Week 3: Color, Spatial Data

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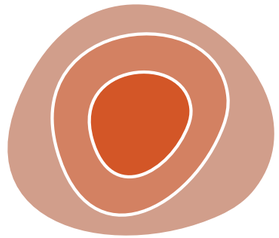
JRNL 520M, Special Topics in Contemporary Journalism: Visualization for Journalists
Week 3: 29 September 2015

http://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/courses/journ15

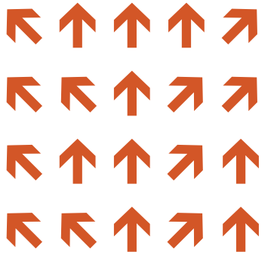
VAD Chap 8: Arrange spatial data

- **Use Given**
  - Geometry
    - *Geographic*
    - *Other Derived*

  - Spatial Fields
    - *Scalar Fields (one value per cell)*
      - *Isocontours*
      - *Direct Volume Rendering*

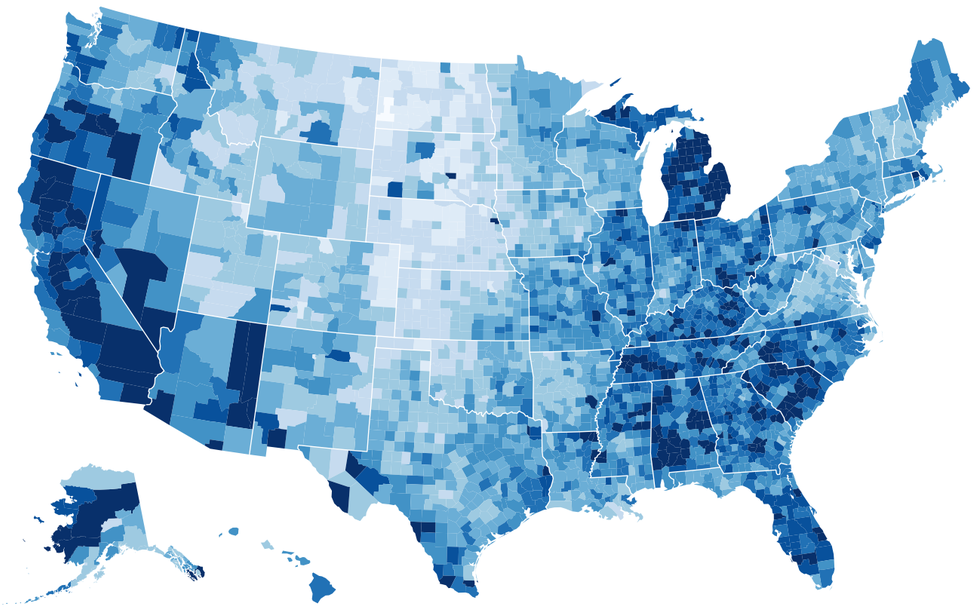


    - *Vector and Tensor Fields (many values per cell)*
      - *Flow Glyphs (local)*
      - *Geometric (sparse seeds)*
      - *Textures (dense seeds)*
      - *Features (globally derived)*



Idiom: **choropleth map**

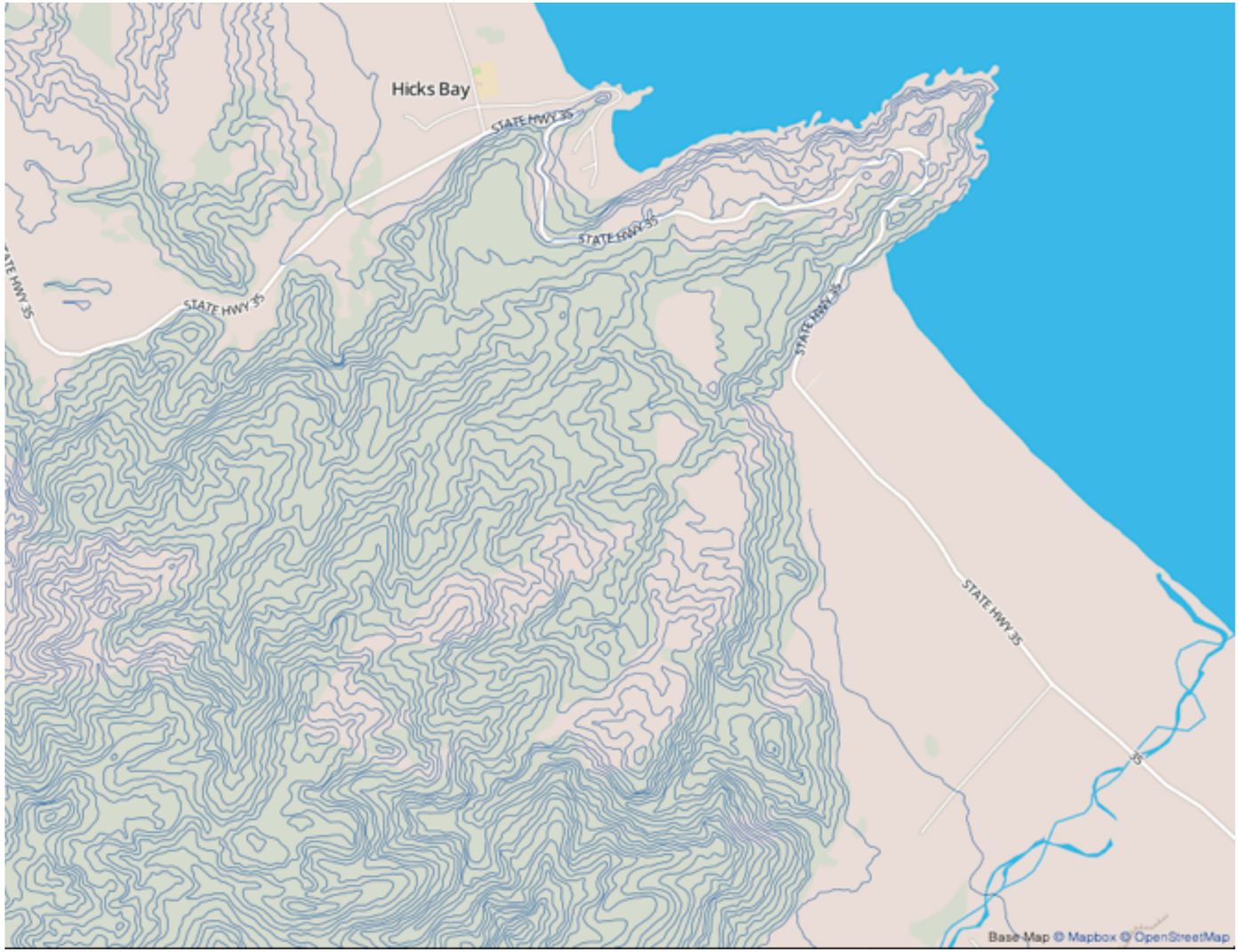
- ***use*** given spatial data
  - when central task is understanding spatial relationships
- data
  - geographic geometry
  - table with 1 quant attribute per region
- encoding
  - use given geometry for area mark boundaries
  - sequential segmented colormap



http://bl.ocks.org/mbostock/4060606

Idiom: **topographic map**

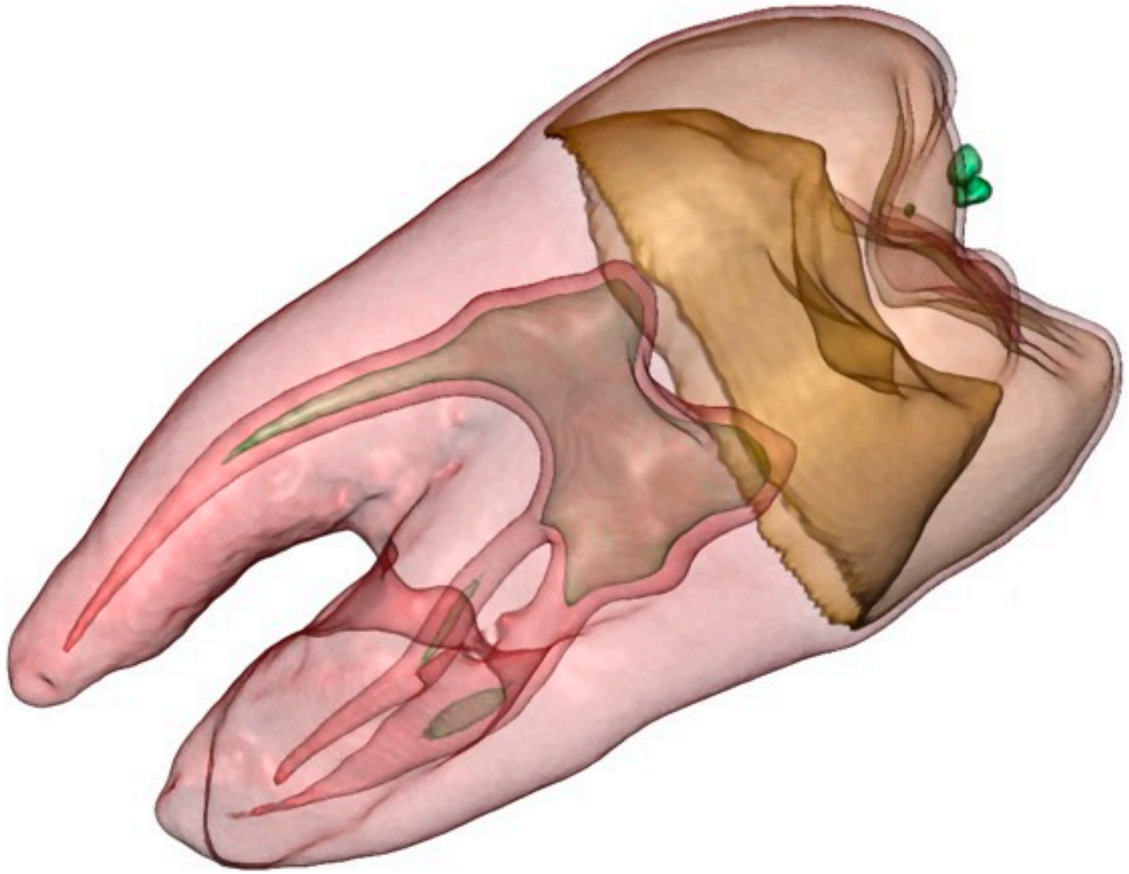
- data
  - geographic geometry
  - scalar spatial field
    - 1 quant attribute per grid cell
- derived data
  - isoline geometry
    - isocontours computed for specific levels of scalar values



Land Information New Zealand Data Service

Idiom: **isosurfaces**

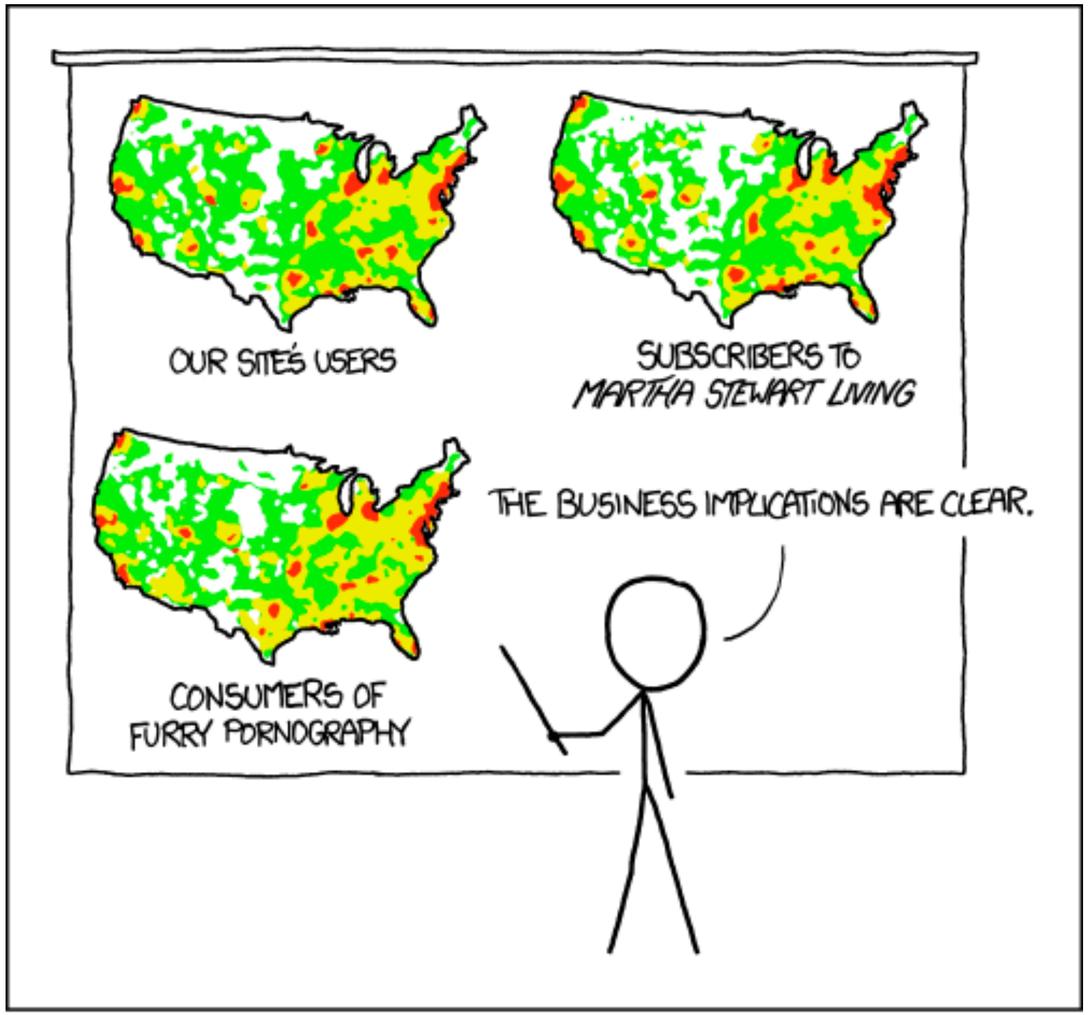
- data
  - scalar spatial field
    - 1 quant attribute per grid cell
- derived data
  - isosurface geometry
    - isocontours computed for specific levels of scalar values
- task
  - spatial relationships



[Interactive Volume Rendering Techniques. Kniss. Master's thesis, University of Utah Computer Science, 2002.]

Population maps trickiness

- beware!



PET PEEVE #208:
GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE MAPS WHICH ARE BASICALLY JUST POPULATION MAPS

[https://xkcd.com/1138]

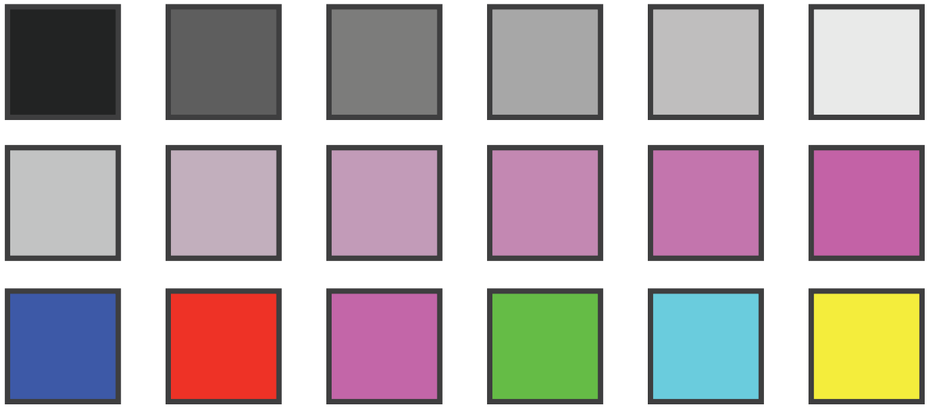
VAD Chap 10: Color

- 3 channels
  - identity for categorical
    - hue
  - magnitude for ordered
    - luminance
    - saturation

Luminance

Saturation

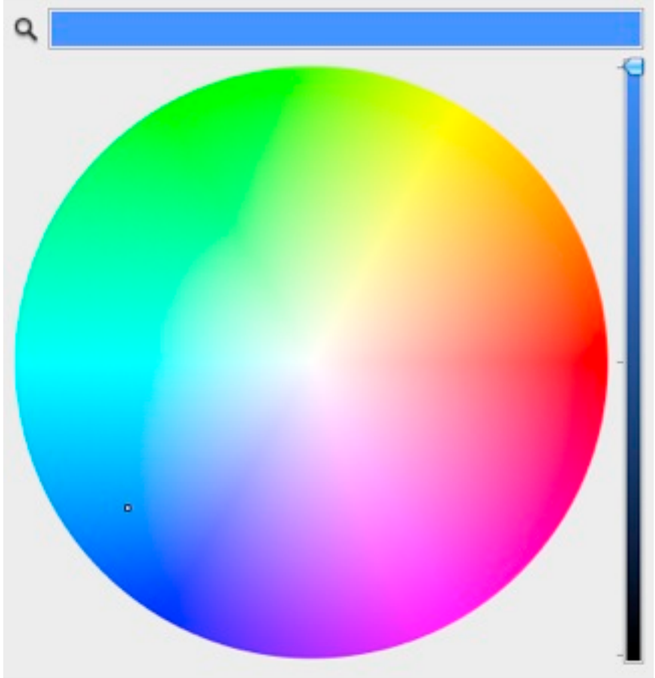
Hue



- transparency
  - useful for creating visual layers
    - but cannot combine with luminance or saturation

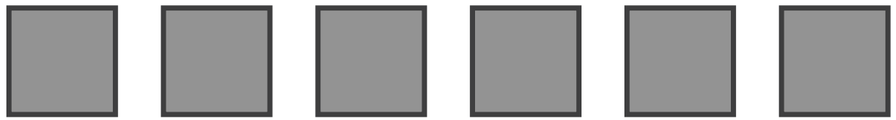
Other color spaces

- RGB: poor choice for visual encoding
- HSL: better, but beware
  - lightness ≠ luminance

