Which Graph Should You Choose?

Data visualizations are powerful tools to convey data graphically. Below, we categorize some of the commonly used types, used among varying communication purposes, according to their primary functions.

**Correlation**
Shows relationships (not causation) between 2+ variables.
- Scatterplots
- Bubble Charts
- XY Heatmaps

**Concepts**
Methods that help explain and show ideas or concepts.
- Concept Maps
- Illustration Diagrams
- Venn Diagrams

**Deviation**
Variations (+ or -) based on a fixed point.
- Diverging Bar Graphs
- Diverging Column Graphs
- Deficit/Surplus Area Graphs

**Distribution**
Depicts how often a value occurs and how uniform the data is.
- Histograms
- Boxplots
- Violin Plots

**Flow**
Shows sequence of events, movement or intensity.
- Sankey Graphs
- Flowcharts
- Flow Maps

**Magnitude**
Comparing sizes (whole or relative).
- Radar Graphs
- Ordered Columns/Bars
- Pictograms

**Part-to-whole**
Breaks down a single entity into components.
- Stacked Bars/Columns
- Waffle Charts
- Pie/Donut Charts

**Ranking**
Presents entities in order of importance.
- Ordered Columns/Bars
- Bump Charts
- Lollipop Charts

**Spatial**
Presents patterns in location-based data.
- Choropleth Maps
- Equalized Cartograms
- Point Maps

**Time**
Depicts changing trends and events over time.
- Area Charts
- Line Charts
- Timelines

Want to learn more?
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