

Basic Data Visualization with D3.js

Visualize data dynamically



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Introduction

Meet John

John had CSV data tracking key metrics for his company that he wanted to visualize. Simply sharing the raw data wouldn't convey the insights effectively. He needed an interactive visualization solution.

John found D3.js, a JavaScript library to bind data to HTML/SVG and create visualizations. Using D3.js, John built line charts, bar charts and pie charts to represent his data.

John loaded his data into D3.js and created his first visualization in a few lines of code. He built more visualizations and dashboards, bringing his data to life with responsive and animated charts.

Stakeholders seeing John's dashboards instantly grasped insights that were hard to see in the CSVs. John's project succeeded, and he plans to use D3.js again. D3.js proved a simple yet powerful tool to gain valuable insights into complex data.

Overall, the core message and sequence of events remains the same as the original story, just in a more concise summarization.

What is D3.js?

- D3.js is a JavaScript library for manipulating documents based on data
- Allows you to bind data to a Document Object Model (DOM), and then apply transformations to the document
- Uses web standards: HTML, SVG and CSS
- Open source, maintained by Mike Bostock

Compare D3.js to other chart libraries

| | D3.js | Highcharts | Vega | Vega Lite |
|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Type | Library | Charting library | Visualization grammar | High-level visualization grammar |
| Language | JavaScript | JavaScript | JSON | JSON |
| Learning curve | Steep | Low | Moderate | Low |
| Customization | High | Medium | High | Low |
| Main purpose | DOM manipulation for visualization | Interactive charts and plots | Create custom visualizations | Rapid visualization creation |

Compare D3.js to other chart libraries

Some key differences:

- D3.js has a steep learning curve as a low-level library, while the others are higher level (especially Vega Lite)
- D3.js and Vega offer high customization, while Highcharts and Vega Lite are more limited
- Highcharts is focused specifically on charting, while D3.js and Vega are more general purpose
- Vega and Vega Lite use a JSON grammar, while D3.js and Highcharts use JavaScript
- D3.js manipulates the DOM directly, while the others have abstraction layers Overall, the choice depends on your needs for customization vs. ease of use, purpose of visualization, and tech stack. Let me know if you would like me to clarify or expand the table further. I aimed for a high-level comparison, but can add more nuanced detail if needed.

Basic concepts

Basic Concepts

The core concepts to create charts using D3.js

There are some core concepts we need to know before creating our first chart using D3.js:

- Selections
- Scales
- Axes
- Transitions
- Data Binding

Selections

Selections are the basic unit of interaction in D3.js. They allow you to query and traverse the DOM.

What are selections? D3 selections let you choose some HTML or SVG elements and change their style and/or attributes.

Making a selection:

- Use `d3.select()` to select one element:

```
1 d3.select("div") // Selects first div
```

- `d3.select()` uses `querySelector()` under the hood to find the first matching element.
- Use `d3.selectAll()` to select multiple elements:

```
1 d3.selectAll("div") // Selects all divs
```

- `d3.selectAll()` uses `querySelectorAll()` under the hood to find all matching elements.

Selections

Selections are the basic unit of interaction in D3.js. They allow you to query and traverse the DOM.

- Select by ID (#), class (.), tag name, attribute, or node:

```
1  d3.select("#id");    // Uses getElementById()
2  d3.select(".class"); // Uses getElementsByClassName()
3  d3.select("div");    // Uses querySelector()
4  d3.select("[attr]"); // Uses querySelector()
5  d3.select(node);     // Just passes through node
```

Selections

Selections are the basic unit of interaction in D3.js. They allow you to query and traverse the DOM.

Selecting and chaining:

- Store selection in a variable to operate on later
- Use method chaining to apply multiple operations to a selection sequentially:

```
1  let divSelection = d3.selectAll("div")
2      .attr("class", "bar")    // Set attribute
3      .style("color", "blue")  // Set style
```

- Each method call returns the selection, allowing the next method to be called on the same selection.

Selections

Selections are the basic unit of interaction in D3.js. They allow you to query and traverse the DOM.

Appending elements:

- Use `.append()` to add an element to each node in the selection:

```
1 divSelection.append("p") // Add <p> to each div
```

- `.append()` uses `element.appendChild()` to append a child element to each node in the selection.

Selections

Selections are the basic unit of interaction in D3.js. They allow you to query and traverse the DOM.

Other selection methods:

- `.attr()` - Get or set attributes
- `.text()` - Get or set text content
- `.html()` - Get or set inner HTML
- `.style()` - Get or set styles
- `.on()` - Add event listeners
- `.data()` - Bind data (covered in Data Binding slides)
- `.join()` - Bind data (covered in Data Binding slides)
- `.remove()` - Remove elements from document

And many more! Selections are a core part of D3.

Scales

Scales map a dimension of data to a visual representation. They are a core part of D3.js.

