DATAcated® Visual Best Practices Checklist

The *DATAcated® Visual Best Practices Checklist* is meant to be used as a guide for the development of effective data visualization.

GENERAL

Visualization highlights the key takeaway

- ❑ The data visualization is designed with your specific **audience** in mind
- ❑ **Chart type** is appropriate for the data – e.g. use a line chart for demonstrating trends over time
- ❑ Objects **work together** to **clearly highlight a finding** or takeaway message
- ❑ Limit the use of **complex 'fancy' charts** to avoid confusing or misleading your audience – keep it simple

LAYOUT

Strategic arrangement of elements can make a data visualization easier to interpret

- ❑ The **number of charts** in the view is limited to four
- ❑ **Proper use of real estate;** the more important elements in the view should take up more space
- ❑ **Chart axes** should start at 0 (unless there's a specific need to alter)
- ❑ The **spaces between X & Y axis intervals** should be even and they should be clearly labeled.
- ❑ Data is displayed in a **logical order** (e.g. chronological, magnitude, etc.)
- ❑ Ensure proper **sizing of elements** in the visualization (avoid scroll-bars, or scrunched up charts)

TEXT

Titles, labels, annotations, and other text forms help communicate your message

- ❑ Short and **descriptive title** in the upper-left corner
- ❑ **Annotations** highlight specific data points, as needed
- ❑ All **text is horizontal**
- ❑ **Font type** is consistent and legible
- ❑ **Font size** is hierarchical and readable
- ❑ **Acronyms** are defined

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FORMAT

Removing unnecessary elements in the view can significantly improve its quality and impact

- ❑ **Gridlines** are not present or muted (light gray)

- ❑ Redundant **borders** are removed

- ❑ **Axes tick marks** are used with appropriate spacing

- ❑ Values are formatted to a suitable **level of precision** (round up) and apply applicable display units (e.g. thousands, currency)

- ❑ **Currency symbols** are used, when applicable

- ❑ **Graphs are 2 dimensional;** avoid 3D or shape bevels

- ❑ Any **icons or images** are used to support interpretation

- ❑ **Data legends** (color, size, or shape) are positioned near the relevant data and used sparingly

COLOR

Proper use of color will help tell your data story; while a poor one will confuse or distract your audience

- ❑ Color is used to **highlight key patterns** and guides the viewer

- ❑ **Supporting data is muted** (light gray)

- ❑ Patterns are still viewable when **printed in black and white**

- ❑ **Color scheme** is intentional (e.g. in line with brand)

- ❑ Color is legible for people with **colorblindness**

- ❑ **Culture**-laden color connotations have been considered

- ❑ Not more than **5 colors** are used in the visualization

- ❑ **Consistent color** is used for same variables

- ❑ **Gradient diverging color** palette is not used for categorical data nor for background

- ❑ Sufficient **contrast** exists to ensure readability

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