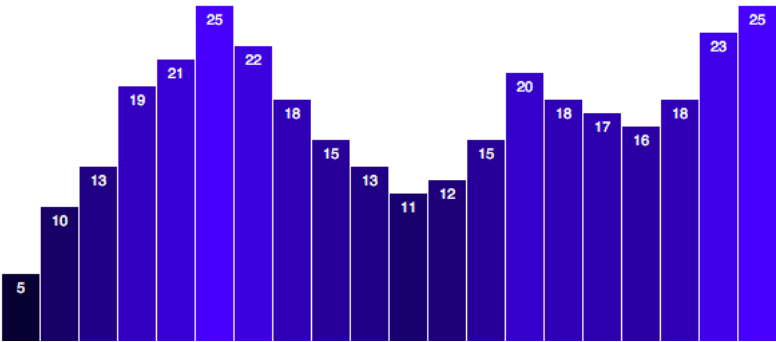


Figure 9-22. Initial bar chart

Then, after one click on the text, note the loss of one bar in [Figure 9-23](#).

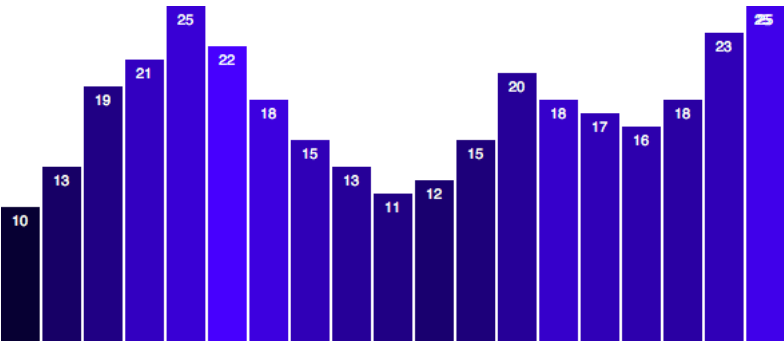


Figure 9-23. After one click

After two clicks, you'll see the chart in [Figure 9-24](#). [Figure 9-25](#) shows what displays after three clicks.

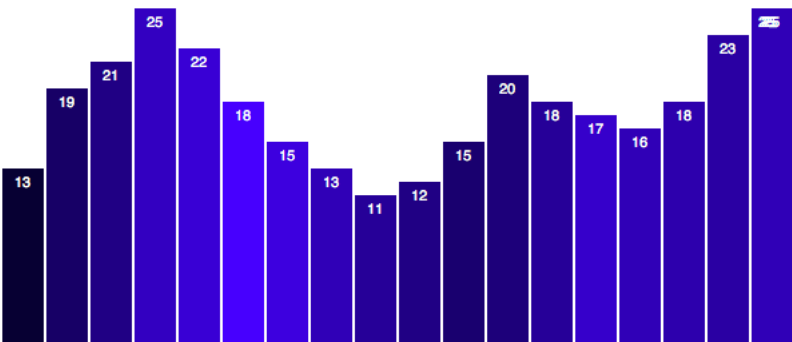


Figure 9-24. After two clicks

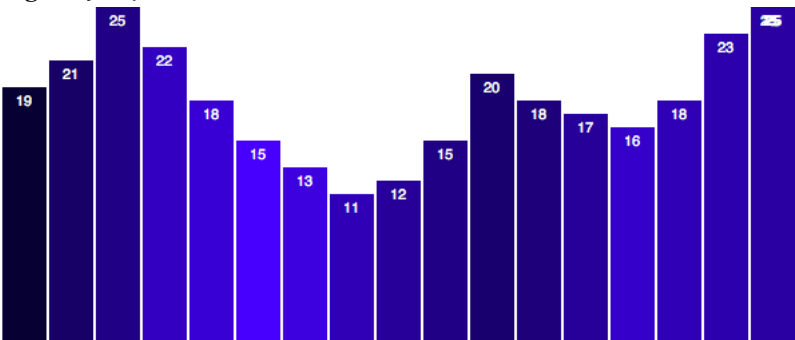


Figure 9-25. After three clicks

After many clicks, the result is shown in [Figure 9-26](#).

