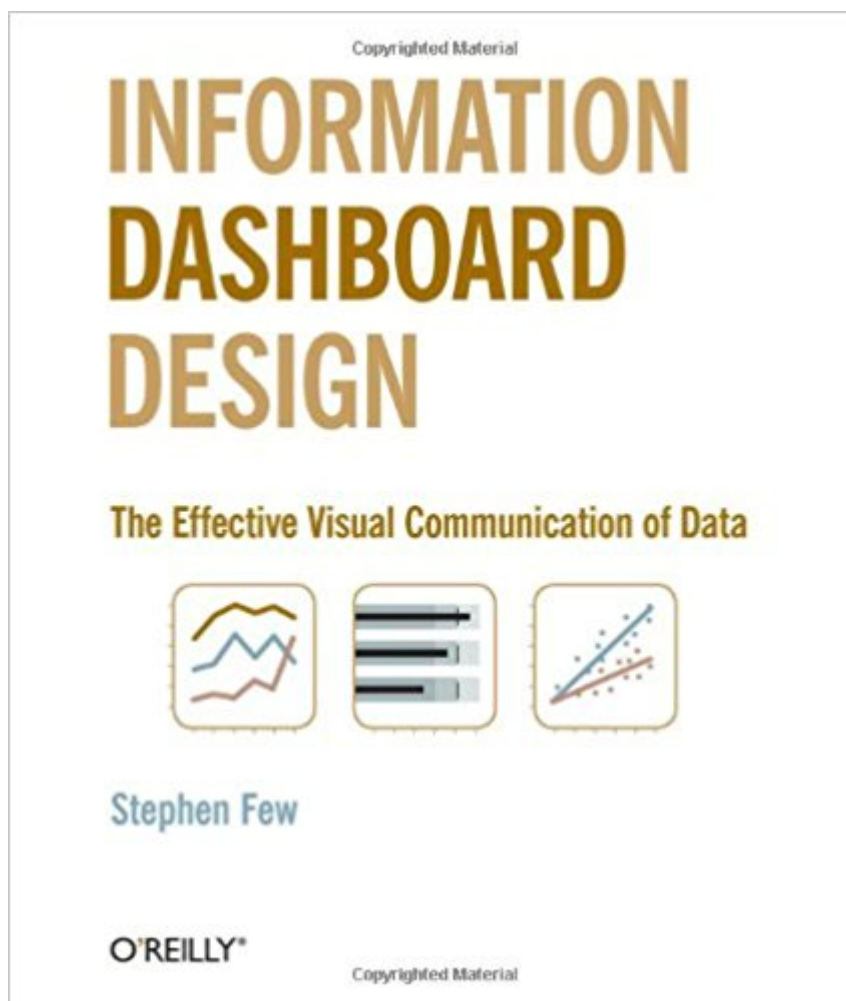




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Information Dashboard Design: The Effective Visual Communication Of Data



Synopsis

Dashboards have become popular in recent years as uniquely powerful tools for communicating important information at a glance. Although dashboards are potentially powerful, this potential is rarely realized. The greatest display technology in the world won't solve this if you fail to use effective visual design. And if a dashboard fails to tell you precisely what you need to know in an instant, you'll never use it, even if it's filled with cute gauges, meters, and traffic lights. Don't let your investment in dashboard technology go to waste. This book will teach you the visual design skills you need to create dashboards that communicate clearly, rapidly, and compellingly. Information Dashboard Design will explain how to:

- Avoid the thirteen mistakes common to dashboard design
- Provide viewers with the information they need quickly and clearly
- Apply what we now know about visual perception to the visual presentation of information
- Minimize distractions, cliches, and unnecessary embellishments that create confusion
- Organize business information to support meaning and usability
- Create an aesthetically pleasing viewing experience
- Maintain consistency of design to provide accurate interpretation
- Optimize the power of dashboard technology by pairing it with visual effectiveness

Stephen Few has over 20 years of experience as an IT innovator, consultant, and educator. As Principal of the consultancy Perceptual Edge, Stephen focuses on data visualization for analyzing and communicating quantitative business information. He provides consulting and training services, speaks frequently at conferences, and teaches in the MBA program at the University of California in Berkeley. He is also the author of *Show Me the Numbers: Designing Tables and Graphs to Enlighten*.

