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Graph Design Article Summary

In John Boyd’s notes, *How to Graph Badly or What NOT to Do,* and *The Gospel According to Tufte,* the author goes through several of things that can make it difficult to read and understand the data a graph is doing. He starts in Chapter One by explaining how one can mess up a graph, which I feel is a better representation of how to graph correctly instead of outright teaching us that. Boyd goes through many different styles of graphs, showing how simple things can make it so much harder to understand data.

His basis for this is Edward Tufte’s theories, which he goes over extensively in Chapter Two after summarizing how to mess them up in Chapter One. He starts with what he calls Chartjunk, or just a bunch of different things that make charts pretty, but ruins them. These include fonts, Moire shading, Pseudo 3-D, artificial color, and hype. Fonts can be hard to read, too many types of shading can confuse things, pseudo 3-D makes things seem bigger or smaller than they actually are, color is powerful, but easily misused, and hyping up your data with overrepresentation or generalization can make people misinterpret your data easily.