

A History of Data Visualization & Graphic Communication

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Product Description

A comprehensive history of data visualization—its origins, rise, and effects on the ways we think about and solve problems. With complex information everywhere, graphics have become indispensable to our daily lives. Navigation apps show real-time, interactive traffic data. A color-coded map of exit polls details election balloting down to the county level. Charts communicate stock market trends, government spending, and the dangers of epidemics. *A History of Data Visualization and Graphic Communication* tells the story of how graphics left the exclusive confines of scientific research and became ubiquitous. As data visualization spread, it changed the way we think. Michael Friendly and Howard Wainer take us back to the beginnings of graphic communication in the mid-seventeenth century, when the Dutch cartographer Michael Florent van Langren created the first chart of statistical data, which showed estimates of the distance from Rome to Toledo. By 1786 William Playfair had invented the line graph and bar chart to explain trade imports and exports. In the nineteenth century, the golden age of data display, graphics found new uses in tracking disease outbreaks and understanding social issues. Friendly and Wainer make the case that the explosion in graphical communication both reinforced and was advanced by a cognitive revolution: visual thinking. Across disciplines, people realized that information could be conveyed more effectively by visual displays than by words or tables of numbers. Through stories and illustrations, *A History of Data Visualization and Graphic Communication* details the 400-year evolution of an intellectual framework that has become essential to both science and society at large.