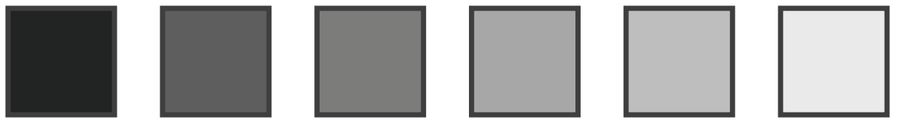


Corners of the RGB color cube

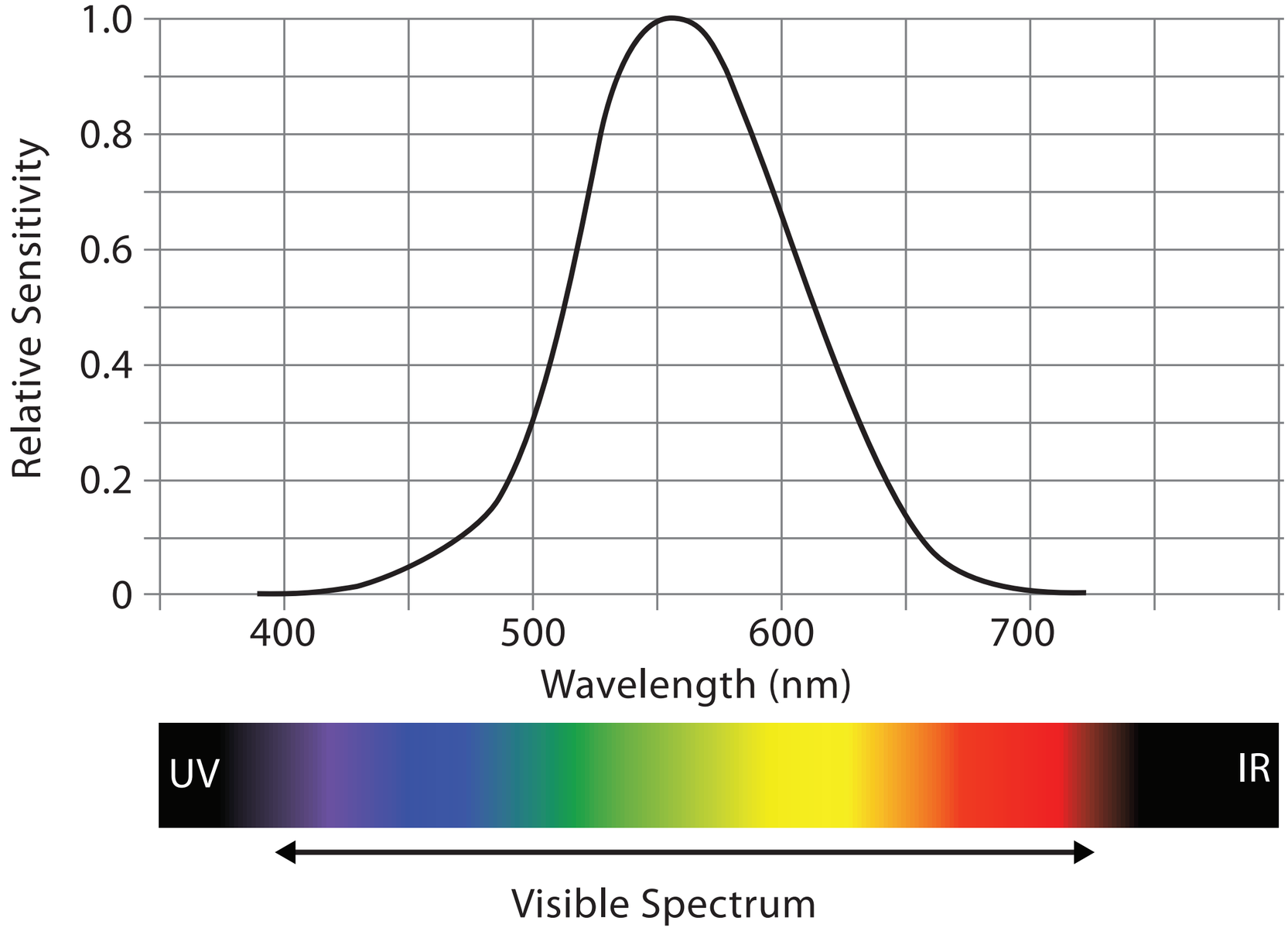
L from HLS
All the same



Luminance values



Spectral sensitivity



Colormaps

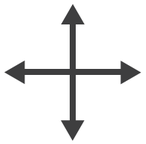
➔ Categorical

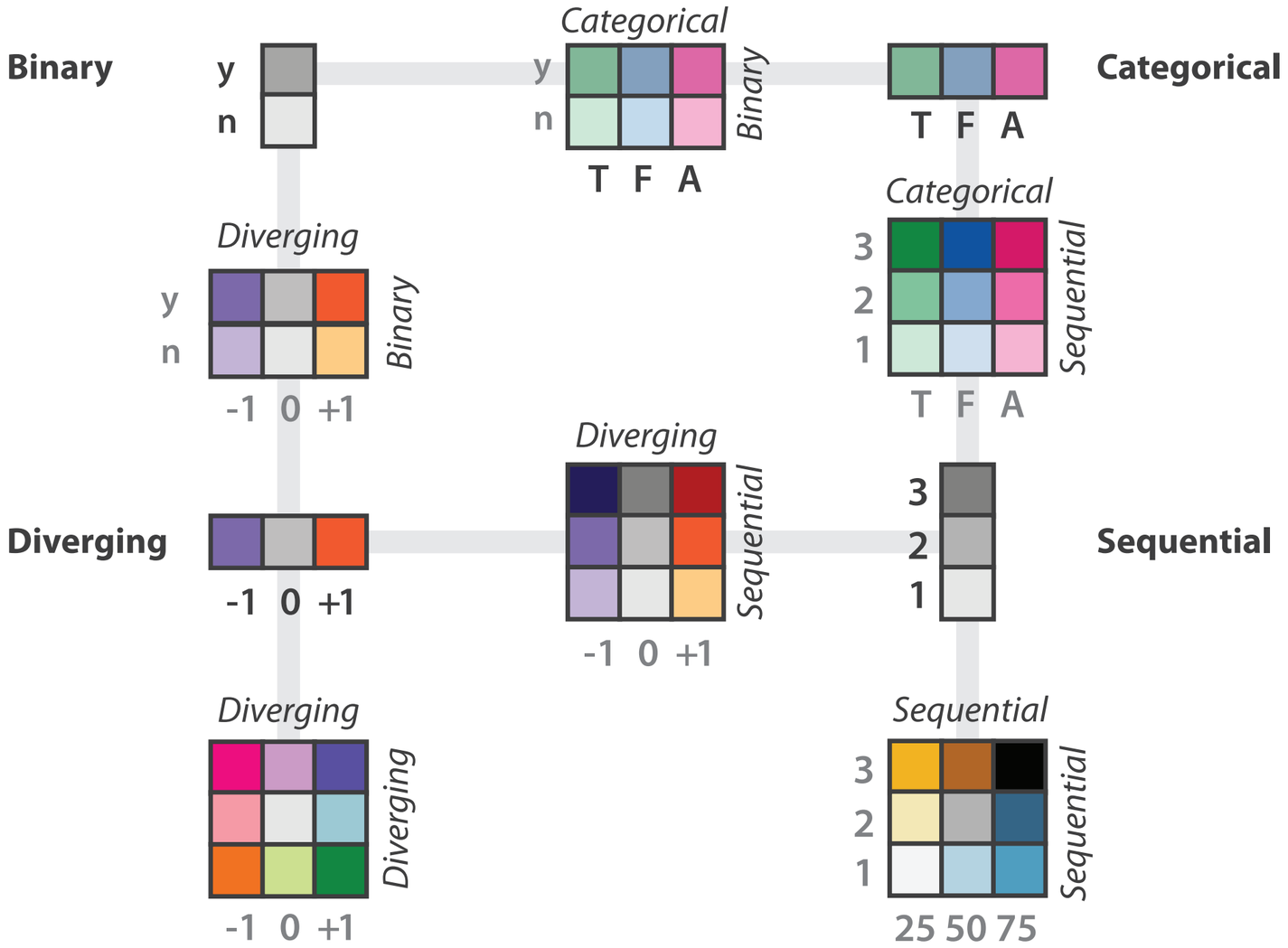
➔ Ordered

➔ *Sequential*

➔ *Diverging*

➔ Bivariate



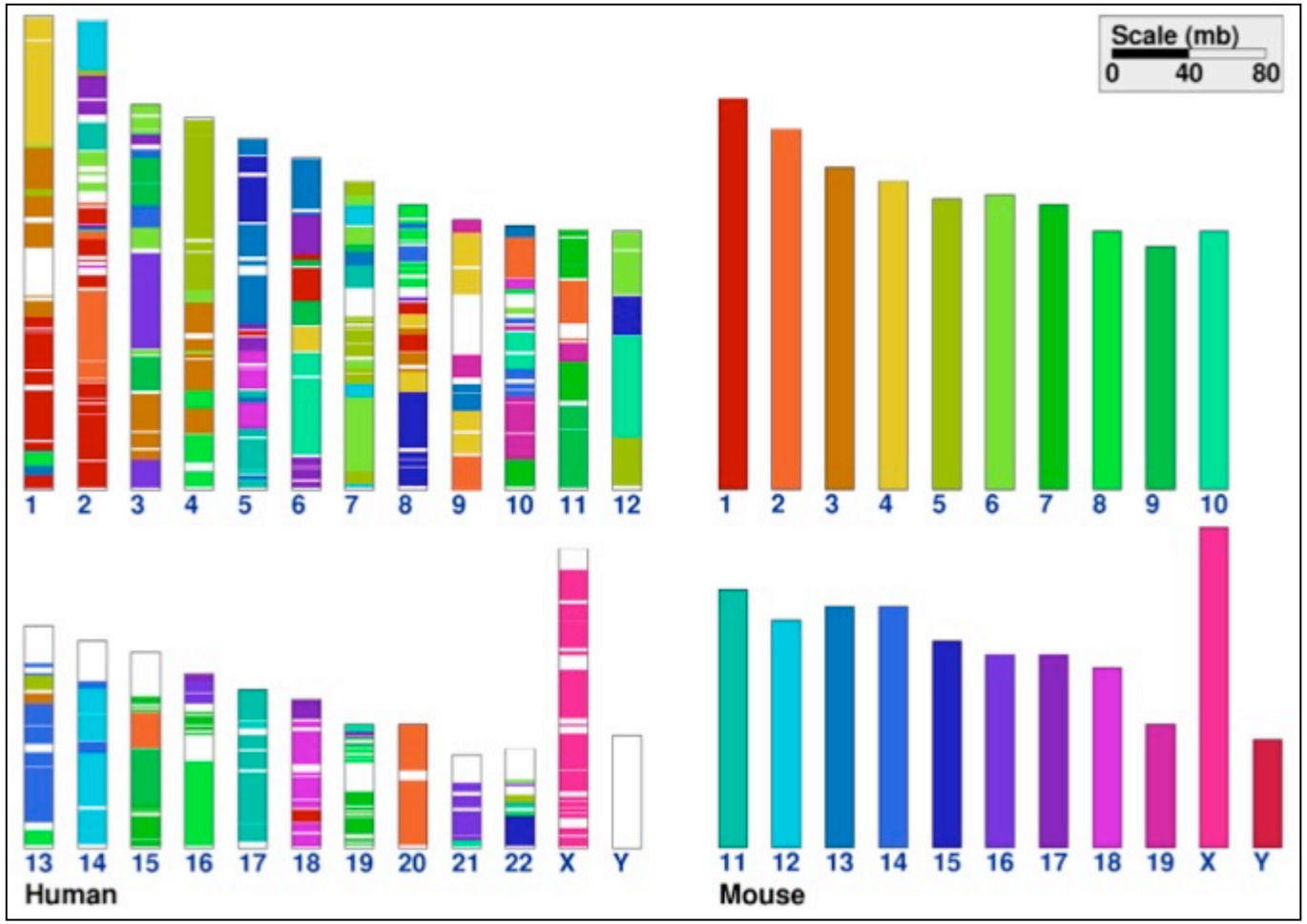


- categorical limits: noncontiguous
  - 6-12 bins hue/color
    - far fewer if colorblind
  - 3-4 bins luminance, saturation
  - size heavily affects salience
    - use high saturation for small regions, low saturation for large

after [Color Use Guidelines for Mapping and Visualization. Brewer, 1994. http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/c/a/cab38/ColorSch/Schemes.html]

Categorical color: Discriminability constraints

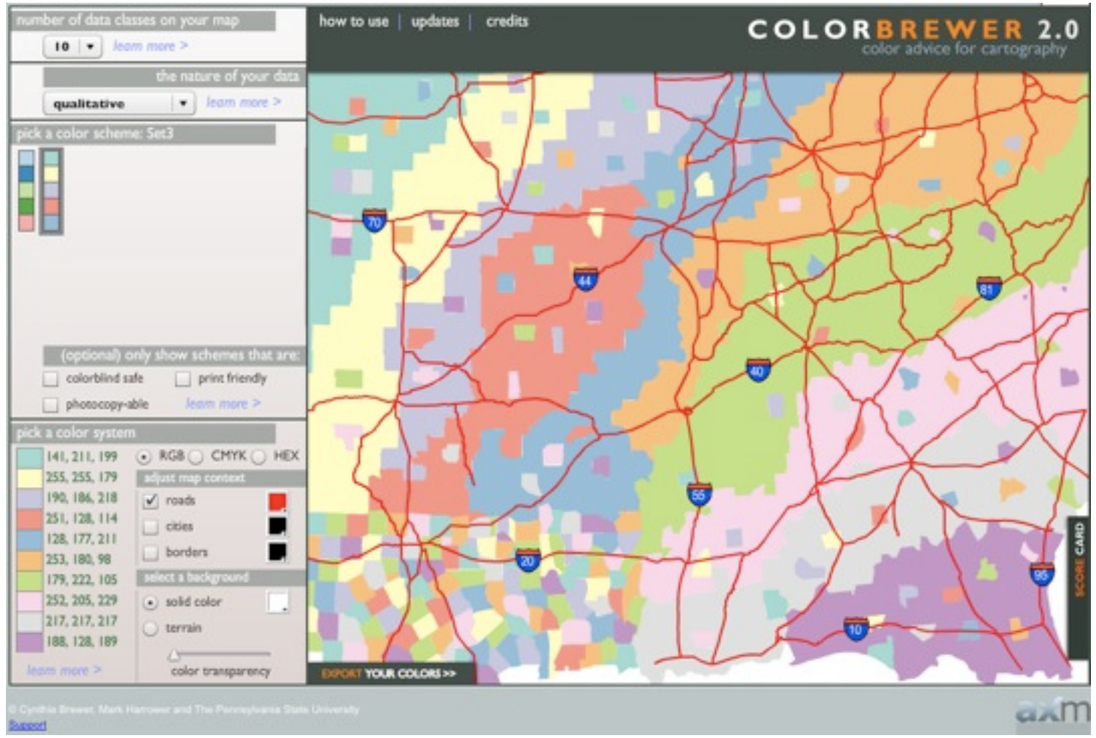
- noncontiguous small regions of color: only 6-12 bins

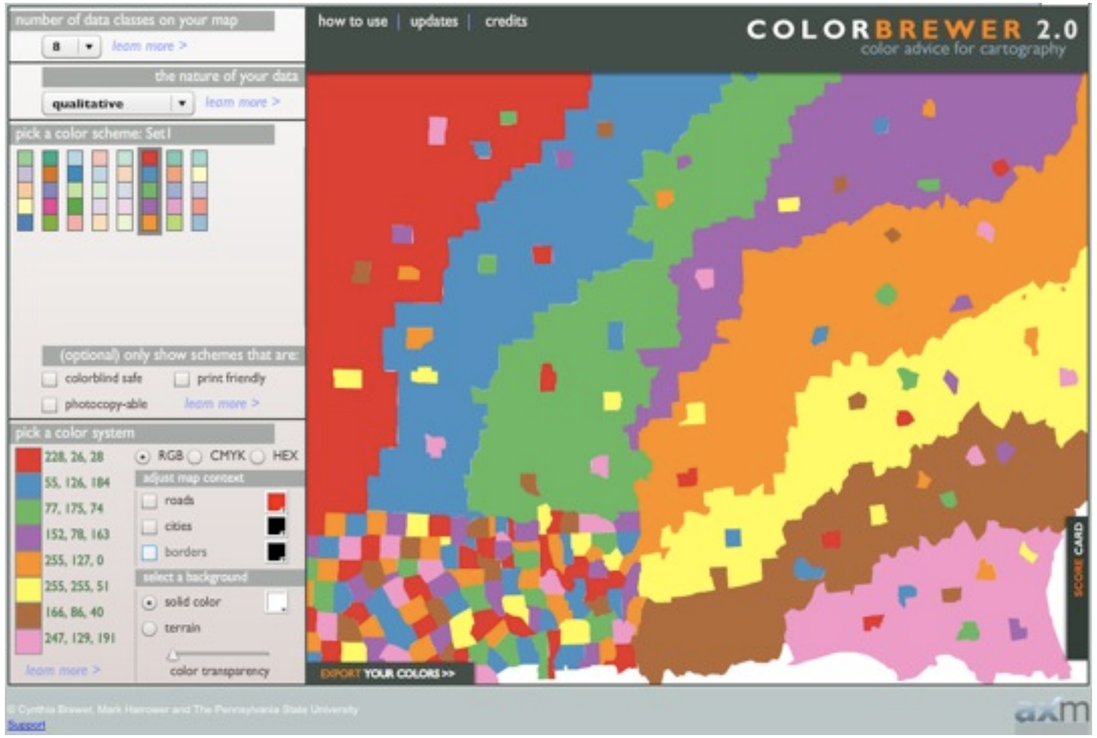


[Cinteny: flexible analysis and visualization of synteny and genome rearrangements in multiple organisms. Sinha and Meller. BMC Bioinformatics, 8:82, 2007.]

ColorBrewer

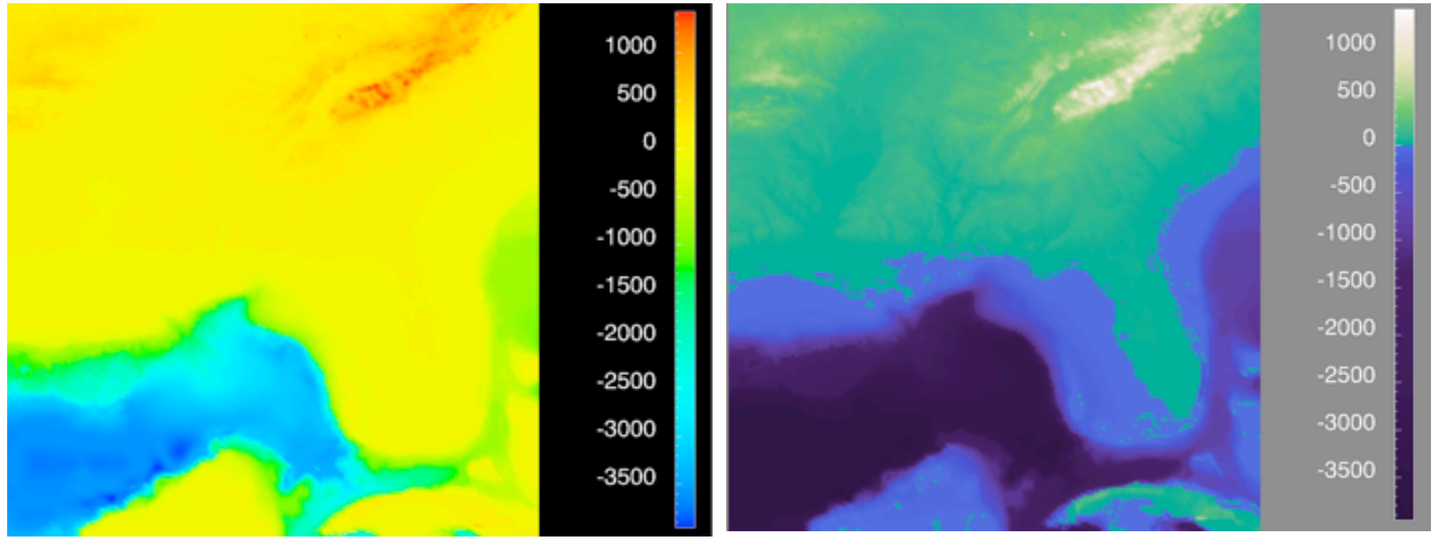
- http://www.colorbrewer2.org
- saturation and area example



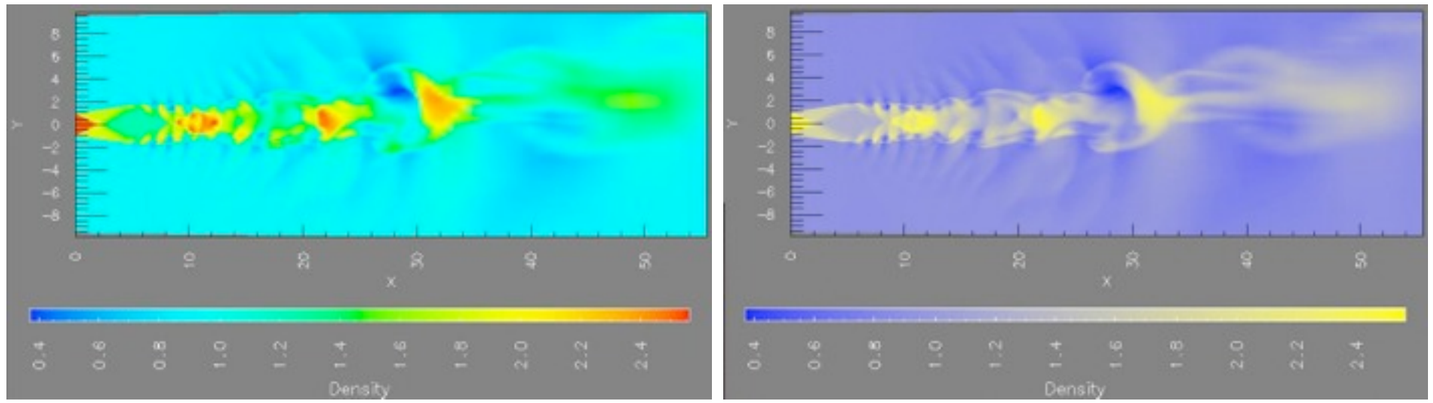


Ordered color: Rainbow is poor default

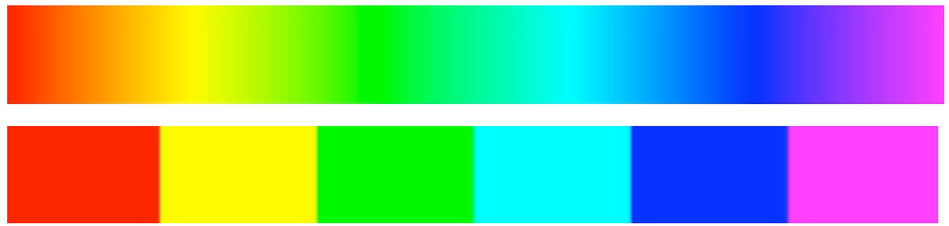
- problems
  - perceptually unordered
  - perceptually nonlinear
- benefits
  - fine-grained structure visible and nameable
- alternatives
  - fewer hues for large-scale structure
  - multiple hues with monotonically increasing luminance for fine-grained
  - segmented rainbows good for categorical, ok for binned



[Why Should Engineers Be Worried About Color? Treinish and Rogowitz 1998. http://www.research.ibm.com/people/l/lloydt/color/color.HTM]



[A Rule-based Tool for Assisting Colormap Selection. Bergman,. Rogowitz, and. Treinish. Proc. IEEE Visualization (Vis), pp. 118–125, 1995.]



