



GNet-AERC Policy Brief Training Workshop

ICT and Development Project
Dec 1-2, 2011 Nairobi, Kenya

PRESENTING COMPLEX DATA VISUALLY: USING WEB-BASED TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR STATISTICS TRAVEL

Data and statistics are a powerful way to communicate development research.

Including data and statistics within research findings can enhance their impact, however, large tables or spreadsheets of numbers take time to decipher and sometimes the true meaning behind the data itself can be misinterpreted.

One option to prevent your data being misread is to **present the figures visually** in the form of charts, graphs or even infographics. This will provide clarification and emphasis to your main points, appeal to a number of learning styles and add impact and interest to your research findings.

There are now a plethora of online tools with which you can visualise data findings in an interesting, accurate and arresting way. Here are some of the best:

- **StatPlanet**: this browser-based interactive data visualization and mapping application allows you to create a wide range of visualizations, from simple Flash maps to more advanced infographics.
<http://www.sacmeq.org/statplanet/>
- **Xtimeline**: allows you to create your own timelines of data.
<http://www.xtimeline.com/index.aspx>
- **Gap Minder**: this site created by **Hans Rosling** allows you to upload data and create an interactive motion charts and graphs.
<http://www.gapminder.org/upload-data/>
- **Many Eyes**: created by **IBM Research** allows you to upload data in a range of very versatile formats.
<http://www-958.ibm.com/software/data/cognos/manyeyes/>

- **Creately**: this is easy to use Online Diagramming software - purpose built for team collaboration.
<http://creately.com/>
- **Google Chart Tools**: this application lets you include constantly changing research data sourced online. Google has also released **Fusion Tables** where you can share, discuss and track your charts and graphs with specific people online.
<http://code.google.com/apis/chart/>
- **Hohli**: this online chart maker is simple to use and allows you to create a range of colourful pie, line, scatter, radar and bar charts.
<http://charts.hohli.com/>
- **Tagcloud**: allows you to upload texts and highlight the most common concepts. The clouds can be exported as images and inserted in a website or power point presentation.
<http://tagcrowd.com/>
- **Wordle**: similar to tagcloud, this application lets you create images out of key phrases and words relevant to your research, great for using in PowerPoint presentations.
<http://www.wordle.net/>
- **Tableau**: a free Windows-only software for creating colourful data visualisations.
<http://www.tableausoftware.com/public/>

To see how other researchers are presenting work in new innovative and visual ways see:

- **Information is Beautiful**: David McCandless, an “**independent data journalist and information designer interested in how designed information can help us understand the world.**”
<http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/>
- **Flowing Data**: This blog explores how “**designers, statisticians and computer scientists are using data to understand ourselves better.**”
<http://flowingdata.com/>
- **Afrographique**: Ivan Colic’s blog “**aims to collect as much data as possible with the aim of presenting the information in an exciting and digestible format to all.**”
<http://afrographique.tumblr.com/>