

COMMUNICATING WITH DATA

Joseph Nelson, Represently

AGENDA

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Math and stats
- ▶ Selecting a Metric
- ▶ Visual Design
- ▶ Communication Tips

AGENDA

“ ”
All models are wrong. Some are useful.

— George Box, 1978

AGENDA

- Co-Founder, Represently
- **From:** Des Moines, Iowa
- **Influences:** Marc Andreessen & Ben Horowitz, Zuckerberg, Andrew Ng, Yann LeCun, Jürgen Schmidhuber
- **Likes:** Hockey, SaaS, bad data science puns, running



FLEISHMANHILLARD



YOU

- ▶ Your background:
- ▶ Name
- ▶ How do you currently or need to communicate with data? (Brevity counts)
- ▶ Rank these three:
 - ▶ 1. Mathematics and statistics
 - ▶ 2. Visual design
 - ▶ 3. Communication strength

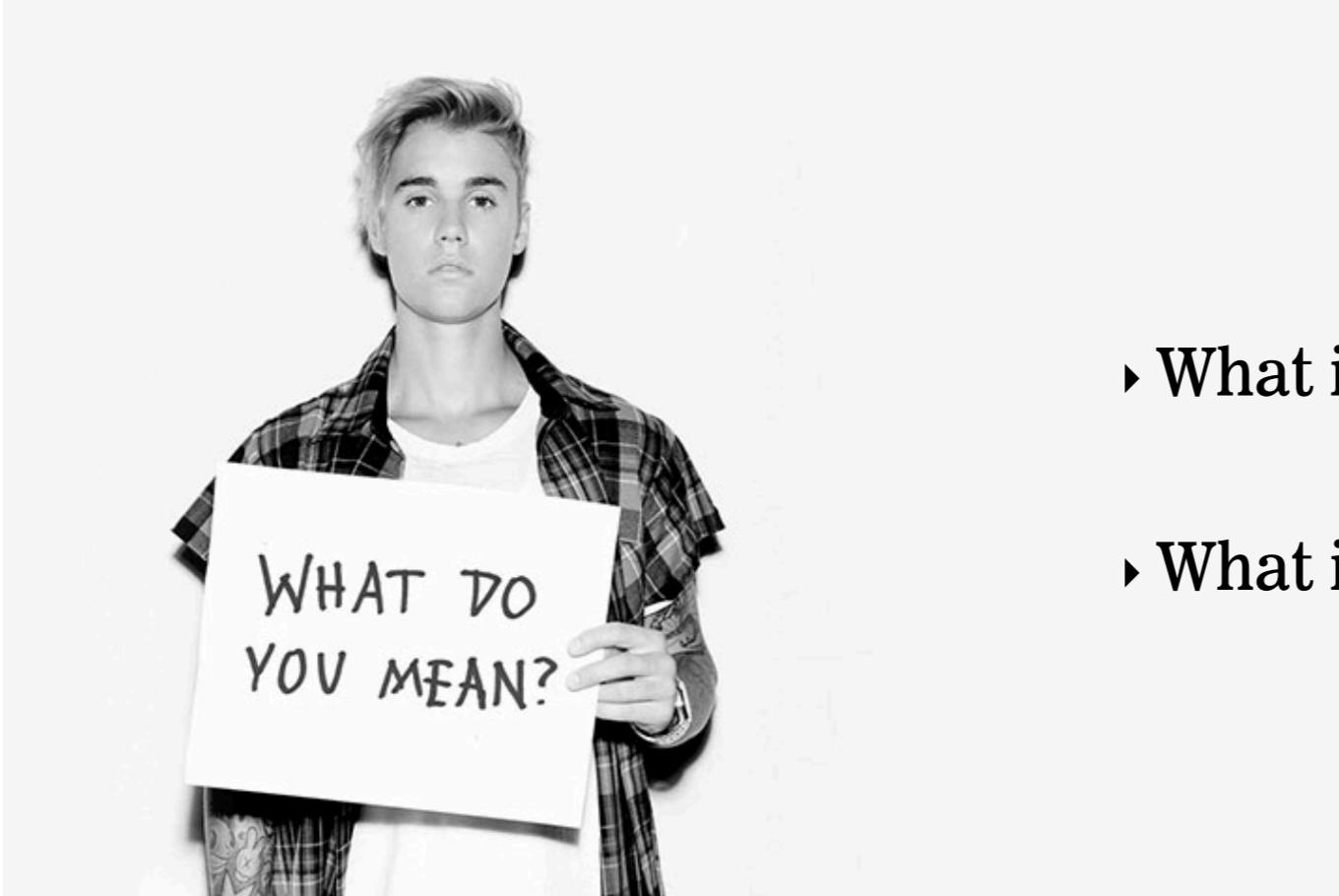
PART 1: MATH AND STATS REVIEW

BASIC DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

- ▶ Mean
- ▶ Median
- ▶ Mode
- ▶ Max
- ▶ Min
- ▶ Quartile
- ▶ Inter-quartile Range
- ▶ Variance
- ▶ Correlation



MEAN



- What is the mean?
- What is another name for the mean?

MEDIAN

- ▶ What is the median?
- ▶ How do you find the median?



MEDIAN

- ▶ What is the median?
- ▶ How do you find the median?
- ▶ Bonus: Why might the median be advantageous instead of the mean? When does this condition NOT hold?



MODE

- ▶ What is the mode?
- ▶ The mode of a set of values is the value that occurs most often.
- ▶ A set of values may have more than one mode or no mode.



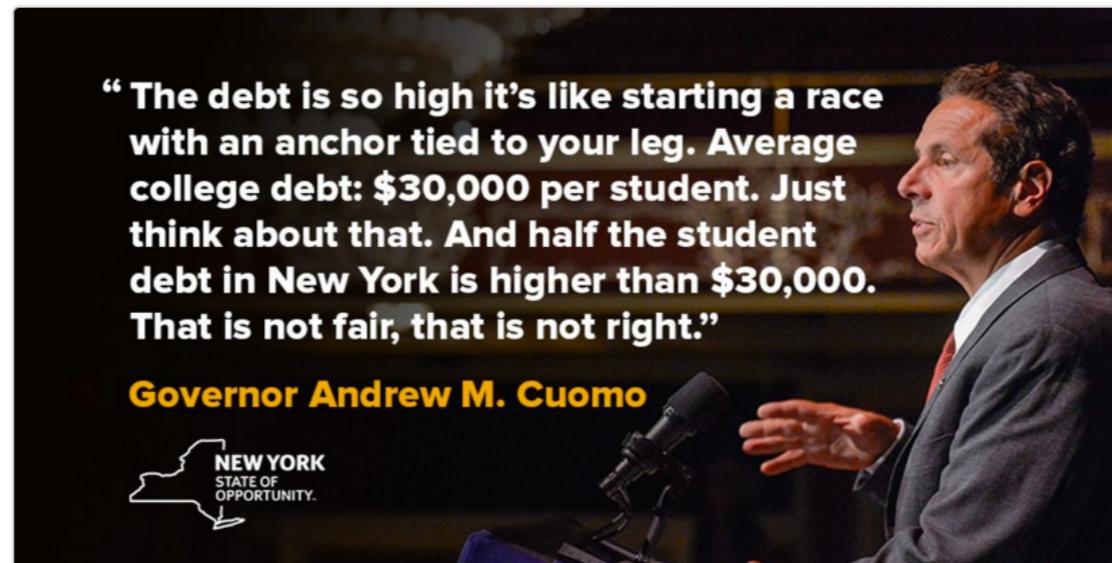
MEAN VS MEDIAN...



Andrew Cuomo
@NYGovCuomo

Follow

Student debt is so high it's like starting a race with an anchor tied to your leg. That's why we're going to provide free tuition in NY.



RETWEETS
146

LIKES
389



5:35 PM - 4 Jan 2017



146

389

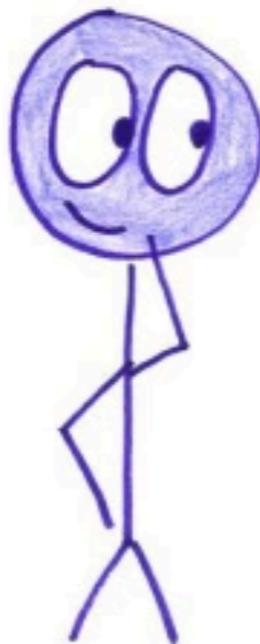
HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS: EXERCISE 1

- For each picture:
 - 1) What could go wrong
 - 2) How to fix it
-
- Work in pairs!