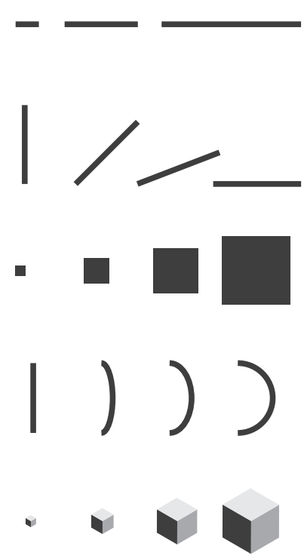
[Transfer Functions in Direct Volume Rendering: Design, Interface, Interaction. Kindlmann. SIGGRAPH 2002 Course Notes]

Map other channels

- size
  - length accurate, 2D area ok, 3D volume poor
- angle
  - nonlinear accuracy
    - horizontal, vertical, exact diagonal
- shape
  - complex combination of lower-level primitives
  - many bins
- motion
  - highly separable against static
    - binary: great for highlighting
  - use with care to avoid irritation

Size, Angle, Curvature, ...

- Length
- Angle
- Area
- Curvature
- Volume



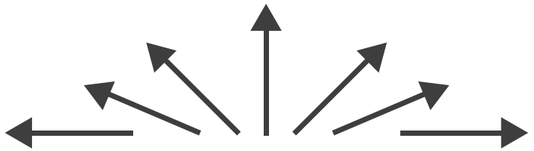
Shape

Motion

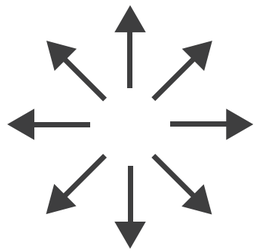
- Motion
  Direction, Rate, Frequency, ...

Angle

Sequential ordered
line mark or arrow glyph



Diverging ordered
arrow glyph



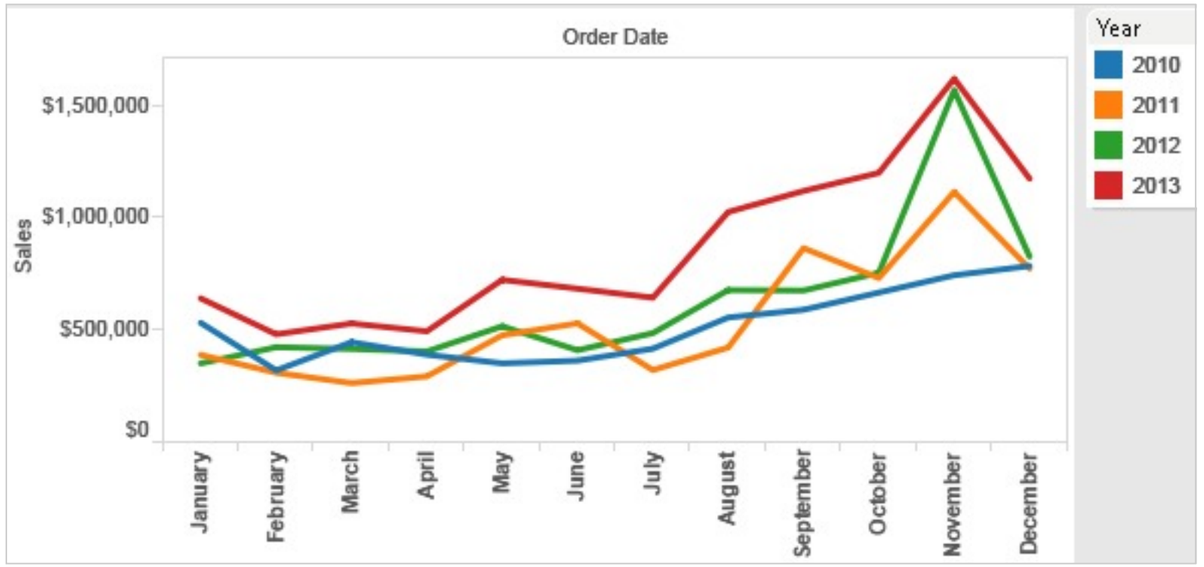
Cyclic ordered
arrow glyph

Maureen Stone

- Tableau Research
  - designer of Tableau color defaults
  - also author of A Field Guide to Digital Color

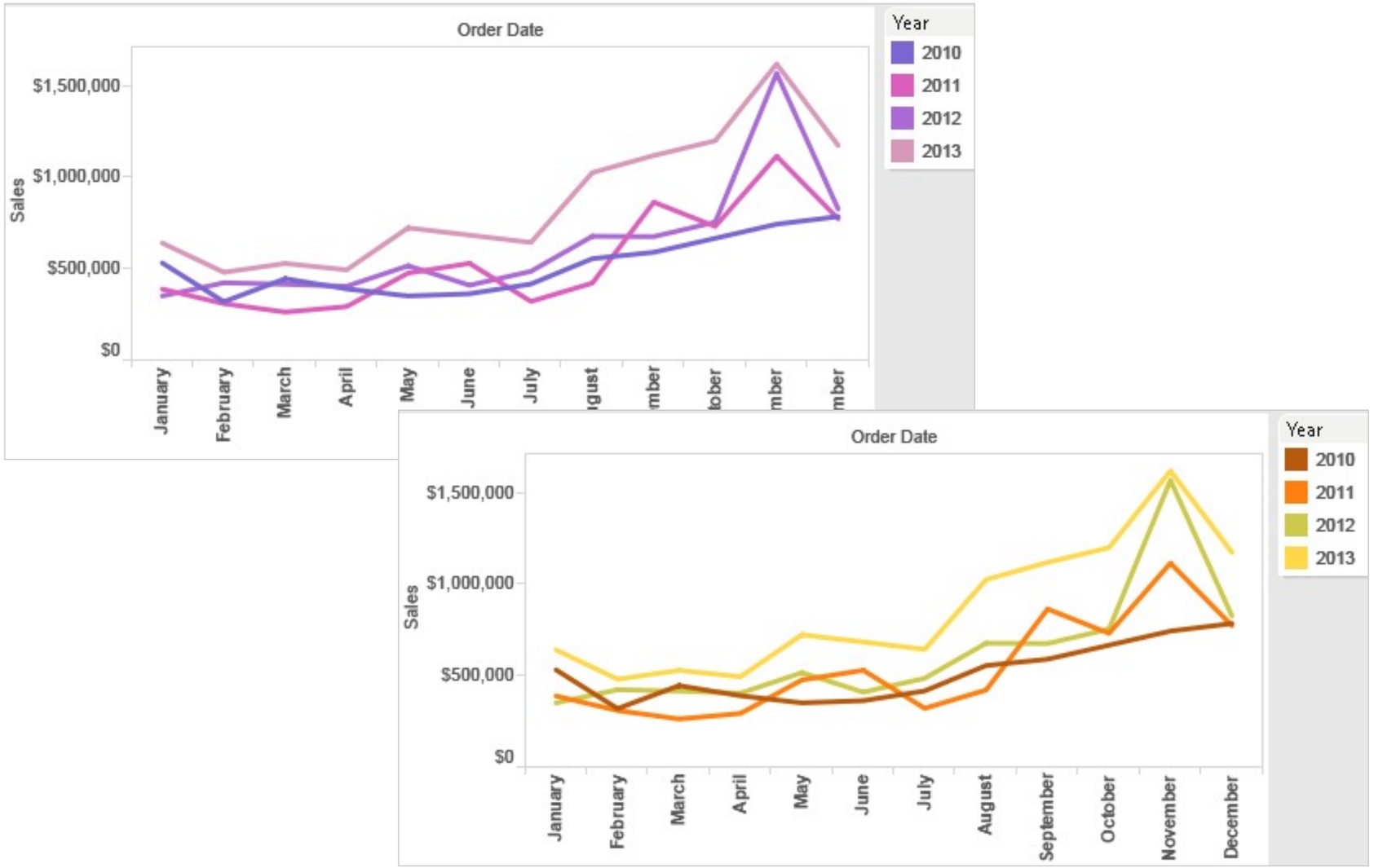
  - credits: following color slides excerpted from
    Seriously Colorful: Advanced Color Principles & Practices
    - Tableau Customer Conference 2014 talk

Different colorings tell different stories



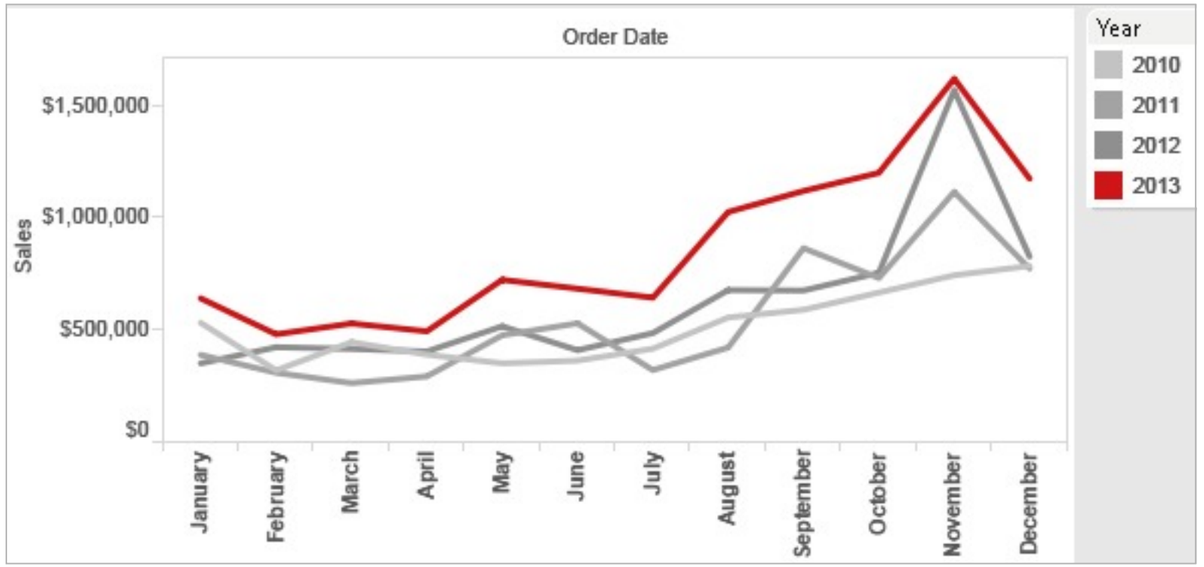
Four distinct categories

Similar, but still distinctly different



Ordered colors for ordered relationships

Contrasting color for emphasis



Perceived lightness: Fundamental to vision

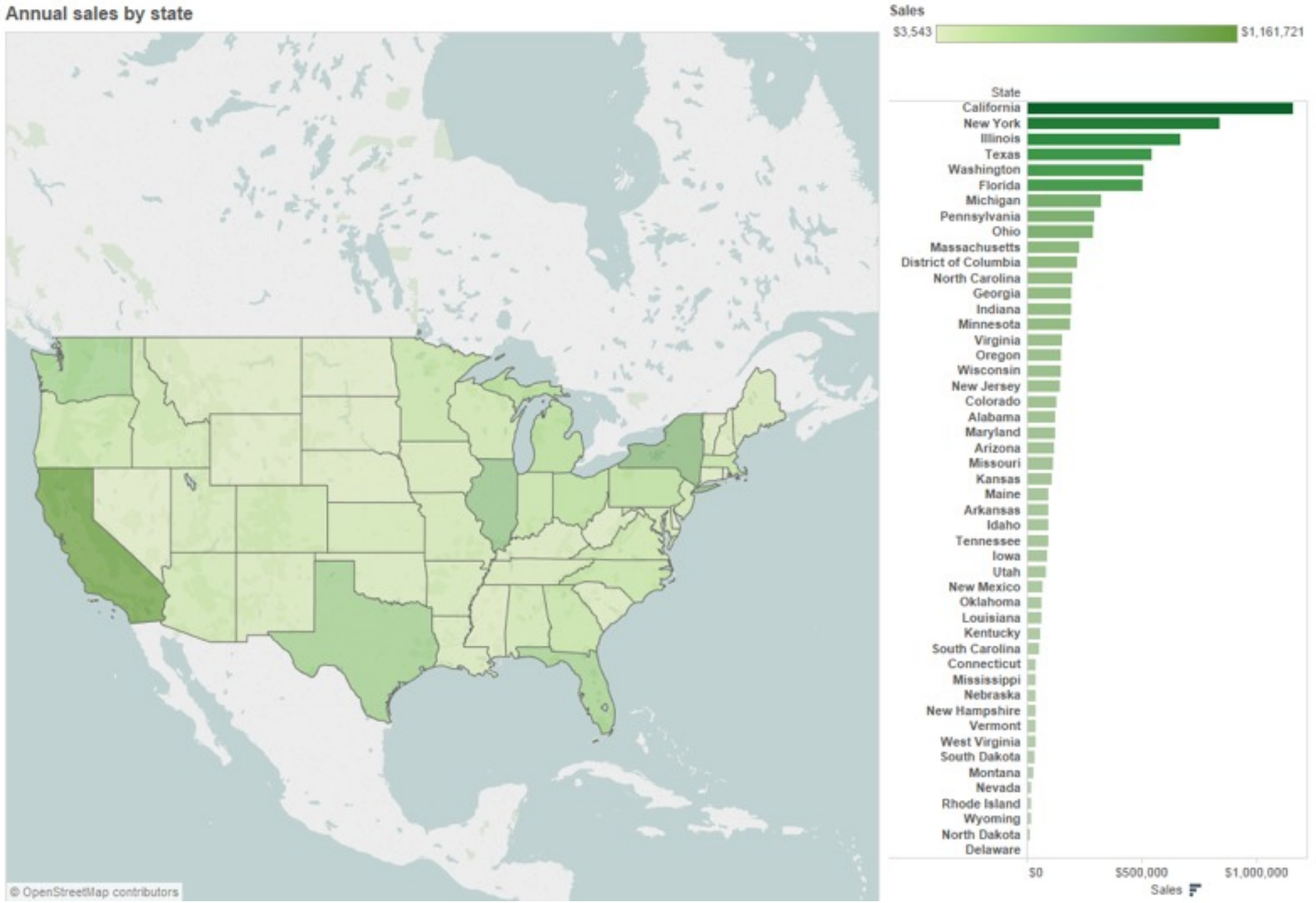
Lightness information

Color information

“Get it right in black and white”

Maps courtesy of the National Park Service (www.nps.gov)

Lightness encodes values



How do we define “lightness”?

Generated lightness: RGB, HSV, HLS

Perceived lightness: Luminance, L* (from CIELAB)

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Same generated lightness: B or V, from HSB, HSV

Different perceived lightness: L*, from CIELAB

B = 100
L* = 98

B = 100
L* = 30

Tools for perceived lightness

CIELAB, L*a*b*, Lab, etc.

Adobe Creative Suite (gray, Lab)

Gpick (www.gpick.org) Opensource, PC, Unix

DigitalColor Meter (L*a*b*) Apple desktop utility

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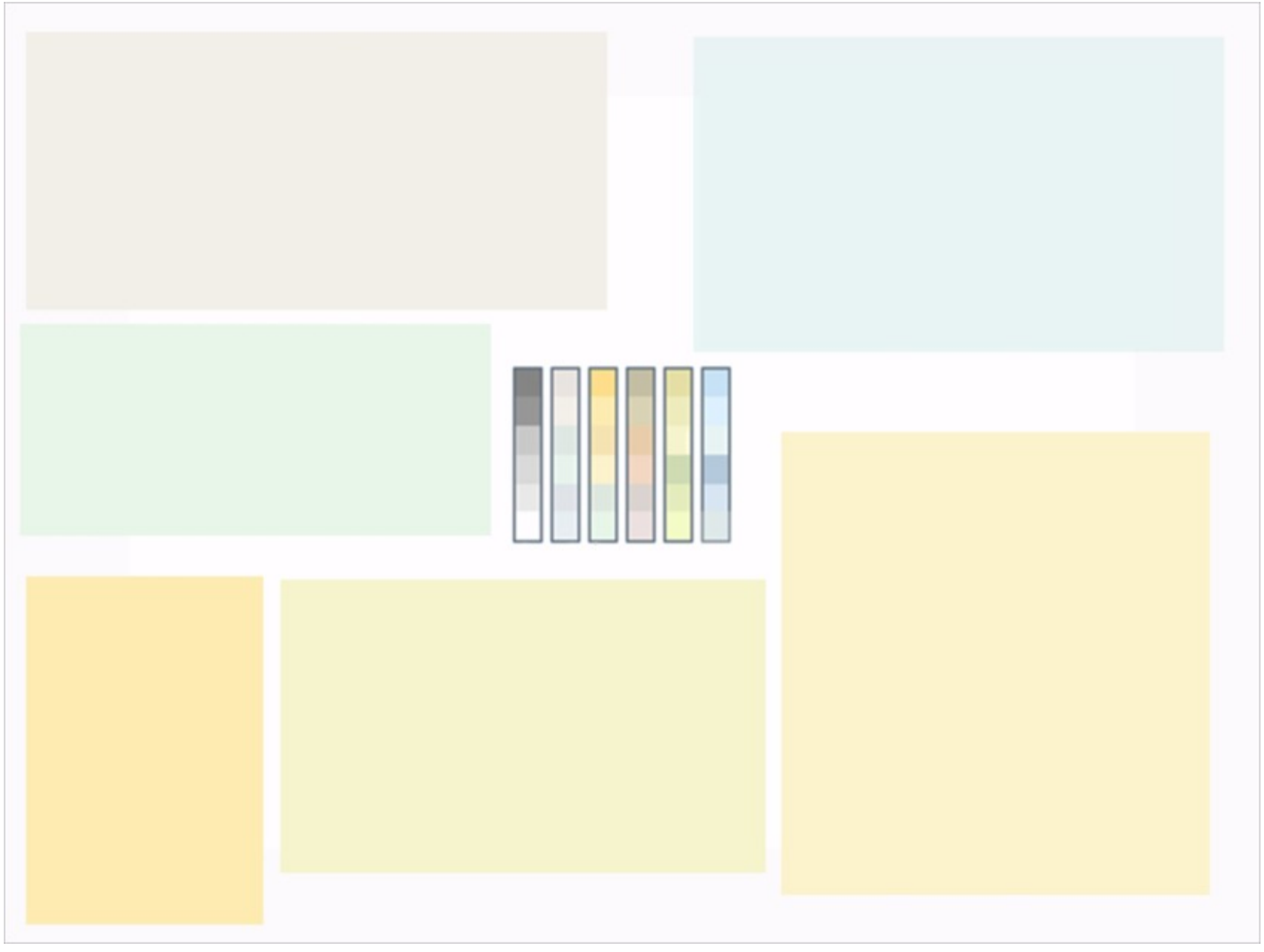
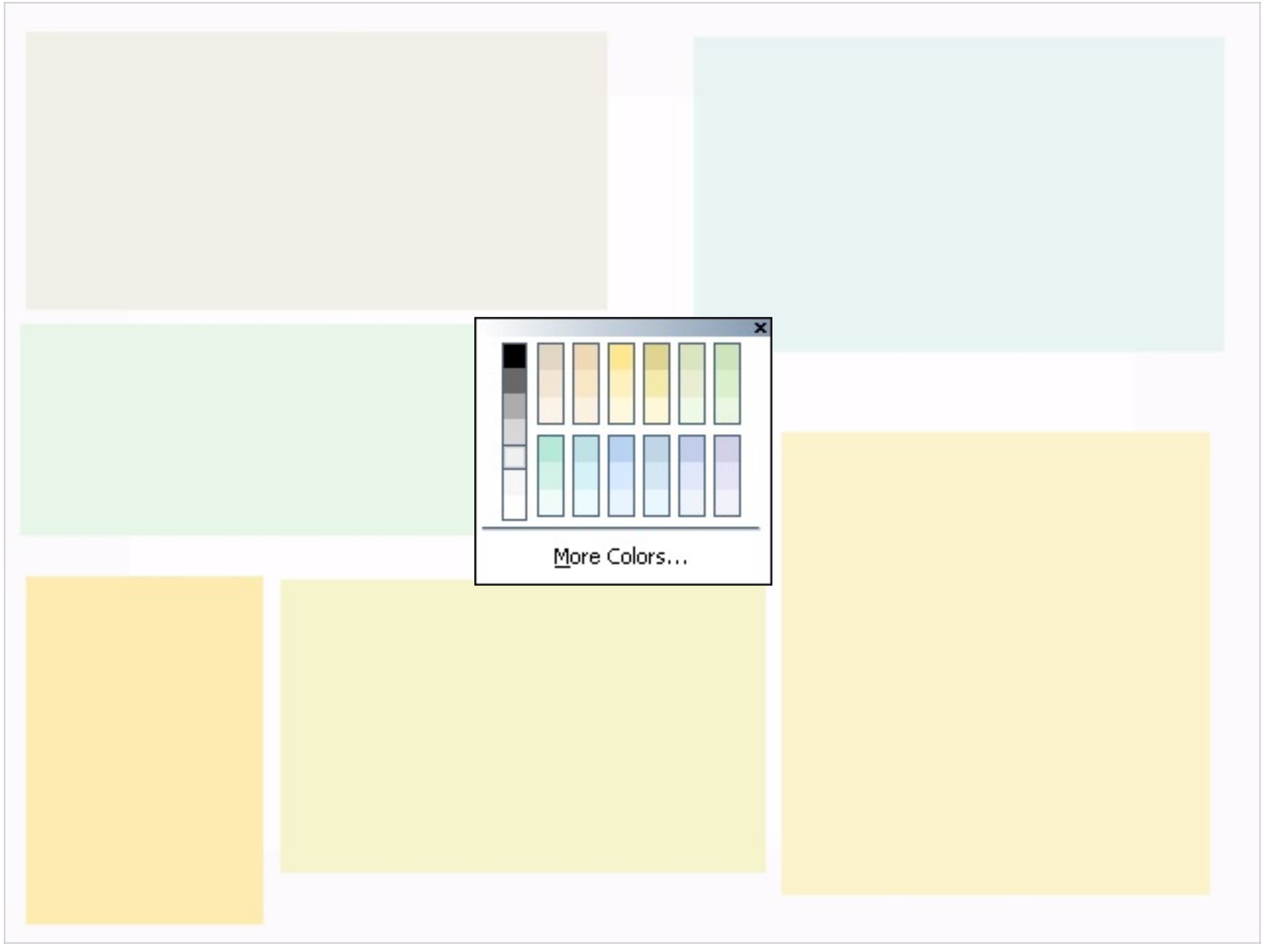
By default: Tableau 10 and 20

