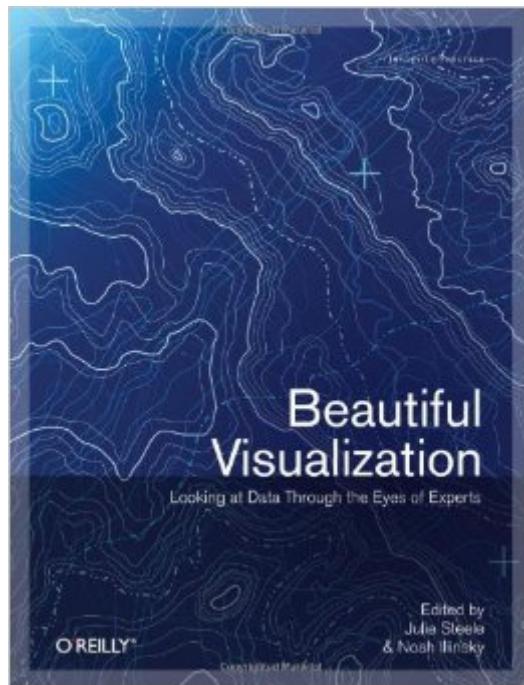


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# Beautiful Visualization: Looking At Data Through The Eyes Of Experts (Theory In Practice)



## Synopsis

Visualization is the graphic presentation of data -- portrayals meant to reveal complex information at a glance. Think of the familiar map of the New York City subway system, or a diagram of the human brain. Successful visualizations are beautiful not only for their aesthetic design, but also for elegant layers of detail that efficiently generate insight and new understanding. This book examines the methods of two dozen visualization experts who approach their projects from a variety of perspectives -- as artists, designers, commentators, scientists, analysts, statisticians, and more. Together they demonstrate how visualization can help us make sense of the world. Explore the importance of storytelling with a simple visualization exercise. Learn how color conveys information that our brains recognize before we're fully aware of it. Discover how the books we buy and the people we associate with reveal clues to our deeper selves. Recognize a method to the madness of air travel with a visualization of civilian air traffic. Find out how researchers investigate unknown phenomena, from initial sketches to published papers. Contributors include: Nick Bilton, Michael E. Driscoll, Jonathan Feinberg, Danyel Fisher, Jessica Hagy, Gregor Hochmuth, Todd Holloway, Noah Iliinsky, Eddie Jabbour, Valdean Klump, Aaron Koblin, Robert Kosara, Valdis Krebs, JoAnn Kuchera-Morin et al., Andrew Odewahn, Adam Perer, Anders Persson, Maximilian Schich, Matthias Shapiro, Julie Steele, Moritz Stefaner, Jer Thorp, Fernanda Viegas, Martin Wattenberg, and Michael Young.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Like all of O'Reilly's Beautiful Series this collection offers an excellent overview of the subject matter it describes; it is carefully edited to provide smooth reading of insights of multiple experts on telling a clear simplifying visual story with data. These viewpoints, war stories and insights from multiple practitioners is as beautiful as any of Edward Tufte's works but provides more practical insight into the process of converting raw uninterpreted data on a complex problem into a computer generated visual story. Each of these data points and illustrations give new insight into the process of converting data complexity into a simplified and explanatory visual presentation. Insights into the process of exploiting software methods for showing this story are also given in sufficient depth something else that would not be gained from other Tuftean works on Information Design. The heavy coated stock and color corrected illustrations in this deceptively compact volume fully illustrate the variety and beauty of the authors visualization examples. I found all of the illustrated chapters and differing expert viewpoints on visual storytelling with data extremely valuable. A slight nit I would have with this phenomenal work is that I would have placed Jessica Hagy's chapter entitled *Visualization: Indexed* derived from her blog on visual storytelling first because of its explanatory power. But, perhaps the editors felt that a different emphasis was appropriate in that this is an O'Reilly collection emphasizing Visual Storytelling with The Computer as the Preeminent Tool. A Beautiful Coffee Table Book that will serve both scientists and graphic artists. --Ira Laefsky MSE/MBA HCI and IT Consultant formerly on the Senior Staff of Arthur D. Little Inc. and Digital Equipment Corporation

I feel the major areas where good visualization adds value is - avenues of knowledge discovery, information presentation or simply context exploration where one does not know beforehand what insights data may reveal or the extent of relationships between data points. It can be debated that good visualizations could possibly increase cognitive resources available to our minds and decrease conceptual load that has to be dealt with at one time. Visual analytics is an invaluable tool for divergent thinking as well. Coming up with good visualizations is hard but its impact can be immediate and convincing. The visual impact is probably more because visual pathways have higher bandwidth at the systems level directly to our reptilian brain whereas logical reasoning resides on the neocortex. Sometimes we just have to see to believe. The book does an excellent job of visiting various applicable domains. There is enough variety to keep you occupied. Its covers visualizing social datasets(link-node), hierarchical datasets(trees), categorical datasets(relational), time-varying datasets and other most commonly found datasets in scientific and information visualizations. Most chapters are well written with plenty of visuals. If you are an ardent fan of

visuals you probabaly have seen everything in this book at one place or another. I think a significant part of the information is derived from papers or other well known publications. You can find almost anything by taking the visualcomplexity website as a starting point. However, the book can save you the research and is an excellent introductory text to expand your knowledge on visualizations. That being said, I feel its little expensive for its size and as most content is there on the web already, O'Reilly should have listed it at slightly lesser cost. In case you are not going to buy, its a 5-star book no doubt.

I am relatively new to creating data visualizations, so I was very curious to see what kinds of ways I could express data by reading about what experts do. Beautiful Visualization is an excellent resource, mostly for those who are not novices like myself, but regardless, is a wonderful learning tool. The chapters are written by different people, each with different methodologies and tools that they use to visualize data. Several chapters include sample code or suggested applications you can use to create visualizations, most of them open source. A key thread throughout the course of this book is using visualization to tell stories that may not otherwise be told or realized by simple data evaluation.

As a software developer, I often struggle with how to best present data to a user in a meaningful way. This book explores a variety of scenarios and datasets, and, how people far smarter than I created unique ways to express that data in new and interesting ways. One of the best parts of this book is the explanations of what worked and what didn't, and the principles behind creating visualizations that express concepts cleanly and concisely. If you have any interest in this field, I can't recommend this book highly enough. Fantastic, useful information.

You'd think that a book that calls itself "beautiful", would understand the basics of graphics DTP and printing. Sadly this book is marred by extensive use of raster images instead of vector ones, making edges fuzzy, text annotations practically illegible in many cases, and even blacks are most often composite (ie ugly brown made up of CMY instead of proper K). The layout people have clearly tried to up the quality by increasing the pixel density, but the graphics are disappointingly ugly due to this basic error. Moreover many charts are printed far too small, making text practically illegible, and certainly unpleasant to read. Many essays appear to have been thrown together from computer screen-based presentation raw materials, which just do not cut it in print. I was hoping this book might look something like the truly "beautiful" Tufte books. No.

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