Using Data to Help Tell Your Library's Story

WLA Conference 2021

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Session Road Map

What’s the (data) plan?

When to use existing data sources and when to collect novel data?

Existing Data Sources

Demographic Data

1. US Census Data
2. DataUSA
3. GetFacts Wisconsin

Library Data

1. **Public Libraries**
    a. National - IMLS' Public Libraries Survey
    b. State - DPI's Public Library Service Data
2. **Academic and School Libraries**
    a. National - NCES/IPEDS

Community Data

1. **Education Data**
    a. State - DPI Entity
    b. National - NCES
2. **Workforce Data**
    a. State - Department of Workforce Development
    b. National - BLS
3. **Health & Human Services Data**
    a. State - HHS Entity
    b. National - HHS and CDC

Data Collection Methods

Novel Data Collection Methods

Surveys

Excellent way to gather qualitative and quantitative data from a lot of people at the same time.

- Capture a lot of data; great for benchmarking; easy to share; can show clear directions
- Can’t capture all voices; will need to use resources to market the survey; surveys aren’t magic

Questionnaires

Convenient method of capturing qualitative and often descriptive data from a targeted segment of your community.

- Relatively easy and affordable; rich, descriptive data; nice option between a survey and community conversation
- Might not receive thoughtful answers; need to spend time crafting questions and analyzing for themes

Novel Data Collection Methods -- “Group Talk” ™

Community Conversations
Learn more about community needs and strengths and where you might fit into both through “kitchen table” conversations that build understanding and connection.

Focus groups
This method of data collection comes from the market research world and can be used to understand responses to services, spaces, and more.

SWOT/SOAR/Internal Engagement
Methods to capture unique and important perspectives about the library and community from your internal experts -- staff, board, Friends and more

- Rich qualitative and quantitative data; relationship building amongst participants and between the library and stakeholders; no special tools required
- Leading groups can be a little intimidating if you haven’t had practice; logistics can be a challenge.

Tying it all together...

What is data visualization?

Why does data visualization matter?

Data Viz Basics

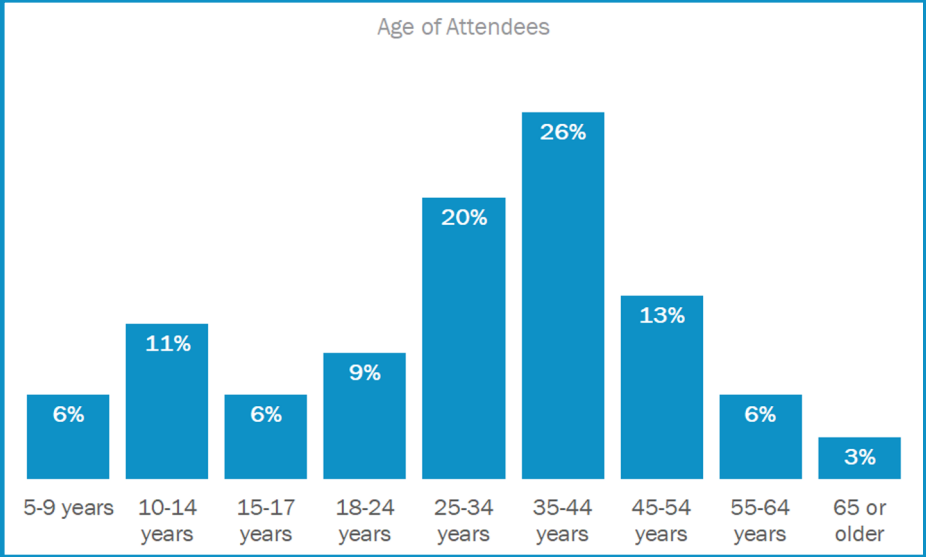
1. Audience persona
2. Identify data relationships
3. Chart type

Data Viz Best Practices

Simple.
Clean.
Bold.

Pick your colors carefully.

