Jennifer *
HIS 112
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Data Visualization Project - Recommendations, Ideas, and Comments

As part of the data visualization project for HIS 112, I have chosen to compare the population growth of the United States of America before, during and after World War II.

The biggest hurdle in this project was probably choosing the right subject. Since the data visualization assignment only requires you to be devoted to some historical subject, you have an extensive selection of historical events to choose from. Because the internet has so many statistics for so many possible topics, I didn't know which topic to pick from and which data source would be good enough for my project. This is when I turned to Professor Evans for guidance. It was crucial to me to receive the feedback on my data source and to know that I was on the right track. I know now that it was a mistake trying to identify data sources prior to choosing a specific topic.

With the right data source selected, it was time to work with the information that I had gathered. Even though we are given the option to use data sources that have already been uploaded to Many Eyes, I wanted to make sure my data was valid and accurate when reporting on it in DV, and so I decided to upload my own set of data. For this, all I had were the national estimates for the years 1930 throughout 1949. No percentages, no count on how much the population grew from one year to another, and no graphs; only the number of people who resided in the US each year.

This meant I had to do some calculations on the information I had gathered in my brainstorming and research process. I found Microsoft Excel to be the most valuable software for this step. Here, with the help of some basic formulas, I identified the trend of the population growth and summarized the data in a separate spreadsheet called "Total" which was then imported to Many Eyes to create line graphs.

When creating the actual data visualization in Many Eyes, it is important to choose a DV that provides people with bigger picture. People should be able to take a look at your graph and understand immediately what happened in respect to your historical data and how it can support the events that occurred throughout the years.

Throughout the process of importing your data into Many Eyes, make sure your table only includes **one** header column, and that your data for each column is identified correctly as number or text. If you select the wrong type for your data, you most likely will end up with an error message such as "Only one data source available in your table".

Please note that if you want to include a description for your DV, this has to be done at the time of creation of your DV and cannot be modified anymore afterwards. Assuming I could edit the description after validating the graph, I actually had to redo my DV to be aligned with the assignment requirements.

Additionally, I also ran into some problems when working with Windows 8 instead of Windows 7. Expecting Many Eyes to be compatible with Windows 8, I realized that Windows 7 is more stable when creating DV's and when adding comments to your DV. For some reason, when working with Windows 8, my comments were added as an Anonymous comment.