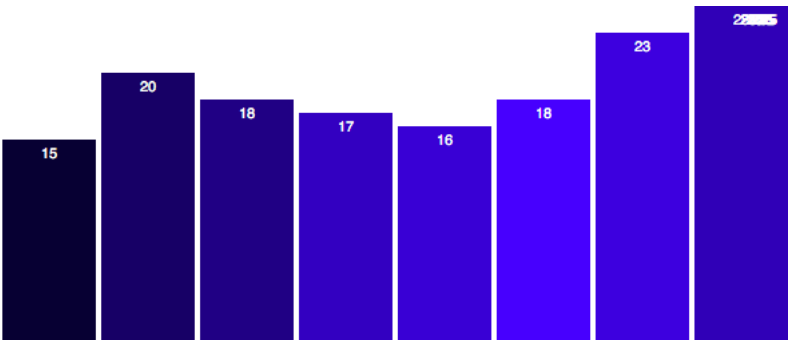


Figure 9-26. After many clicks

On each click, one bar moves off to the right, and then is removed from the DOM. (You can confirm this with the web inspector.)

But what’s not working as expected? For starters, the value labels aren’t being removed, so they clutter up the top right of our chart. Again, I will leave fixing this aspect as an exercise to you.

Exercise

Add code in the below-left panel to remove the labels corresponding to the deleted bars. Test your solution in the output panel at right

[Open in new window](#)

JS Bin

Save

HTML

CSS

JavaScript

Console

Output

Help

HTML

<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
 <head>
 <meta charset="utf-8">
 <title>D3: Removing values from
 <script type="text/javascript" sr
 <style type="text/css">
 /* No style rules here yet
 </style>
 </head>
 <body>

 <p>Click on this text to remove

 <script type="text/javascript">

 //Width and height
 var w = 600;
 var h = 250;

Click on this text to remove a data value from the chart!

| Bar Index | Value |
|-----------|-------|
| 1 | 5 |
| 2 | 10 |
| 3 | 13 |
| 4 | 19 |
| 5 | 21 |
| 6 | 25 |
| 7 | 22 |
| 8 | 18 |
| 9 | 15 |
| 10 | 11 |

Auto-run JS

Run with JS

More important, although we are using the `Array.shift()` method to remove the *first* value from the `dataset` array, it’s not the *first* bar that is removed, is it? Instead, the last bar in the DOM, the one visually on the far right, is always removed. Although the data values are updating correctly (note how they move to the left with each click—5, 10, 13, 19, and so on), the bars are assigned new values, rather than “sticking” with their initial values. That is, the anticipated *object constancy* is broken—the “5” bar becomes the “10” bar, and so on, yet perceptually we would prefer that the “5” bar simply scoot off to the left and let all the other bars keep their original values.

Why, why, oh, why is this happening?! Not to worry; there’s a perfectly reasonable explanation. The key to maintaining object constancy is, well, keys. (On a side note, Mike Bostock has a very eloquent [overview of the value of object constancy](#), which I recommend.)

Data Joins with Keys

Now that you understand update, enter, and exit selections, it's time to dig deeper into data joins.

A data join happens whenever you bind data to DOM elements; that is, every time you call `data()`.

The default join is by *index order*, meaning the first data value is bound to the first DOM element in the selection, the second value is bound to the second element, and so on.

But what if the data values and DOM elements are not in the same order? Then you need to tell D3 how to join or pair values and elements. Fortunately, you can define those rules by specifying a *key function*.

This explains the problem with our bars. After we remove the first value from the `dataset` array, we rebind the new `dataset` on top of the existing elements. Those values are joined in index order, so the first `rect`, which originally had a value of 5, is now assigned 10. The former 10 bar is assigned 13, and so on. In the end, that leaves one `rect` element without data—the last one on the far right.

We can use a *key function* to control the data join with more specificity and ensure that the right datum is bound to the right `rect` element.

Preparing the data

Until now, our dataset has been a simple array of values. But to use a key function, each value must have some “key” associated with it. Think of the key as a means of identifying the value without looking at the value itself, as the values themselves might change or exist in duplicate form. (If there were two separate values of 3, how could you tell them apart?)