**** What are scale functions? **** Scale functions are JavaScript functions that:

- Take an input (usually a number, date or category) and
- Return a value (such as a coordinate, a colour, a length or a radius)

They're typically used to transform (or 'map') data values into visual variables (such as position, length and color).

Scales

Scales map a dimension of data to a visual representation. They are a core part of D3.js.

For example, suppose you have some data: `[0, 2, 3, 5, 7.5, 9, 10]`

You can create a scale function using:

```
1 let myScale = d3.scaleLinear()  
2   .domain([0, 10])  
3   .range([0, 600]);
```

D3 creates a function `myScale` which accepts input between 0 and 10 (the domain) and maps it to output between 0 and 600 (the range).

You can use `myScale` to calculate positions based on the data:

```
1 myScale(0); // returns 0  
2 myScale(2); // returns 120  
3 myScale(3); // returns 180  
4 ...  
5 myScale(10); // returns 600
```


Scales

Scales map a dimension of data to a visual representation. They are a core part of D3.js.

Scale functions:

- `scale(x)` - Get corresponding y value for x
- For example:

```
1  scale(25)    // Returns 250
2  scale("b")   // Returns "blue"
```

- `invert(y)` - Get x value for corresponding y value
- `domain()` - Get or set input domain
- `range()` - Get or set output range
- `ticks()` - Get tick values for axis
- `tickFormat()` - Format ticks appropriately (currency, percentage, time, etc.)

Scales

Scales map a dimension of data to a visual representation. They are a core part of D3.js.

Uses of scales:

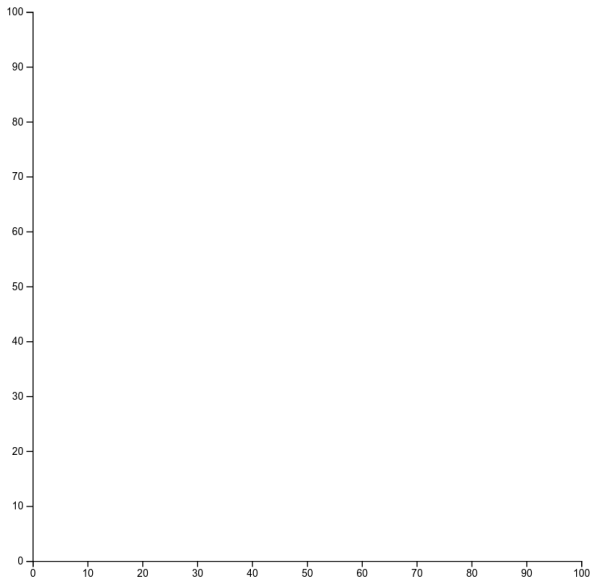
- Position and size elements based on data
- Color elements
- Create axes to map positions visually
- Encode other visual properties like opacity, font size, etc.

Axes

Axes are visual representations of scales. They provide reference marks for values along a scale's domain.

What are axes?

The axis module, which draws axes, is one of the most helpful D3 modules (particularly for generating bar, line, and scatter charts).



Axes

Axes are visual representations of scales. They provide reference marks for values along a scale's domain.

Creating an axis:

- Call `.axisBottom()` (or `.axisTop()`, `.axisLeft()`, `.axisRight()`) and pass in a scale:

```
1  let scale = d3.scaleLinear()  
2      .domain([0, 100])  
3      .range([0, 500]);  
4  
5  let axis = d3.axisBottom(scale);
```

Axes

Axes are visual representations of scales. They provide reference marks for values along a scale's domain.

Axis properties: Some properties to customize your axis:

- ticks: Number of ticks (and labels)
- tickSize: Length of ticks
- tickPadding: Padding between tick and label
- tickFormat: Format tick labels (\$, %, time, SI prefix, etc.)
- orient: Orientation (top, bottom, left, right)
- tickValues: Specific tick values to use instead of D3's default

Axes

Axes are visual representations of scales. They provide reference marks for values along a scale's domain.

Uses of axes

- x-axis along the bottom of a chart
- y-axis along the left side of a chart
- Color bar axes
- Size axes
- And more! Any visual encoding of data along a dimension.

Transitions

Transitions animate and interpolate between states in D3.js visualizations.

What are transitions? D3 transitions let you smoothly animate between different chart states. This article shows how to add transitions to selection updates, how to set transition duration, how to create staggered transitions, how to change the easing function, how to chain transitions and how to create custom tween functions.

Transitions

Transitions animate and interpolate between states in D3.js visualizations.

How do they work?

- D3 interpolates values and styles over the duration of the transition
- During a transition, D3 will calculate the state between the starting and ending values
 - For numeric values, it calculates the range between start and end
 - For colors, it interpolates RGB values
 - For positions, it calculates the intermediate x and y coordinates
- This gives the smooth animated transition effect

Transitions

Transitions animate and interpolate between states in D3.js visualizations.

