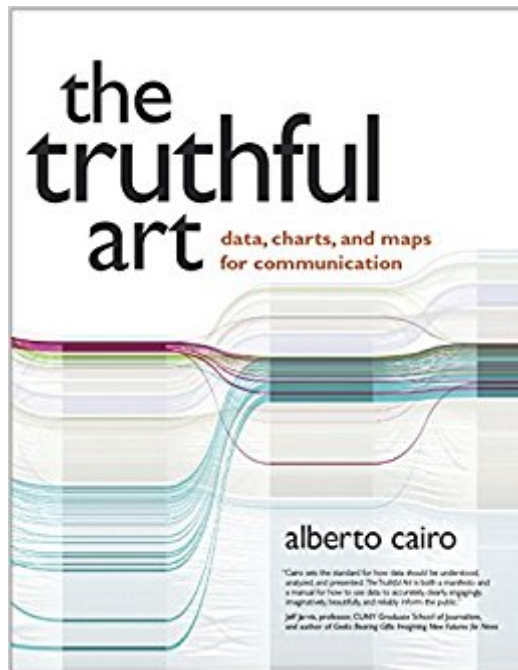




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The Truthful Art: Data, Charts, And Maps For Communication



Synopsis

No matter what your actual job title, you are—or soon will be—a data worker. Every day, at work, home, and school, we are bombarded with vast amounts of free data collected and shared by everyone and everything from our co-workers to our calorie counters. In this highly anticipated follow-up to *The Functional Art*, Alberto Cairo's foundational guide to understanding information graphics and visualization—the respected data visualization professor explains in clear terms how to work with data, discover the stories hidden within, and share those stories with the world in the form of charts, maps, and infographics. In *The Truthful Art*, Cairo transforms elementary principles of data and scientific reasoning into tools that you can use in daily life to interpret data sets and extract stories from them. *The Truthful Art* explains:

- The role infographics and data visualization play in our world
- Basic principles of data and scientific reasoning that anyone can master
- How to become a better critical thinker
- Step-by-step processes that will help you evaluate any data visualization (including your own)
- How to create and use effective charts, graphs, and data maps to explain data to any audience

The Truthful Art is also packed with inspirational and educational real-world examples of data visualizations from such leading publications as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Estado de São Paulo* (Brazil), *Berliner Morgenpost* (Germany), and many more.

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Customer Reviews

"Alberto Cairo is widely acknowledged as journalism's preeminent data viz wiz. He is also journalism's preeminent data scholar. As newsrooms rush to embrace data journalism as a new tool and toy, Cairo sets the standard for how data should be understood, analyzed, and presented. *The Truthful Art* is both a manifesto and a manual for how to use data to accurately, clearly, engagingly, imaginatively, beautifully, and reliably inform the public."

- Jeff Jarvis, professor at CUNY Graduate School of Journalism and author of *Geeks Bearing Gifts: Imagining New Futures for News* "A feast for both the eyes and mind, Alberto Cairo's *The Truthful Art* deftly explores the science and art of data visualization. The book is a must-read for scientists, educators, journalists, and just about anyone who cares about how to communicate effectively in the information age."

- Michael E. Mann, Distinguished Professor, Penn State University and author of *The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars* "If I were smarter, had more patience with academia, and had more focus, I might turn out to be more like Alberto, closer to the brilliance that he applies to the nature of information architecture. His title explains a lot: truth represents a most fundamental of attitudes, in questions asked, answers given and journeys taken. This [book] is a must on your thoughtful shelf of understanding."

- Richard Saul Wurman, founder of the TED Conference "Alberto Cairo is a great educator and an engaging storyteller. In *The Truthful Art* he takes us on a rich, informed, and well-visualized journey that depicts the process by which one scrutinizes data and represents information. The book synthesizes a lot of knowledge and carefully explains how to create effective visualizations with a focus on statistical principles. *The Truthful Art* will be incredibly useful to both practitioners and students, especially within the arts and humanities, such as those involved in data journalism and information design."

- Isabel Meirelles, professor at OCAD University (Canada) and author of *Design for Information* "As soon as I started immersing myself in *The Truthful Art*, I was horrified (and somewhat ashamed) to realize how much I didn't know about data visualization. I've spent most of my career pursuing a more illustrative way to present data, but Alberto Cairo's clarifying prose superbly explained the finer points of data viz. Since Alberto warns us that "[data is] always noisy, dirty, and uncertain, everyone in this business had better read his book to find out how to properly construct visualizations that not only tell the truth, but also allow us to interact meaningfully with them."

- Nigel Holmes, founder of Explanation Graphics "To communicate data clearly, you have to think about it clearly. *The Truthful Art* dives deep and provides an enlightened introduction to the power tools of data experts: science, statistics, and visualization."