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Customer Reviews

Stephen FewÃ Â is the author ofÃ Â Show Me the Numbers: Designing Tables and Graphs to EnlightenÃ Â (2004),Ã Â Information Dashboard Design: The Effective Visual Communication of DataÃ Â (2006), andÃ Â Now You See It: Simple Visualization Techniques for Quantitative AnalysisÃ Â (2009). Stephen is recognized as a world leader in the field of data visualization and he has worked for more than 25 years as an information technology innovator, educator, and consultant. As the principal of the consultancy Perceptual Edge, he focuses on practical uses of data visualization to explore, analyze, and present quantitative information. He also teaches in the MBA program at the University of California, Berkeley.

I bought this book a few weeks ago, and I know of the previous work about the matter by Dr. Stephen Few. I am a great fan of him because of Bullet Graph conception. He also drives and manages a blog, Perceptual Edge, that teaches you tons of examples about how to do and how-not-to do everything involved in BI Dashboard creation. I have to say this book is a good resource in case you are to design and develop a BI Dashboard. There are many books out there related to design and to Data Visualization. This book is not about Data Visualization ONLY. I am saying this because I've read some reviews that state this book has somehow too many pages for such a small topic. I personally don't think so. Designing a BI Dashboard is not the same as designing a web board or simply a common dashboard. The topic is deep enough to deserve a whole book, maybe more. And this one is all about the BI Dashboard Interface. If you plan to develop such a dashboard, you cannot rely only on this book, but you sure will need it to learn how to deal to the basic and more intricate secrets about how to visualize BI information. You will need to know about how to choose KPIs, how to choose between many visualizations regarding KPIs, and so forth. But you will also need this book. The book is wonderfully designed. The fonts, the background colors, everything on it makes you think about how much care you can take when editing a book. Highly recommended, but only if you have to deal with BI information, not ANY information that you need to visualize.

Information Dashboard Design is an excellent book that is published consistent to what it preaches. The book itself is a delight which is easy on the eyes to read, with clear and vivid colored illustrations and a generous layout that is designed to bring the message of effective communication

across efficiently. The content itself is full of excellent insight on data visualization, and Stephen Few's wisdom in the field shines through flawlessly in manner of both form and content. This book, however, would've been excellent if for one significant literary flaw -- and that is the manner by which Stephen Few kinda whines through the whole book. While I appreciate the method by which ineffective dashboard designs are illustrated to give the reader an idea of how common flawed dashboard designs are, a good chunk of chapter 1, the whole of chapter 3, a few bits of chapters 5 and 7, and just when I thought it was over -- the first half of chapter 8, had been used illustrating bad dashboard design and why things went wrong. While I do appreciate that there is a concerted effort here in terms of education via repetition, you do get that feeling that the book is also quite repetitive ugly dashboard design. That being said it remains to be an excellent book, and is an invaluable resource for the study of effective data visualization and communication.

I didn't really have a clue what an "information dashboard" was when I first looked at this book. Rather, it was the subtitle - "the effective visual communication of data" - and a few positive customer reviews that convinced me to add it to my list of 10 or so books to use to teach myself the foundations of information design. I'm glad I got this book because, although most of the principles introduced are similar to those found in Tufte's *Envisioning Information*, this book applies these principles in possibly the most challenging situation imaginable. Information dashboards are incredibly complex and the challenge of creating one is fascinating. Imagine pulling together a dozen (or several dozen) very different daily business performance indicators all onto a single screen that doesn't immediately make you cringe, scratch your head, feel dizzy or desire to close the window as quickly as possible. And the real trick? The charts on information dashboards, unlike their print and PDF cousins, update in real time. Think jumping line charts, blinking lights, popup alerts. Discussing how to create an effective graph or diagram is one thing, but in my opinion managing a menagerie of performance indicators for some of the most time-pressed (and not always the most tech-loving) people on the planet - senior managers of large corporations - is a very unique challenge. Most valuable part of the book in my opinion is the sample dashboards at the end - engaging and pleasant to the eye. Kudos to this author! This book is definitely in the top 3 of the ones I've read so far on this topic.

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