When creating a live presentation, minimize the use of text as much as possible on slides. If you feel the need to write out a lengthy explanation for your data visualizations, the data viz itself might be too complicated or over-wrought for the audience persona you've developed. Remember that if your slide(s) have lots of written content on them, the audience is much more likely to be reading your presentation instead of listening to you. Like you all are probably doing right now. Or maybe not. But probably. Because look at all this text! Don't you want to know what it says?!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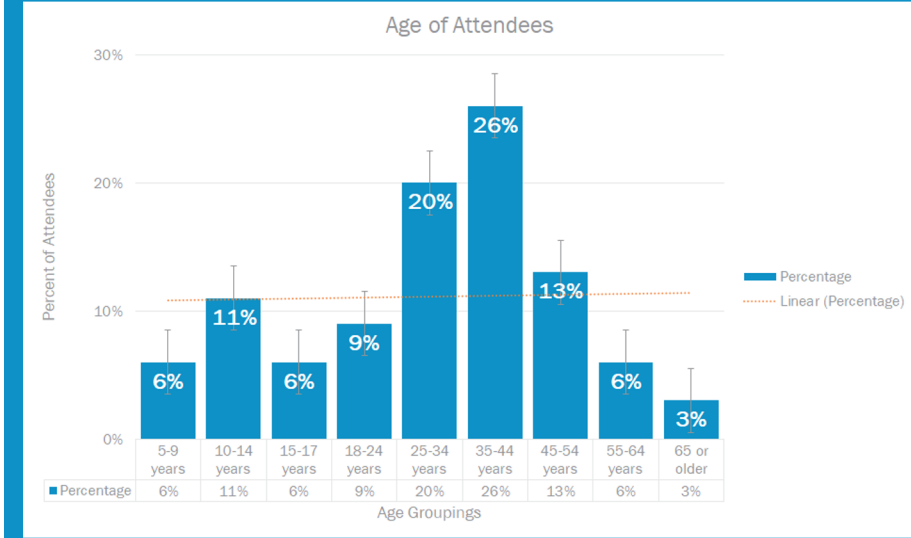
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65 or older
Percentage
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26%
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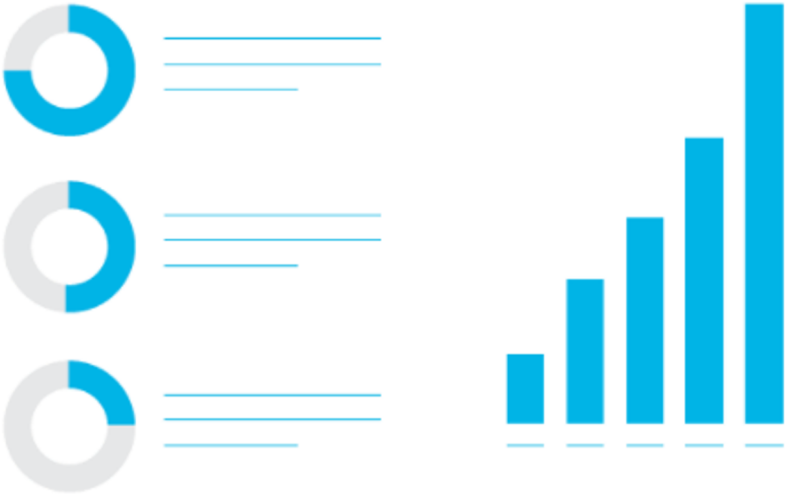
Age Groupings
Percentage
Linear (Percentage)

Order data from **smallest to largest** or **largest to smallest**



Unless the x-axis or y-axis forces an order

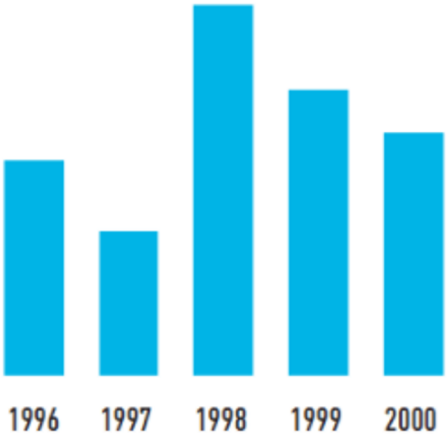


Image Source

Resources for Creating Data Visualizations

Free or Low-Cost Options:

- Microsoft Office products (Excel, PowerPoint, Word)
- Google Data Studio
- Canva

Additional Options:

- Tableau
- Power BI

Questions?