

19 Quality Control

Counting Happiness and Where it Comes From

1. What is the data story?

- the project visualizes what makes people happy based on 100,000 self-reported moments from HappyDB
- happiness is broken into three sentence parts: who, action, and what
- most happy moments begin with “i,” showing happiness often comes from personal or internal events
- moments involving others such as family, friends, partners, and pets highlight that relationships also play a major role
- common themes include spending time together, receiving good news, accomplishing goals, and enjoying everyday experiences

2. What is effective?

- clear structure using who, action, what helps readers follow the flow of a happiness moment
- circle sizes effectively show which words and themes appear most often
- color coding separates self, others, and pets in a visually intuitive way
- real text snippets humanize the data and connect patterns to lived experiences
- separate charts for happiness with others and pets make comparison easy
- viewers can quickly identify dominant themes like time, family, home, and accomplishments

3. What could be improved?

- dense node-link connections create visual clutter and make pathways hard to trace
- many labels are very small and difficult to read without zooming
- the visualization lacks clear annotated takeaways, leaving interpretation fully to the viewer
- some color tones are too similar, reducing clarity between groups
- the flow direction could be more visually guided for easier interpretation
- an interactive format would allow filtering, zooming, and deeper exploration of categories