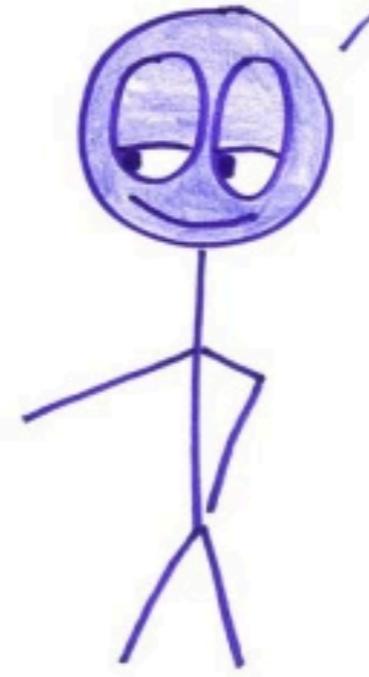
HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

Mean

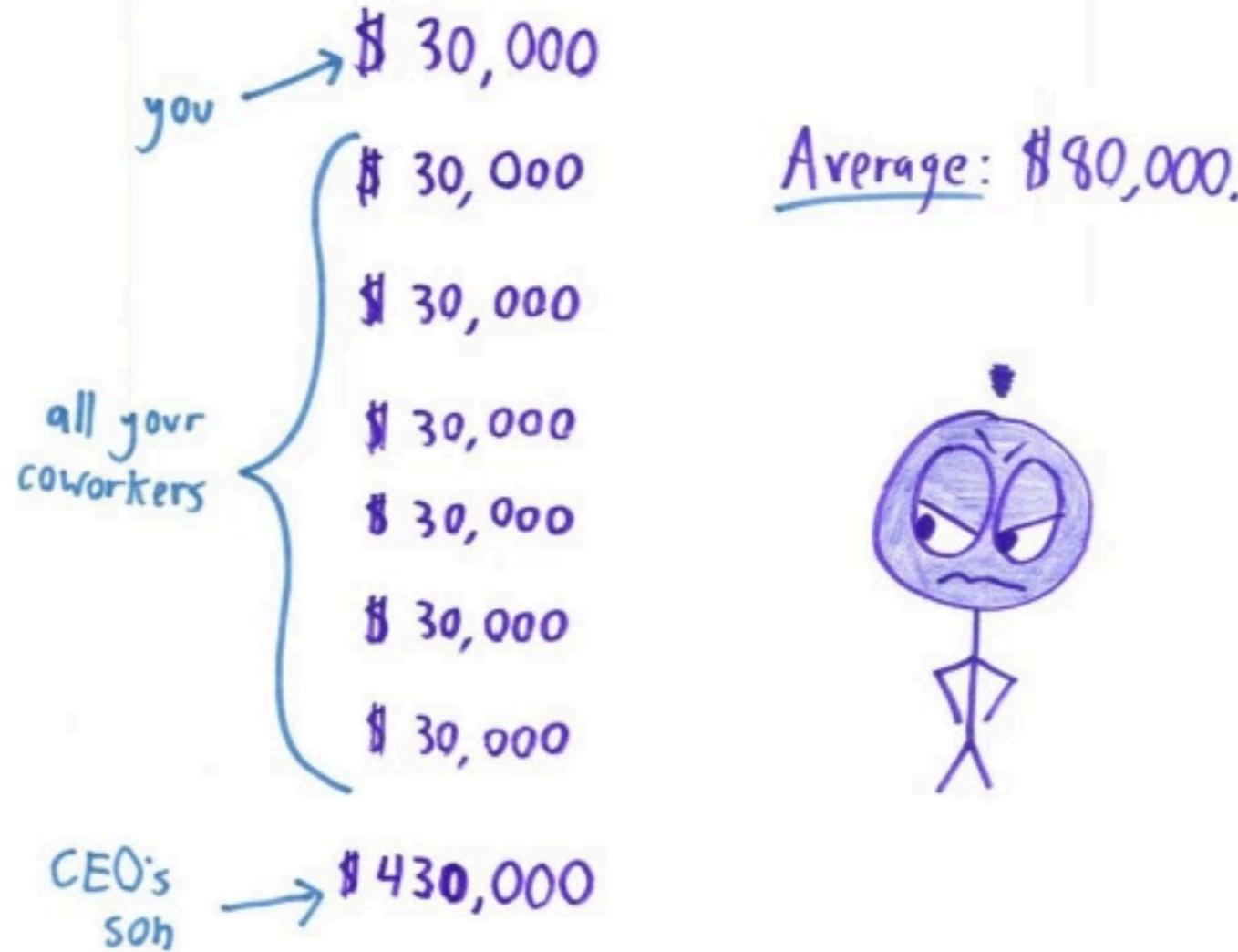
What would my
starting salary be?



I'll put it this way:
our average starting
salary is \$80,000!



HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS



HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

Median

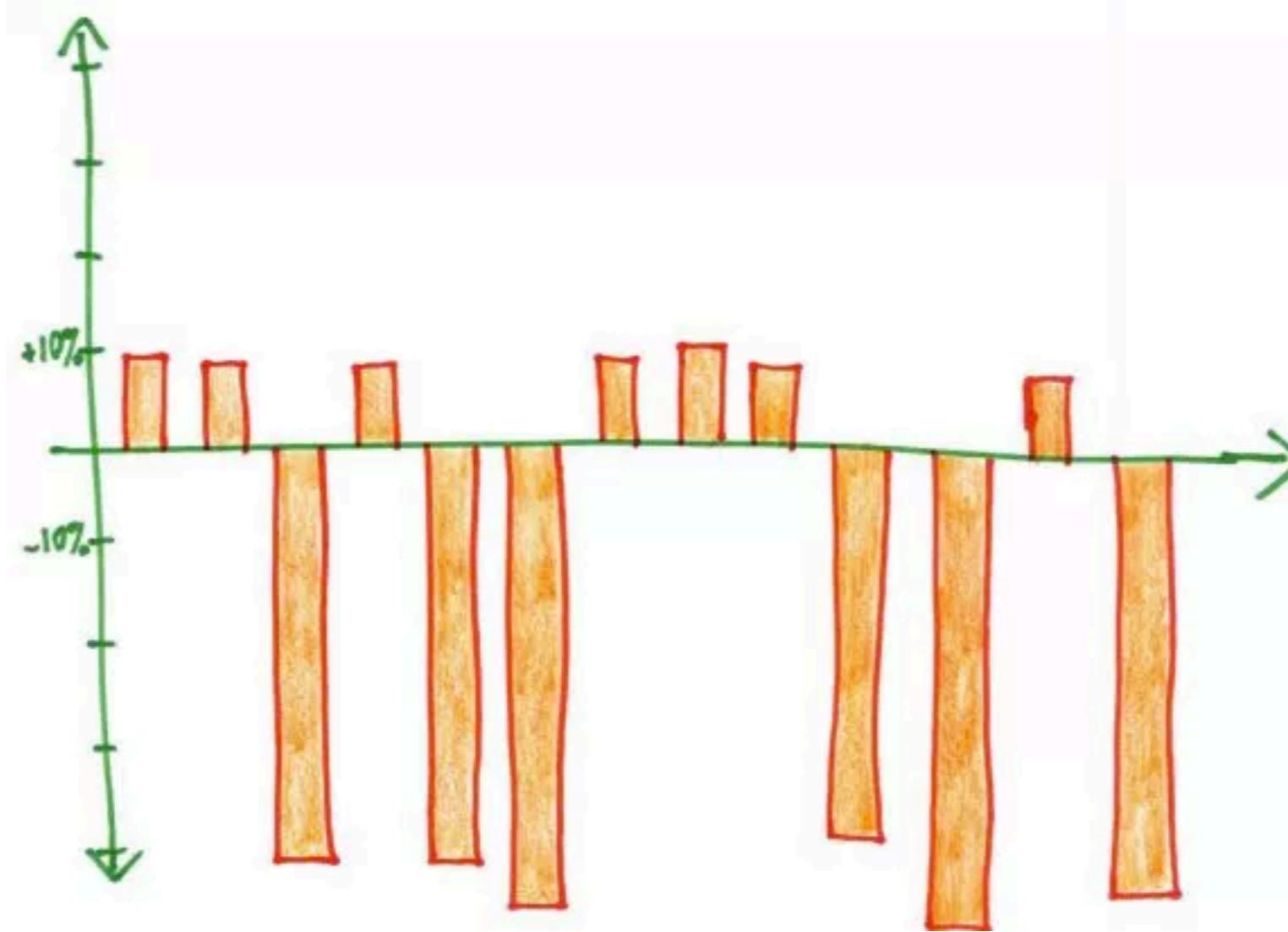
So, why should I
invest with you?



Well, not to brag, but
my fund has a median
gain of 8% per year!



HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS



HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

Mode

How are you doing
on your tests?



My modal category
is 70-80%!



HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS



| Score Category | Number of Tests |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 90s | 0 |
| 80s | 0 |
| 70s | 2 |
| 60s | 1 |
| 50s | 1 |
| 40s | 1 |
| 30s | 1 |
| 20s | 1 |

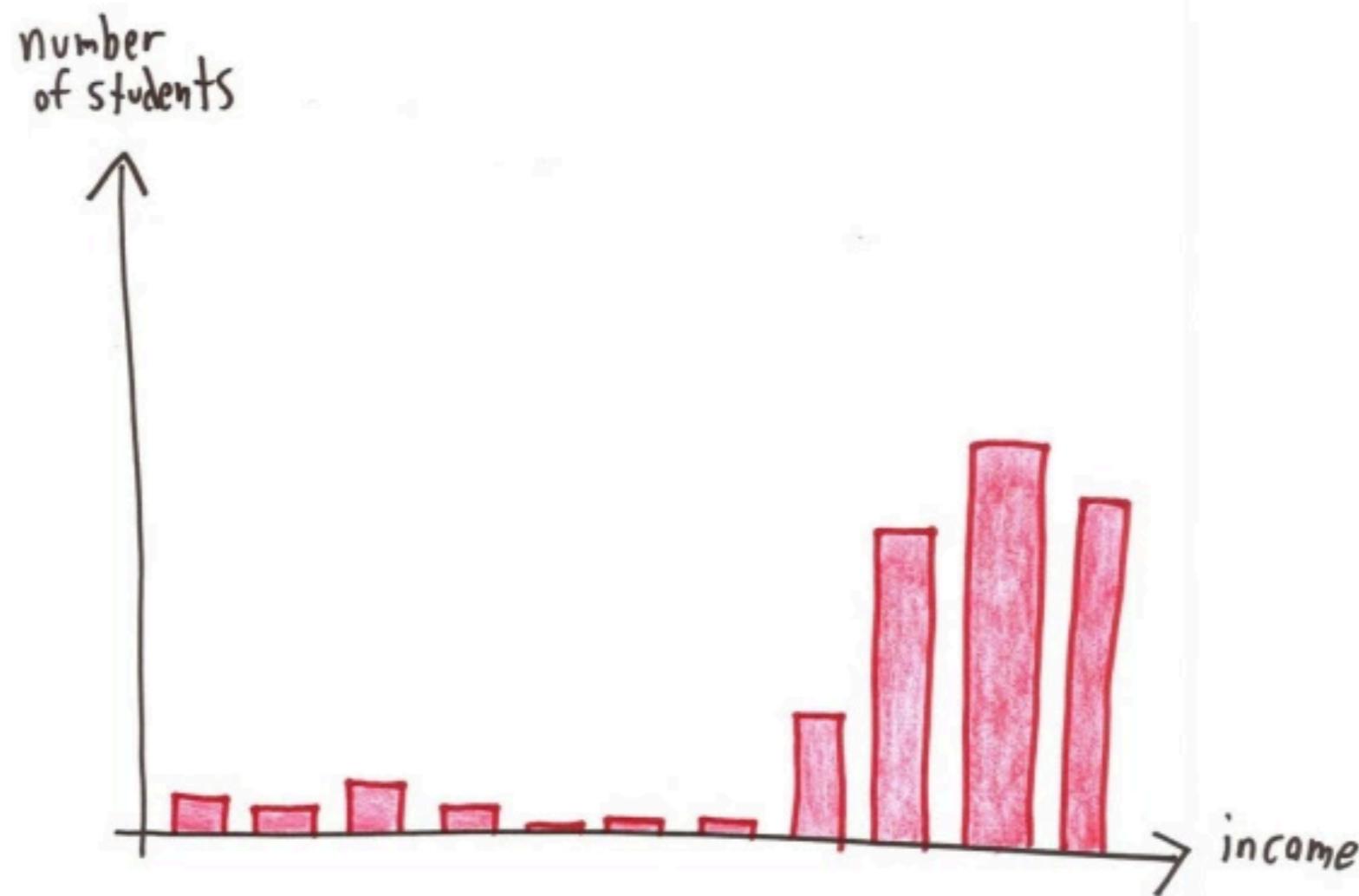
HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

Range

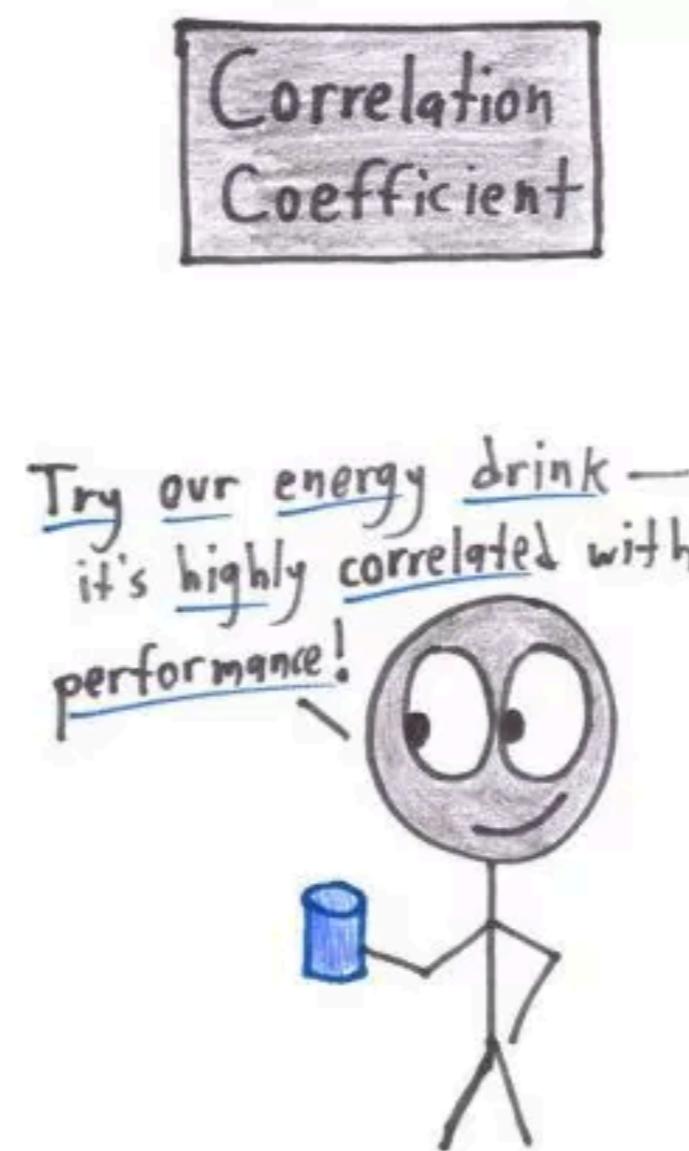
Our students come from a
wide range of
Socioeconomic
backgrounds...



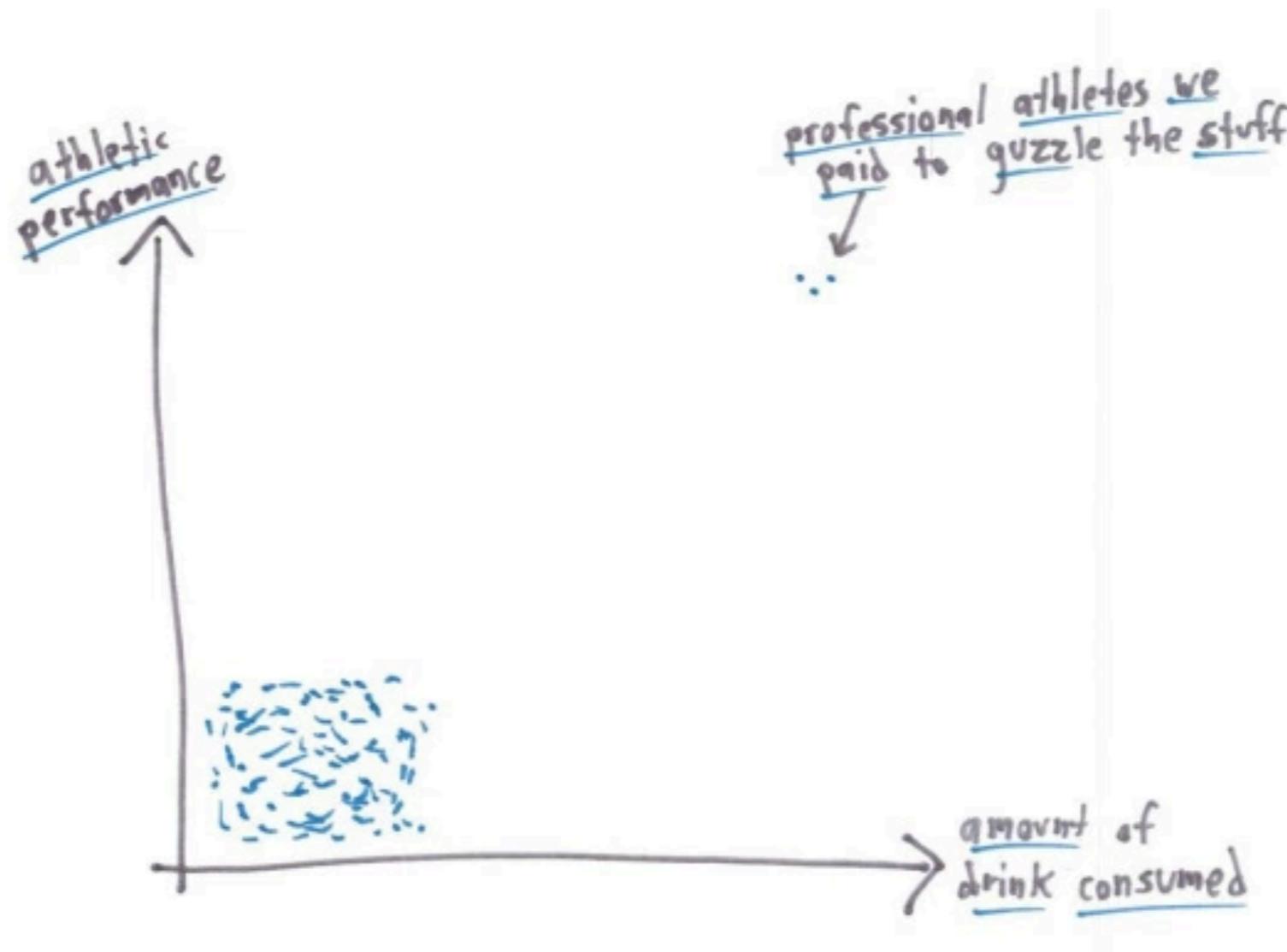
HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS



HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS



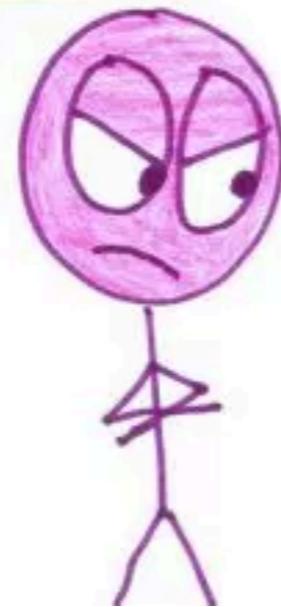
HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS



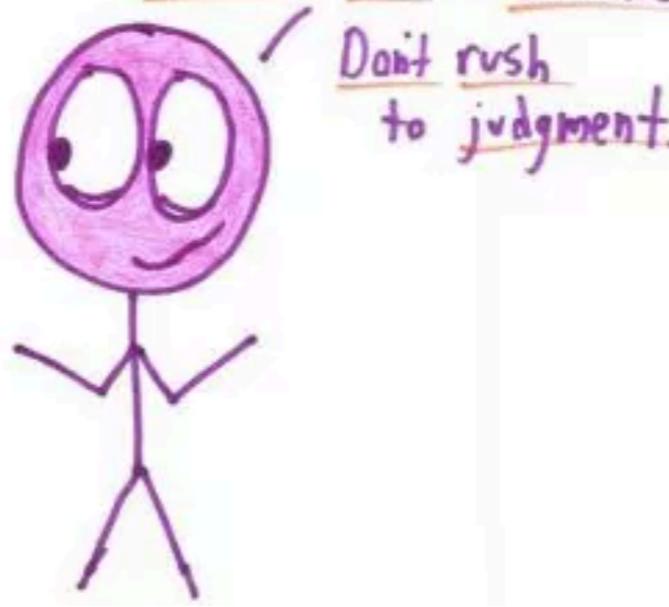
HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

Variance

These results are
a disaster!

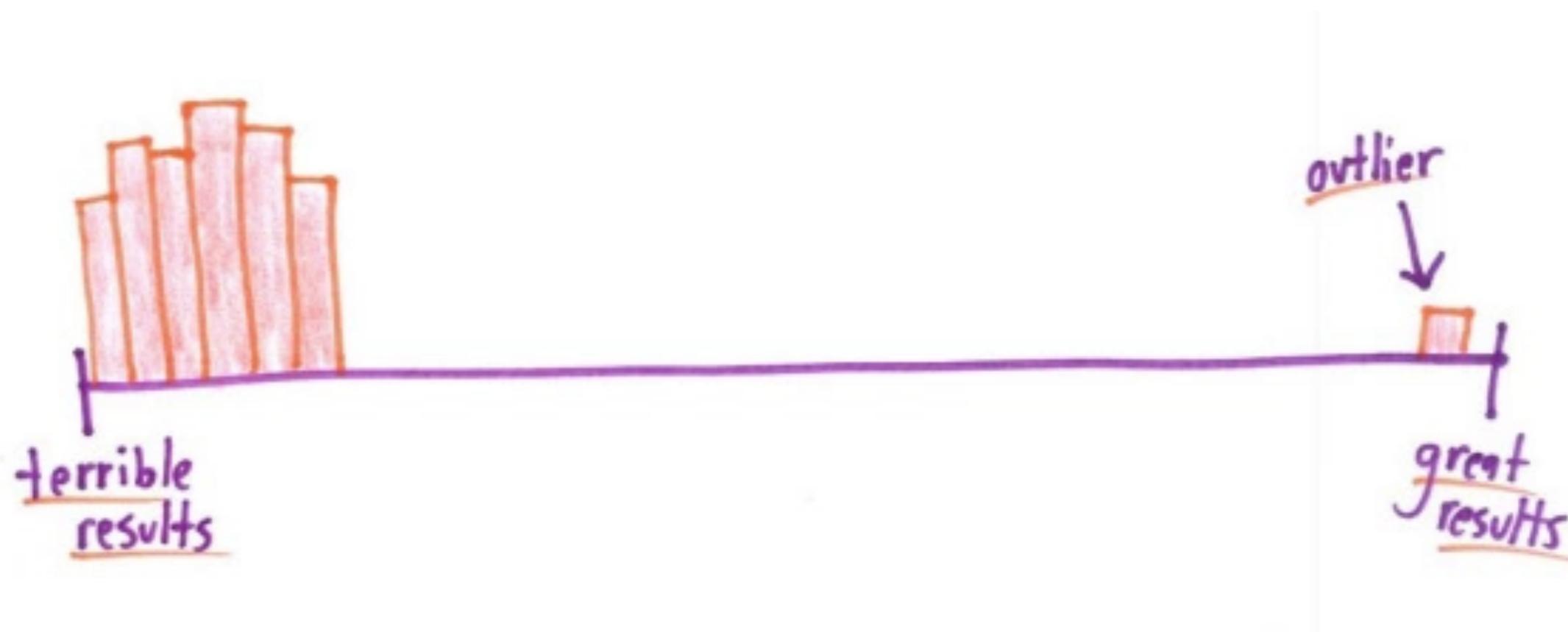


Sure, they look bad,
but there's a lot of variance!



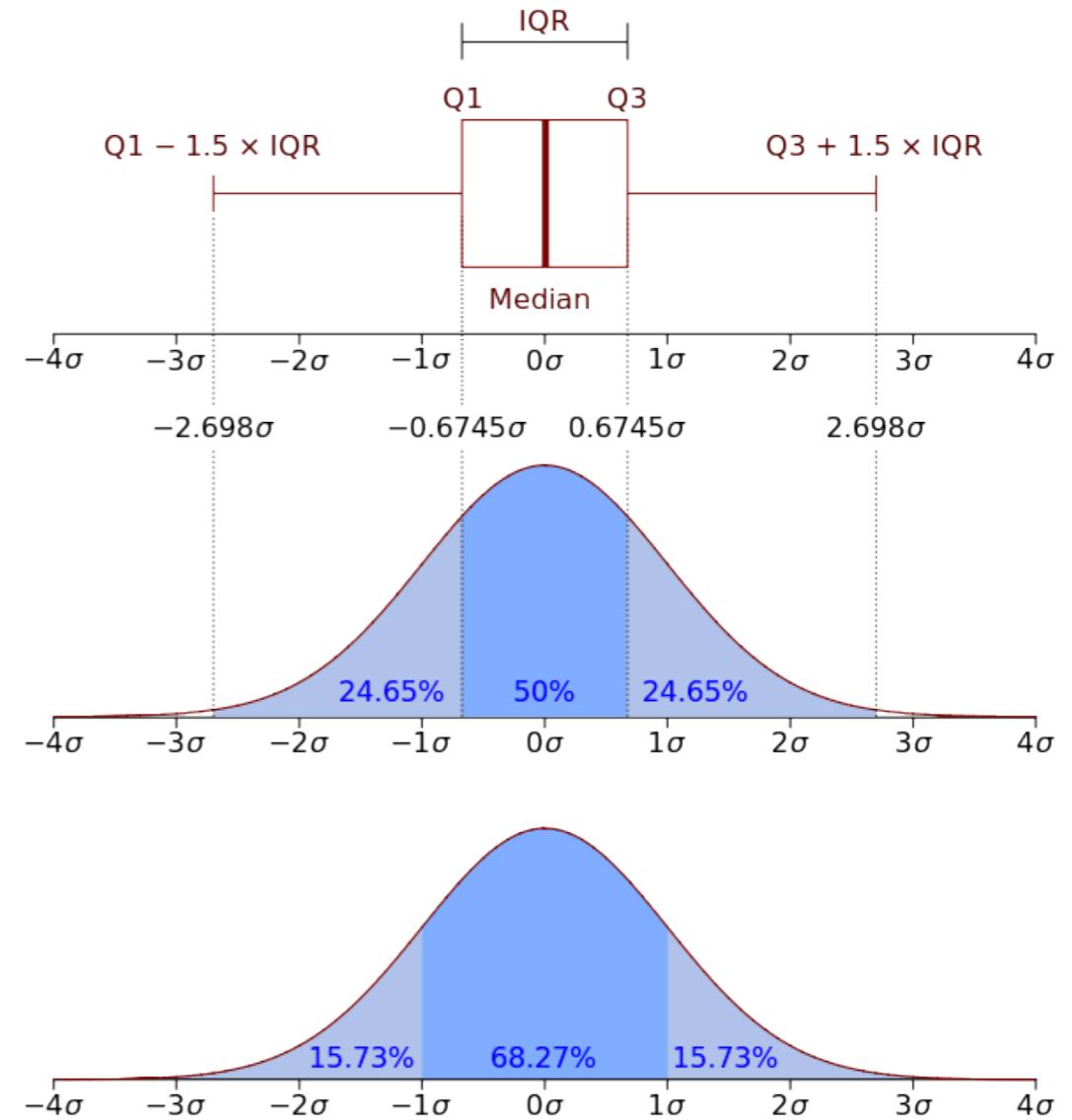
Don't rush
to judgment.

HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

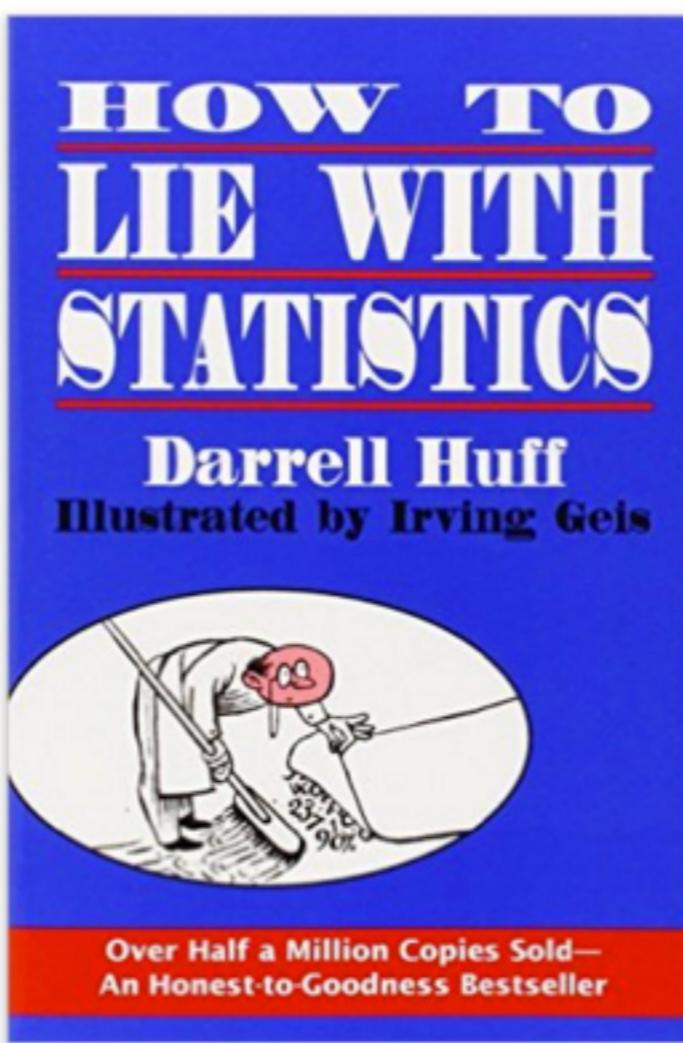


QUARTILES AND THE INTER QUARTILE RANGE

- Quartiles divide a rank-ordered data set into four equal parts.
- The values that divide each part are called the first, second, and third quartiles; and they are denoted by Q₁, Q₂, and Q₃, respectively.
- The interquartile range (IQR) is a measure of variability, based on dividing a data set into quartiles. It is the “middle 50” of your data. Also called the H-spread. IQR = Q₃-Q₁
- Outliers: Q₁ - 1.5(IQR), Q₃ + 1.5(IQR)



CRITERIA FOR GOOD VISUALIZATION



PART 2: METRICS

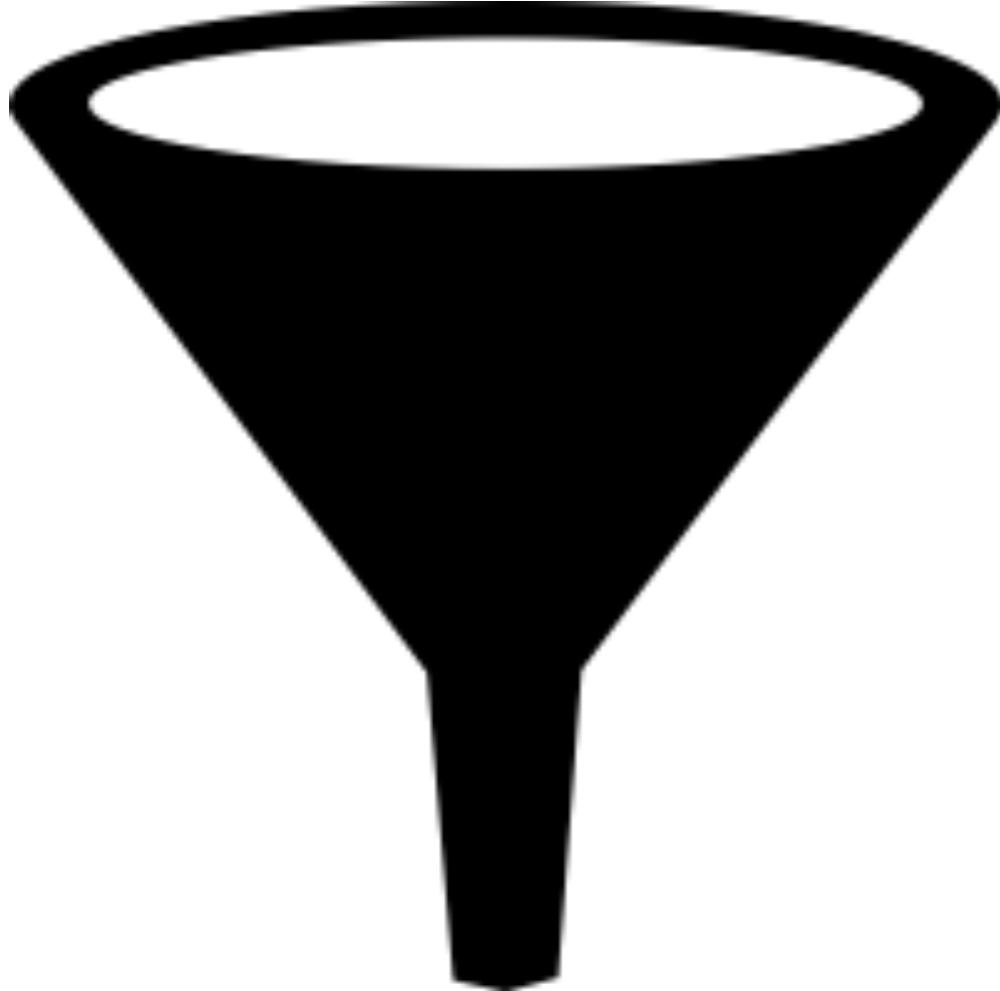
A CONVERSATION ON METRICS...

- Choosing a metric is (almost) everything.
- What are you optimizing?
- Why are you optimizing for that?
- Does that capture the full picture? (No)

YOU RUN A MOBILE APPLICATION COMPANY CALLED SMACEBOOK

- What metric do you choose to prove your success?

You run a mobile application company called smacebook



- Site visit
- App download
- Profile creation
- Usage
- Referral

YOU RUN A MOBILE APPLICATION COMPANY CALLED SMACEBOOK

- What metric do you choose to prove your success?
- Monthly active users (MAU) is a top choice.
- Facebook waited for Harvard University to demonstrate 50% of the campus to have DAILY active usage before launching to Stanford. This was controversial.
- Source: <http://a16z.com/2016/07/16/network-effects-event/>

NPS



UBER

Your Opinion Is Powerful.

We'd like to hear it.

Joseph, how likely are you to recommend riding with Uber to friends and family?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Not at all likely

Extremely Likely

A CONVERSATION ON METRICS...

- Can metrics mislead us?

| Date | Users |
|--------|-------|
| 1/1/16 | 3 |
| 1/2/16 | 5 |
| 1/3/16 | 9 |
| 1/4/16 | 10 |
| 1/5/16 | 17 |
| 1/6/16 | 19 |
| 1/7/16 | 22 |
| 1/8/16 | 26 |
| 1/9/16 | 30 |

A CONVERSATION ON METRICS...

