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Project 2 Report

Why is it Useful?

The idea behind it was to create some sort of timeline for users to read. Finding some way to give the users more interactivity but at the same time not going into too many specifics. Allowing the user to get a sense of what food are becoming more popular, and maybe others that are on the downward trend. Providing the user some information so they can further explore or place their experience into further research and understanding.

Planning

As I was saying before, I needed to figure out how to create some sort of timeline. A whole bunch of snapchats of each year's food trend wouldn’t be absorbing to the user. I needed to tell a story, and allow the user to possibly see the relation between the other foods in the data sets. Therefore, I decided animation was the best way to show growth or depletion of certain categories.

Since there are so many sub divisions to the categories, my first idea was to give all subclasses making up a category with same color but in different tints. Allowing them to feel like there are only little differences between these categories. Unfortunately that fell through when I realized small data sets wouldn’t show these differences. Instead I just gave them all the same color, and show how these data sets build up the totals for these categories. I also wanted to add in some tooltip to give users what was making up each category, but I did not have the time to complete this. Therefore, i felt like there would be some confusion about what is actually in the subcategory data.

With these subcategories still in mind, I was looking for graphs that would express area. In my mind, I thought the timeline animation would compliment the message of growth and depletion. So the first idea was to create a pie chart. Overall it looked ok at first, but I realized that there was a lot of junk with all the area it took up. So I needed a way to allow the user to focus on less area, and more on the changes. This led me to the donut chart. I ended up sticking with it because a) time constraints and b) less boring than the everyday pie chart.

Representation

The main idea is to represent the categories by grouping up the sub categories given. By showing an overview of this data, we can see the fluctuation of the data from the years. Overall, giving the user a sense of what the average consumer was will to buy and not over the last 40 years. Trying to use length, like a bar chart, is one of the more accurate ways of showing the measurement of the data. Therefore, using the movement of a bar chart could clearly express the difference between years. Allowing the user to identify patterns of differences without going to the specifics of each sub category. Hoping that maybe they can come up theories as to why these changes happened based on their knowledge.

Presentation

The way I saw it was somehow creating a bird’s eye view. I wasn’t too keen on showing every detail that made up a category of a food, but more about how the sums of these subcategories changed over the years. By grouping sub categories, we can get a general idea as to how the data was changing. Getting the overall sense to trends, and providing detail about the changes through these years. Therefore, I created a donut chart that moves the areas based on the years. The user can select a year from the radio buttons provided. The radio buttons are also aligned in a time line manner to allow the user to relate the functionality of this graph.

In the end, it’s really more than a donut graph. I like to call it the caterpillar graph. Much like looking down on a caterpillar from a bird’s eye view, , we can see the movement of the bar charts put together to create multiple moving charts. Seeing how the subcategories contribute to a category and how they impact the sums.

Interaction

The only interaction is with the radio buttons. They give the user a number of ways to compare all the years. By clicking on a year, it provides the users the given data set for the year. Allowing the user to go through a number of possible combinations when clicking through the years.

Positive features

* Animation to show differences between the categories
* Shows subcategories without too much detail
* Radio buttons used to toggle the different years
  + Giving the user interaction
  + Allowing the user to see the data in many different ways
* Shows totals of categories
* Shows total of all the categories summed up
* Gets rid of all the unnecessary area that doesn’t need to be read.
  + Allowing focus changes in categories