

Peer Feedback Exercise

Project: Who Trades With Whom - Exploring International Trade Relationships Over Time

Peer Reviewers: Ilkin Safarli and Kiran Gahave

Summary: We received excellent feedback from our peer review. The peer reviewers were respectful and offered objective feedback that will increase the functionality and presentation of our project. We made several changes to our implementation based on the quality of feedback we received.

Issue: Include a search box to find a country rather than relying on the map.

Discussion: Users may not know where a country is geographically. Thus, adding an input box to select a country would increase functionality and give an alternative way to select a country for review.

Recommendation: Add to the nice to have list and implement as time permits.

Issue: "Top Traders" chart.

Discussion: Consider combining into one chart with imports going to the left and exports going to the right with a central axis in the center. This would show a comparison of exports/imports. We agree this would be an interesting chart; however, the purpose of this specific chart is to show the top importers / top exporters for a given country. Changing this chart in such a way would undermine that purpose.

Recommendation: We will create a hybrid solution parallel axes chart with back to back axes and connect countries with a line to show the relationship.

Issue: Include trade categories (agriculture, steel, etc) for more detail.

Discussion: We all agree that this would make a better product. However, due to time constraints and lack of researchers to go collect categorical trade information for all 195 countries. We considered gathering categorical data for just the United States, but this still would be a major undertaking of itself.

Recommendation: We will continue as planned using total import/export data per year.

Issue: Map/country changes overtime (Countries that have changed names/been created).

Discussion: We are looking at trade over time; however, we are only looking at the last

25 years. During the last 25 years there have been minimal changes to countries throughout the world.

Recommendation: Focus on creating a functional project and then as time permits - review country changes and ensure our map accurately reflects this.

Issue: Use line widths to encode trade volume on the map.

Discussion: We considered doing this but for densely populated areas on the map a thick line would obscure several nations and render the map less effective.

Recommendation: Use a fine, easy to see line, to encode import / export relationships on the map. The line will be encoded with a color to represent import / export.

Issue: The “Global Balance Chart” shows very little data.

Discussion: Consider using a stacked bar chart for each year of the comparison. The stacked bar chart (including data for the two countries) will communicate more data and allow for better comparison over time.

Recommendation: We love this idea and will implement based on this feedback.

Issue: Map links to other countries.

Discussion: The default for links per country is 10. Is 10 the right number for all countries. Consider country density in Europe - 10 links may be too many, especially since they likely trade with neighboring countries.

Recommendation: Once we implement we are going to test to see how many links are useful. We want to show the maximum links between countries without occlusion or the visualization becoming too busy.

Conclusion: This was an extremely helpful exercise. We recommend continuing to do this in the future. The classroom environment is NOT suitable for a peer review session. Consider holding class this day in the Catmull Gallery or some other location where teams can sit across from each other at a table in a more constructive environment.