Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic
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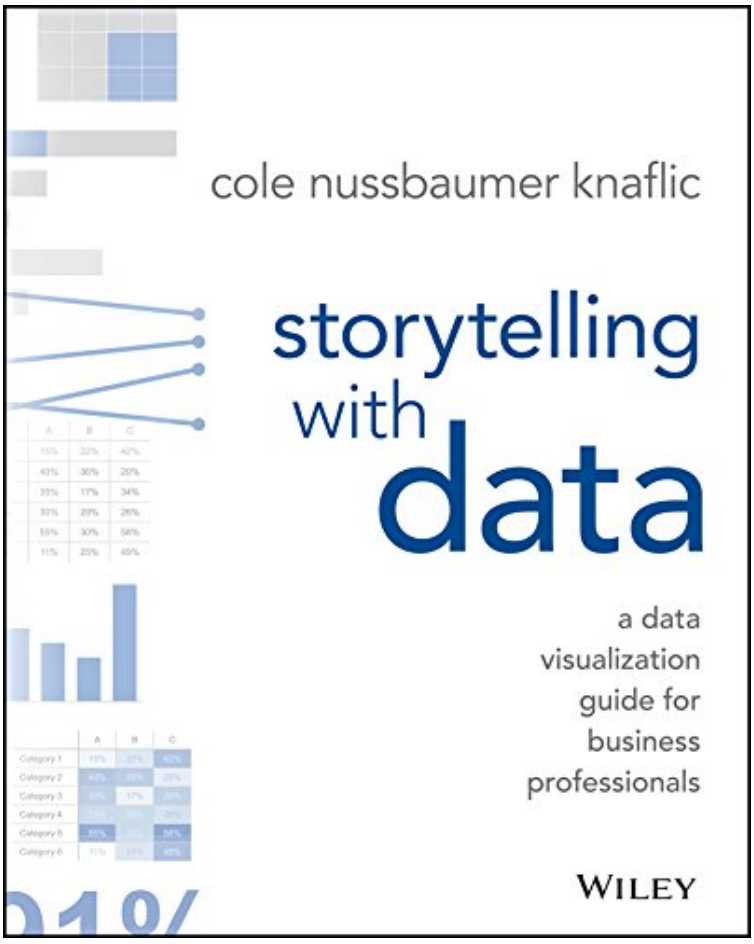

#17857 in eBooks 2015-10-07 2015-10-07File Name: B016DHQSM2 | File size: 56.Mb

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic : Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals:

102 of 107 people found the following review helpful. a worthwhile book that does well what it tries to doBy Nick CoxPeople wanting a basic introduction to presentation graphics would bewell served by this book by Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic. Prerequisites areminimal: there is almost no mathematical content and no use of any butthe most elementary statistical methods. Knaflic's encouraging messageis that MS Excel and PowerPoint can be quite enough software for goodgraphics, but you will need to go beyond the defaults and work at thedetails.Almost all the examples are of very small datasets already to hand withtwo-way structure. 2 variables for 12 months and 5 products for 7 yearsare typical sizes. In practice when analysing data it can be hard workdeciding what methods to use and reducing a mass of raw data to aconcise summary. These steps, sometimes most of a project, are hereassumed already done.The subtitle flags a focus on "business professionals"; the contenttactfully implies junior people presenting with