- Percentage growth is sensitive to small base rate changes.

| Date | Users | Percent Growth |
|--------|-------|----------------|
| 1/1/16 | 3 | 0 |
| 1/2/16 | 5 | 0.6666666667 |
| 1/3/16 | 9 | 0.8 |
| 1/4/16 | 10 | 0.1111111111 |
| 1/5/16 | 17 | 0.7 |
| 1/6/16 | 19 | 0.117647059 |
| 1/7/16 | 22 | 0.157894737 |
| 1/8/16 | 26 | 0.181818182 |
| 1/9/16 | 30 | 0.153846154 |

A CONVERSATION ON METRICS...

- Percent growth of percent growth tells an even different story

| Date | Users | Percent Growth | “Growth Rate” |
|--------|-------|----------------|---------------|
| 1/1/16 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 1/2/16 | 5 | 0.666666667 | 0 |
| 1/3/16 | 9 | 0.8 | 0.2 |
| 1/4/16 | 10 | 0.111111111 | -0.861111111 |
| 1/5/16 | 17 | 0.7 | 5.3 |
| 1/6/16 | 19 | 0.117647059 | -0.831932773 |
| 1/7/16 | 22 | 0.157894737 | 0.342105263 |
| 1/8/16 | 26 | 0.181818182 | 0.151515152 |
| 1/9/16 | 30 | 0.153846154 | -0.153846154 |

YOU RUN A MOBILE APPLICATION COMPANY CALLED SMACEBOOK

- To summarize:
- Metrics are situational specific.
- We can tell different (and misleading) stories with each.
- Growth is new and retained. Be mindful.

SO, GENERAL METRICS PRINCIPLES?

- ▶ Let's generalize:
- ▶ 1. Metrics should be easy to understand and use.
- ▶ 2. Metrics should be easily replicated.
- ▶ 3. Metrics must be actionable
- ▶ Read more: <https://hbr.org/2015/07/identify-the-marketing-metrics-that-actually-matter>

YOUR TURN

- You came to tonight's workshop to communicate your data more effectively. Applied learning should be the key takeaway. And, fortunately, we can all learn from one another. Let's take advantage of that.
- **5MIN:**
- Exercise: in your workplace, what determines you've been successful? What *should* the metric that determines your success be? What does this successfully capture?
- You will be asked to justify this for your classmates 😊

PART 3: EFFECTIVE VISUAL DESIGN

CRITERIA FOR GOOD VISUALIZATION

- We'll break this section into parts:
 - 1.) Examining best examples
 - 2.) Distilling those examples
 - 3.) Discussing tools to achieve those examples

CRITERIA FOR GOOD VISUALIZATION

- First, we'll look at examples. We'll discuss, as a class, what makes those examples successful.
- 1: <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/lionel-messi-is-impossible/>

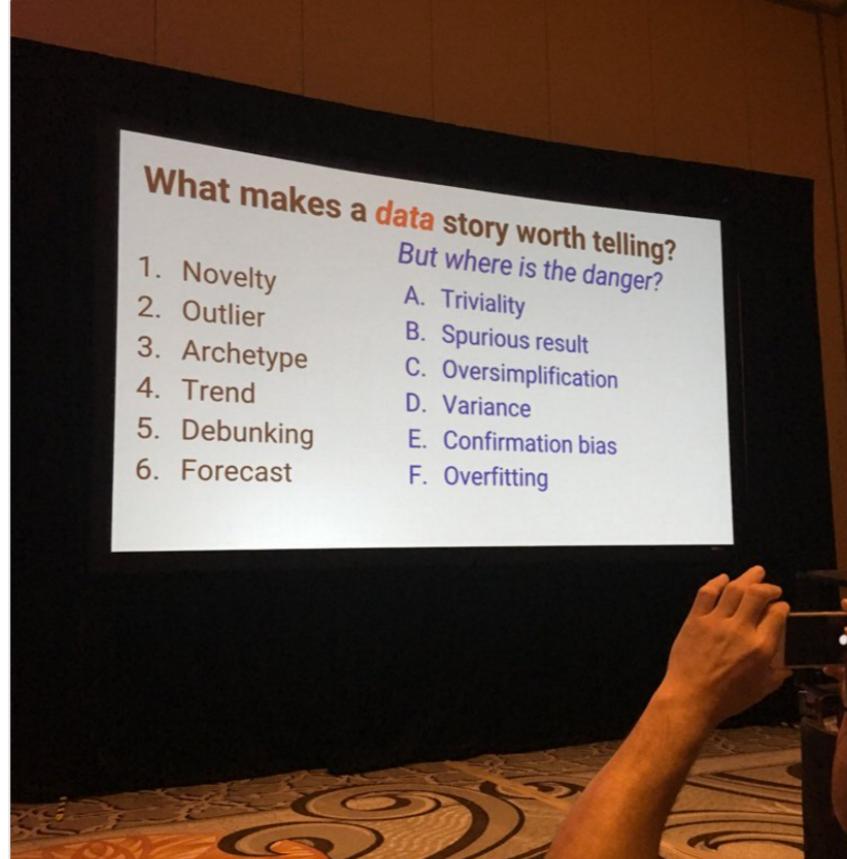
CRITERIA FOR GOOD VISUALIZATION

- First, we'll look at examples. We'll discuss, as a class, what makes those examples successful.
- 1: <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/lionel-messi-is-impossible/>
- 2: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/10/15/us/politics/swing-history.html?_r=2&

AN ASIDE ON DATA JOURNALISM

Hadley Wickham  [@hadleywickham](#) 

Six types of data story + their dangers from
[@andrewflowers #rstudioconf](#)



What makes a **data** story worth telling?

But where is the danger?

- 1. Novelty
- 2. Outlier
- 3. Archetype
- 4. Trend
- 5. Debunking
- 6. Forecast

- A. Triviality
- B. Spurious result
- C. Oversimplification
- D. Variance
- E. Confirmation bias
- F. Overfitting

RETWEETS 594 LIKES 1,144



CRITERIA FOR GOOD VISUALIZATION

- ▶ 1. Simplified
 - ▶ 2. Easy to Interpret
 - ▶ 3. Clearly Labeled
-
- ▶ Bonus: 4. Interactivity

