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

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Hi, I am Alexandra. 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. I invited my colleague Jessica Barnett to show us how to use the thematic maps. Let's check it out.

Hi, I'm Jessica. 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 that data. In this data gem, I'll walk you through creating a map using a table that you've found in data.census.gov. I want to look at the percent of females in poverty by census tract in Delaware, so I'm going to first go to data.census.gov and select the filters that I need in the Advanced Search: all the census tracts in Delaware and poverty.

Using Google Chrome, I've gone to data.census.gov and selected the Advanced Search button. Now I need to add the filters, so let's select Geography > Tract > Delaware > and check the box for all census tracts within Delaware. Then let's select 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 bottom 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, so I'm going to click on the table title to open it to the full view. This table uses the 2018 5-Year ACS estimates. Looking through the table, I can locate the line of data that I need—for Females—and the percent below the poverty level is 13.4 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'm going to hit the Customize Table button. This will open the table to the view that includes the customization ribbon.

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Once I've gotten all the estimates I need from the table, I can select the Map button located at the end of the customization ribbon 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 total population for whom poverty status is determined. I really need to know the percent estimate for females below poverty, so I'm going to select the Data Variable dropdown, scroll down, and select Percent below poverty level – Population for whom poverty status is determined – Sex—Female—Estimate. 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 can also select the Clear Geos button to clear all the selected geographies or choose the Table button to view the full source table. If I choose to select the Table button, I'll go to the full source table, but I 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. Click the Data Notes button again to hide it.

You also have the option to make customizations to the map by clicking on the cog icon located beneath the legend. You can change the color palette by selecting the dropdown arrow. I like this green and purple combination, so I'm going to select that. I can also change the number of data classes and the classification types. 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 cog icon again.

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Another option that you'll see is the VIEW 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. Click the HIDE button to hide this panel. If I click on VIEW TABLE again, I can also select the Go to Full Table button to view the full source table.

I hope you found this helpful! Thank you.

Thank you, Jessica. Thematic maps are definitely a great way to show your data. I hope you guys like this Data Gem. For more videos like this, please visit Census.gov/Academy, and subscribe. Thank you.