Size matters



Size matters



OK large, Not so OK small

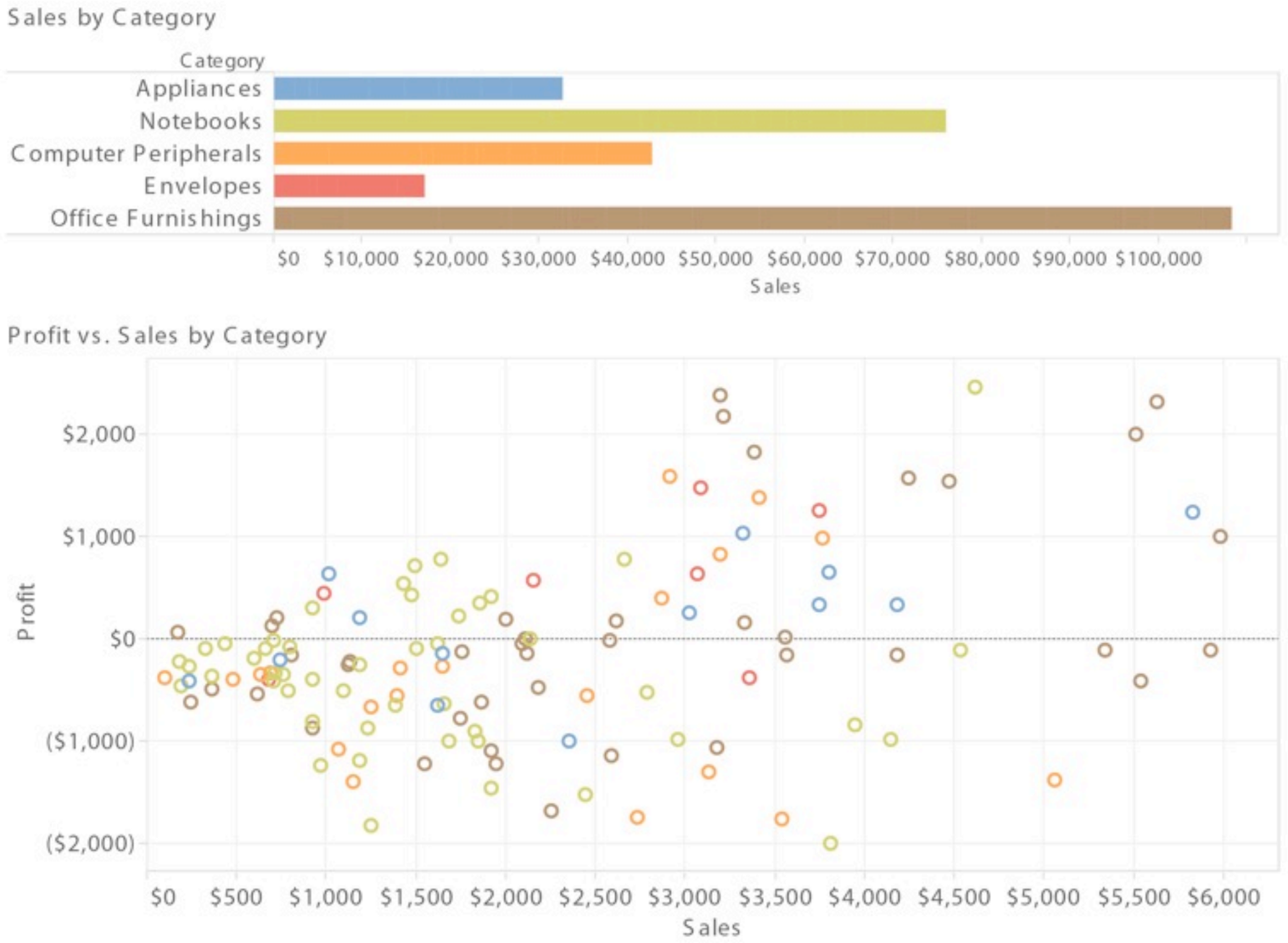
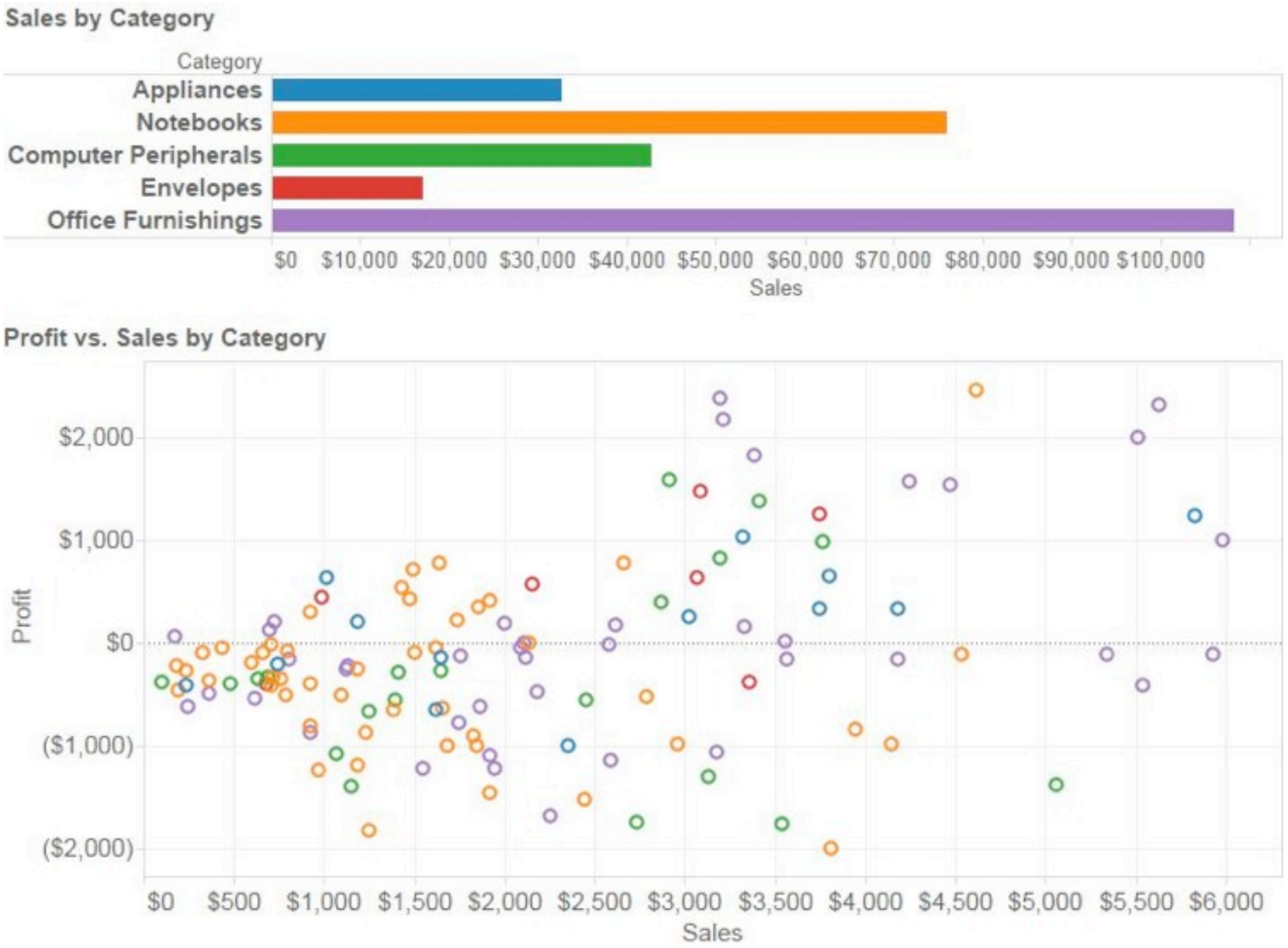
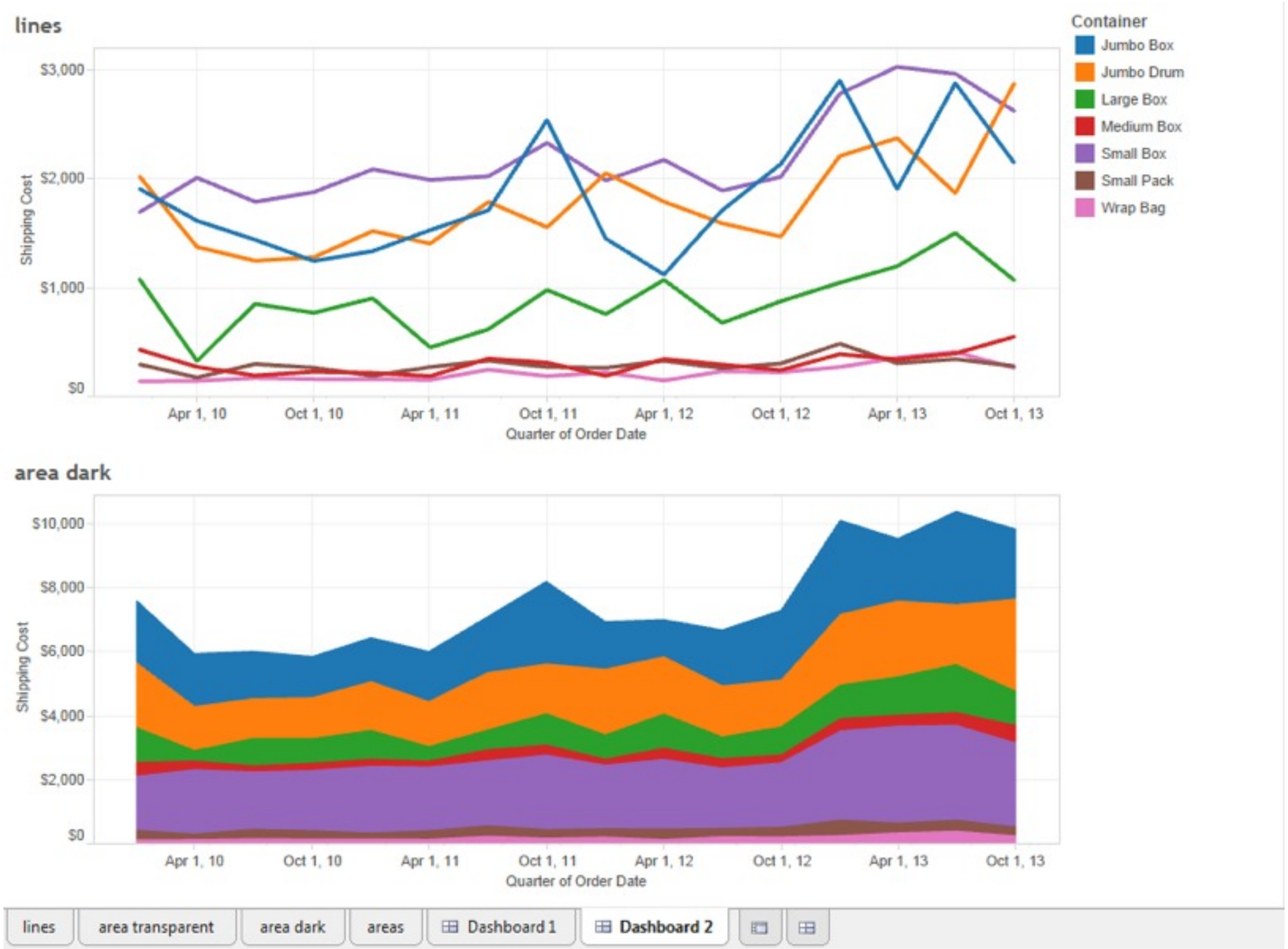