PowerPoint totime-challenged bosses at brief meetings. Seemingly few write reports tobe read any more, or use any other presentation software.Knaflic is excellent on the need to keep things simple. She has a goodeye and sound logic on what looks and works well and what does not.Examples show how mediocre graphs can be improved by reducing clutter,killing the key, better use of color, and similar standard tricks.Horizontal bar charts are usually more readable than vertical, and piecharts and a false third dimension are best avoided: these points havebeen well made many times, yet do deserve forceful repetition. Variouskinds of bar and line charts are her main work-horses.Sometimes the discussion seems a little contrived, as poor graphs areset up to be shot down, but that's often what convinces. Readers shouldbe on the author's side as she encourages us towards effective andtasteful graphics. Her combinations of blue for data deserving emphasisand grey for data providing context -- or of blue and orange for groupsto contrast -- are good design patterns for experienced analysts as wellas outright beginners.The closing chapters are more long-winded and repetitive, but do includesmall gems. A splendid case study on avoiding spaghetti graphics (lotsof tangled lines) stands out, and the problem and the ideas deservedmore.I always find it disappointing when datasets are fabricated orsufficiently anonymous that they might as well be. People care mostabout their own data which an author cannot provide, and confidentialityconstraints often bite, but real data examples are still generallypreferable to fake. Too many examples here are variants on Products A toE or Features A to O. Unfortunately an outrageous example of a barchart from a well-known U.S. television news network (p.50) seems alltoo real.What's not here includes Cleveland dot charts, histograms and box plotseven among the staples of good introductory statistics courses, letalone (say) use of logarithmic scale, always one of the first graphicaldevices for many sciences. So if you want something with morestatistical bite or depth, you need to look elsewhere. Naomi Robbins'excellent, no nonsense Creating more effective graphshttp://www..com/Creating-Effective-Graphs-Naomi-Robbins/dp/0985911123would enable you to go further.As in any first edition there are some small slips and exaggeratedclaims. 40% is not a majority (p.5). There is confusion between numberand percentage on p.39. Any rule that "bar charts must have a zerobaseline" (p.52) is simplistic. It is quite correct that bar chartsshould encode departures from some sensible reference level. (Thetelevision network responsible should have paid attention.) But thatreference level could easily be some value not zero, such as paritybetween men and women, or the mean of a variable, or 32 degreesFahrenheit to separate freezing and non-freezing temperatures. Idisagree that every dollar amount or percent should be labeled as such(p.90); that is repetitive clutter such as Knaflic rightly deplores. Noris it an absolute principle that every axis needs a title. If the axislabels are 2008 to 2015, no one should need "Year" to explain what ishappening. Far from being "extremely rare" (p.141), several exceptionsto that principle are included in this book!A note on style: Inside a very useful book is an even more usefulshorter book struggling to get out. For my taste, the motivationalwarm-ups and little anecdotes are often too spun-out or too trite. Goodgraphics should be presented as illustrations within a good story: a keypoint, but not one that required a long chapter with digressions on RedRiding Hood or on Aristotle on drama, or advice from a junior highschool teacher. A tighter copy-editor would have signalled that"leverage" (used as a verb about 70 times) was too much of a personalfavorite, while "de-emphasize" for "tone down", "utilize" for "use" and"incredible" for things all too credible are among several otherrepeated tics.An easy solution is to skip and skim: if a book is on graphics, you canalways just look at the graphics. In this case, Knaflic has written aworthwhile book that, small details aside, does well what it tries todo.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Insightful and goes to the pointBy P. BrassardThis is an extremely insightful book on storytelling with data. I've been leading software development teams for 25+ years (Java, .NET, Mainframe, Mini, Client/Server, WEB, etc.) and with the emergence of BI, big data and analytics, visualization represents a key element to the discipline. This book is extremely well laid out, concise, provide the right amount information and above all, fun to read. The information is logically presented and well detailed. I've read many many books in my career, this one being by far the most insightful, well presented and easiest to read. It will definitely be my go to reference in the future. One thing is sure, I will never again look at charts the same way. Kudos!!!4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A must-read for anyone sharing data!By Susan BaierThis is a beautifully written, helpful book that no data vizzer (amateur or pro) should be without. Knaflic touches on key elements of producing not just an informative visualization, but one that truly engages the audience and helps them immediately see the story it tells. The book is an easy read and full of very helpful "before" and "after" visualizations that really drive her points home and are practical regardless of the platform you're using to share your data -- from Excel to Tableau and beyond. I read the whole book in an hour and immediately went to work incorporating her recommendations into a visualization being prepared for a client. The end result was cleaner, more aesthetically pleasing and did a better job telling the data's story. A must read.