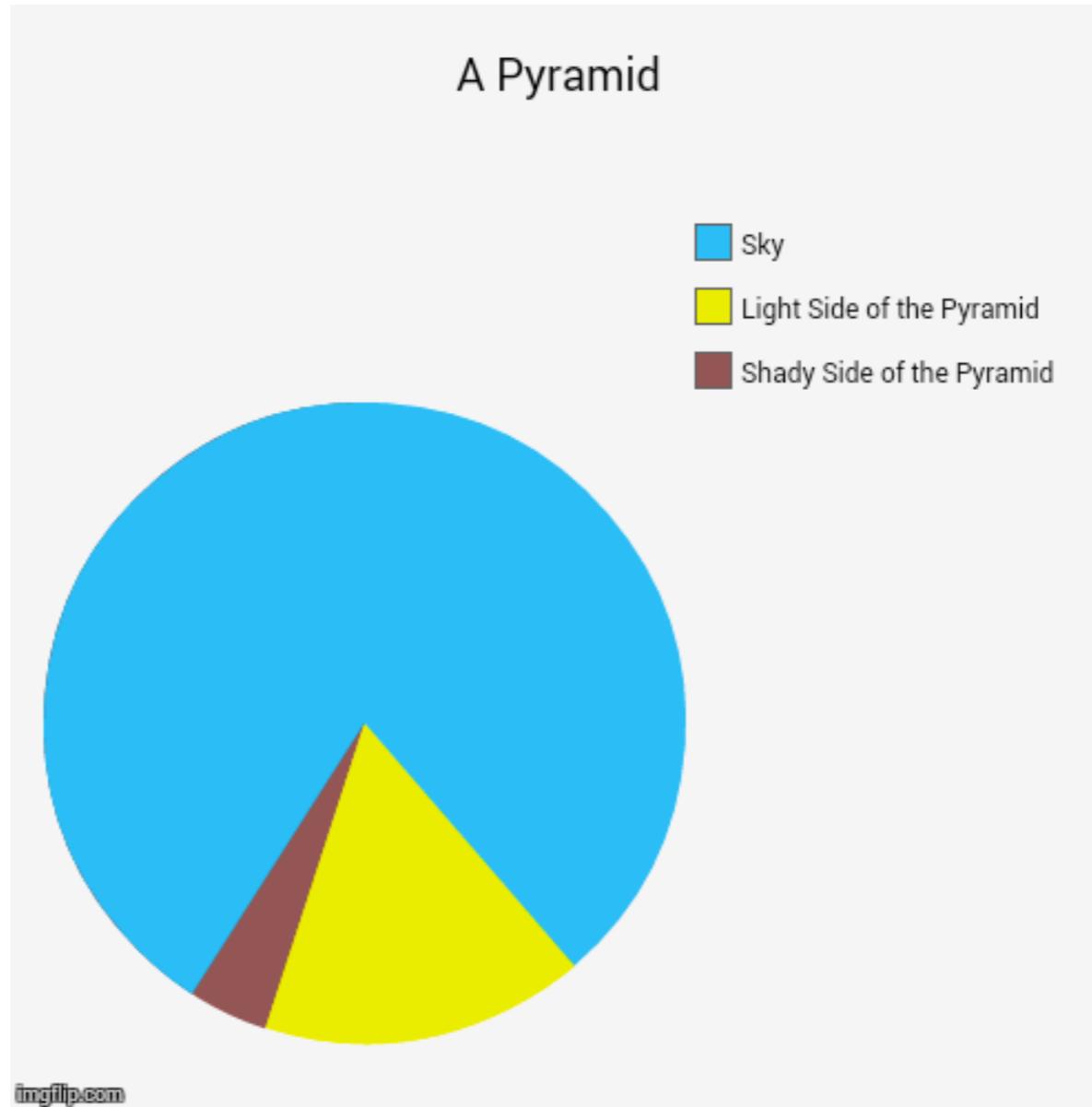
CRITERIA FOR GOOD VISUALIZATION

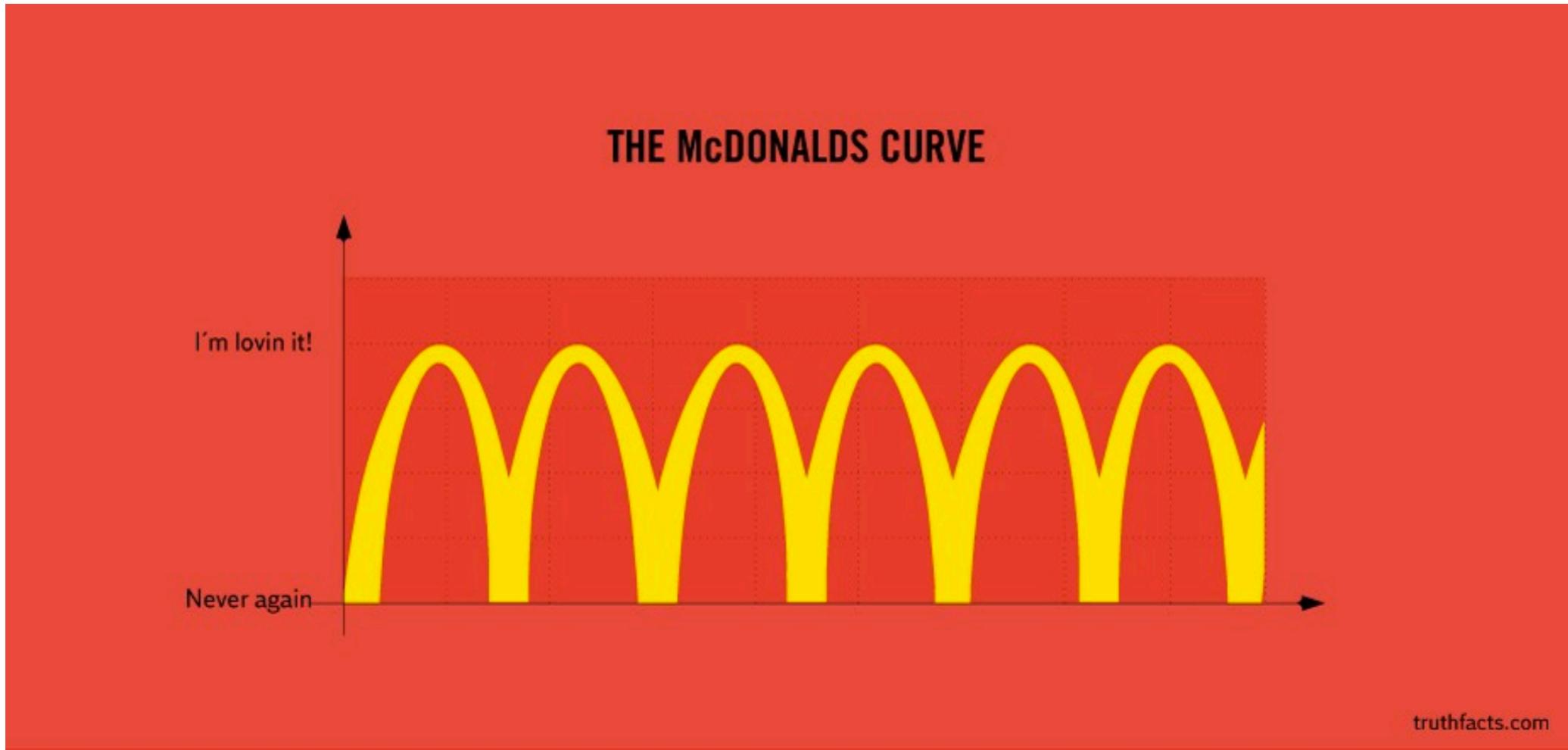
- 1. Simplified
 - 2. Easy to Interpret
 - 3. Clearly Labeled
-
- Ask yourself:
 - Who is my target audience?
 - What do they already know, and what do they need to know?
 - How does my project affect this audience? How might they interpret (or misinterpret) the data?

TOOLS

- So you have developers you can ask to do this for you...
- D3.js: <https://flowingdata.com/2015/12/15/a-day-in-the-life-of-americans/>
- Tableau: <https://public.tableau.com/en-us/s/blog/2015/07/analyzing-airbnb-data>
- Excel + PPT (for real!)
- Python (Bokeh, Seaborn, matplotlib)
- R (ggplot)