Adding a basic transition: To a selection, call `.transition()` and chain a `duration()` method:

```
1  svg
2    .append('rect')
3    .attr('width', 0)
4    .attr('height', 40)
5    .style('fill', 'red')
6    .transition()
7    .duration(500) // Transition lasts 500ms
8    .attr("width", 200) // End value
```

This will animate the width of elements in the selection from their current width (0px) to 200px over 500ms.

Transitions

Transitions animate and interpolate between states in D3.js visualizations.

Other methods:

- `delay()` - Delay transition start
- `ease()` - Set easing function for different effects (bounce, elastic, etc.)
- Can call same methods as on regular selections:
 - `attr()` - Animate attribute changes
 - `style()` - Animate style changes
 - `text()` - Transition text content
 - `remove()` - Transition elements out of the document

Transitions

Transitions animate and interpolate between states in D3.js visualizations.

Common uses:

- Change bar heights on updating data
- Zoom in/out of a map or scatterplot
- Fade elements in/out
- Move elements positions
- And much more! Transitions greatly enhance data visualizations.

Data Binding

Data binding links input data to elements in the document.

What is data binding?

Data Binding uses data joins to create the correspondence between an array of data and a selection of HTML or SVG elements.

Joining an array to HTML/SVG elements means that:

- HTML (or SVG) elements are added or removed such that each array element has a corresponding HTML (or SVG) element.
- each HTML/SVG element may be positioned, sized and styled according to the value of its corresponding array element.

Data Binding

Data binding links input data to elements in the document.

Creating a data join

Typically four methods are used in a data join:

- `.select` defines the element that'll act as a container (or parent) to the joined HTML/SVG elements
- `.selectAll` defines the type of element that'll be joined to each array element
- `.data` defines the array that's being joined
- `.join` performs the join. This is where HTML or SVG elements are added and removed

Data Binding

Data binding links input data to elements in the document.

Creating a data join

For example, suppose you've an array of five numbers which you'd like to join to circle elements: `[40, 10, 20, 60, 30]`

Each time D3 performs the join it'll add or remove circle elements so that each array element has a corresponding circle element.

D3 can also update the position and radius of each circle (and any other attributes or style) based on the value of the corresponding array element.

Data Binding

Data binding links input data to elements in the document.

```
1  const data = [40, 10, 20, 60, 30];
2  const numberOfCircles = data.length;
3
4  // Scale the circle position x
5  const xScale = d3
6    .scaleLinear()
7    .domain([0, numberOfCircles])
8    .range([0, width]);
9
10 // Scale the r of the circle
11 const yScale = d3
12   .scaleLinear()
13   .domain(d3.extent(data))
14   .range([10, width/(2*5)]);
15
16 svg
17   .selectAll('circle')
18   .data(data)
19   .join('circle')
20   .attr('cx', (d, i) => xScale(i + 0.5))
21   .attr('cy', width/2)
```

Data Binding

Data binding links input data to elements in the document.

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1  const data = [40, 10, 20, 60, 30];
2  const numberOfCircles = data.length;
3
4  // Scale the circle position x
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20   .attr('cx', (d, i) => xScale(i + 0.5))
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```

Data Binding

Data binding links input data to elements in the document.

