

# Group beats Trend!?

## Testing feature hierarchy in statistical graphics

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### Abstract

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## 1 Introduction and background

Discussion of pre-attentive visual features (Healey and Enns, 2012) - with a focus on hierarchy of pre-attentive features: color trumps shape - do we also see this in our results, and if so, by how much?

Intro to lineups (Buja et al., 2009; Majumder et al., 2013; Wickham et al., 2010; Hofmann et al., 2012)

The change to lineups we make is to introduce a second target to each lineup. We then keep track of how many observers choose any one of the two targets (to assess the difficulty of a lineup), and additionally we record how often observers choose one target over the other one. This is information that we can use to evaluate how strong the signal of one target is compared to the other one.

A further extension of this testing framework are the use of color (in a qualitative color scheme), the use of shapes, and additional density lines - we anticipate that all of these features are going to emphasize the clustering component. On the other hand, regression lines should emphasize any linear trends in the data.

## 2 Design Choices

We choose colors and shapes for the lineups in our study to be the most different from a set of ten choices as evaluated by participants in the study by Çağatay Demiralp et al. (2014) on the so called perceptual kernels. Unfortunately, this limits the choice to the set used in the Tableau software. Beyond that, we modified some color pairings observed in the general population to reflect individual's abilities: the red-green color pair is one of the pairs of the most distinct color pairings in the general population (XXX exact value?), but obviously is a poor choice for the approximately XXX% of population with a red-green color vision deficiency.

XXX Which other color combinations did we exclude?

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Shapes - there were some problems with reliable unicode representations in the lineups, which led to using slightly modified shapes.

All shapes are non-filled shapes, which means that they all are supporting one of the simplest solutions to overplotting of points in the tradition of ? and Few (2009). For this reason we abstained from the additional use of alpha-blending of points to measure the amount of overplotting.

### 3 Generating Model

We are working with two models  $M_C$  and  $M_T$  to generate data for the target plots. The null plots are showing data generate from a mixture model  $M_0$ . Both models generate data in the same range of values. We made also sure that data from the clustering model  $M_C$  shares the same correlation with the null data, while data from model  $M_T$  exhibits a similar amount of clustering as the null data.

We compute the correlation coefficient for all of the plots to assess the amount of linearity in each panel. As a measure of clustering, we can use the  $F$  statistic of between versus within group variation.

#### 3.1 Cluster Model $M_C$

We begin by generating cluster centers along a line, then we generate points around the cluster center.

Algorithm:

Parameters  $N$  points,  $K$  clusters,  $\sigma_C$  cluster standard deviation

1. Generate cluster centers  $(c_i^x, c_i^y)$  for each of the  $K$  clusters,  $i = 1, \dots, K$ :
  - (a) Generate vectors  $c^x$  and  $c^y$  as permutations of  $\{1, \dots, K\}$ ,
  - (b) such that the correlation between cluster centers  $\text{Cor}(c^x, c^y)$  falls into a range of  $[.25, .9]$ .

We might have to go up with the correlation a bit. I'm still worried that people will pick the cluster plot from the trend line lineup because of the lowest slope.

2. Center and standard-normalize cluster centers  $(c^x, c^y)$ :

$$\tilde{c}_i^x = \frac{c_i^x - \bar{c}}{s_c} \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{c}_i^y = \frac{c_i^y - \bar{c}}{s_c},$$

where  $\bar{c} = K(K+1)/2$  and  $s_c^2 = \frac{K(K+1)(2K+1)}{6} - \frac{K^2(K+1)^2}{4}$  for all  $i = 1, \dots, K$ .

3. Determine group size  $g_i$  for clusters  $i = 1, \dots, K$  as a random draw  $g_i \sim \text{Multinomial}(K, p)$  where  $p = p_1 / \sum_{i=1}^K p_{1i}$  for  $p_{1i} \sim N(\frac{1}{K}, \frac{1}{2K^2})$ .
4. Generate points around cluster centers:
  - (a)  $x_i^* = c_{g_i}^x + e$ ,  $e_i \sim N(0, \sigma_C^2)$
  - (b)  $y_i^* = c_{g_i}^y + e$ ,  $e_i \sim N(0, \sigma_C^2)$

### 3.2 Regression Model $M_T$

This model has the parameter  $\sigma_T$  to reflect the amount of scatter around the trend line.