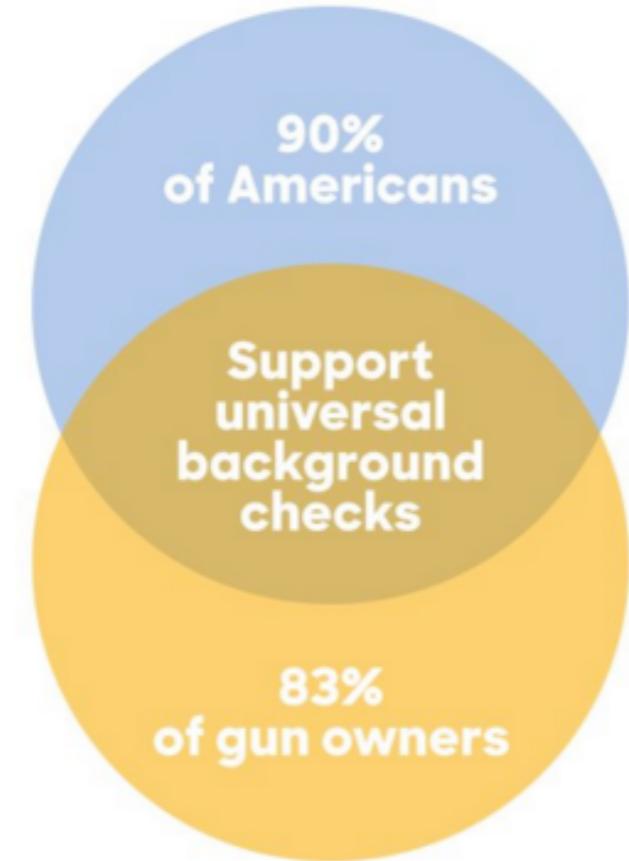
CHARTJUNK







GRAPHJUNK



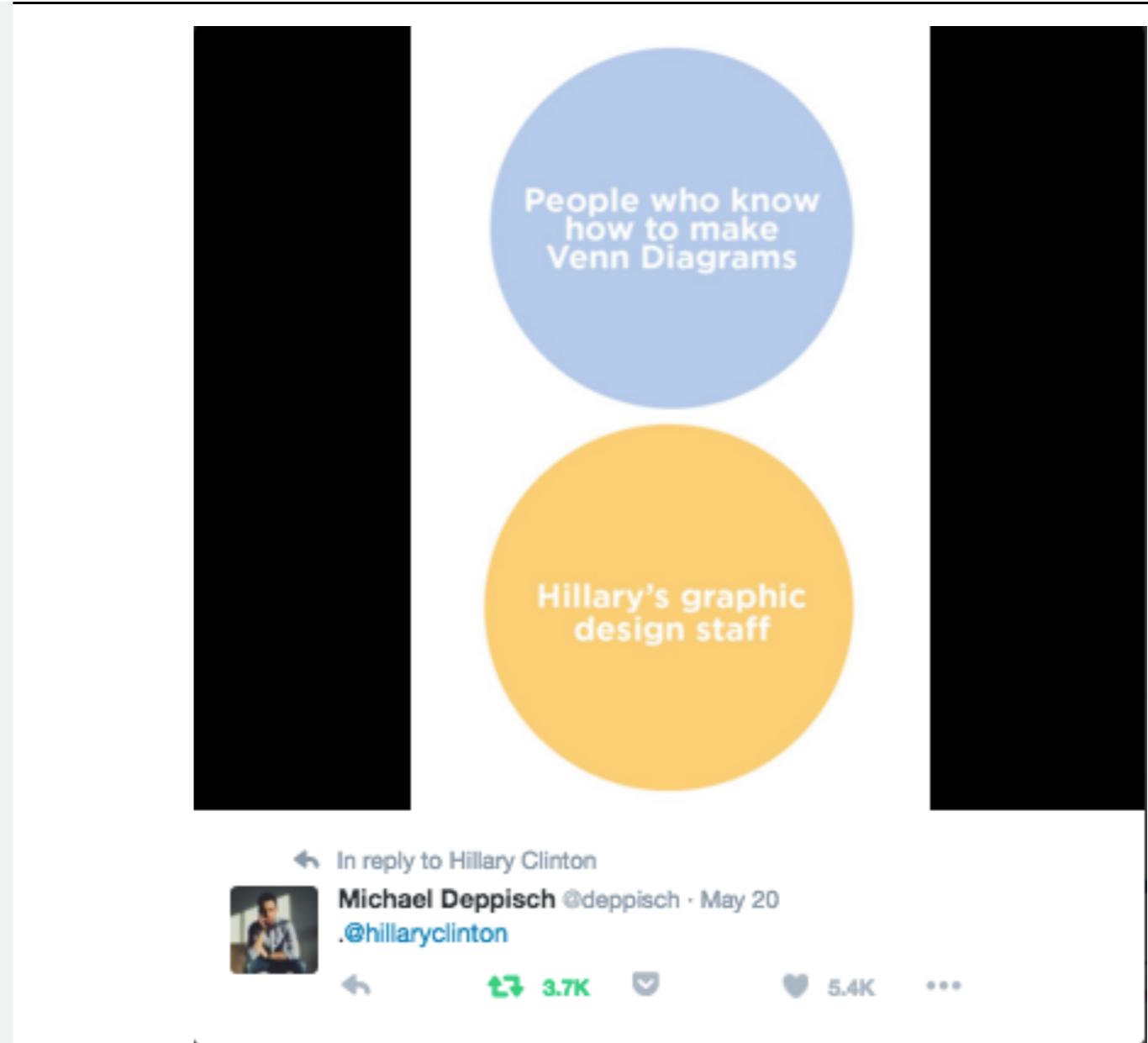
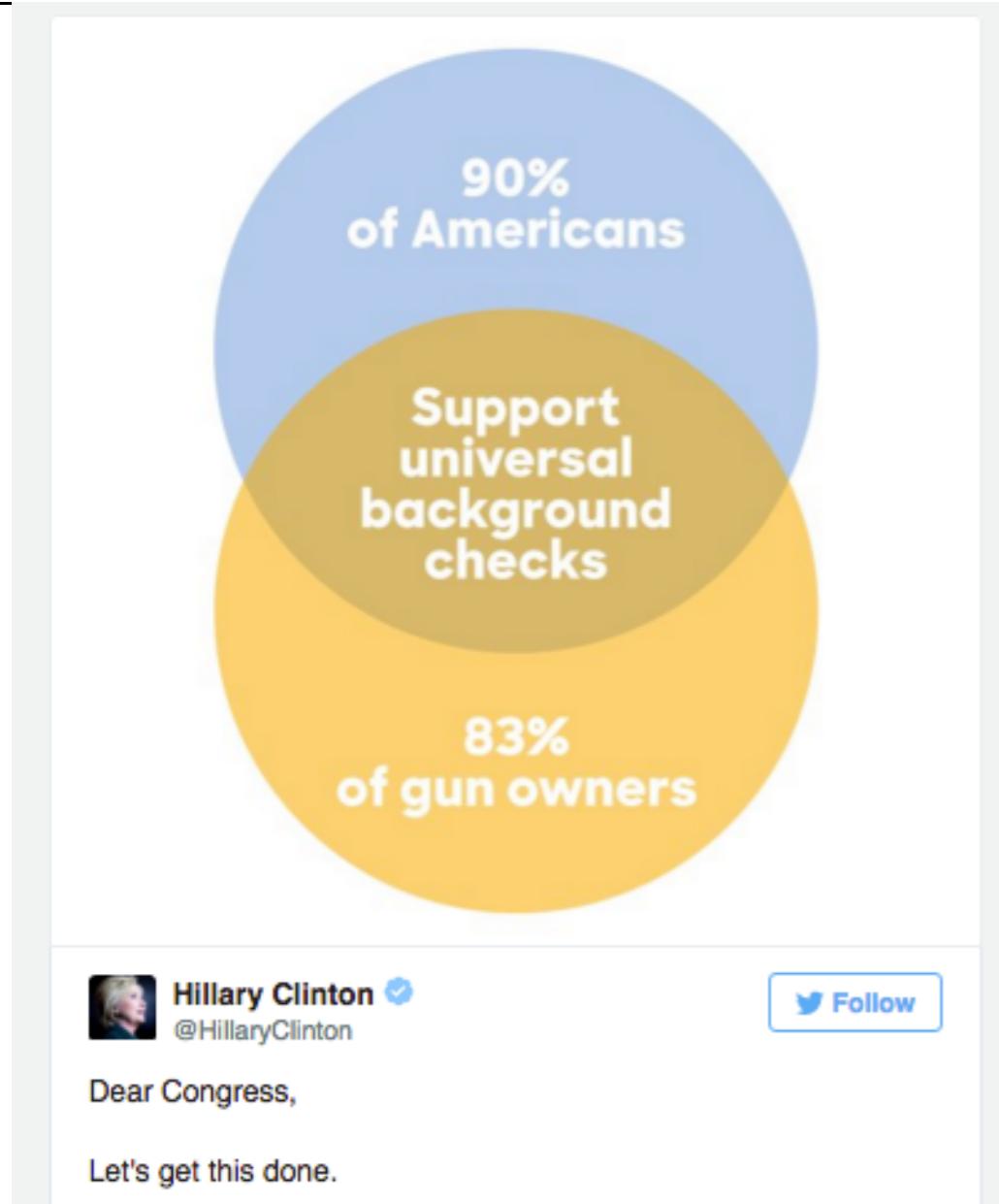
Hillary Clinton 
@HillaryClinton

 Follow

Dear Congress,

Let's get this done.

GRAPHJUNK



IT'S A BIPARTISAN PROBLEM

GOP  @GOP

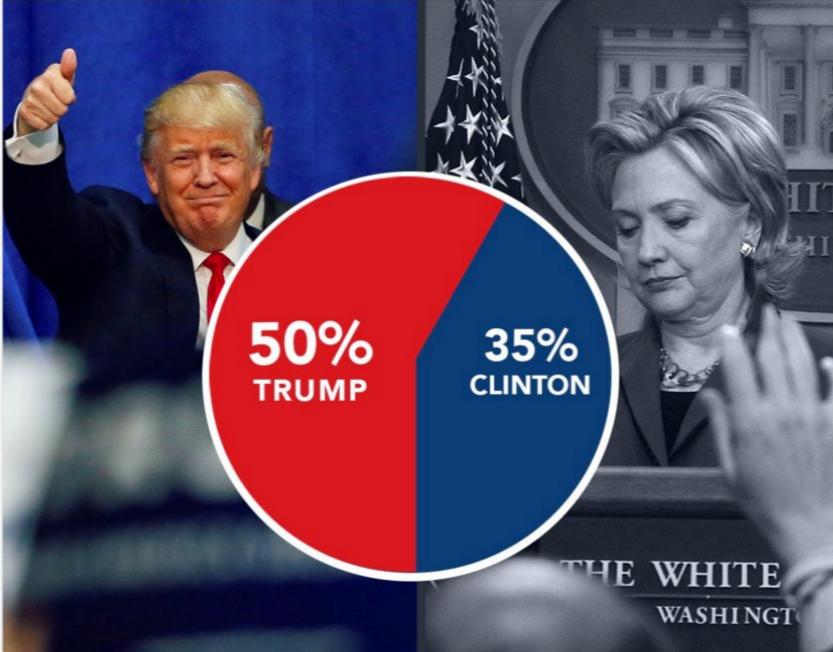
Following

.@HillaryClinton's persistent lies have lost her the trust of the American people 

VOTERS TRUST TRUMP OVER CLINTON

— VOTERS SAY TRUMP IS MORE HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY —

(CNN/ORC, 9/6/16)



50% TRUMP

35% CLINTON

THE WHITE
WASHINGTON

RETWEETS LIKES

39 65

3:26 PM - 7 Sep 2016

PART 4: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION - CONTENT

- ▶ Establish a central thesis
- ▶ Create a narrative arc: problem, addressing, result
- ▶ “Completed X by doing Y as measured by Z”
- ▶ Follow the SAR principles: Situation, Action, Result

COMMUNICATION - DELIVERY

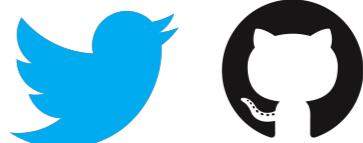
- Establish a confident stance
- Engage your audience: fill the room and ensure your audience knows you’re speaking to every one of them
- Speak as though you’re writing: you begin with a thesis, topic sentence, and example
- Offer a “nugget” and reflect humility
- A pause is more powerful than “Um”

NEXT STEPS

- Keep in touch!
- If you like data, checkout:
- Python for Data Analysis Workshop
- Intermediate Python Workshop
- Part-time Data Science
- Data Science Immersive



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