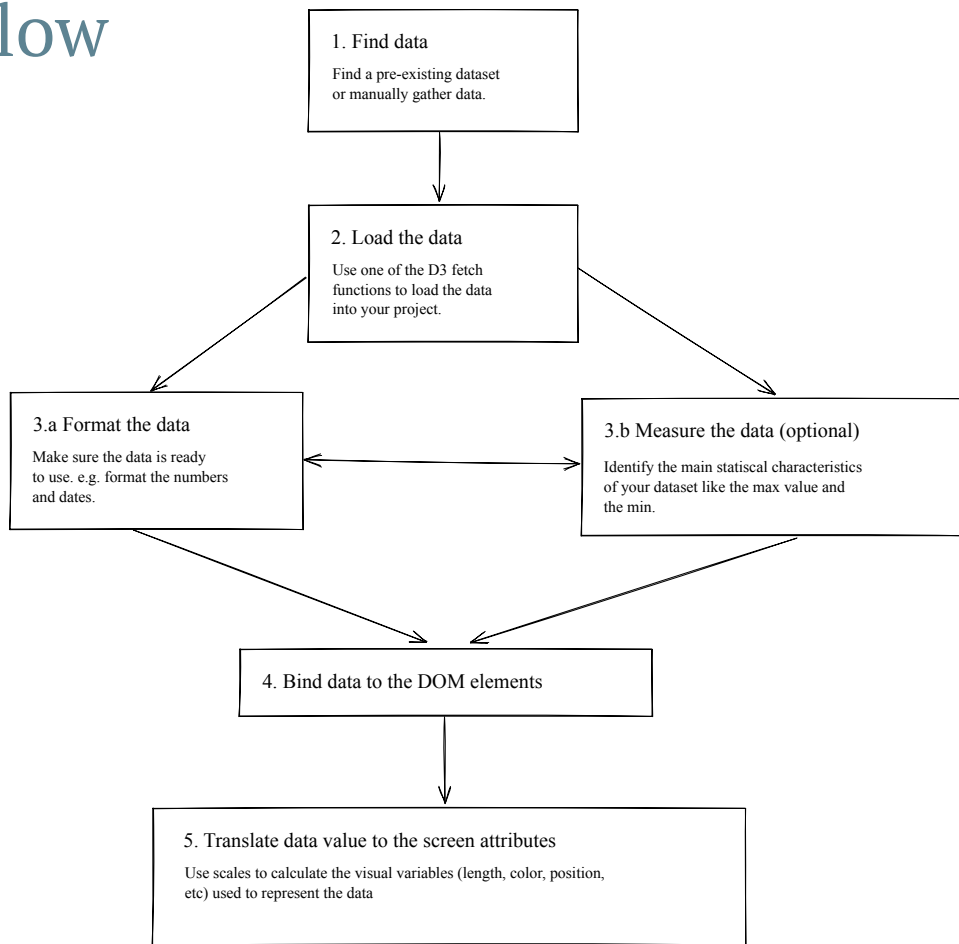
```
1  const data = [40, 10, 20, 60, 30];
2  const numberOfCircles = data.length;
3
4  // Scale the circle position x
5  const xScale = d3
6    .scaleLinear()
7    .domain([0, numberOfCircles])
8    .range([0, width]);
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12   .scaleLinear()
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17   .selectAll('circle')
18   .data(data)
19   .join('circle')
20   .attr('cx', (d, i) => xScale(i + 0.5))
21   .attr('cy', width/2)
```

