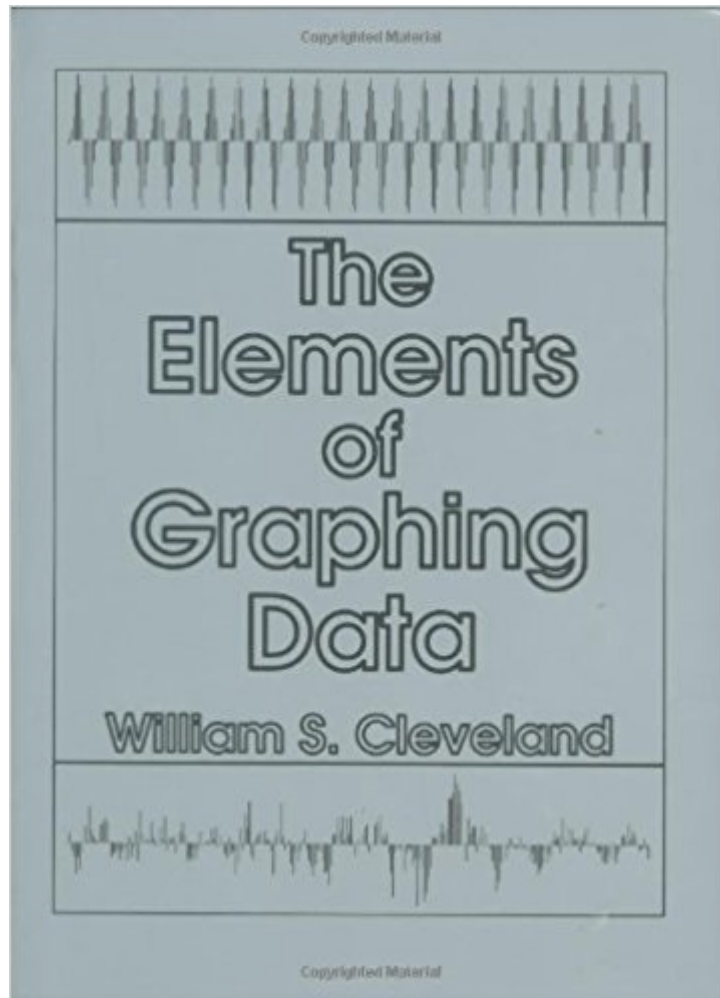




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# **The Elements Of Graphing Data**



## Synopsis

Visualization methods in science and technology. Many new ideas and methods; many not widely known before. Excellent methodological resource for research workers.

## Book Information

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William S. Cleveland is the Shanti S. Gupta Distinguished Professor at Purdue University, and splits his time between the Statistics and Computer Science Departments. Throughout his career, he has worked in research areas --- statistical model building, local machine learning, visualization, time series, and data mining --- that have broadened the scope of research in learning from data. He has developed many methods of visualization, statistics, and machine learning that are widely used throughout the scientific community. Cleveland has published over 100 papers on his research in a wide range of scientific journals, books, and proceedings. His two books, *The Elements of Graphing Data* and *Visualizing Data* have been reviewed in many journals from a wide variety of disciplines, and *Elements* was selected for the Library of Science.

previously borrowed it from lib, then decided to buy it. not like other similar books, which only illustrate big charts but discuss little how to produce them, from this book, i can learn a lot which was ignored before. i even think most latter books just copy its idea, even graphics. especially very helpful to produce academic charts

This classic belongs on the bookshelf of every serious statistician and everyone who considers herself or himself a professional in creating graphics. Nevertheless, it is far from perfect, e.g., in dealing with color. In spite of the fact that a significant number of people (primarily males) have red-green color vision deficiency (color "blindness"), the authors first graphic, which is provided before the title page itself (and therefore is the first thing within the book that the reader sees), uses orange, green, blue, and red with overlapping circles as plot symbols. It's a disaster. A much better plot from the point of view of someone who has red-green color deficiency would have been to have replaced the overlapping circles with smaller but solid bullets (with very few if any jiggled slightly to prevent overlapping). The colors could have been blue, red (but not dark), black, and yellow-orange. There are modern methods on the Net to simulate what graphics look like to people who have color deficiency. However, given the significant number of people with red-green color-vision deficiency, anyone serious about color graphics should easily have at least one such person who can check the appearance of their color graphics. It's not rocket science, just common sense. It seems unthinkable that there would be a book about graphing data that did not discuss color-vision deficiency issues.

Mr. Cleveland takes a topic which sounds very dry and makes it interesting with simple descriptions of methods for displaying quantitative data and illustrations of "do's" and "don'ts". It should be mandatory reading for anyone who is creating charts and graphs for widespread consumption.

Like one of the other reviewers, I first borrowed this book from the library. I read it from cover to cover and realised how much valuable information it contained. I needed to get my own copy to be able to put it into practice. It is also a nice hard covered book, great for bashing my work colleagues (who love pie charts) over the head with.

If you are interested in making scientific plots, or any kinds of statistical graphics for a wide audience, Edward Tufte's series and especially his *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, are indispensable. Reading William S. Cleveland's *The Elements of Graphing Data*, you can see where Tufte drew much of his inspiration, and where he expanded, clarified, and improved upon Cleveland's ideas. Much of this is simply due to advances in computer graphics, personal computers, and printing and display capability - it's been 27 years since Cleveland's book was published, and the WWW didn't even exist then. Cleveland certainly isn't at fault for the technical limits of displays in his day, but for the modern reader and chart-maker, Tufte's work is more instructive and is a better starting point.

William Cleveland clearly describes how data can be presented to great effect. His description of visual perception spell out the "how to's" of graphing data. While many graphing programs are available in today's high technology environment, Cleveland's descriptions of how data can be presented into graphical format is enlightening. The book provides great examples of both superior and poor graphing presentation, focusing on how to encode graphs to allow for straightforward data analysis. "The Elements of Graphing Data" is a must for those who graph scientific data.

Tufte shows you why it's important to do graphs well. Cleveland shows you how. The last quarter of the book details experiments in human visual perception that rank how well we detect certain things: relative angles not on a common baseline (i.e. pie charts) justly come out at the bottom of the list. One of a only handful of books I've labelled "JXH ONLY". If I loan you my copy, know that you are special.

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