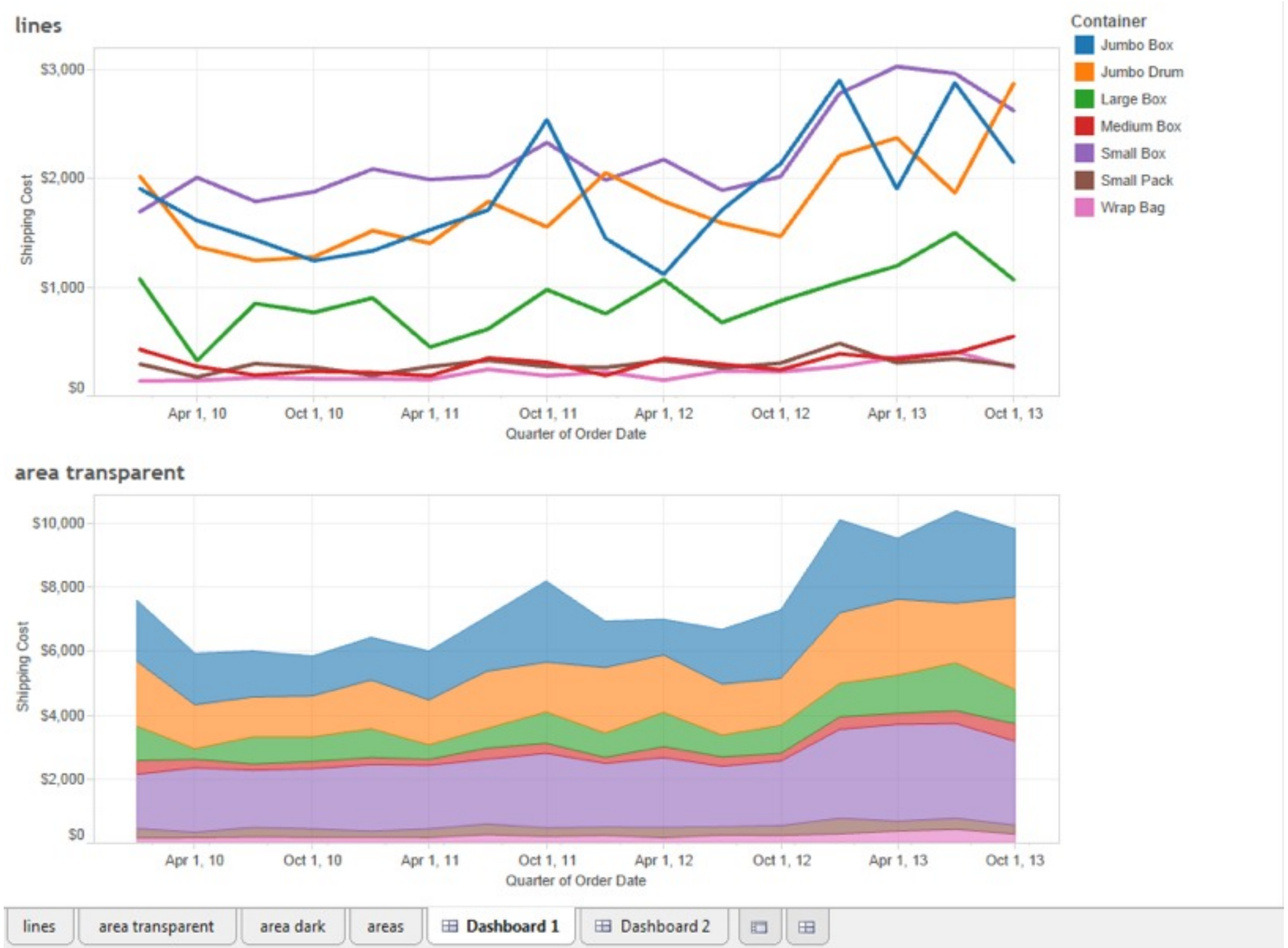
Tableau default



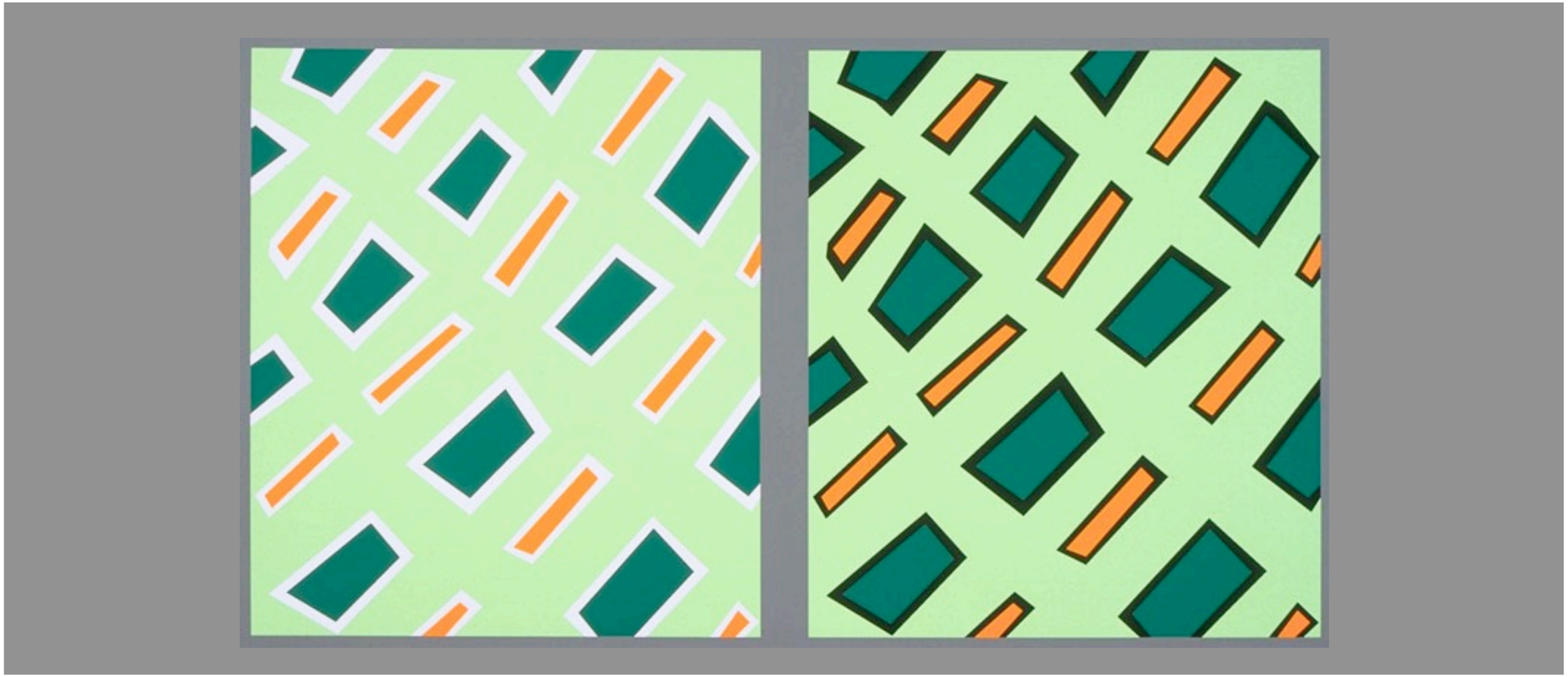
Large area color: Too bright



Use transparency to make less bold



Bezold Effect: Outlines matter



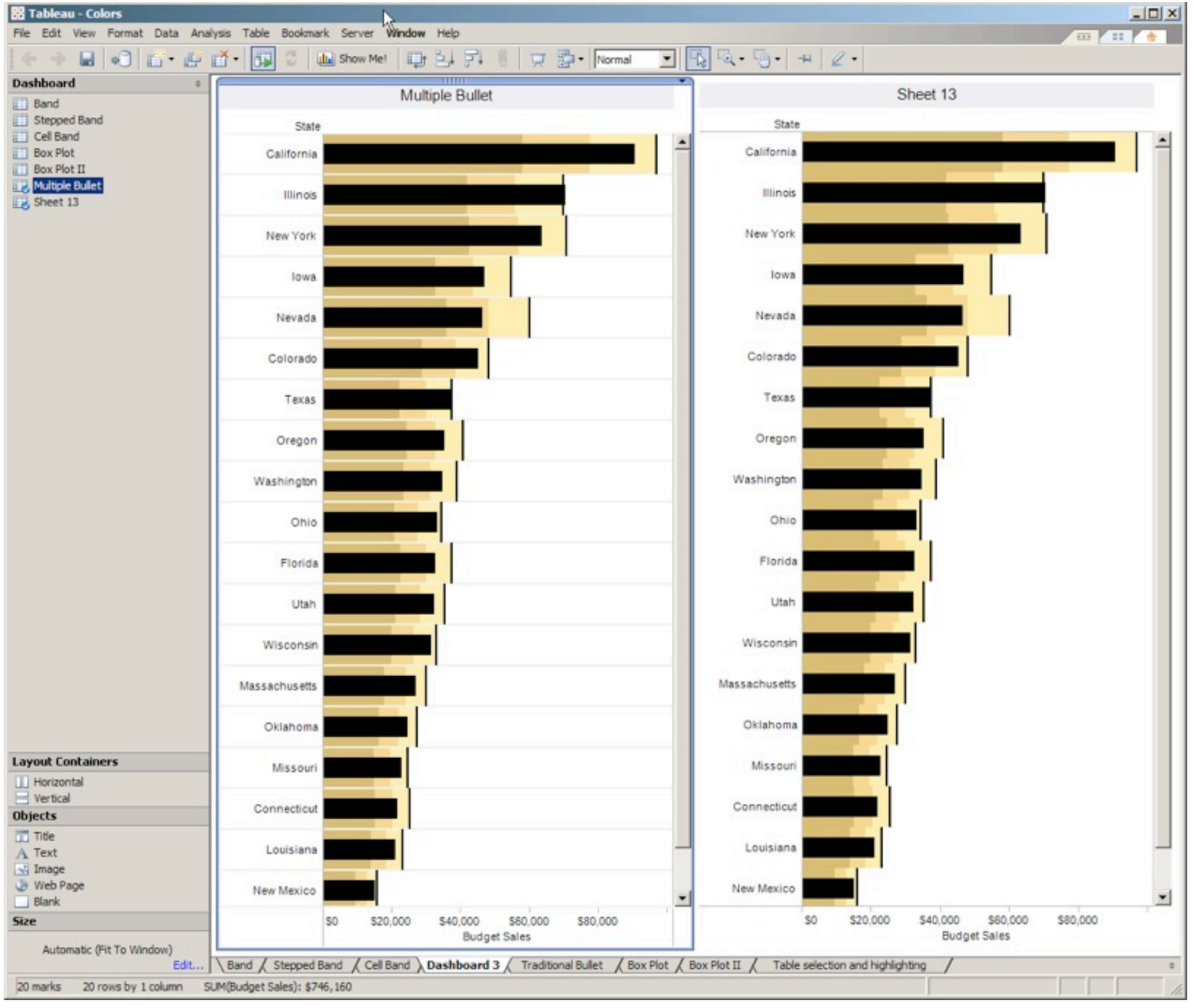


Tableau - Colors
File Edit View Format Data Analysis Table Bookmark Server Window Help
Show Me!
Normal
Dashboard
Band
Stepped Band
Cell Band
Box Plot
Box Plot II
Multiple Bullet
Sheet 13
Layout Containers
Horizontal
Vertical
Objects
Title
Text
Image
Web Page
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Size
Automatic (Fit To Window)
Edit...
Multiple Bullet
State
California
Illinois
New York
Iowa
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Colorado
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Sheet 13
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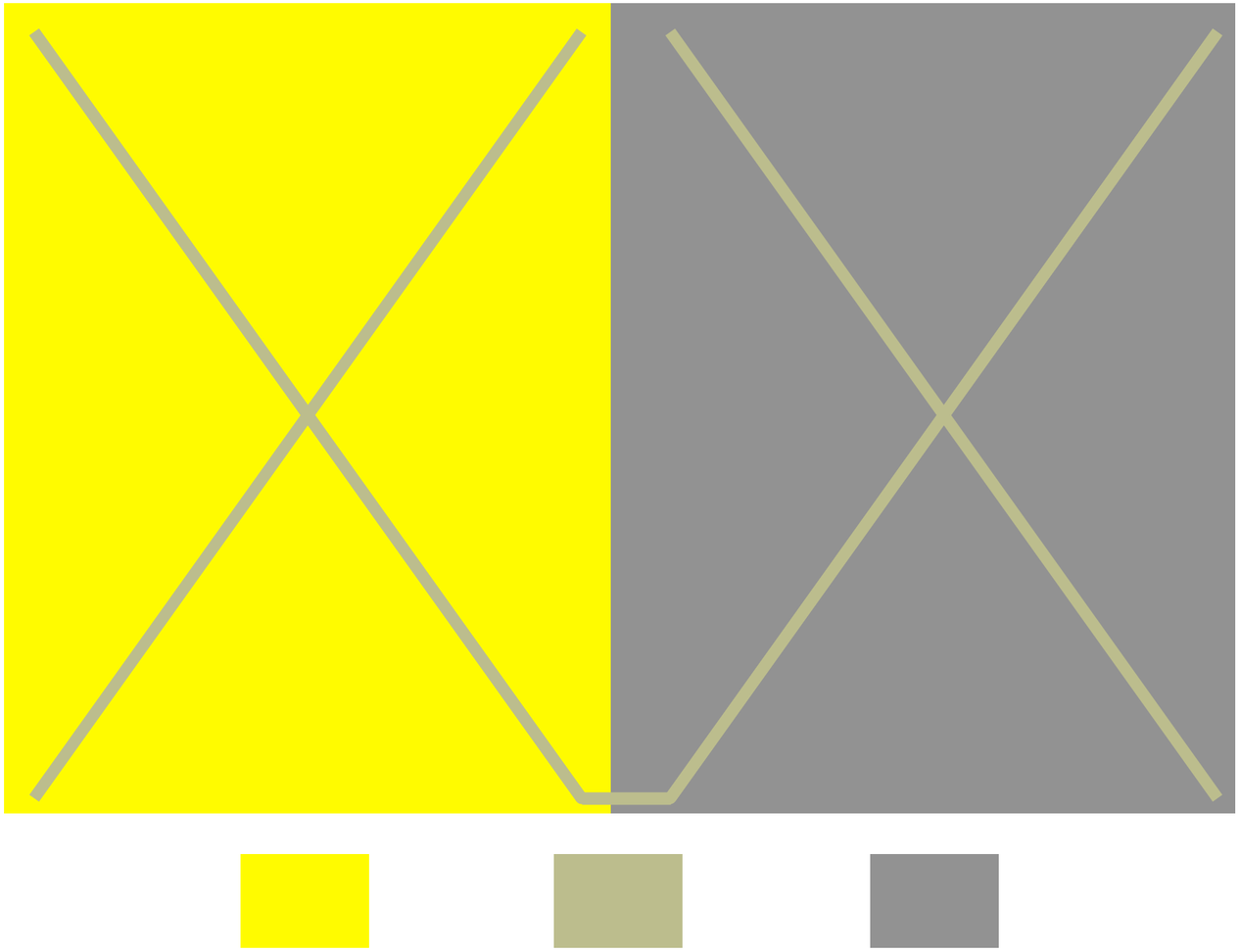
Louisiana
New Mexico
$0
$20,000
$40,000
$60,000
$80,000
Budget Sales
Band
Stepped Band
Cell Band
Dashboard 3
Traditional Bullet
Box Plot
Box Plot II
Table selection and highlighting
20 marks
20 rows by 1 column
SUM(Budget Sales): $746,160

“Color is the most relative medium in art.”

—Josef Albers, Interaction of Color



Summary: Understanding color

- Hue, chroma, lightness
- Generated vs. perceived
- Contrast and analogy: Tell your story
- Size, outlines, background all matter

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Color vision deficiency (CVD)

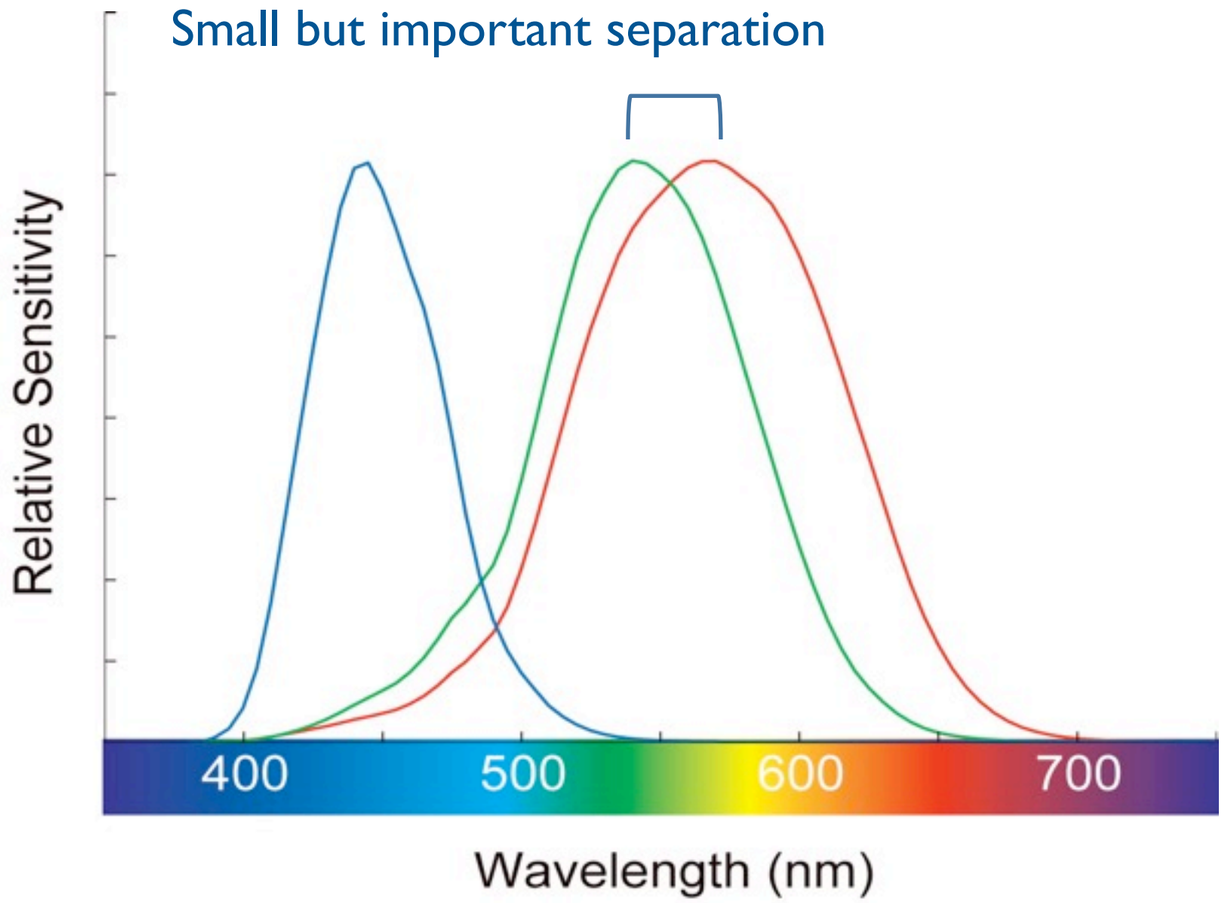
“normal”

Affects 8-10% of men

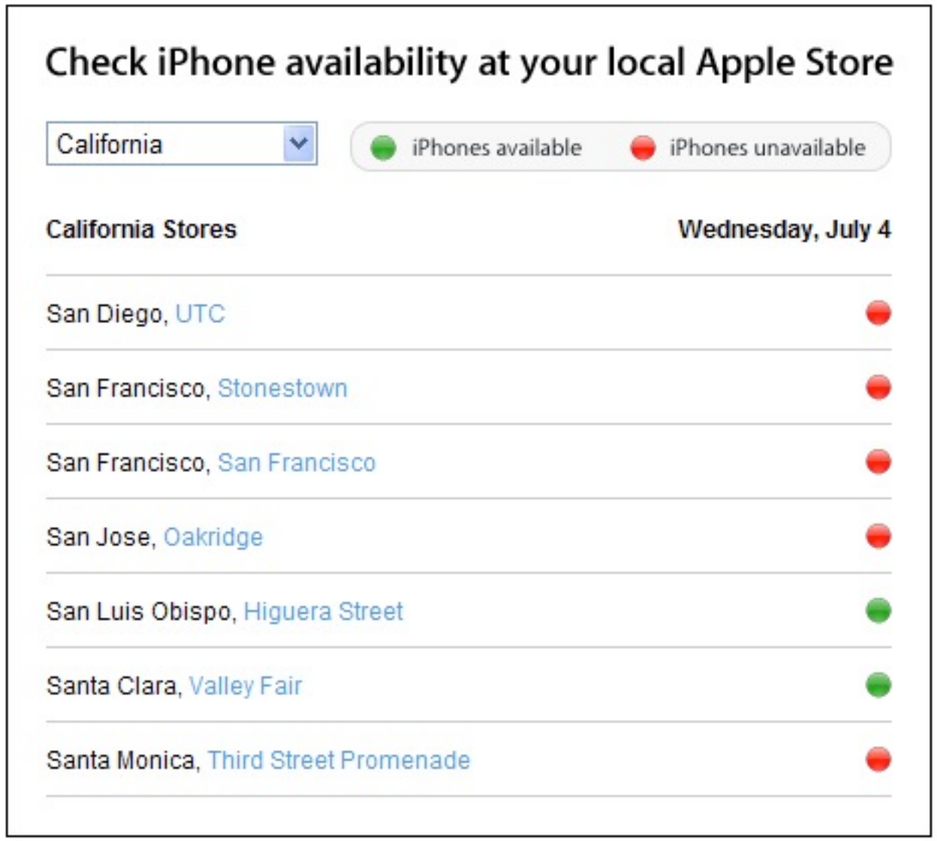
“weak red-green”

Simulation from Coblinder

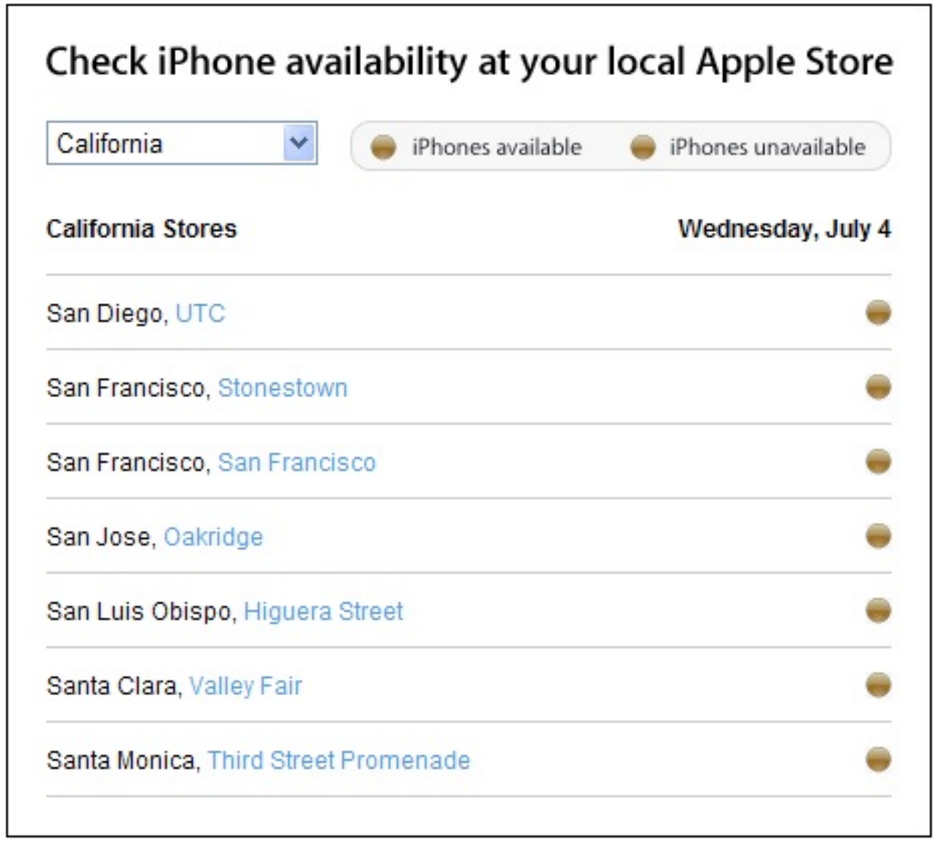
Most CVD involves problems with red-green



When CVD is a problem



Red-green availability icons



As seen by a deuteranope

www.iloveux.com

Extreme CVD (Vischeck simulation)

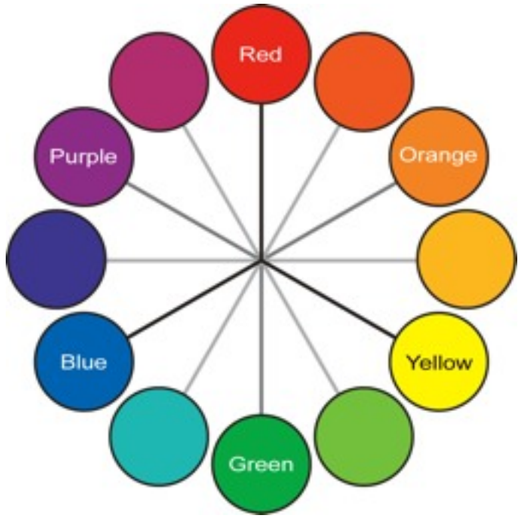
Normal

Protanope (missing L)

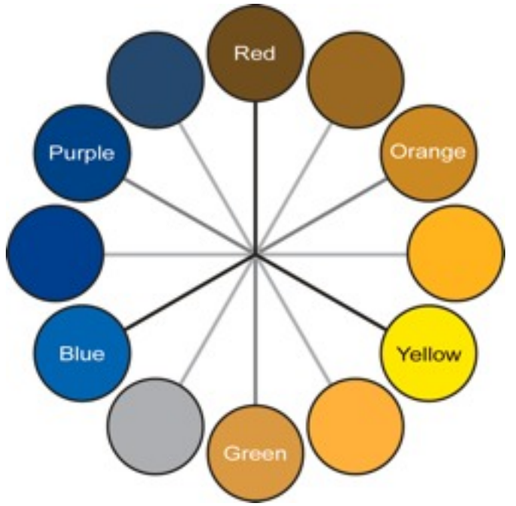
Deuteranope (missing M)

Tritanope (missing S)

