Designing Visualizations to Tell your Data Stories

Audience

.Ask questions…
Who are you communicating with?
What motivates them to engage?
What questions do they want to answer?
What actions do you want them to take?

segment to stakeholder groups

For example

Funders

Potential attendees

Other Festival hosts

understand who they are

Literacy

Analytic capacity

Job function

Level of education and knowledge of your topic

Motivations & Pain Points

Data Story

Ask questions...
What is your key message?
What data do you have to support that message?
Can you put a human face on the data?
Will you articulate a call to action?

storytelling approaches

Journey Map
Frame your data story around one illustrative person's experience

Pixar story arc
Once upon a time there was ___.
Every day, ___.
One day ___.
Because of that, ___.
Because of that, ___.
Until finally ___.

The TED Approach
Focus on one central idea, and build a beginning, middle and end into the illustration

storyboard

Sketch! Draw! Use a storyboard or simple slide deck to map out the different visuals and messages you want to incorporate.

simplify

Look at your storyboard and sketches. What elements are essential to your data story, and what could you remove?

Design

1 Declutter

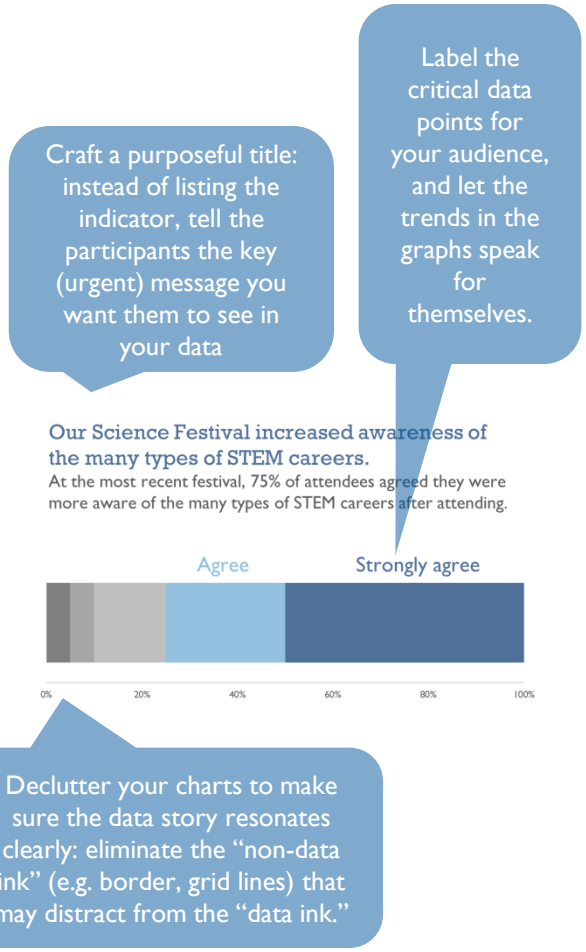
Are there elements of the graph that district rather than helping the reader to understand your data story? Borders, gridlines, and tick marks are often chart defaults but should be used minimally to create a clearer display of data.

2 Color

Are you using color to highlight the important data? Color used sparingly helps important data stand out. Avoid the trap of feeling like you need to use every color in your branding guide! Also consider black & white printing & the colorblind (avoid red and green together).

3 Title

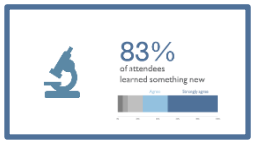
Are you clear and succinct, telling your reader the key takeaway? Use the title to express the main story you want to share from the data, rather than using the title to tell the reader the name of the indicator.



use icons

83%
of attendees
learned something new

big numbers



white space

Disseminate

Ask questions…
Where will you share your final product?
Does this need to be printed or optimized for social sharing on the web?
How does your dissemination plan align with where your audience seeks information?
What metrics will you use to measure reach and/or effectiveness?

repackaging

Think about how you can repackage your visual content or use what you've created as a template.

Idea: Create a blank slide deck, and add one visual per slide (like building a storyboard). Keep adding it to it for your project so you can repurpose and edit content as you need!

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