Design tips for non-designers

juicebox

Core-level design tips

Pay attention to the data to ink ratio. One of the basics from the data visualization Godfather himself, Edward Tufte. Indispensable.
The Visual Display of Quantitative Information, 2001, Chapter 4, Data-Ink and Graphical Redesign

Avoid chart junk. Ditto above.
The Visual Display of Quantitative Information, 2001, Chapter 4, Chart Junk

The best explanation of why to never use a pie chart. I admire much of Jorge Camoes' work and simple writing. This one still conveys the issue best. *Finally revealed: The optimal number of categories in a pie chart.*

Whitespace matters. There's lots of writing on the topic, but this article has a nice summary with great examples. *Why whitespace matters*

PowerPoint can be dangerous. Some good references on how easily presentations go awry.
We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint
Amazon Staff Meetings: "NO POWERPOINT"

Do the squint test. This might sound silly, but try it and see what you think. *The Squint Test: How quick exposure to design can reveal its flaws*

Major-level design tips

Less is more. And this article helped me understand why. *Hick's Law*

Simplify the explanation. Avinash's passion when writing about this very old principle is hard to miss. *Occham's Razor*

Consider your user's decision fatigue. When I think about a user looking at information at the end of the day, I remember this article.
Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?

Limit colors. Juice's design principles are great. I love the ones on color the most, like this one. *Limit Colors*

Persuade your audience. This one is more about presentation than design, but it's good for helping you consider your audience.
More than just facts

Understand performance vs. preference. A little deep, but useful when thinking about what chart might be more effective.
User Satisfaction vs. Performance Metrics

Take Tufte's one day class on presenting data and information. If you've gotten this far, congratulations! Now it's time to schedule your *Edward Tufte one day class.*

Learn the 5 design principles of Gestalt Theory. You'll be one of the cool kids when you mention Gestalt. I found this article to be the easiest to digest. *Gestalt Theory in Typography & Design Principles*

Graduate-level design tips

Use aesthetics that attract people. A good 101 on aesthetics for the non-artist. *The Fascinating Science Of Aesthetics*

Include storytelling in your visualizations. It's really necessary to understand the connection between storytelling and data.
Storytelling: The Next Step for Visualization

Consider what motivates users to take action in your design. There's a lot written on the psychology behind design, but this is a great summary article. *How psychology can help generate more clicks on your links*

Learn about interactive data analysis. This video focuses on visualization for exploring data. Hear from a major thought leader in the data visualization space, Jeff Heer. *Interactive Data Analysis*

Review these data design guides. Lots of suggestions from Nathan Yau on ways to think about charts. *Working and designing with data.*

Design information so it tells a story. This video focuses more on art than data, but it's helpful to see another thought leader's perspective on data visualization. *The beauty of data visualization - David McCandless*