Algorithm:

Parameters  $N$  points,  $\sigma_T$  standard deviation around the line, slope  $a$  (1 by default)

1. Generate  $x_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, N$ , a sequence of evenly spaced points from  $[-1, 1]$  ( $\sigma_T$  added and subtracted to match the range of cluster points in  $x$ )
2. Jitter  $x_i$ :  $x_i = x_i + \eta_i$ ,  $\eta_i \sim \text{Unif}(-z, z)$ ,  $z = 1/5 * (2/(N - 1))$
3. Generate  $y_i$ :  $y_i = a * x_i + e_i$ ,  $e_i \sim N(0, \sigma_T^2)$

Would the pictures change dramatically, if you used  $x \sim U[-1, 1]$  to start out with? that would be easier to explain.

### 3.3 Null Model $M_0$

The generative model for null data is created as a mixture model  $M_0$  that draws  $n_c \sim B_{N, \lambda}$  observations from the cluster model, and  $n_T = N - n_c$  from the regression model  $M_T$ .

## 4 Experimental Setup

### 4.1 Design

Factors:

Parameter	Description	Choices
$N$	# Points	45, 75
$K$	# Clusters	3, 5
$\sigma_T$	Scatter around trend line	.35, .45, .55
$\sigma_C$	Scatter around cluster centers	( $K = 3$ ) .25, .35, .45 ( $K = 5$ ) .2, .3, .4

Table 1: Parameter settings for Data Generation.

HH: I would think of ellipses as the analogue to the error bands in trends - so rather not show them alone. I'm not so sure that we need both conflict situations - the trend lines against color are already bad enough - if we additionally have an error band we get into problems with the band on top of the color.

SVP: I fixed this by changing to lines instead of ribbons. I think it makes it better.

I would consider the values  $\sigma_C = 0.3, .35, .4, .45$  for  $K = 3$  clusters to be interesting.

The actual values of  $\sigma_C$  don't make much sense - because they are only valid within the scaled data values. We might need to re-express the values of  $\sigma_C$  in terms of a percentage of the data or a percentage of the overall variability.

ugh, that sounds like a pain.

Emphasis	Aesthetics
Control	–
Group	Color, Shape Color + Shape, Color + Ellipse, Color + Shape + Ellipse
Trend	Line Line + Error band
Conflict	Color + Trend Line, Color + Ellipse + Trend Line + Error band

Table 2: Aesthetics and add-on design choices.

For  $K = 5$  the parameters for  $\sigma_C$  and the standard deviation  $\sigma_T$  need to be smaller - we could start at 0.2 and 0.75, respectively.

Why would  $\sigma_T$  change? It shouldn't matter for changes in  $K$ .

## Design choices

1. Plain: two targets with data from one of each of the two generative models are included in a set of eighteen panels of null data.
2. Color/Shape: points in each of the panels are colored/marked based on the results of a hierarchical clustering .
3. Trend line: a line of the least square fit is drawn through the points.
4. Color & Shape
5. Color & trend line: this emphasises both the clustering and the regression - it is not clear, which signal will be stronger.
6. Color & Ellipsoids: around the groups of the same color, ellipsoids are drawn to reflect the 95% density estimate.

## 4.2 Hypothesis

The plot most identified as the "target" will change based on plot aesthetics which emphasize linear features or cluster features. This effect will be mediated by the signal strength of the line and cluster features.

- Increasing  $N$  will increase signal strength for both line and clusters
- Increasing  $K$  will decrease signal strength for clusters (fewer points per cluster, thus lower visual cohesiveness)
- Increasing  $\sigma_T$  will decrease signal strength for lines
- Increasing  $\sigma_C$  will decrease signal strength for clusters

Plot features will emphasize either lines or clusters as follows:

- None (control)
- Color (cluster emphasis)
- Shape (cluster emphasis)
- Color + shape (double cluster emphasis)
- Ellipse + color (doubly cluster emphasis)
- Line
- Line + Prediction Interval (double line emphasis)
- Color + line (conflict)
- Color + line + Prediction Interval (conflict)

In a more organized representation:

		Line Emphasis		
		0	1	2
Cluster Emphasis	0	None	Line	Line + Prediction
	1	Color, Shape	Color + Line	Color + Line + Prediction
	2	Color + Shape		
		Color + Ellipse		

## References

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