

Visualizing Complexity from #vizthink09

Definition

- Many (>3) flavors of information

Challenges

- Few conventions / metaphors:
 - need to convey your language before data
- Too many targets on the page:
 - takes longer to find relevant targets
- Many data flavors:
 - may run out of encoding styles

Solutions

- Understand your user's needs
- Prioritize and minimize what you present
- Use axes to encode or group without adding ink
- Group regions to change initial search scale
- Encode redundantly if possible
- Use appropriate encoding for your data

Encoding	Useful Variations	Ordered
color (hue)	few (20 max)	no
shape	few/medium (icons)	no
line endings (arrows), line patterns	few/medium	no
shading, texture	medium (patterns)	no
brightness (& saturation)	medium	somewhat
size, weight/boldness, etc	medium	somewhat
placement	many	optional
numeric labels	infinite	yes

This is not a complete list, but it covers commonly used properties.