Show it Off- Visualization Facts & Tips

Why is information visualization important? It helps us think about and understand data! It provides insight into data which can help with decision making or information discovery. Data visualization does not require computers or technology, but computers and technology can often improve visualization. Visualization styles can range from basic or practical to artsy and beautiful.

Here are some things to consider when it's time to visualize your data. First think about the type of data, the size or amount of data, and the complexity of the data. Is it a simple time series with a few data points, or is it a large and complex dataset with several types of data? Next, think about the information you want to convey, or information that you need to extract from the data. What is the story you want to tell? Finally, you need to think about who you are presenting the data to. Who is your audience? Will they understand the terms and components you selected for the visualization?

Data visualization tips:
- Use color, shading, and patterns carefully and intentionally- remember that your viewers could be color blind or have other visual impairments.
- Avoid using familiar colors in unfamiliar ways. If you use red to represent increases and green to indicate decreases, it might confuse the viewer who is used to red meaning negative and green meaning positive.
- Use consistent scales. If your chart or graph is meant to show the difference between data points, your scale must remain consistent. If your scale is inconsistent, it can cause significant confusion for the viewer.
- Qualitative data tends to be better suited to bar graphs and pie charts, while quantitative data might be best represented in formats like charts and histograms.
- There are LOTS of resources online to help you in your visualization journey! A simple internet search will provide many quality results.