Instead of an array of values, let's use an array of *objects*, within which each object can contain both a key value and the actual data value:

```
var dataset = [ { key: 0, value: 5 },
                 { key: 1, value: 10 },
                 { key: 2, value: 13 },
                 { key: 3, value: 19 },
                 { key: 4, value: 21 },
                 { key: 5, value: 25 },
                 { key: 6, value: 22 },
                 { key: 7, value: 18 },
                 { key: 8, value: 15 },
                 { key: 9, value: 13 },
                 { key: 10, value: 11 },
                 { key: 11, value: 12 },
                 { key: 12, value: 15 },
                 { key: 13, value: 20 },
                 { key: 14, value: 18 },
                 { key: 15, value: 17 },
                 { key: 16, value: 16 },
                 { key: 17, value: 18 },
                 { key: 18, value: 23 },
                 { key: 19, value: 25 } ];
```

Remember, hard brackets `[]` indicate an array, and curly brackets `{ }` indicate an object.

Note that the data values here are unchanged from our original `dataset`. What's new are the keys, which just enumerate each object's original position within the `dataset` array. (By the way, your chosen key name doesn't have to be `key`—the name can be anything, like `id`, `year`, or `fruitType`. I am using `key` here for simplicity.)

Updating all references

The next step isn't fun, but it's not hard. Now that our data values are buried within objects, we can no longer just reference `d`. (Ah, the good old days.) Anywhere in the code where we want to access the actual data *value*, we now need to specify `d.value`. When we use anonymous functions within D3 methods, `d` is handed whatever is in the current position in the array. In this case, each position in the array now contains an object, such as `{ key: 12, value: 15 }`. So to get at the value 15, we now must write `d.value` to reach *into* the object and grab that `value` value. (I hope you see a lot of `value` in this paragraph.)

First, that means a change to the `yScale` definition:

```
var yScale = d3.scale.linear()
    .domain([0, d3.max(dataset, function(d) { return d.value; })])
    .range([0, h]);
```

In the second line, we used to have simply `d3.max(dataset)`, but that only works with a simple array. Now that we're using objects, we have to include an *accessor function* that tells `d3.max()` how to get at the correct values to compare. So as `d3.max()` loops through all the elements in the `dataset` array, now it knows not to look at `d` (which is an object, and not easily compared to other objects), but `d.value` (a number, which is easily compared to other numbers).

Note we also need to change the second reference to `yScale`, down in our click-update function:

```
yScale.domain([0, d3.max(dataset, function(d) { return d.value; })]);
```

Next up, everywhere `d` is used to set attributes, we must change `d` to `d.value`. For example, this:

```
...
.attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d);          // <-- d
})
...
```

becomes this:

```
...
.attr("y", function(d) {
    return h - yScale(d.value);    // <-- d.value!
})
...
```

Key functions

Finally, we define a key function, to be used whenever we bind data to elements:

```
var key = function(d) {
    return d.key;
};
```

Notice that, in typical D3 form, the function takes `d` as input. Then this very simple function specifies to take the key value of whatever `d` object is passed into it.

Now, in all four places where we bind data, we replace this line:

```
.data(dataset)
```

with this:

```
.data(dataset, key)
```

Note that rather than defining the key function first, then referencing it, you could of course simply write the key function directly into the call to `data()` like so:

```
.data(dataset, function(d) {  
    return d.key;  
})
```

But in this case, you'd have to write that four times, which is redundant, so I think defining the key function once at the top is cleaner.

That's it! Consider your data joined.

Exit transition

One last tweak: Let's set the exiting bar to scoot off to the left side instead of the right:

```
//Exit...  
bars.exit()  
    .transition()  
    .duration(500)  
    .attr("x", -xScale.rangeBand()) // <-- Exit stage left  
    .remove();
```

Great! Check out the sample code, with all of those changes, in `27_data_join_with_key.html`. The initial view shown in [Figure 9-27](#) is unchanged.