Demo 1

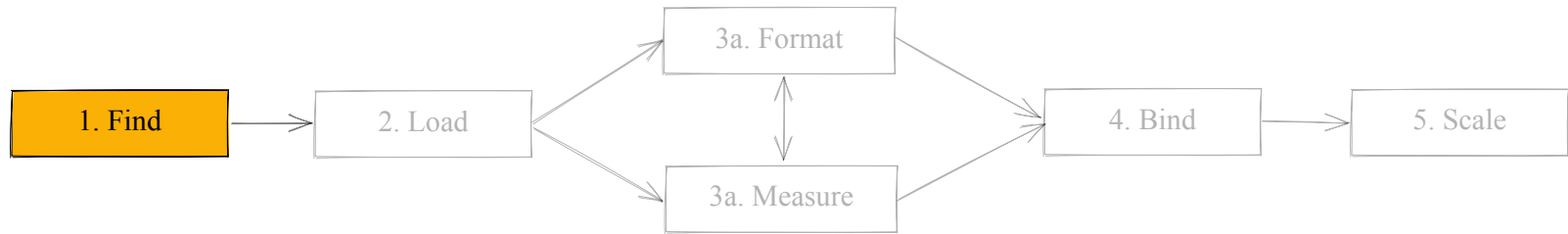
Basic Concepts

Working with Data

The d3 data flow



Find the data



Find the data

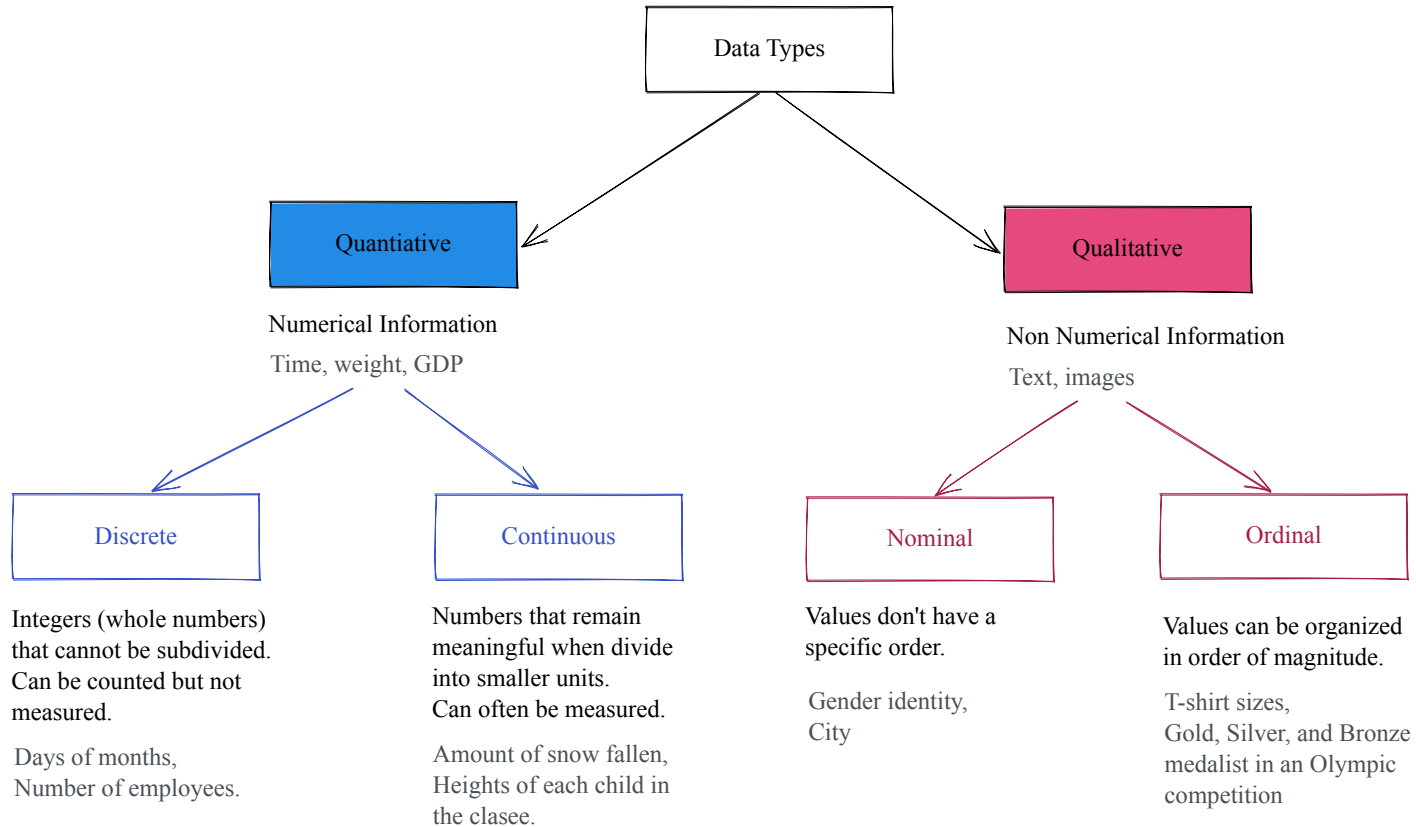
Data Types

When building data visualizations, we work with two main data types: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative data is numerical information like time, weight, or countries' GDP. Quantitative data can be discrete or continuous.

Discrete data consists of whole numbers, also called integers, that cannot be subdivided.

Qualitative data is made of non-numerical information like text. It can be nominal or ordinal. Nominal values don't have a specific order, for instance, gender identity labels or city names. Ordinal values, on the other hand, can be classified by order of magnitude. If we take t-shirt sizes as an example, we usually list them in ascending size order (XS, S, M, L, XL).



Find the data

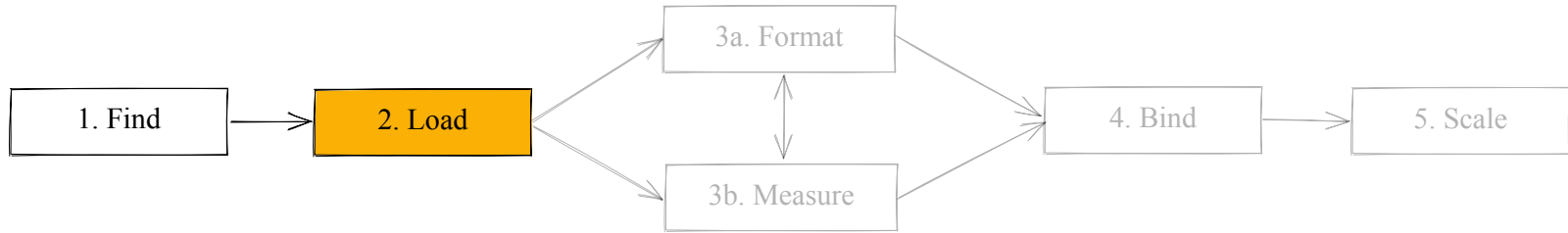
Data Formats and Structures

Data comes in many formats for different needs. Some common ones are:

- Tabular data: represent in columns and rows.
- JSON objects.
- Nested data.
- Networks.
- Geographic data.
- Raw data.

In this talk, we'll use the tabular data from CSV file.

