Assignment 3: Data Visualization for Business Communication

*Due: November 13, 2014 at 9:00 PM as a PDFs*

We have been discussing complexities in representing visual information as they are appropriate for different audiences, purposes, and contexts. For this assignment, you will choose one data set and represent it three times:

1. As a table with raw numerical data
2. As a chart selected from the appropriate Microsoft Excel chart options
3. As an infographic made through [www.easel.ly](http://www.easel.ly)

You will place all three data visualizations in one document (it may be more than one page in length). Each data visualization will need to contain these elements:

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* Table/image sizing that is appropriate for readability.
* A caption that identifies each visualization as “Table 1” or “Image 1” as appropriate (we will go over this in class).
* A paragraph under the visualization and caption that describes the **specific** sort of context, audience, and purpose of using each visualization.

I want to be sure to stress one thing: **This is not an art project.** You will not be graded based on artistic ability or the complexity of your work. The assignment is meant to be a visual representation of data. While design issues such as balance, color choice, and clarity of data and captions will be taken into consideration in evaluation, the “pretty” data visualizations that tells me nothing about the data will be unsuccessful

Readings for the next few class sessions are designed to center on design.

You may choose your own data set, but keep in mind that you will have to conceptualize how you would represent the data in a business context. For example, census information from Estonia may be easy to access, but think about what sort of business writing context you would use that data. You are ultimately writing to those contexts. The data set should be cited at the end of the paper using the citation style of your choice.

You will be evaluated according to the rubric on the next page. For this assignment, keep in mind that the commentary on the data visualizations will be in many ways more important than the visualization itself, as the commentary will give me a sense of how you are thinking about using visualizations.

Remember that your visuals should tell a story, and that the story it tells will probably change depending on your audience.

As always, please email or talk to me about any questions you have about this assignment.

**Grading Rubric: Data Visualization for Business Communication**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Components** | Excellent | Good | Needs Work | Comments | Points awarded |
| **Attention to Prompt (10%)** | 15 14 13  Your visualization includes all of the elements of the prompt. | 12 11.5 11 10.5  Your visualization includes most but not all of the elements of the prompt. | 10 8 6 5  Your visualization does not include the elements listed in the prompt. |  | 15 |
| **Content (40%)** | 60 57 54  Each paragraph deeply explores the role of the data visualization with respect to rhetorical choices you made in composing it. You provide specific points in explaining your choices and demonstrate a deep understanding of the values, wants, and needs of your audience. Moreover, each visualization is appropriate for its identified audience. | 53 50 48 47 44  The visualization and accompanying paragraphs may not offer enough context for your reader to understand your explanation of your design decisions.  The arguments may not be fully understandable for the reader or may not have enough support for the reader to believe your interpretation of your audience or the appropriateness of your design choices. | 43 41 39 35 30  The visualization and paragraph offers only surface level insights into your audience. The reader is left with many questions about your audience’s attitudes, values, wants, and needs.  The claims made in the paragraph are not clear and/or are not well supported. |  | 60 |
| **Visuals (20%)** | 30 29 28  Your visualizations expertly demonstrates best practices of visual design, including balance, proximity, color, alignment, thoughtful use of whitespace, and is generally easy to understand for your intended audience. | 27 26 25  Your visualizations generally demonstrates best practices of visual design, including balance, proximity, color, alignment, thoughtful use of whitespace. There may be some elements of the visualization that may be confusing to audiences | 24 23 22 20  Your visualizations generally lacks best practices of visual design, including balance, proximity, color, alignment, thoughtful use of whitespace. Elements of the visualization are confusing to your intended audiences |  | 30 |
| **Organization / Structure (20%)** | 30 29 28  Your text guides the reader through a progression of ideas and doesn’t repeat itself. Each paragraph makes a distinct point and includes relevant supporting details and examples about your data visualization. Use visual cues to move from one topic to the next such as headers, and readers can make easily find specific information that may seek | 27 26 25  Your text mostly guides the reader through your ideas. However, the relationship between paragraphs and the main points of the visualizations may not be fully clear and/or there may be some repetition. | 24 23 22 20  The progression of the document is confusing to a reader. |  | 30 |
| **Writing Style (10%)** | 15 14 13  The style and tone are appropriate to the genre and rhetorical situation. | 12 11.5 11 10.5  The style and tone somewhat matches the genre and the rhetorical situation. | 10 8 6 5  The style and tone do not match the genre, rhetorical situation or assignment. |  | 15 |
| **Ethos** (bonus points)  **(0%, up to 3 bonus)** | +3  There are no errors in proofreading, grammar, punctuation, or usage, which contributes to a positive ethos. | +1 There are very few errors in proofreading, grammar, punctuation, or usage. | 0  The number of surface errors is very distracting, severely affecting one’s ethos, and interferes with the reader’s comprehension of the text. |  | 0 |
| Total points awarded out of 150 | | | | | 150 |