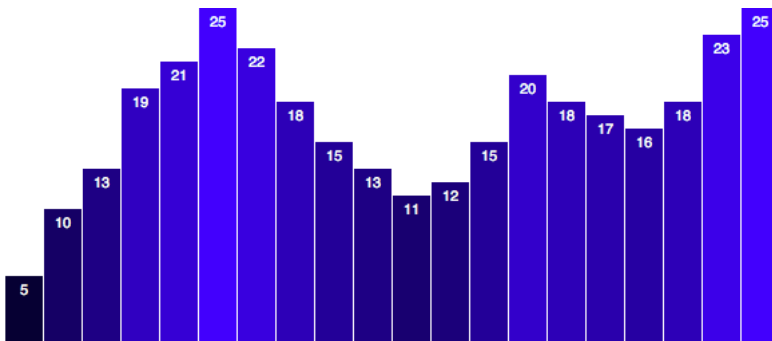


Figure 9-27. Initial bar chart

Try clicking the text, though, and the leftmost bar slides cleanly off to the left, all other bars' widths rescale to fit, and then the exited bar is deleted from the DOM. (Again, you can confirm this by watching the `rects` disappear one by one in the web inspector.)

[Figure 9-28](#) shows the view after one bar is removed.

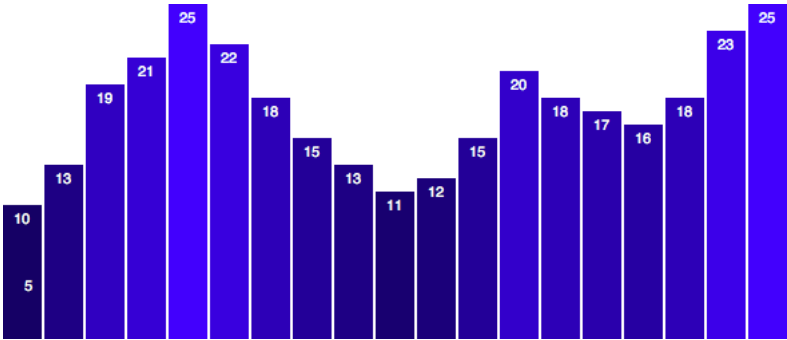


Figure 9-28. After one click

After two clicks, you’ll see the chart in [Figure 9-29](#).

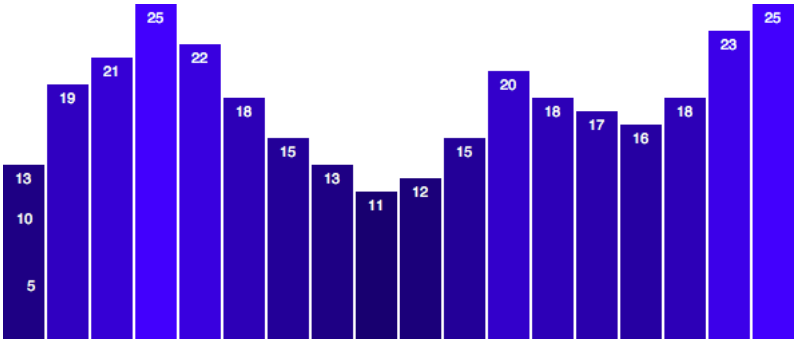


Figure 9-29. After two clicks

[Figure 9-30](#) displays the results after three clicks, and after several clicks, you’ll see the result shown in [Figure 9-31](#).