Load the data

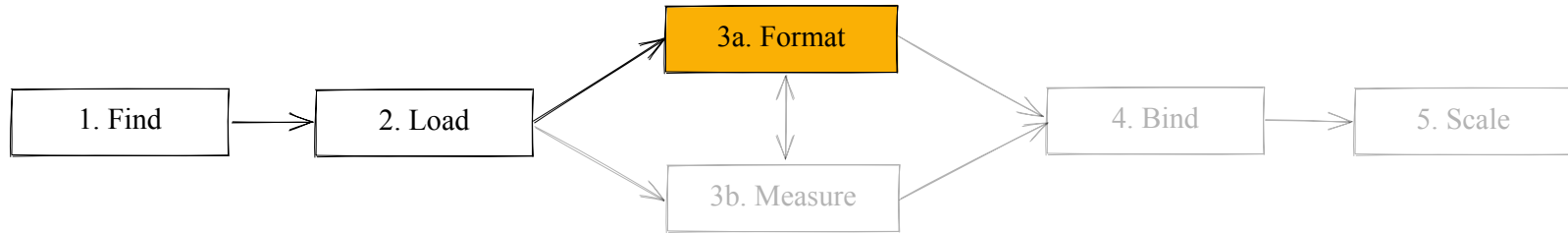


Load the data

We load the data into the project using the `d3-fetch` module.

```
1  d3.csv('src/data/1.csv', d => {  
2    console.log(d);  
3  });
```

Format the data

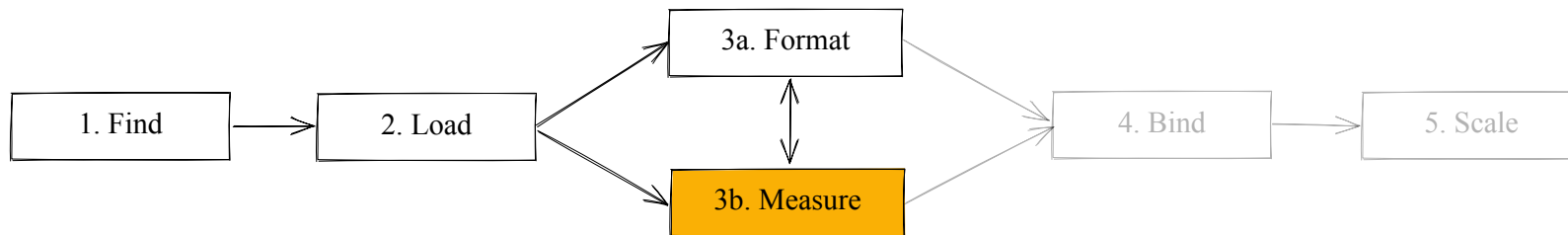


Format the Data

Note how the values from the count column have been fetched as strings instead of numbers. This is a common issue when importing data and is due to the type conversion of the dataset from CSV to JSON. Since the callback function of `d3.csv()` gives us access to the data one row at a time, it is a great place to convert the counts back into numbers. Doing so will ensure that the count values are ready to be used to generate our visualization later.

```
1  d3.csv('src/data/1.csv', d => {
2    console.log(d);
3    return {
4      technology: d.technology,
5      count: +d.count,
6    };
7  }).then(d => {
8    console.log(d);
9  });
```

Measure the data

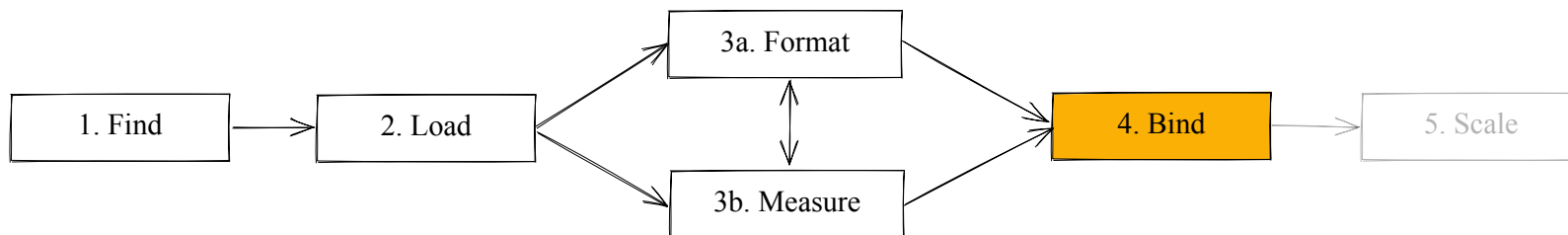


Measure the Data

In step 3.a of our data workflow, we have completed the data formatting part but we can still explore and measure our data using D3. Measuring specific aspects of the data can help to get situated before diving into the actual crafting of a data visualization.

```
1  d3.csv('src/data/1.csv', d => {
2    return {
3      technology: d.technology,
4      count: +d.count,
5    };
6  }).then(data => {
7    console.log(data.length);
8    console.log(d3.max(data, d => d.count)); // => 1078
9    console.log(d3.min(data, d => d.count)); // => 20
10   console.log(d3.extent(data, d => d.count)); // => [20, 1078]
11   data.sort((a, b) => b.count - a.count);
12   console.log(data); // => [20, 1078]
13 });
```


Bind the data to DOM elements



Bind the data to DOM elements

We are now ready to introduce one of the most exciting features of D3: data-binding. With data-binding, we can couple objects from a dataset to DOM elements. For instance, each rectangle element in our bar graph will be coupled with a technology and its corresponding count value. At the data-binding step of the data workflow, the visualization really starts to come to life.