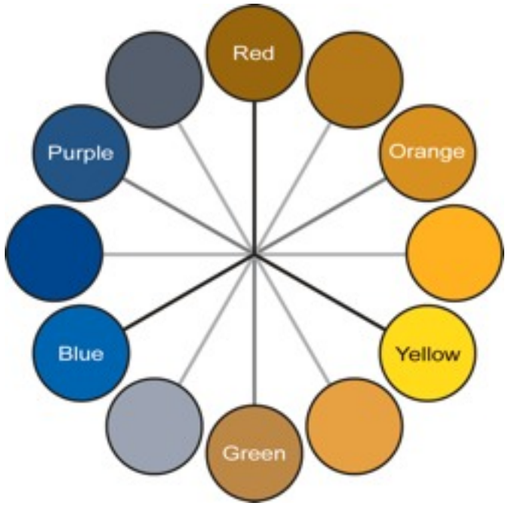
Reduces color to 2 dimensions



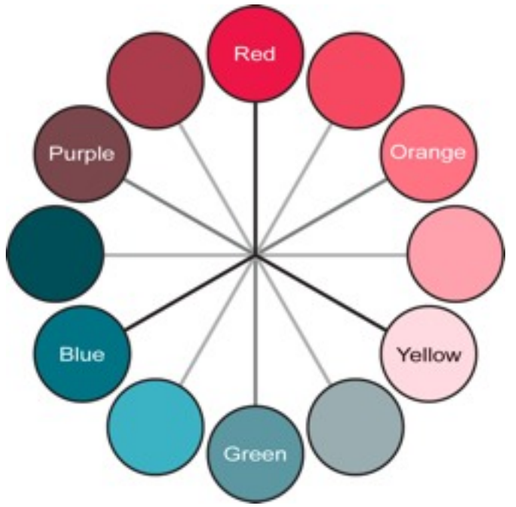
Normal



Protanope



Deuteranope



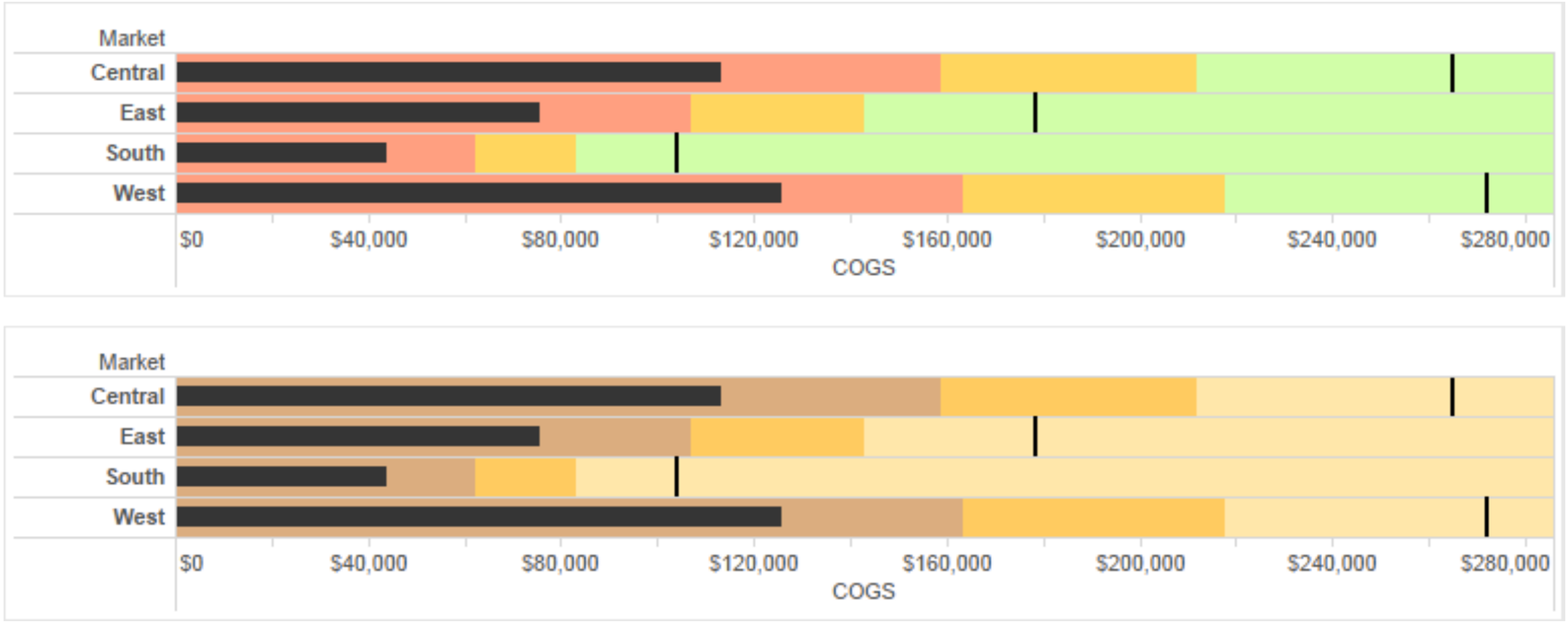
Tritanope

Named colors and CVD

Red-green not the only problem

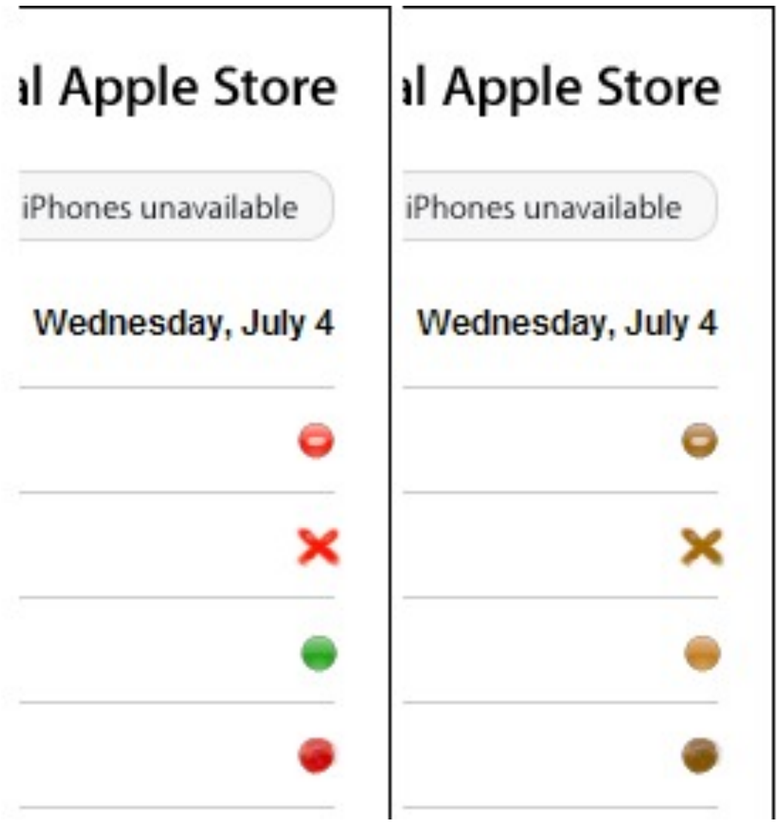
Similar perception of lightness

Encode with lightness



Deuteranope simulation

Avoid encoding by color alone



Problem: Genes in Vischeck

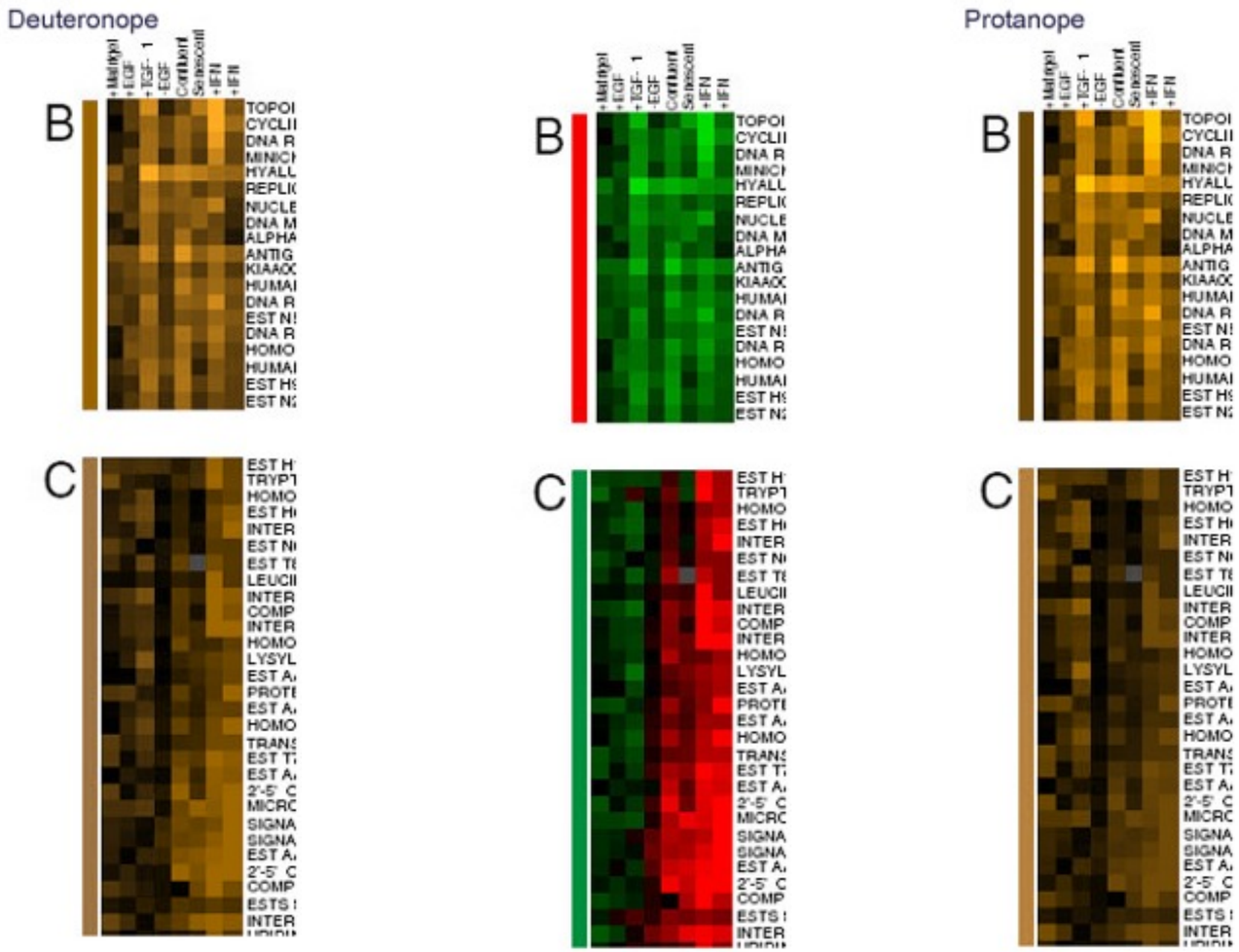
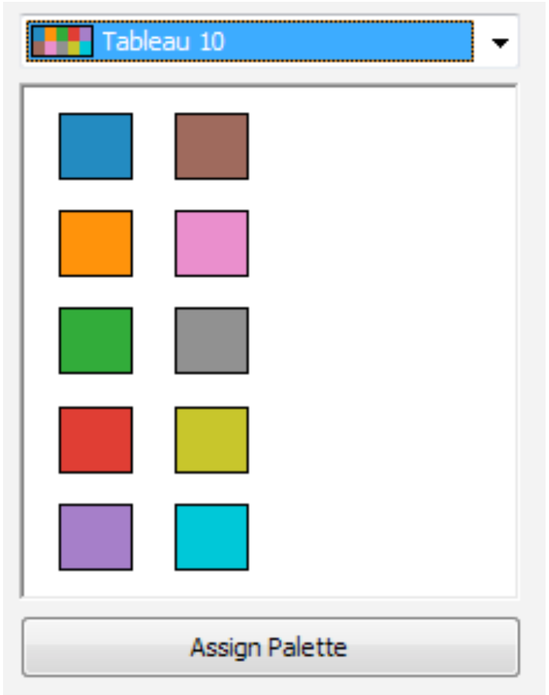
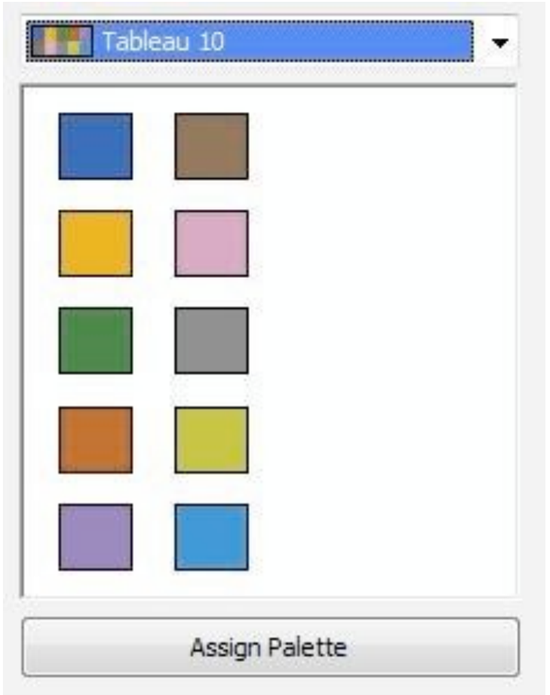


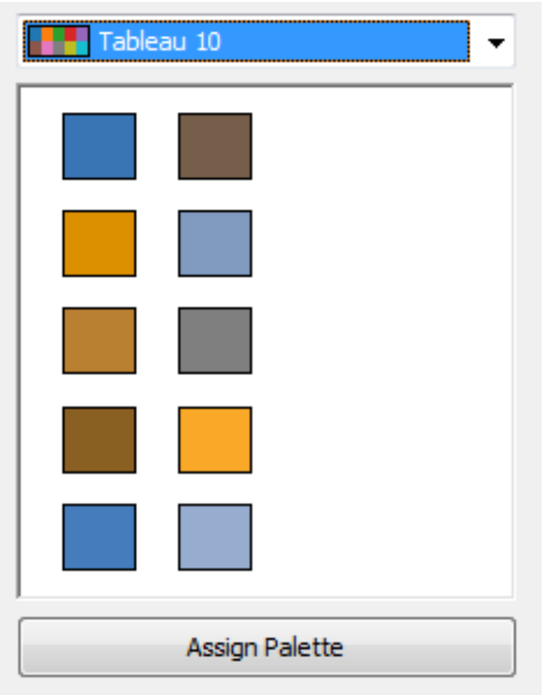
Tableau 10 and CVD



Normal



Mild



Severe

Blue-Orange is “safe”

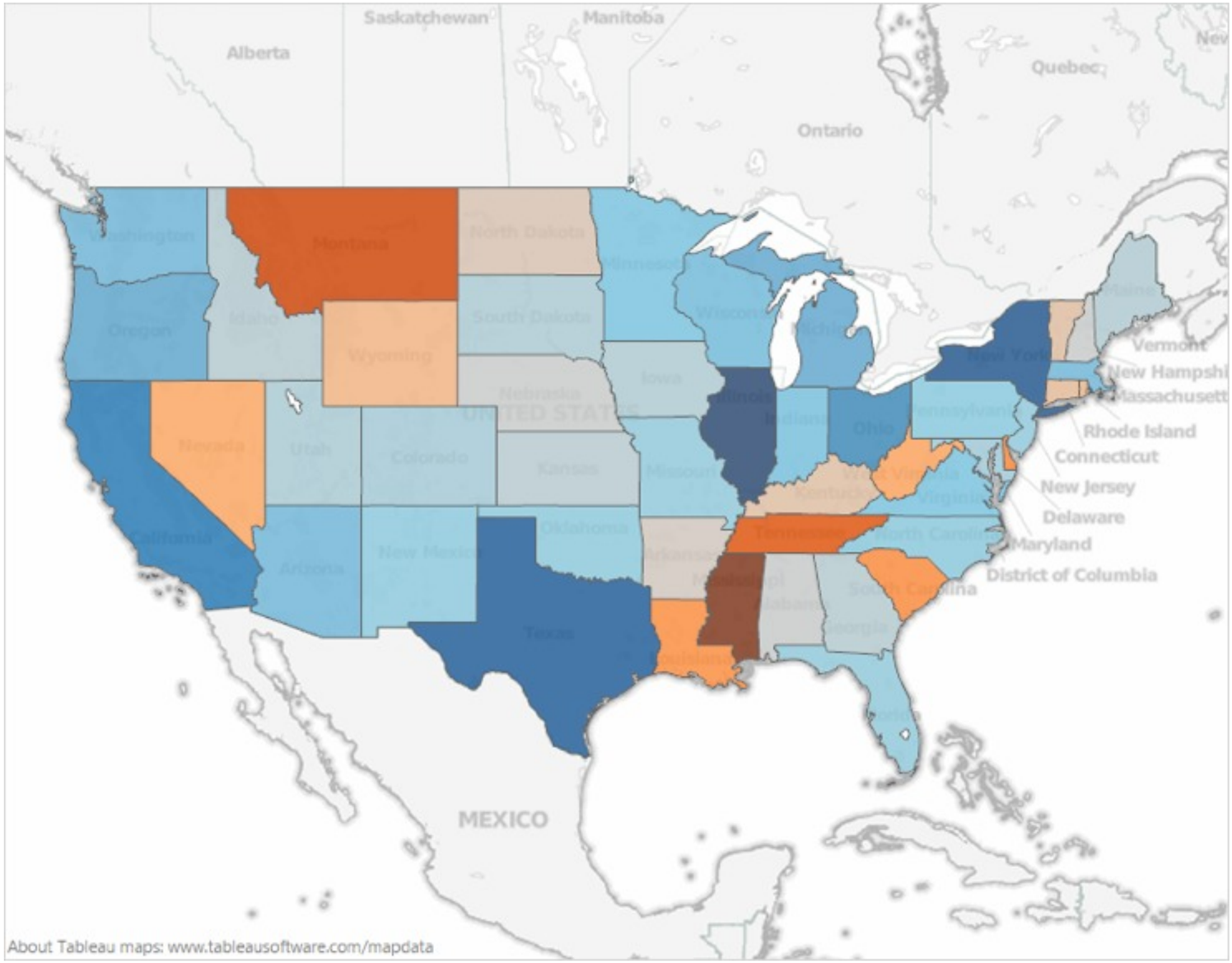
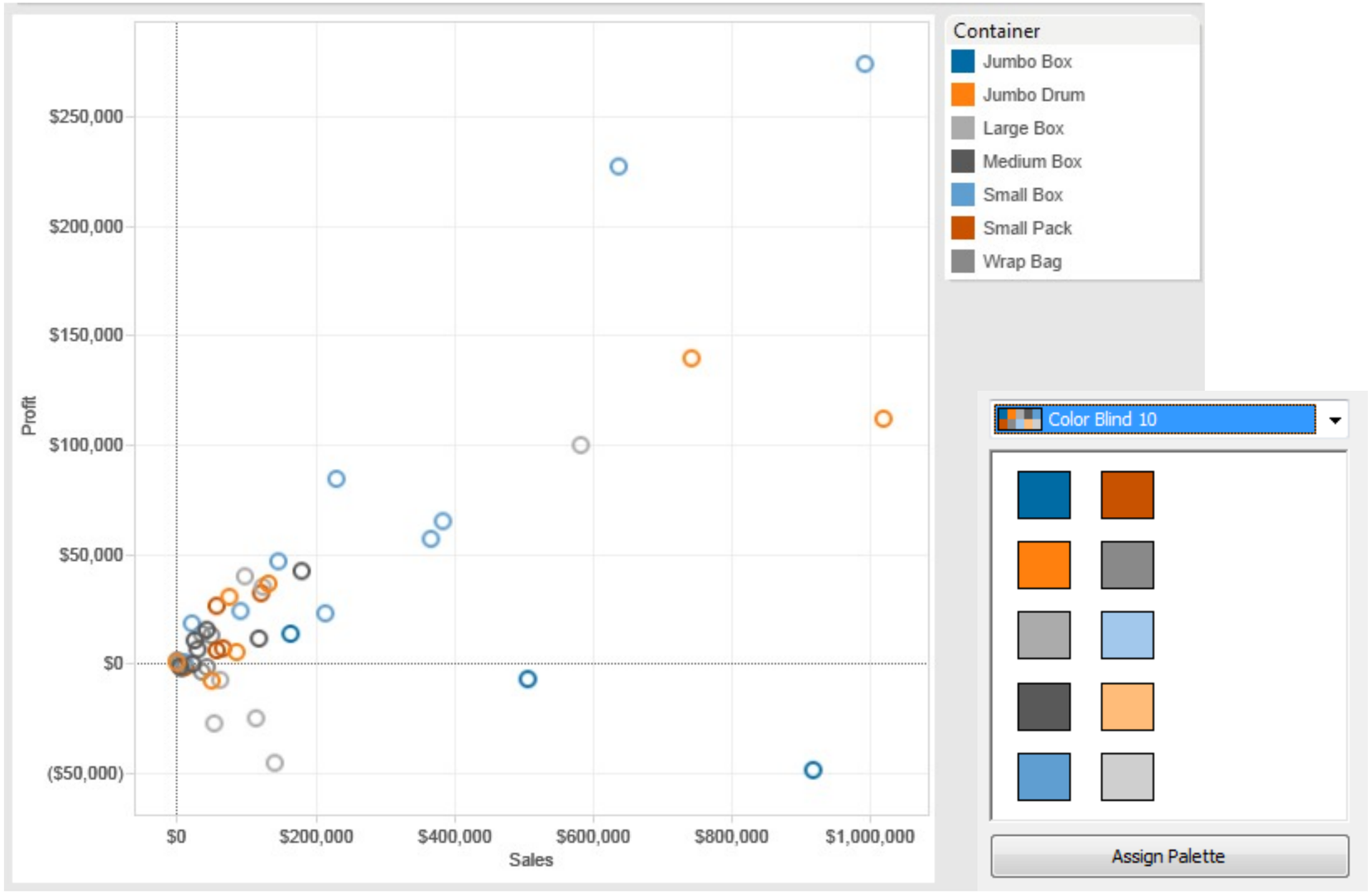
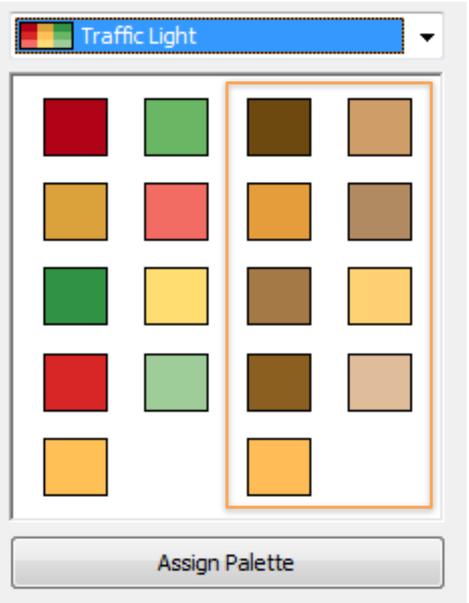
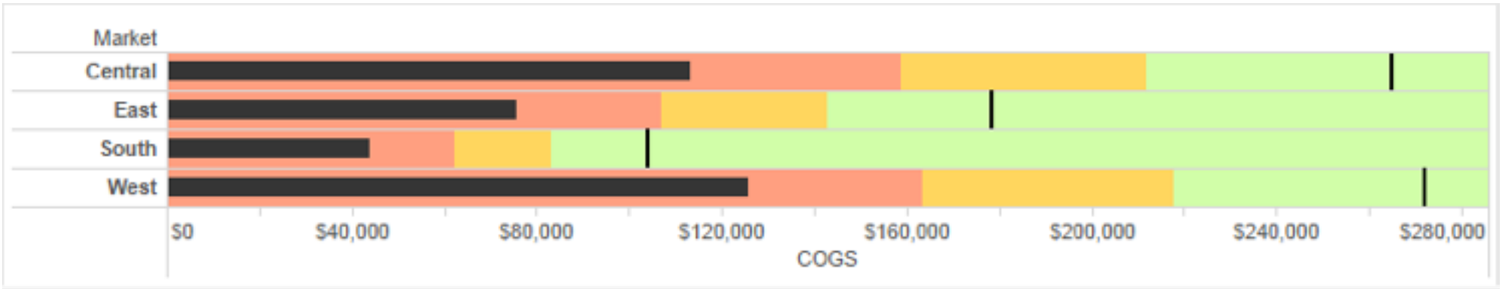