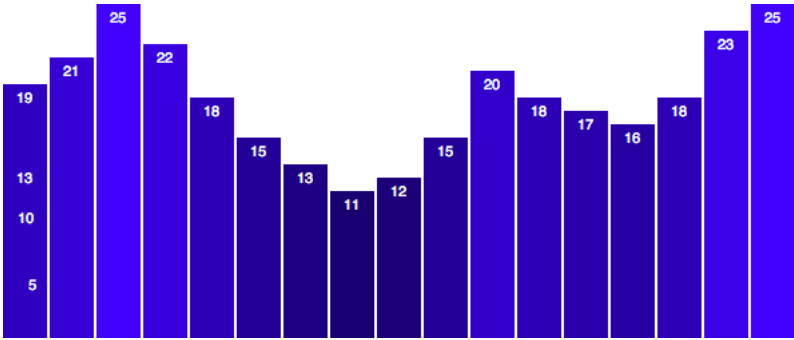


Figure 9-30. After three clicks

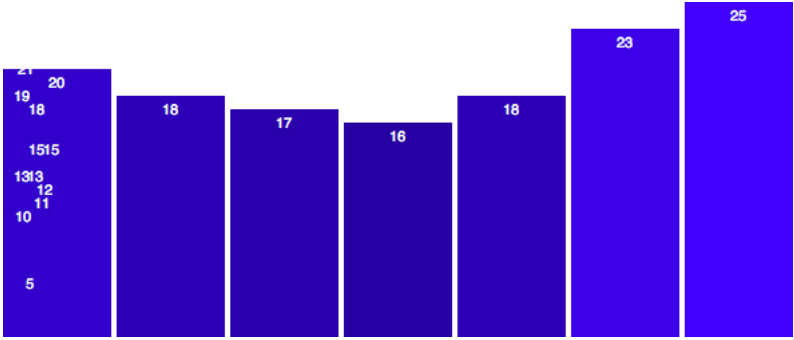


Figure 9-31. After many clicks

This is working better than ever. The only hitch is that the labels aren’t exiting to the left, and also are not removed from the DOM, so they clutter up the left side of the chart. Again, I leave this to you; put your new D3 chops to the test and clean up those labels.

Exercise

Add code in the below-left panel to remove the labels corresponding to the deleted bars. Test your solution in the output panel at right

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JS Bin

Save

HTML

CSS

JavaScript

Console

Output

Help

HTML

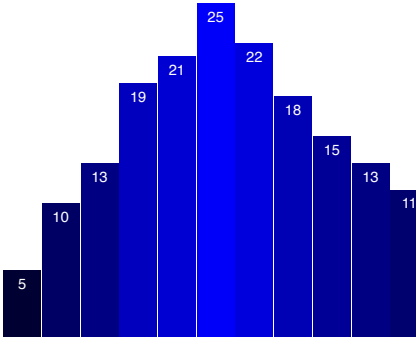
```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="utf-8">
    <title>D3: Removing values from
  <script type="text/javascript" sr
  <style type="text/css">
    /* No style rules here yet
  </style>
</head>
<body>

  <p>Click on this text to remove

  <script type="text/javascript">

    //Width and height
    var w = 600;
    var h = 250;
```

Click on this text to remove a data value from the chart!



Auto-run JS Run with JS

Add and Remove: Combo Platter

We could stop there and be very satisfied with our newfound skills. But why not go all the way, and adjust our chart so data values can be added *and* removed?

This is easier than you might think. First, we'll need two different triggers for the user interaction. I'll split the one paragraph into two, and give each a unique ID, so we can tell which one is clicked:

```
<p id="add">Add a new data value</p>
<p id="remove">Remove a data value</p>
```

Later, down where we set up the click function, `select()` must become `selectAll()`, now that we're selecting more than one `p` element:

```
d3.selectAll("p")
    .on("click", function() { ...
```

Now that this click function will be bound to both paragraphs, we have to introduce some logic to tell the function to behave differently depending on which paragraph was clicked. There are many ways to achieve this; I'll go with the most straightforward one.

Fortunately, within the context of our anonymous click function, `this` refers to the element that was clicked—the paragraph. So we can get the ID value of the clicked element by selecting `this` and inquiring using `attr()`:

```
d3.select(this).attr("id")
```

That statement will return `"add"` when `p#add` is clicked, and `"remove"` when `p#remove` is clicked. Let's store that value in a variable, and use it to control an `if` statement:

```
//See which p was clicked
var paragraphID = d3.select(this).attr("id");
```

```
//Decide what to do next
```

```
if (paragraphID == "add") {
  //Add a data value
  var maxValue = 25;
  var newNumber = Math.floor(Math.random() * maxValue);
  var lastKeyValue = dataset[dataset.length - 1].key;
  console.log(lastKeyValue);
  dataset.push({
    key: lastKeyValue + 1,
    value: newNumber
  });
} else {
  //Remove a value
  dataset.shift();
}
```

So, if `p#add` is clicked, we calculate a new random value, and then look up the key value of the last item in `dataset`. Then we create a new object with an incremented key (to ensure we don't duplicate keys; insert locksmith joke here) and the random data value.

