

## The Necessity of Accessible Data Visualization

Data visualization is an incredibly useful tool, if used properly: it can effectively give meaning to an enormous amount of data collected each day in the EdTech space. But if visualizations aren't designed with precision and intention, they can just as easily defeat their own purpose.

EdTech products have grown increasingly sophisticated, and dataviz is used to improve learning outcomes and support research. But, some designers favor the presentation of dataviz, instead of discernable data. This can serve as a setback to both intended audiences and designers themselves. So, designers and developers must remain vigilant against data visualizations that favor aesthetics over the utility of discernible data.

First, designers must be wary of visualizations that obscure data within visually-pleasing design. Designers must remember that visualizations are *not* art, and that data itself must take priority. Next, data must surface at appropriate times. Poorly-placed information can confuse recipients and undermine the presentation itself. And, visualizations that don't provide context for data completely invalidate visualizations' purpose. Without context, audiences will almost certainly be lost. Lastly, all data must have a call to action, and be accessible for all. Without providing the possibility of an actionable takeaway and making all functions accessible, the data contained therein are rendered moot.

With this information in mind, designers can instead take a more strategic approach to data visualizations. Maintaining a focused, intentional mindset from production to delivery can significantly retain data visualization's cohesion. Next, if flashy design precludes clear information, designers must forgo distracting visuals. This means situating data in relevant sections, with appropriate contexts and discernable value. And finally, data visualizations must be accessible and interpretable for all parties. Designers who work in the educational sector must extend the principle of accessibility to all who will absorb said data.