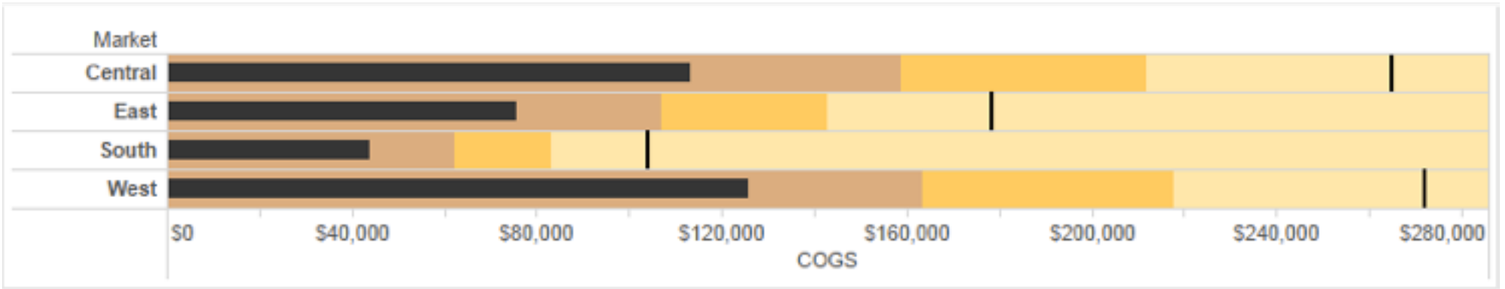
Tableau and CVD: Colorblind palette



Making “traffic light” colors work







Deuteranope simulation

Summary: Designing for CVD

- Blue-orange-gray “safe”
- Encode with lightness
- Double-encode where it really matters

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CVD Simulation

- Built into some Adobe tools
- Coblis: http://www.color-blindness.com/coblis-color-blindness-simulator/

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Tableau color design principles

Focus on data, not color design

Defaults encode best practices

Support multiple views, multiple mark types

Encourage best practices, allow personal expression

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Overview

Discrete palettes and continuous ramps

- Design of defaults and UX
- Design alternative choices
- Customized within the UX

Create your own with XML (preferences.tps)

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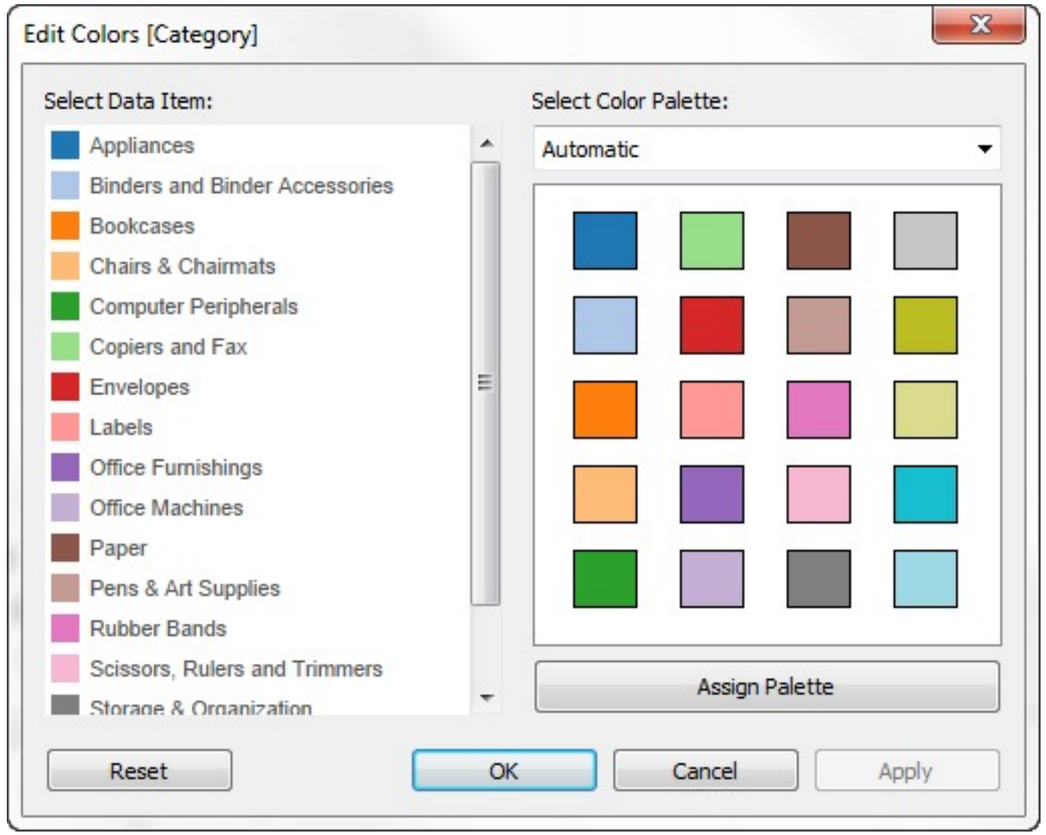
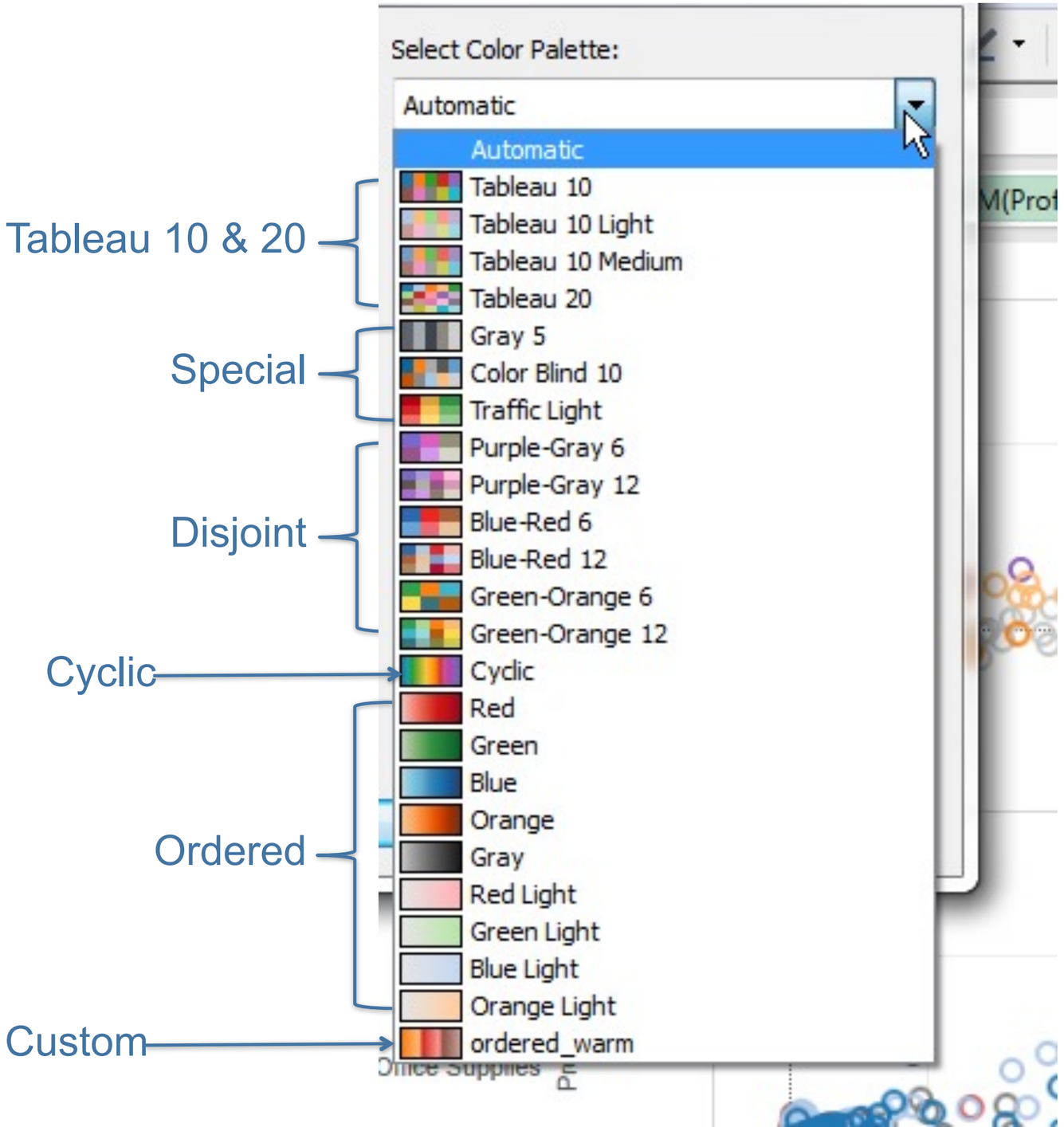
Discrete data: Palettes

