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Data Visualization: Opening Our Minds by Opening Our Eyes

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ABSTRACT

Vision is by far our most powerful sense. It is so intimately tied to thinking that, when we suddenly understand something, we say "I see." Through graphical representations of data, we can coax the meanings that lurk therein from the shadows into the light. Based on what we now know about visual perception and cognition, we can learn to shift much of the work involved in data analysis and presentation from difficult, time-consuming processes to simple, rapid visual processes. With the help of good software tools designed to support our perceptual abilities and augment our thinking, we can bring numbers alive and tell their stories in compelling ways.

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