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Visual And Statistical Thinking: Displays Of Evidence For Making Decisions

Synopsis
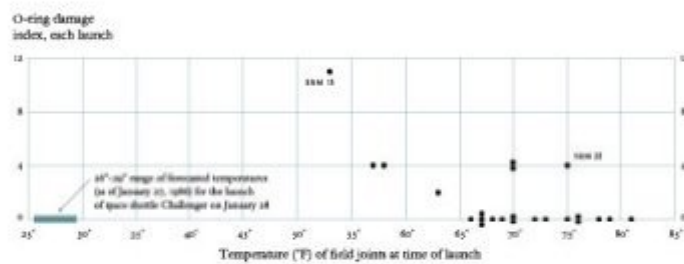
This booklet reprints chapter 2 of Visual Explanations by the same author, analyzing a cholera epidemic in London in 1854 and the evidence used to decide to launch the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. Topics include cause and effect, data errors and credibility, evidence selection, and statistical graphics. For teaching data analysis and evidence in excision making.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Just a note that this is a reprint of Chapter 2 of Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative, just so Tufte fans aren't thinking they're getting something not seen before.(Space shuttle and cholera epidemic examples.)

Edward Tufte has written 3 big, justifiably famous and well liked books. They're also beautiful and expensive. This is really a booklet, a reprint of a chapter of one of his books, and is a great way to get started on the way he thinks. It explores how graphics were used to track down the source of a cholera epidemic in London -- and how bad chart-making and graphics could have led to the wrong conclusion. The second example in this excerpt explores the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger. In this absorbing example, Tufte takes the 13 pages of (badly organized) data that the engineers debated on the night before the space shuttle was scheduled to blast off. Tufte first tears apart the charts, and demonstrates why even though the engineers reached the right conclusion (don't launch), why the data was presented so badly that NASA overruled them (resulting in the Challenger explosion). Then, Tufte rearranges the same data into a couple of clear graphic displays

that demonstrate they clearly had enough data to demonstrate that the launch of the Challenger was clearly occurring at grave risk. A great example of clear thinking at work.OK, so maybe great graphics won't save the world. But this is a good, well priced introduction into Tufte's line of thinking. If you think you might like his stuff, buy this; get hooked; buy the big books.

Rather than a new work, this is actually Chapter 2 of "Visual Explanations, Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative," and I wish it had been represented as such on the cover. The graphics are his least inspiring. Nevertheless, anything by Edward R. Tufte is bound to be brilliant, so I give this one five stars. As for his other books, there aren't enough stars. My favorite: "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information."

"This booklet ... reproduces chapter 2 of my recent book Visual Explanations ..." (quote from the first page).The material is outstanding, as is all of Tufte's, but I was very disappointed to pay for something I already had.

This is a 31 page pamphlet reproducing chapter 2 of Tufte's 1997 "Visual Explanation:images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative". It contains two case studies: doing it right illustrated by John Snow's famous Cholera investigation and doing it wrong showing charts used to determine the ill-fated challenger accident (could almost be renamed as an example of liing with charts what what to suspect).Production values are unusually high (which we'd expect from Tufte) with heavy paper, well printed, excellent illustration and color pictures. The pages are large 8.5"x11". The only thing I'm concerned about is the durability of the cover pages (paper back).Two really good eamples, one good/one bad, of the use of charts.Low price, 5 stars.

Chapter Two as a separate reprint fits perfectly with teaching a one-week topic in an editing class. In my "Editing for Science and Technology" class at George Washington University Center for Professional Education, my students and I found the booklet ideal for homework and discussion. The students, mostly working professionals, perked up more than usual when we took on Tufte's examples and ideas. I recommend it without reservation.

In "Visual & Statistical Thinking", Edward Tufte (a professor at Yale University, where he teaches statistical evidence and information design), provides two case study-like topics that explores how graphs and images provide better decision making. This clearly written booklet reiterates his focus

on his other books: (1) The task in making decisions based on evidence is understanding how thing work (cause and effect), and (2) making decisions based on evidence requires appropriate display of that evidence. Good charts and images help reveal knowledge relevant to making informed decisions.This booklet was a required text for a knowledge management course. I recommend this and all his books if you are an information architect, web designer, graphic artist, or anyone who works with providing and displaying data and information to others. Well worth the $$$

A very good book on a fairly obscure but very important subject. Being able to effectively communicate numerical/statistical information in a graphical way is far more art and aethetics, than science. Anyone who uses charts and graphs to convey important information should get this book. In other works by Tufte, he shows how proper use of explaining critical numerical information could have stopped the Space Shuttle from launching on a cold morning which eventually led to it exploding shortly after tackoff in 1987 - due to an o-ring failing to seal properly. A fascinating read that reveals how important graphs are to making sense of numerical data.

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