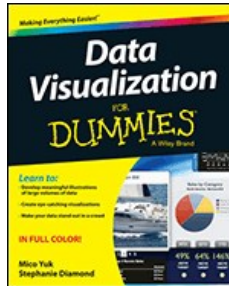


# Chapters *To Go*



## Data Visualization for Dummies

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# Introduction

## Overview

Data visualization (also known as *data viz*) is a hot topic. With the development of more data sources, such as social media platforms, photos, and customer reviews, Big Data has become a concern for small businesses and large corporations alike. Data is coming from all parts of the business like finance, customer service, and sales, and using it effectively helps you gain a competitive advantage.

It's no longer sufficient to use a multiple-page spreadsheet to present findings about your data. You need to tell visual data stories that produce important insights. This book shows you some ways to create and display data visualizations, including infographics, dashboards, and business intelligence (BI) graphics.

Many experts in the field have created inspiring data visualizations that dazzle the eye. You should be inspired by them, rather than humbled. Not every data viz can — or should — be a devastating work of art. Some visualizations just need to get the job done. But you do want to give yourself every opportunity to create something special. We believe that reading this book will put you on the right path.

## About This Book

This book was written to provide you all the information you need to get started creating high-value data visualizations. Use it as a reference guide when you're trying to select the right data, charts, text, and menus to add to your creations.

Data visualizations can be visually creative, such as infographics, or straightforward, such as dashboards. The key to creating the right one for you is to follow the Business Intelligence Dashboard Formula (BIDF), outlined in Part III of this book, and apply it to the different types of visualizations you need to create. It is suggested that you go through Part III in the order in which it is written so that you can follow the progression of the data viz from start to finish.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending that the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy; just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

## Foolish Assumptions

We assume that you're a highly intelligent person who is both creative and business-minded, with a flair for presenting visually appealing graphics — you wouldn't be reading this book if you weren't, right? — but you may be making your first foray into the world of data viz. So we also assume that you're reading this book for any of the following reasons:

- You want to demonstrate to your colleagues that you can make data more useful by displaying it visually.
- You need to gain more direct knowledge about how your customers feel about your products.
- You're tired of using a spreadsheet program to create all your data visualizations and want to try other techniques.
- Your manager wants to use BI dashboards, and you've been chosen to make that happen.
- You want to provide your customers with useful data visualizations that help raise your company's visibility when it is shared by others.

## Icons Used in This Book

We packed this book with all sorts of tips, warnings, and other good hints so that you can benefit from our experience. They're identified by the following icons:

**Tip** This icon lets you know about a way to make things easier, faster, or just plain smarter. Who doesn't want to be smarter?

**Remember** This icon calls out something you need to remember, so take note. You may even want to write down the information.

**Warning!** We don't want to scare you, but we certainly want to warn you about things to avoid at all costs. Take heed.

**Technical Stuff** This icon points out things that are more technical in nature. If geekiness isn't your thing, don't worry; the technical information is here for your edification if you want it.

## Beyond the Book

We wrote extra content that you won't find in this book. Visit [www.dummies.com/extras/datavisualization](http://www.dummies.com/extras/datavisualization) to find the following:

- A handy list of "Ten Unbreakable Rules for Using Text in a Data Visualization"
- Additional information on using the Business Intelligence Dashboard Formula (BIDF) Blueprint
- A downloadable worksheet to help you determine what to include in your data viz
- A Part of Tens called "Top Ten Blunders to Avoid When Creating a Data Visualization"

## Where to Go from Here

You can travel at least two paths when reading this book: You can start at the beginning and wend your way around the topics to familiarize yourself with each one, or you can skip right to the juicy parts that interest you. It's up to you. Either way, we want you to feel confident that you've chosen the right path for yourself. We hope that this book will get you where you want to go. Enjoy the journey!