Presenting Data

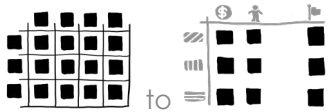
How to Engage with Data

Course Summary

Making Presentations

REDUCE

Use the right tools



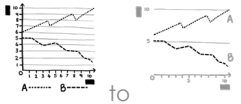
CUT
Remove all that you can: tertiary data, excess guide lines, repeating marks (e.g. "%"), significant figures (the brain likes 2 sig.figs if possible).

GREY-OUT
Define what is secondary or just for reference – grey that out.

PUSH & PULL
Get things to compare close together, and distance the rest.

TAG
Use colour and shape intuitively communicate categories of things. Consider adding icons (e.g. flags, brand logos) to speed up recognition.

The same principles apply for charts and graphs.

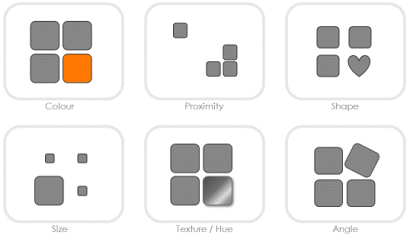


SPOTLIGHT

Diminish everything else

Don't just make the highlighted data **bolder**!
Instead make the everything else lighter.

Pinpoint through differences eyes will notice



Switch spotlights on and off

SHINE
Add highlights to exact spots before switching off to see everything equally again.

TRAFFIC LIGHT
Colour mark data sets – again remember the lights can change.

TRACKTHRU

Walk through 4 Steps:

1. Q 2. □ 3. # 4. !

Q QUESTION
State the question the data is looking to answer.

□ FRAME
Describe the source of the data – explain what real things are being counted.
Orientate the audience around the data table/chart.

 # DATA
Share the data, including highlighting the most interesting and relevant data points.

! CONCLUSION
Express a clear conclusion from the data.

This will take longer to present, but it will be much clearer for the audience to follow.

UNCOVER

Turn data into a puzzle

Don't spoon feed your best data – make the audience do some of the work. Puzzles, rhetorical questions, group discussions, etc.?

Hide the element that you want them most to focus on – e.g. hide the conclusion if you want the most focus on the conclusion.

"Hat Questions" or "Porsche Questions"

HAT QUESTIONS when you want to keep control – e.g. *"do you expect to see an upturn or a downturn in the last period?"*

PORSCHE QUESTIONS when you want to maximise engagement – e.g. *"What do believe has driven this upturn in data?"*

Story tricks

- PERSONALISE HIGHLIGHTS: share curiosities, examples, etc.
- INCLUDE WRONG TURNS: share some data that failed to answer your question. This will add weight to the data that does.

Book List

Here are some books that Richard recommends, associated with the ideas shared:

Visual Display of Quantitative Information

Edward R. Tufte, Graphics Press, (2001)

The main volume on principals for effective visual communication of data, famous amongst students (geeks) in this area. A little heavy on theory at times, and it takes a while to get to the clear simple principals, but gold dust.

Guide To Information Graphics

Dona M. Wong, Norton, (2010)

From The Wall Street Journal, this is a really excellent and direct way to learn the fundamentals of laying out tables and graphs. Full of very practical advice.

DataStory – Explain Data and Inspire Action Through Story

Nancy Duarte, Ideapress (2019)

All of Duarte's books are worth reading. This one goes heavier on the principles of telling a story with data rather than on how to lay the data out itself. Especially useful if you are presenting to very senior people as a lot that she explores is for these situations.

How To Lie With Statistics

Darrell Huff, Penguin (1954)

An ancient classic, read this to understand what NOT to do (and to spot bad examples from others). You learn quite a lot of good practice by seeing the bad practice. It is an old book, but the principles still hold.

Back of a Napkin

Dan Roam, O Reilly (2008)

This is a lot about visualisation, but at its heart it is giving you a process to form clear messages and ideas.

The Non-Designer's Design Book

Robin Williams

I learnt a huge amount about whitespace and layout through this foundational book.