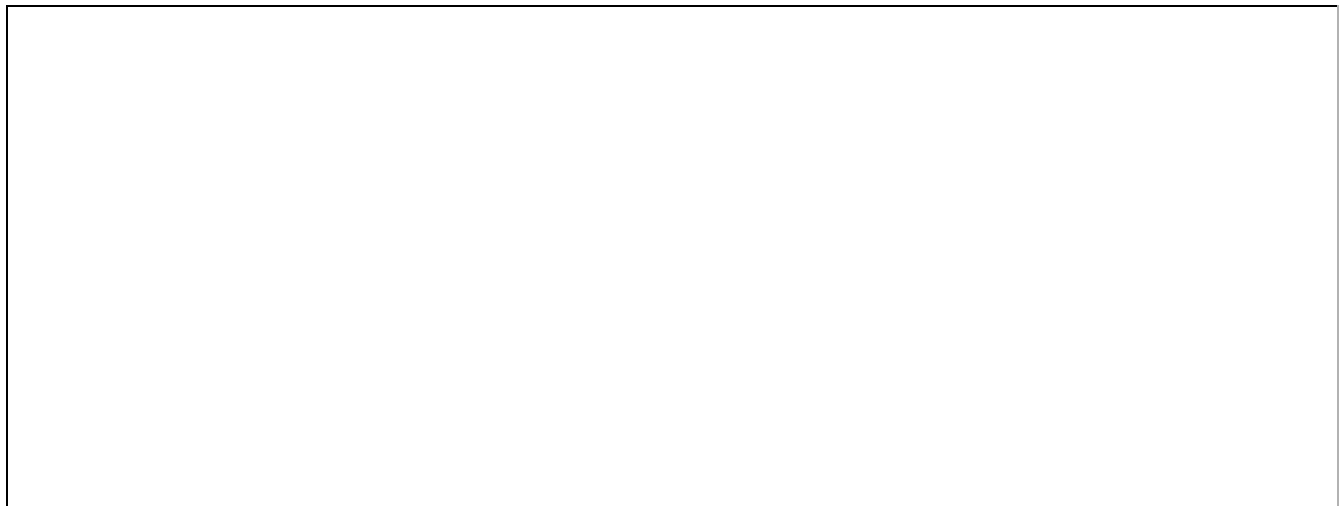
No additional changes are needed! The `enter/update/exit` code we wrote is already flexible enough to handle adding *or* removing data values—that's the beauty of it.

Try it out in *28_adding_and_removing.html*. You'll see that you can click to add or remove data points at will. Of course, real-world data isn't created this way, but you can imagine these data updates being triggered by some other event—such as data refreshes being pulled from a server—and not mouse clicks.

Also see *29_dynamic_labels.html*, which is the same thing, only I've updated the code to add, transition, and remove the labels as well.

Try It Now!

[Open in new window](#)



Recap

That was a lot of information! Let's review:

- `data()` binds data to elements, but also returns the *update selection*.
- The update selection can contain *enter* and *exit* selections, which can be accessed via `enter()` and `exit()`.

- When there are *more values than elements*, an enter selection will reference the placeholder, not-yet-existing elements.
- When there are *more elements than values*, an exit selection will reference the elements without data.
- Data joins determine how values are matched with elements.
- By default, data joins are performed by index, meaning in order of appearance.
- For more control over data joins, you can specify a key function.

As a final note, in the bar chart example, we used this sequence:

1. Enter
2. Update
3. Exit

Although this worked well for us, this order isn't set in stone. Depending on your design goals, you might want to update first, then enter new elements, and finally exit old ones. It all depends—just remember that once you have the update selection in hand, you can reach in to grab the enter and exit selections anytime. The order in which you do so is flexible and completely up to you.

Fantastic. You are well on your way to becoming a D3 wizard. Now let's get to the really fun stuff: interactivity!

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