

Hi! Welcome to module 1 part 2. In this I'm going to talk a little bit about when we should use a map to tell a story, and I'm gonna give some examples of when a map shouldn't be a map. So just because data is organized by geography, that doesn't mean it should be displayed geographically.

The first issue that we see about this is when there's a lack of context. This map shows election results in Arkansas, but our readers might not know anything about which counties in Arkansas are which and why they matter and this map doesn't really tell you much of a story some are red some are blue, but what does it mean?

The solution is to do population squares. This political geography treatment provides far more context about why places matter and which ones matter. Using small maps of the state for reference is also a great way to get the geographic point across, but also to tell a deeper story about election maps and population.

Problem number 2 is hidden information. This map shows Chicago city council races that are going to a run off, but it also hides information from the user. Who is going to click on every word to find out which races are going to run off? Not me.

The solution here is a list or table instead that Chicago map could be as simple list of the race is going to run off in which two people are in each race. This table shows the results of a US House race, which is much more complex, but it still works beautifully... or you could display that same information as a scatterplot.

Problem number three is when there's too much data on a map this map shows Uber rides between neighborhoods in San Francisco, but showing relationships and movement between actual places and the real world gets complex really fast. The solution here is small multiples, break the data apart into a lot of little maps. Small multiples are also my personal answer almost every design problem.

Problem number four is that of maps turn into a national population map. This map shows gun deaths since the Newtown elementary school shooting. It's part of a nice presentation, but at the national level the physical location of where shootings happened isn't really the whole story. It just makes for a population map.

The solution here is to use other data points, other points are more important, so use those to tell a story instead. This graphic shows the guns used in mass shootings and how they were obtained. Other options include the age of victims, where the shooting occurred, shootings categorized by place type, like public school or theater.

Problem number five is the wrong data display. The snap went with an investigative story about prison inmates deaths while in custody, but a map of where the prisons are located doesn't really help tell that story. Solution: if it's necessary use a map as a navigation device instead of making it try to carry the whole story and put a face on it. The Florida map was close, it had the faces of inmates, but they were hidden in a few clicks into the presentation.

Problem number six is there's too many key categories. I understand that the laws are really complex and there's a lot going on here in the map and it makes the map pretty difficult to read. A solution: this presentation is much simpler and it puts the most important information, states where pot is legal at the top of the chart.

Problem: sometimes people try to map data that just isn't really geographic. This map shows who move between states as a Voronoi diagram, but crop to the shape of a state. What's on the map really has nothing to do with geography, clearly everyone from the state doesn't live on the edges of the state.

Different state sizes also mean you can't really compare the size of a 61% circle in Texas and a 62% circle in Utah. The solution: these area charts with the same exact data are really easy to read, easy to share and tell each state story and more historic detail.

So in conclusion, you always want to ask should this be a map where journalists and we love to ask questions. This should apply when you're deciding how to visualize data too. Thanks!