• Fernanda Viégas and Martin Wattenberg, research scientists, Google

“The Truthful Art” is essential reading for my visual communication students and for anyone (at any level) who cares about telling a story visually. Get this book, read it, act on it. If you’re looking for help to put your data visualization on the right track, this is it.

• John Grimwade, assistant professor, School of Visual Communication, Ohio University

Alberto Cairo is the Knight Chair in Visual Journalism at the School of Communication of the University of Miami (UM), where he heads specializations in infographics and data visualization. He’s also director of the visualization program of UM’s Center for Computational Science, and Visualization Innovator-in-Residence at Univision. Cairo is the author of the books *Infografía 2.0: Visualización interactiva de información* en prensa, published exclusively in Spain in 2008, and *The Functional Art: An Introduction to Information Graphics and Visualization* (New Riders, 2012.) Over the past two decades, Cairo has been director of infographics and visualization at news organizations in Spain and Brazil, in addition to consulting with companies and educational institutions in more than 20 countries. You can find Cairo at www.thefunctionalart.com or on Twitter, where he is @albertocairo.

This book does what the best educational experiences SHOULD do: it explains principles and useful patterns/best practices for visualizing data, without presenting them as absolute rules. This book will help you understand why certain charts work in certain situations (as well as certain calculations and analysis methods), so that you can make better-informed choices in your own data work. Cairo does all this in a very engaging way, with a great balance of illustrative anecdotes, the math of data analysis (aka stats), and even sciency topics of cognition and visual perception. And of course, gorgeous examples of data visualizations, which are focused more towards journalism and infographics. Extra credit for including several sections on uncertainty. Highly recommended - this book is both a great read and an essential desktop reference.

One of the best books I read for a while. Data Science is growing on me for some time now and this is an amazing resource for an essential component of it, visualization. That’s how I got to and into the book but there’s more to it. The book goes above and beyond to the essence of what makes a visualization work, the qualities it must have and more importantly the drive for truth as the north star. I have so many highlights across the book. Here’s an example: "We all have cognitive, cultural

and ideological biases, but that doesn't mean we can't strive to be factual. Truth is unattainable, but trying to be truthful is a realistic and worthy goal." Totally recommended.

This book is one of my new favorites for data visualization. I have been building dashboards and dataviz apps for 10 years and now this book is filled with yellow post it notes as reference material to share with my customers. Learned a lot of useful information and new ways to explain complex visualization concepts and best practices with my customers. It is an easy read and covers a wide range of topics that some other data viz books gloss over like maps.

Foremost, the illustrations and visualizations in the Truthful Art make it worthy of the coffee table in any quant's home. However, I do not think Mr. Cairo intended to resonate just as much with its written content, so we will dive a bit deeper. Alberto Cairo does something in the Truthful Art that I seldom came across in grad school: He hooks us for nearly half the book, discussing guidelines, and principles, with illustrious visualizations to drive the point home, before diving into any formal quantitative discussion. This is a necessary book in an age when trending graphics are popping up across media platforms that can quickly shift the opinion of thousands. Visuals are incredibly appealing and quite often, the modern day worker only has time to examine a visual and its captions, rather than a full written narrative. One such guideline: The more adequately a model fits whatever it stands for without being needlessly complex, and the easier it is for the intended audience to interpret correctly, the better it will be. So how does Cairo define a visualization? As a model that serves as a conduit between a mental model in the designer's brain and a mental model inside the audience's brain. Cairo addresses various conundrums and fallacies that we all face in making visualizations. At some point -- we must keep our own ego in check. He slowly walks us into where we must acknowledge and apply the introspective traits necessary -- and how we quickly stray off path with the three mind bugs that are human tendencies we must keep in check. 1) Patternicity: We will strive to see patterns even when they aren't there 2) Storytelling: We try to develop a story, even with disparate facts 3) Confirmation Bias: We look selectively for data to support our own thoughts, even when what we see says otherwise As for the quantitative section (Part III: Function), this is something I will be handing to future junior analysts as a soft refresher on statistics. It comes in easily digestible components for any audience, a wonderful break from what we encounter with most statistics books. His disarming prose accompanied by stunning charts walk you along on how to translate basic statistical moments into a robust visual. Seasoned quants will

be tempted to skim it, but must heed to understand his thought process behind the visual applications. Thank you for the wonderful read Mr. Cairo!

Much of the same concepts as the last book, The Functional Art. Some new sections and still very good concepts and examples. I did enjoy the DVD that came with the last book, this one doesn't have one. A lot of good information on his blog, there are links and resources listed in the book.

The best impulse purchase I've made! The book & images are beautiful and the writing is compelling. Great for anyone who has data to share with the world or simply wants to better understand the sea of data we live in. I'm already planning to purchase copies for friends. -Kelly

Good. The less-pretentious Tufte. The Tufte books are beautiful, but this book is more practical.

The focus of the book is journalism, not my field, but as a data analyst I appreciated the wonderful exemplars and the discussion. A worthwhile read for anyone who "does data".

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