To bind data, you only need to use the pattern shown in the next snippet and constituted of three methods (`selectAll()`, `data()` and `join()`) chained to a selection.

```
1  selection
2    .selectAll("selector")
3    .data(myData)
4    .join("element to add");
```

Bind the data to DOM elements

Create the svg viewport

```
1  const svgWidth = 600;
2  const svgHeight = 700;
3  const selection = d3
4    .select('.d3-content');
5  const svg = selection
6    .append('svg')
7    .attr('viewBox', `0 0 ${svgWidth} ${svgHeight}`)
8    .style('background-color', 'greenyellow');
```

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```
<div class="responsive-svg-container">
  <svg viewBox="0 0 1200 1600" style="border: 1px solid black;"></svg> == $0
</div>
```

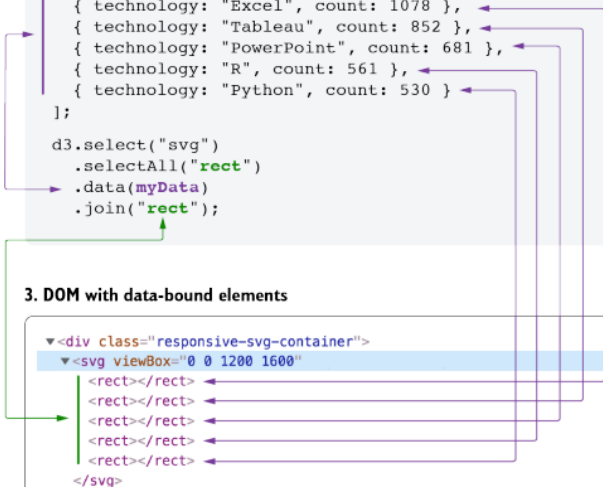
2. Data-binding (in the code editor)

```
const myData = [
  { technology: "Excel", count: 1078 },
  { technology: "Tableau", count: 852 },
  { technology: "PowerPoint", count: 68 },
  { technology: "R", count: 561 },
  { technology: "Python", count: 530 }
];

d3.select("svg")
  .selectAll("rect")
  .data(myData)
  .join("rect");
```

3. DOM with data-bound elements

```
<div class="responsive-svg-container">
  <svg viewBox="0 0 1200 1600">
    <rect></rect>
    <rect></rect>
    <rect></rect>
    <rect></rect>
    <rect></rect>
  </svg>
```



Bind the data to DOM elements