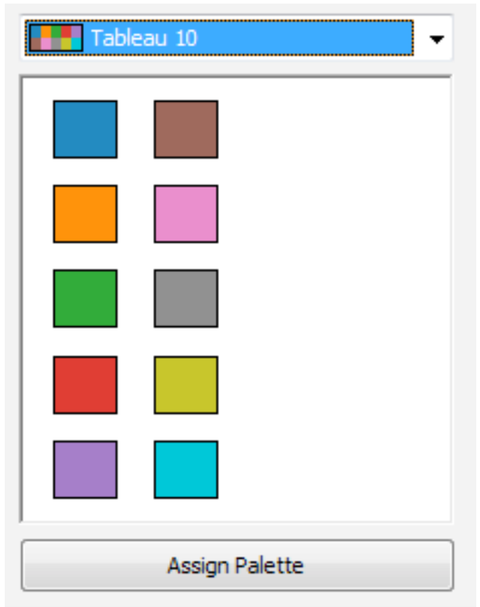


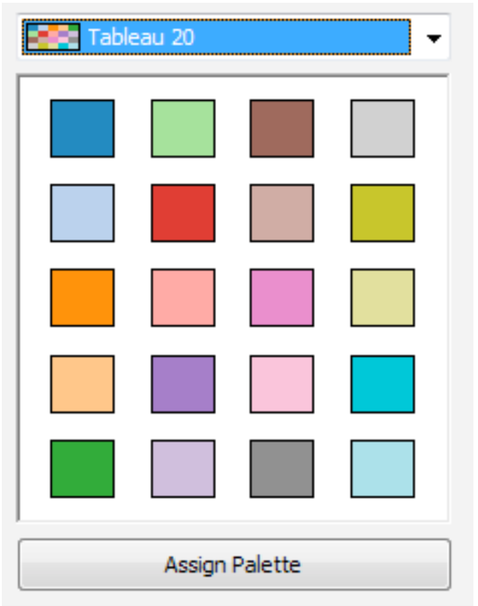
Assign colors to items in categories

Discrete Palettes



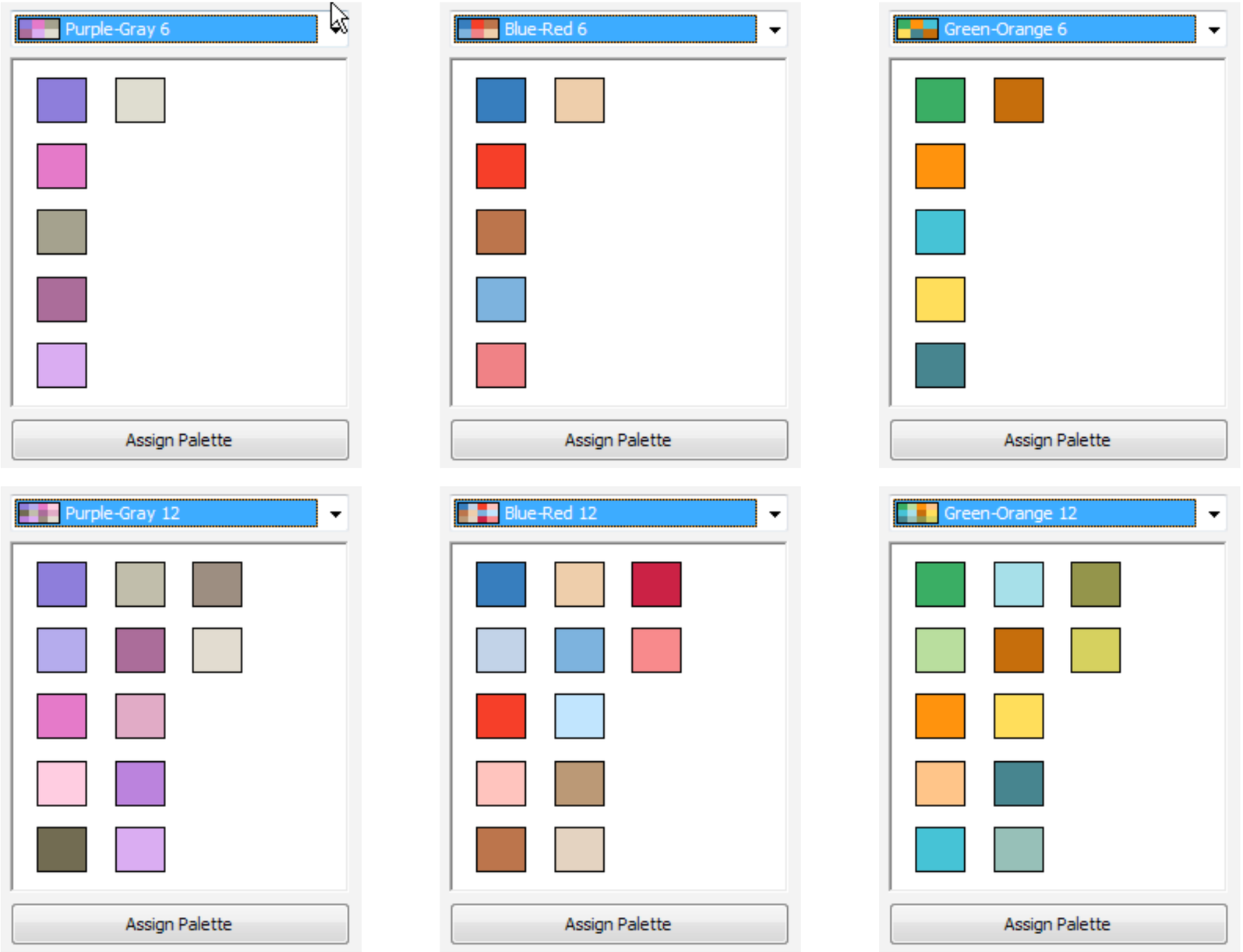
Default: Tableau 10 and 20



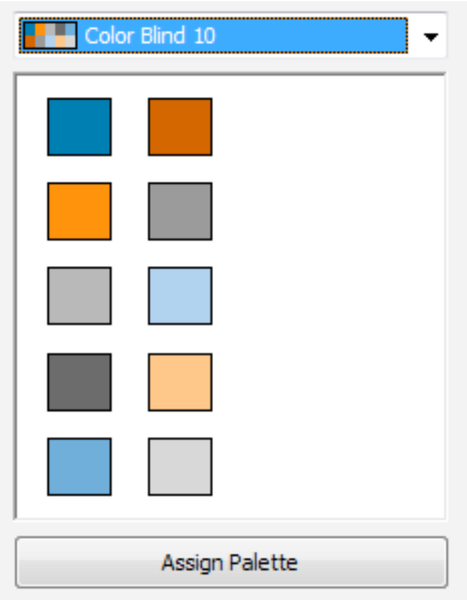


Automatic based on cardinality
Order is top-to-bottom, left-to-right

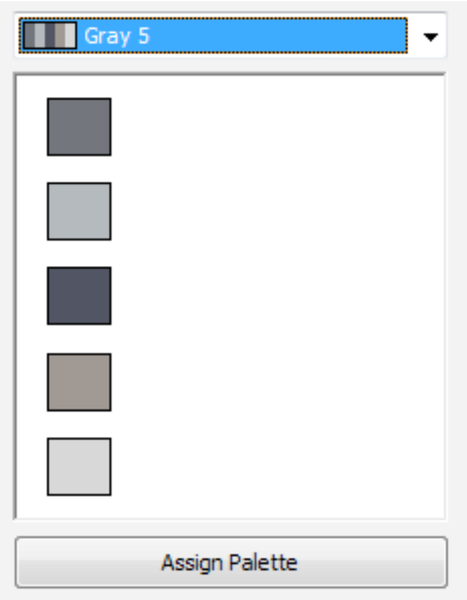
Disjoint Palettes Partition color space



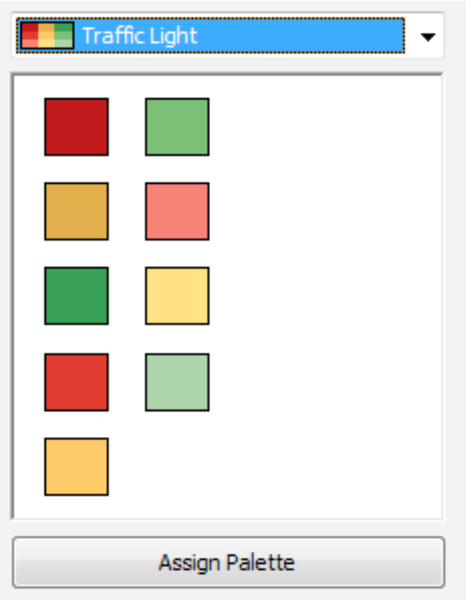
Specials



Colorblind

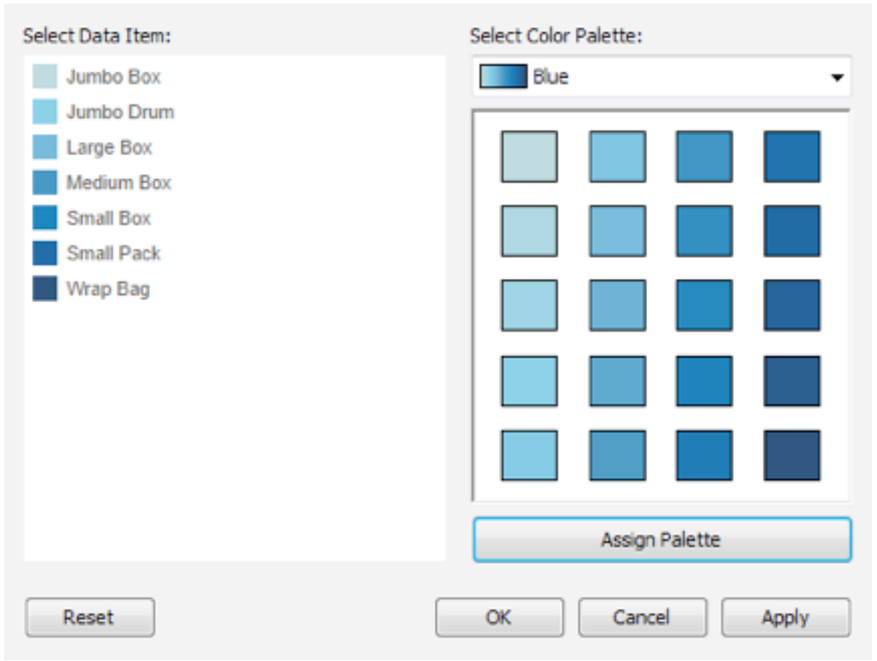


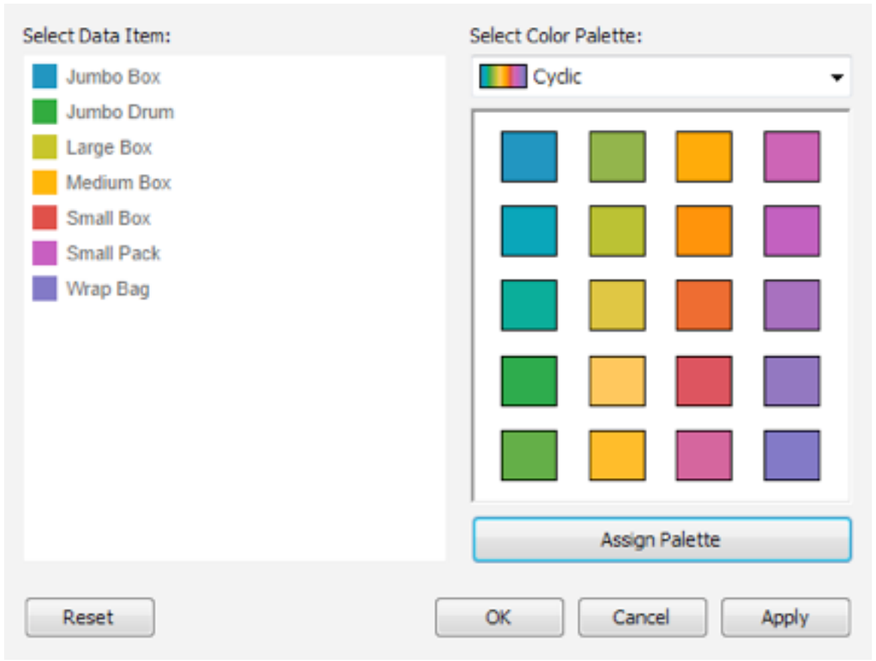
Gray 5



Traffic Light

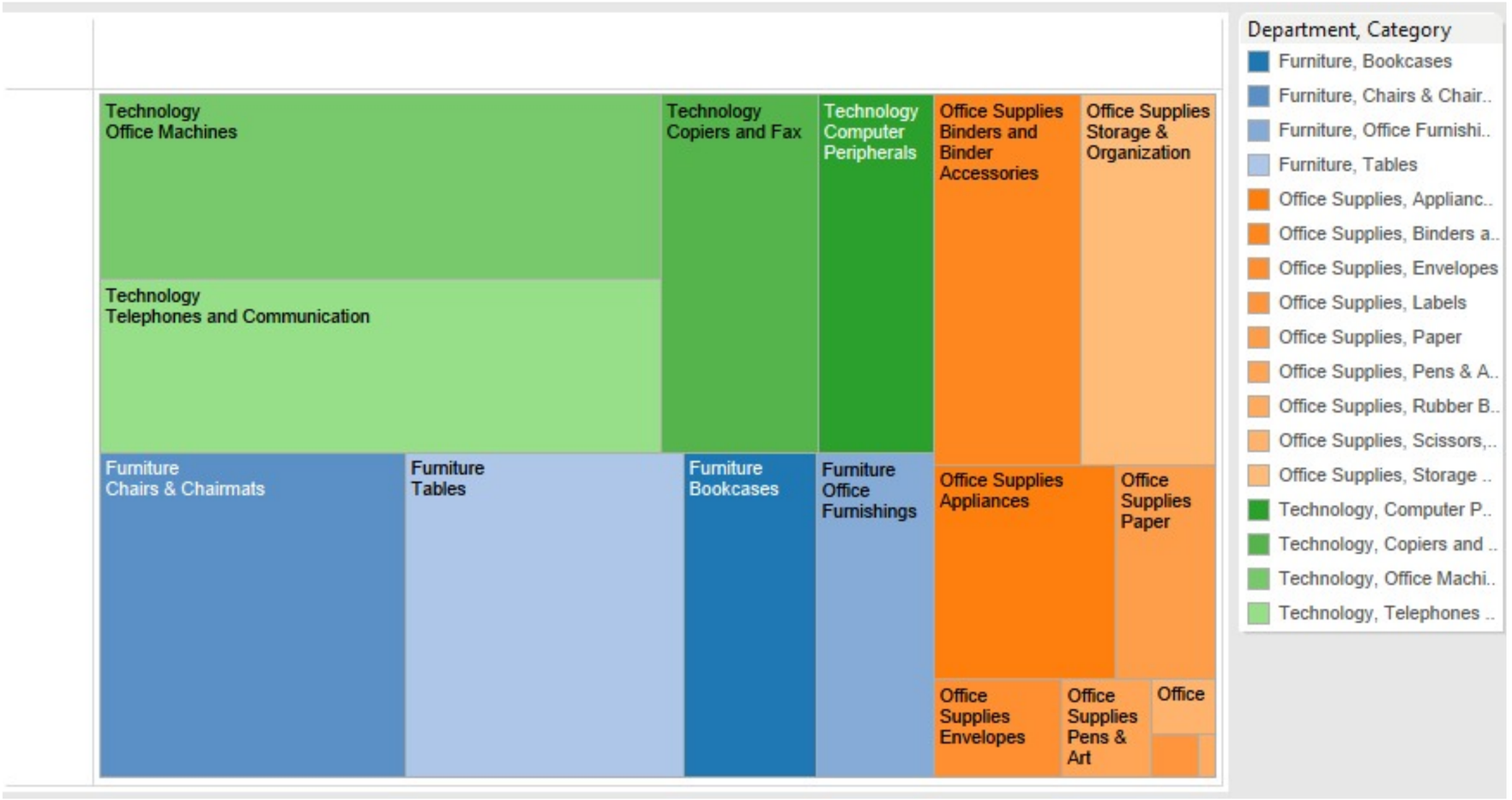
Ordered





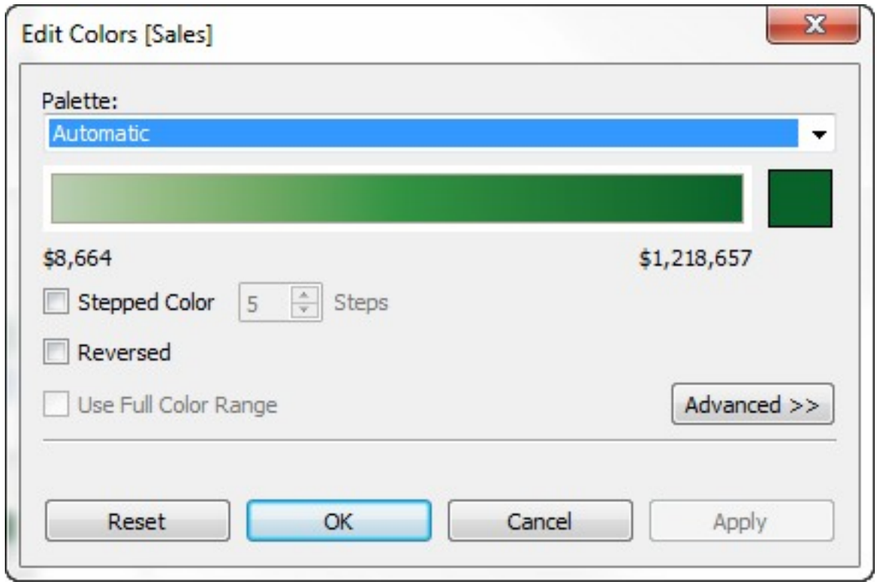
Discrete ramps, distribute across domain

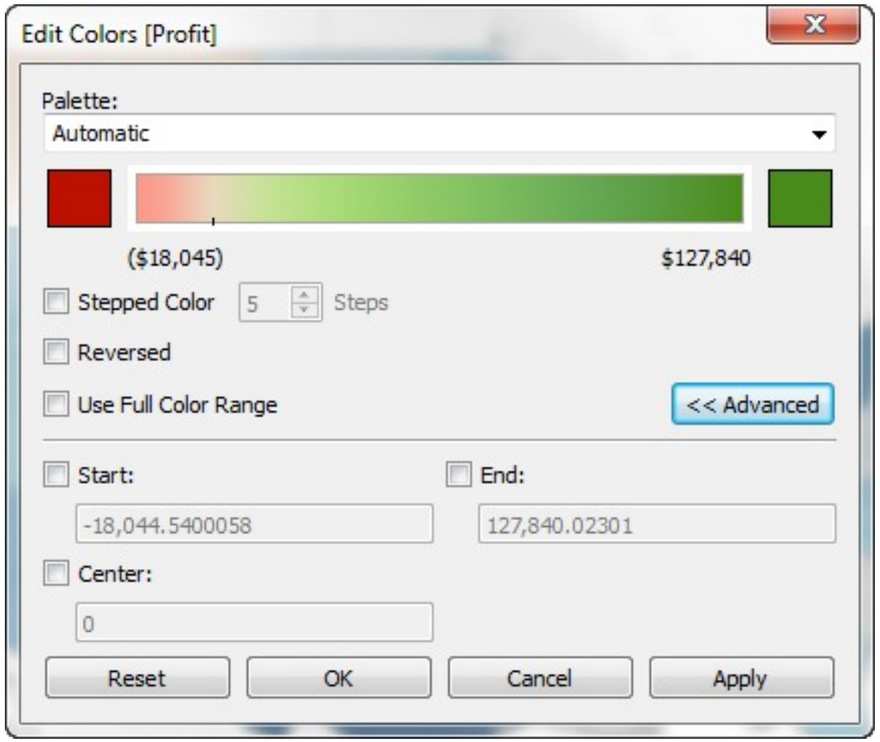
Multiple fields on color



DEMO: CATEGORICAL COLOR

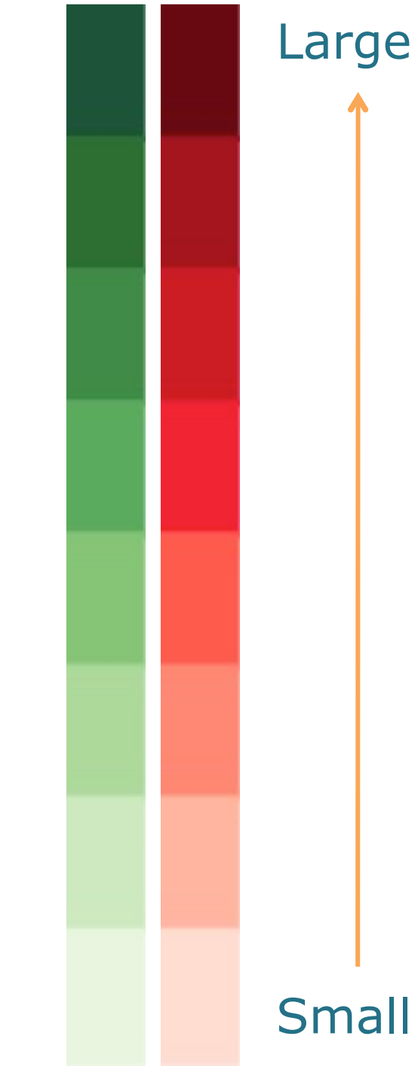
Continuous data: Ramps





Assign colors to sequences of numeric values

Learn from Cartographers



Sequential

Diverging

From Cynthia Brewer

Color Ramps

Sequential

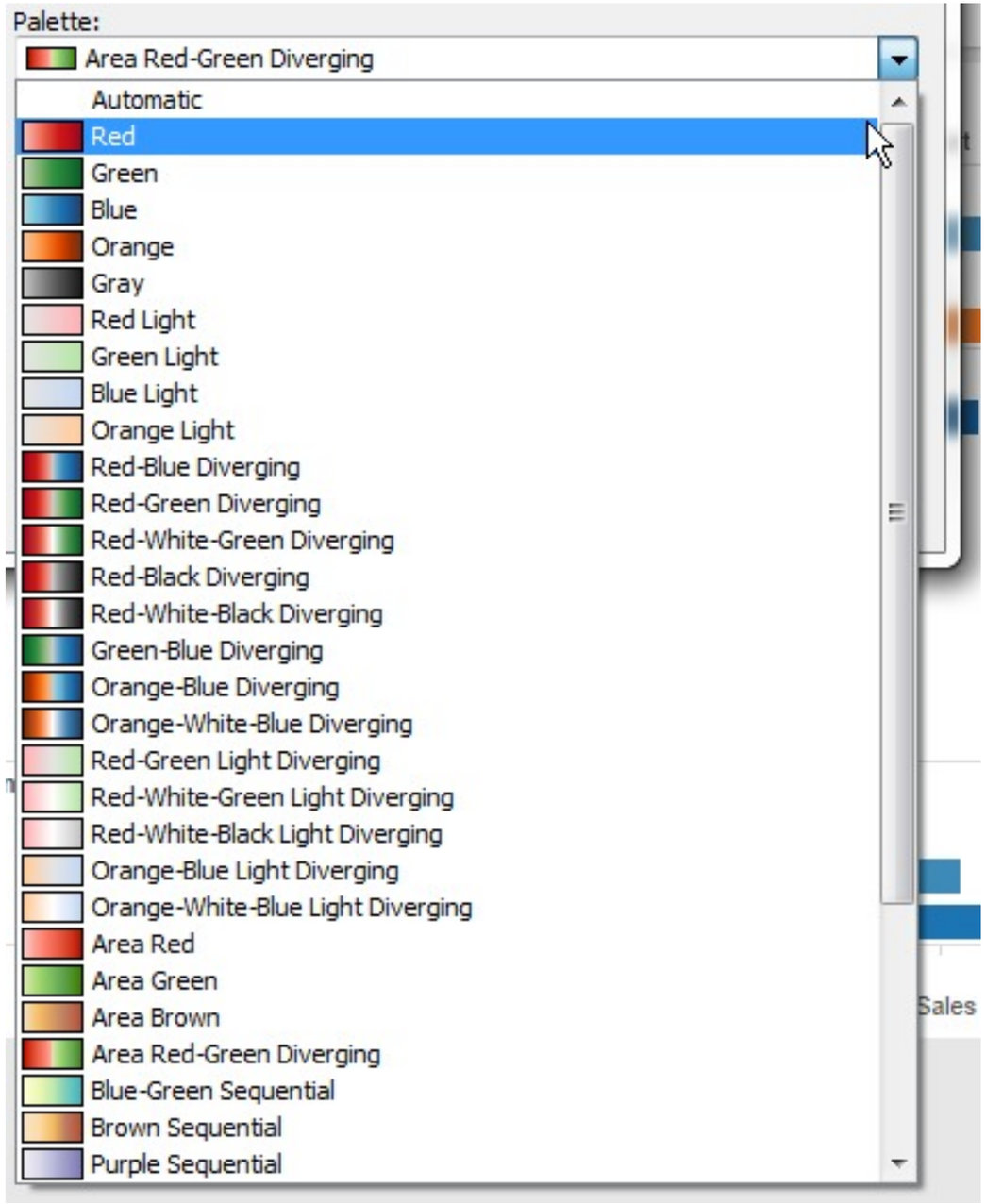
Light, for behind text

Diverging
(grey & white centers)

Light, for behind text

Default for areas
(maps, treemaps, heatmaps…)

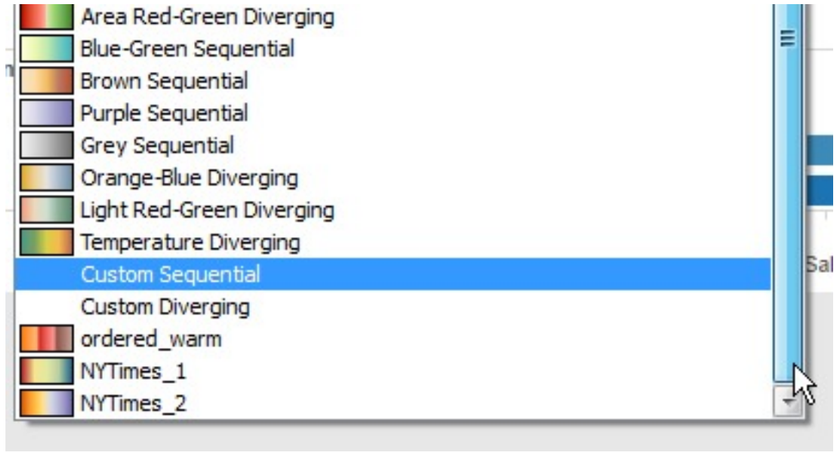
Specials for maps



Color Ramps (continued)

Mapping colors

Custom ramps



DEMO: QUANTITATIVE COLOR

Preferences.tps

XML file

<color-palette > tag with name and type

```
<color-palette name=‘flame' type= 'ordered-sequential'>
    <color>#FFEF3A</color>
    <color>#FED724</color>
    <color>#FEAC0A</color>
    <color>#ED6211</color>
    <color>#E03D1A</color>
    <color>#CC0629</color>
 </color-palette>
```

regular
ordered-diverging
ordered-sequential

Summary

Color vision and design principles

Tableau principles

- Focus on the data
- Design your color “story”
- Consider size, legibility

Don’t forget those with CVD

mstone@tableausoftware.com

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Further reading

- Visualization Analysis and Design. Tamara Munzner. CRC Press, 2014.
  - *Chap 10: Map Color and Other Channels*
  - *Chap 8: Arrange Spatial Data*

- A Field Guide to Digital Color. Maureen Stone. AK Peters 2003.

Now

- Break (15 min)
- Demo (30 min)
  - Continue with color, add Tableau walkthroughs
- Lab 3 (45 min)

Lab/Assignment 3

- Work through two Stevens tutorials
- Work through two Stone color demos
- Apply color principles to three datasets from previous two labs
- submit next week
  - by 9am Tue, email tmm@cs.ubc.ca with subject JOURN Week 3