Dataviz for Philanthropists
How to Communicate Better with Charts

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The Chart Checklist: 5 Steps to Improve Any Chart

1   **Select your story.** Choose 1 finding (of many possible options) to highlight.

2   **Reduce the clutter.** Remove or reduce the border, grid lines, & tick marks.

3   **Directly label.** Lose the legend—place details right next to the data.

4   **Emphasize key findings with color**. Guide the reader's eye with your action color.

**5**   **Summarize your story in the headline**. Add a caption when more details are needed.

Before	After
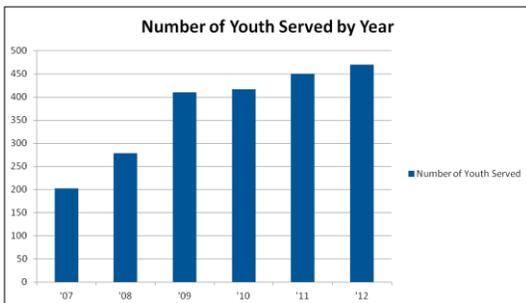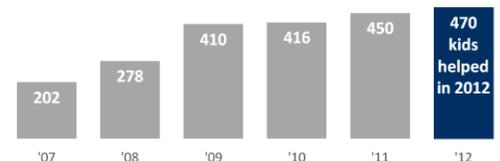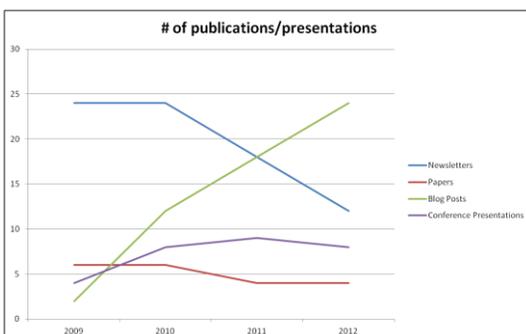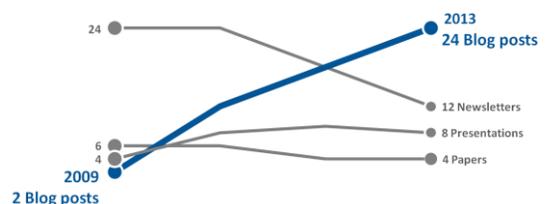
Am I Doing It Right? Two Tests

- **The Squint Test:** Squint your eyes so that you're peering at the chart through your eyelashes and everything seems a little blurry. Can you see the shape or pattern of the data? If not, revisit Step 1 (remove clutter by removing or lightening the border and grid lines).

- **The Significant Other Test:** Give a draft of your chart to a significant other or coworker. Ask, "tell me what you've learned from this chart." If they hesitate more than 5 seconds, or their story doesn't align with your intended story, revisit Steps 2-4. For example, you may need to work on your headline and annotations.

Resources

Excellent multi-purpose dataviz tools
- **Excel:** Nearly all of the graphics from this presentation were made in Excel. Free tutorials at annkemery.com/excel.
- **Tableau Public**: Careful—your datasets become publicly available when uploaded.
- **R**: Prior programming experience needed.

Making specific chart types
- **Social network maps** with nodeXL: 4-step tutorial at slideshare.net/j_morariu/sna-twitter-nodexleval13
- **US and state maps**: presentationmagazine.com/editable-maps
- **Color advice for maps**: colorbrewer2.org
- **Bar charts:** slideshare.net/annkemery/ann-emery-barcharts
- **Side-by-side bar charts:** annkemery.com/side-by-side-solution
- **Diverging stacked bar charts:** annkemery.com/diverging-solution
- **Small multiples:** annkemery.com/small-multiples-solution
- **Dot plots**: slideshare.net/annkemery/ann-emery-dotplots
- **Circle charts**: annkemery.com/circle-chart-solution

Books
- **The Visual Display of Quantitative Information** by Edward Tufte
- **Designing with the Mind in Mind** by Jeff Johnson

Blogs
- storytellingwithdata.com by Cole Nussbaumer
- stephanieevergreen.com/blog by Stephanie Evergreen
- policyviz.com by Jon Schwabish
- annkemery.com/blog (look for the dataviz challenges)

Twitter (#dataviz)
- @PostGraphics
- @NYTgraphics
- @WSJgraphics
- … and many more: twitter.com/AnnKEmery/lists/dataviz

Inspiration and examples
- thumbsupviz.com or @thumbsupviz