```
1  d3.csv('src/data/1.csv', d => {
2    return {
3      technology: d.technology,
4      count: +d.count,
5    };
6  }).then(data => {
7    data.sort((a, b) => b.count - a.count);
8    createViz(data);
9  });
10
11 function createViz(data) {
12   const svgWidth = 600;
13   const svgHeight = 700;
14   const selection = d3
15     .select('.d3-content');
16   const svg = selection
17     .append('svg')
18     .attr('viewBox', `0 0 ${svgWidth} ${svgHeight}`)
19     .const barHeight = 20;
20   svg
21     .selectAll('rect')
```

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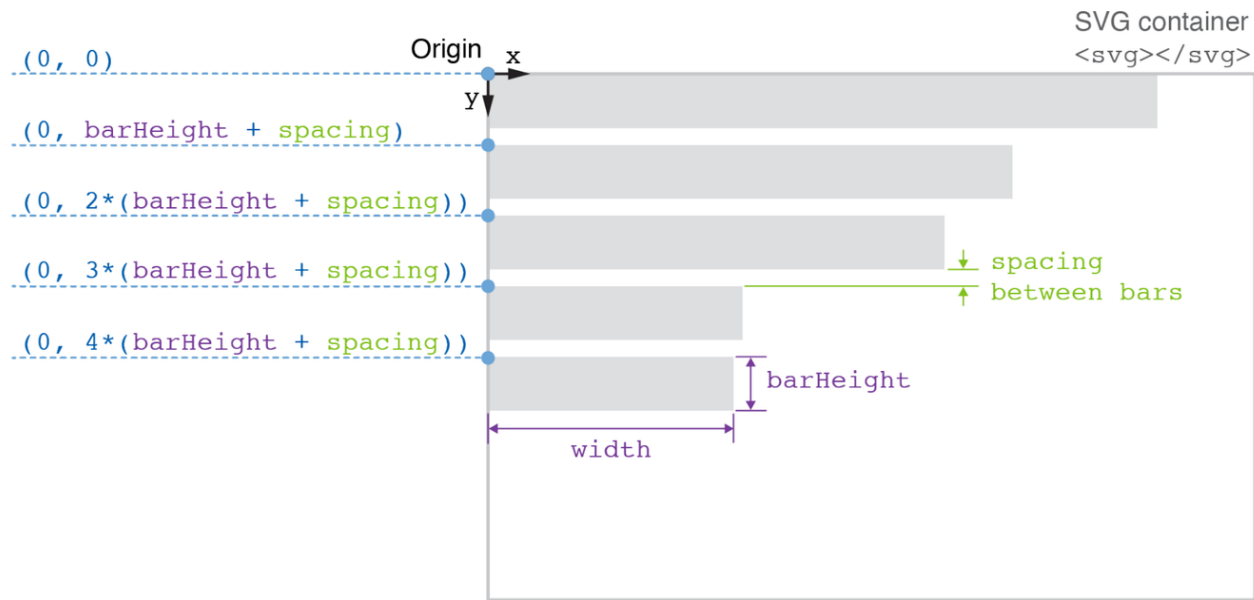

Bind the data to DOM elements

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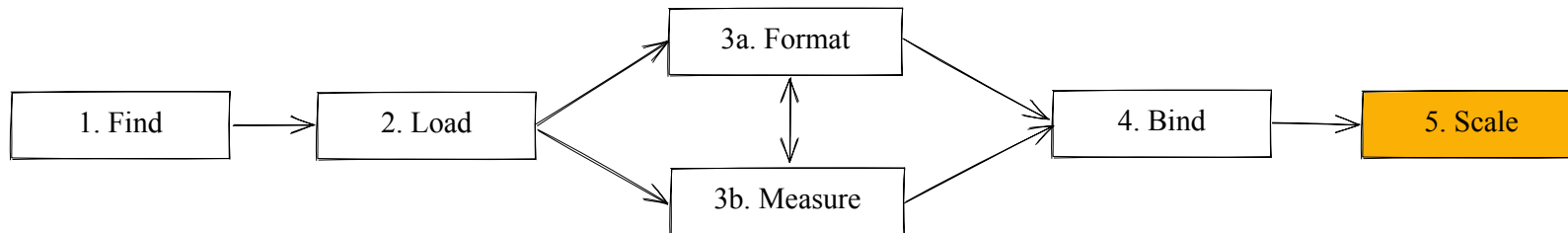
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6  }).then(data => {
7    data.sort((a, b) => b.count - a.count);
8    createViz(data);
9  });
10
11 function createViz(data) {
12   const svgWidth = 600;
13   const svgHeight = 700;
14   const selection = d3
15     .select('.d3-content');
16   const svg = selection
17     .append('svg')
18     .attr('viewBox', `0 0 ${svgWidth} ${svgHeight}`)
19   const barHeight = 20;
20   svg
21     .selectAll('rect')
```

Bind the data to DOM elements



Adapting the data for the screen



Adapting the data for the screen

When we create data visualizations, we translate the data into visual variables, like the size of an element, its color or its position on the screen. In D3 projects, this translation is handled with scales.

Scales are functions that take a value from the data as an input, and return an output value that can directly be used to set the size, position or color of a data visualization element. More specifically, the input data is part of a domain, which is the spectrum of possible data values. On the screen, that domain is mapped onto a range, the spectrum of possible output values.

Adapting the data for the screen

Linear Scale

Linear scales takes a continuous domain as an input and returns a continuous range of outputs.

```
1  const myScale = d3.scaleLinear()  
2    .domain([0, 200])  
3    .range([0, 20]);  
4  
5  console.log(myScale(100));
```

Adapting the data for the screen

Band Scale

Band scales accept a discrete input and provide a continuous output and are especially useful for distributing the rectangles of a bar chart within the available space.

```
1  d3.csv('src/data/1.csv', d => {
2    return {
3      technology: d.technology,
4      count: +d.count,
5    };
6  }).then(data => {
7    data.sort((a, b) => b.count - a.count);
8    const yScale = d3.scaleBand()
9      .domain(data.map(d => d.technology))
10     .range([0, 700]);
11
12    console.log(data);
13    console.log(yScale("Excel"));
14    console.log(yScale("D3.js"));
15  });
```

Adapting the data for the screen

Apply the scale to our visualization

```
1  d3.csv('src/data/1.csv', d => {
2    return {
3      technology: d.technology,
4      count: +d.count
5    };
6  }).then(data => {
7    console.log(data.length); // => 33
8    console.log(d3.max(data, d => d.count)); // => 1078
9    console.log(d3.min(data, d => d.count)); // => 20
10   console.log(d3.extent(data, d => d.count)); // => [20, 1078]
11
12   data.sort((a, b) => b.count - a.count);
13
14   createViz(data);
15 });
16
17 const createViz = (myData) => {
18   const svgWidth = 600;
19   const svgHeight = 700;
20   const selection = d3
21     .select('.d3-content');
```


Adapting the data for the screen

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Demo 2

Working with data

Q&A

Thank you for your listening