

Beyond PDFs: Visualizing your Data

Friday morning 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

NNIP Partners produce many high-quality reports and products, but even in 2018 the most common way that these are disseminated is via printed reports and online PDFs. That said, many Partners are moving beyond the PDF model and using their neighborhood data to create their own visualizations that enhance the overall project. Visualizations can seem intimidating, and for good reason! There are more than 250 tools out there that promise to help you visualize data. The overwhelming number of choices can make data visualization look like a big investment. Partners need to figure out which software to buy, then spend time learning the tools. There's also the question of whether it's easier to simply hire a contractor and outsource the work. Recently, NNIP HQ sent a survey to Partners to assess the data visualization landscape across the network. With the data we obtained, we narrowed down the list of 250+ tools into a much more manageable one that is highly relevant to the work of NNIP Partners.

The purpose of this session is to share the results of our data visualization survey and showcase two partners who are using data visualization tools that are low-cost and relatively low-effort.

Rob Pitingolo from the Urban Institute will moderate the panel and discussion. He will introduce the topic and then present his own data visualization to show the results of the survey. The presenters will provide information about: what visualization they did, who it helped, and how you can make one yourself.

Jie Wu from Rice University will describe a data visualization created using Esri's Story Maps tool and how they used the tool in combination with neighborhood data to tell a story about the Houston metro area. Esri customers have access to Story Maps, even if they rarely use ArcGIS Online.

Laura Simmons from University of North Carolina Charlotte will describe how the Urban Institute uses Tableau to create maps, charts and other visualizations using neighborhood data in the Charlotte metro area.

After the formal presentations, Rob Pitingolo will lead discussion with the panelists and audience for the last 20 minutes of the session. Please share your own experiences and chime in with your tips for data visualizations!

Discussion:

- How can NNIP Partners work together to share knowledge and resources?
- What's the first thing a complete beginner should do when trying to tackle data visualization?
- At what point is it worth it to skip the low-effort visualization tools and hire a pro for your project?

Resources:

250+ data visualization tools. <http://www.visualisingdata.com/resources/>

Blogs and blog posts:

- Tableau Good Enough to Great: A Quick Guide for Better Data Visualizations. <https://www.tableau.com/asset/good-enough-great-quick-guide-better-data-visualizations>
- Evergreen Data: <http://stephanieevergreen.com>
- FlowingData: <https://flowingdata.com>
- PolicyViz: <https://policyviz.com>
- Storytelling with Data: <http://www.storytellingwithdata.com>
- Ann K Emery: <http://annkemery.com>

Chart inspiration:

- Data Viz Project: <http://datavizproject.com>
- Xenographics: <https://xeno.graphics>