TOP TEN LIST

TEN BEST WAYS TO CREATE BAD DATA GRAPHICS

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R.S. Kirby, 1992, updated August 2003

Top Ten List: Ten Best Ways to Create Bad Data Graphics

Number 10
Connecting to the grid, or ‘We’re in the same boat, brother’

Cause a power surge while printing to a high resolution laser printer!
Prominently display your personal recycling symbol to show that you are environmentally friendly. If you don't have one, use your institutional logo instead.

Number 8
A rose is a rose is a rose is . . .

Label all your data points, whether there are a million, or four!
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Number 7
What you get is what you see
If there are fewer than twelve points, graph it anyway!

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Number 6
Graphs should be ten feet tall and bullet-proof
If there are only three points, use lots of bullets!
Number 5
Can you say ‘moiré’?

Patterns, patterns, patterns!

Number 4
Sold by the Pie, Sold by the Slice

No matter what kind of data you have, use a pie chart!
Corollary: no matter what kind of data you don’t have, use a pie chart!
Number 3
Artistic License?

Forget scale: go for effect!
And while you are at it, mislabel both axes.

Number 2
The Power and the Glory of the Multiple
Make 2D into 3D, and 3D into a mini-series!
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Number 1
A Number is Worth a Thousand Pictures

Pay special attention to the over-application of multicolored chart junk!

Be sure the density of irrelevant material far outweighs the six pieces of statistical data on the graph.