Don't simply show your datamdash;tell a story with it! Storytelling with Data teaches you the fundamentals of data visualization and how to communicate effectively with data. You'll discover the power of storytelling and the way to make data a pivotal point in your story. The lessons in this illuminative text are grounded in theory, but made accessible through numerous real-world examplesmdash;ready for immediate application to your next graph or presentation. Storytelling is not an inherent skill, especially when it comes to data visualization, and the tools at our disposal don't make it any easier. This book demonstrates how to go beyond conventional tools to reach the root of

your data, and how to use your data to create an engaging, informative, compelling story. Specifically, you'll learn how to: Understand the importance of context and audience Determine the appropriate type of graph for your situation Recognize and eliminate the clutter clouding your information Direct your audience's attention to the most important parts of your data Think like a designer and utilize concepts of design in data visualization Leverage the power of storytelling to help your message resonate with your audience Together, the lessons in this book will help you turn your data into high impact visual stories that stick with your audience. Rid your world of ineffective graphs, one exploding 3D pie chart at a time. There is a story in your datamdash;Storytelling with Data will give you the skills and power to tell it!

"In Storytelling with Data, Cole has created an of-the-moment complement to the work of data visualization pioneers like Edward Tufte. She's worked at and with some of the most data-driven organizations on the planet as well as some of the most mission-driven, data-free institutions. In both cases, she's helped sharpen their messages, and their thinking." mdash;Laszlo Bock, SVP of People Operations, Google, Inc. and author ofnbsp;Work Rules!From the Back Coverpraise for storytelling with data "Storytelling with Data is a superbly written, masterful display of rare art in the business world. Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic possesses a unique abilitymdash;a giftmdash;in telling a story through data. At JPMorgan Chase, she has helped improve our capabilities to explain complicated analysis to executive management and the regulators with whom we work. Cole's book brings her talents together in an easy-to-read guide with excellent examples that anyone can learn from to encourage smarter decision-making." mdash;Mark R. Hillis, Chief Risk Officer of Mortgage Banking at JPM Chase "We have so much data that it can be hard to get people to pay attention to our critical findings. Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic taught us valuable lessons in her workshop and it is fantastic to see these expanded upon in Storytelling with Data. My team is already using the lessons Cole teaches to move people to action as they see new pearls of understanding and make a difference in the lives of others. Now others can, too!" mdash;Eleanor Bell, Director of Business Analytics at Bill Melinda Gates Foundation "There is something lovely about being consistent with your own teachings. Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic accomplishes that with her first book. She is an advocate for clarity and concision in visualization, and her book is as clear, concise, and practical as it gets. If you are a beginner in visualization, or if you struggle to produce good charts in your everyday job with tools like Excel, Tableau, Qlik, and the like, this is a great place to start learning the core principles." mdash;Alberto Cairo, Knight Chair in Visual Journalism and Professor of Visualization at the University of Miami, and author of The Functional Art "Data slides are not really about the data, they are about the meaning of the data. Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic understands this and has written a straightforward, accessible guide that will help anyone who communicates with data connect more effectively with their audience." mdash;Nancy Duarte, CEO at Duarte, Inc. and bestselling authorAbout the AuthorCole Nussbaumer Knaflic tells stories with data. She is the author of Storytelling With Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals and writes the popular blog storytellingwithdata.com. Her well-regarded workshops and presentations are highly sought after by data-minded individuals, companies, and philanthropic organizations all over the world.nbsp;Her unique talent was honed over the past decade through analytical roles in banking, private equity, and most recently as a manager on the Google People Analytics team. At Google, she used a data-driven approach to inform innovative people programs and management practices, ensuring that Google attracted, developed, and retained great talent and that the organization was best aligned to meet business needs. Cole traveled to Google offices throughout the US and Europe to teach the course she developed on data visualization. She has also acted as an adjunct faculty member at MICA, where she taught Introduction to Information Visualization.Cole has a BS in Applied Math and an MBA, both from the University of Washington. When she isn't ridding the world of ineffective graphs one pie at a time, she is baking them, traveling, and embarking on adventures with her husband and two young sons in San Francisco.