DATA GEM: How to Visualize your Data Using Thematic Maps on data.census.gov Transcript

Hi, I am Aundrea Wilkins, a program analyst from the U.S. Census Bureau. One of my favorite features of data.census.gov is the ability to create thematic maps.

These maps are powerful data visualizations that can help you tell a story by showing the characteristics of an area in comparison to other areas.

Let's check it out.

After you've found the data you need in one of the tables in data.census.gov, you may want to produce a visualization of the data. In this data gem, I'll walk you through creating a map using the table you found in data.census.gov.

I've gone to data.census.gov and selected the advanced search button.

Now I need to add the filters, so under Geographies > Census Tract > Delaware > and check the box for all census tracts within Delaware.

Then under Topics > Income and Poverty > Poverty > and check the box next to Poverty. Let's confirm that both of these filters are in the Selected Filters panel at the top-left of the screen.

Once that's done, I'm going to hit the Search button to see what's returned.

The first table that comes up, S1701, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, is the table that I need. I'm going to click on the table title, since this is a larger table we need to take an additional step and click on open the table, in the bottom right center, to see the full view.

This table uses the latest 5-Year ACS estimates in this case 2023. Please keep in mind that we release estimates every year and the data will change.

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Looking through the table, I can locate the line of data that I need—for Females—and the percent below the poverty level is 13.2 percent for census tract 401 in Kent County, Delaware.

I can also see that, if I scroll over, I can view this line for all of the other census tracts.

These are the estimates that I want to map. To do this, I am going to click on the "More Tools" in the upper right corner and select the Map button to create a map of the data.

The map automatically centers over Delaware. Note that the Survey/Program, Data Variable, Product, and Geography are all noted right above the map. Right now, the data variable used in the map is the Population for whom poverty status is determined – Percent below poverty level.

I really need to know the Total estimate for females below poverty, so I am going to click on the title of the data table and scroll down, under SEX select Female.

When I click this, the map updates with the percent estimates for females below poverty. You can see that the legend is updated as well.

Let's go over the ribbon located directly above the map for a moment. I can use this to select another geography by clicking on the Select button, clicking on the geography I want, and dragging the cursor over the geographies that I want in order to create this rectangle. Any geographies that touch the rectangle will be selected.

You will need to click on the "Select" button again to deactivate, you can remove the highlighted census tracts by clicking on the tract you want to remove and Deselect.

If I choose to select the Charts button, I can view the data in chart form, we can easily select the Map button again to go back to the map. Selecting the Data Notes button will provide all the data notes for the table and map.

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You also have the option to make customizations to the map. You can change the color palette on the legend by selecting the Colors button.

I like this purple combination, so I'm going to select that. I can also change the number of data classes and the classification types by selecting the Classes button.

I'm going to change the data classes from 5 to 6—notice that the legend automatically updates this.

I'm going to leave the classification type as a natural break. Once I'm finished, if I want to re-hide this panel, I can just hit the X.

Another option that you'll see is the TABLE button.

Clicking on this will give you a list of the estimates for the geographies you've selected for quick viewing. This is very similar to the geographic comparison tables that the ACS used to have. I can also select the View Full Table button to view the full source table. Click the X to hide this panel.

We hope you found this helpful!

Thematic maps are definitely a great way to show your data. We hope you've enjoyed this Data Gem. For more videos like this, please visit Census.gov/Academy, and subscribe.

Thank you!

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