Dear ManyEyes Team,

Allow me to congratulate you on creating a simplistic yet powerful visualization interface that reaches out not only to expert users, but also to novices and casual users. Uploading data sets as well as creating visualizations in ManyEyes do not require much effort. I must admit, I had my misgivings about copying and pasting my data set manually; I expected to encounter data mismatch errors. It turned out that my apprehensions were unfounded, as the data upload process was seamless.

In the explore navigational tab, comments seems to be the odd man out. In the context of a particular visualization, comments contribute to an engaging discussion. Exploring comments on their own accord, outside the context of a visualization, seem less useful.

You give the user a great deal of freedom in choosing how to visualize their data. In that spirit, it would be nice if the user could choose their own color schemes for their visualizations, as colors often add meaning to contexts. For example, light green would be an appropriate color in a visualization of environmental data. I realize that you have taken the efforts to ensure that the colors used in ManyEyes are accessible to visually impaired users. How about giving the users access to a palette that contains only the colors that are suitable for visually challenged users?

The option to create visualizations based on percentage values, as opposed to actual numbers, would be very useful. For example, I had a data set containing the total population of each state, as well as the population of the elderly. I wanted to visualize the percentage of the elderly population in each state. I had to calculate the percentages myself and add it to the data set to reflect this change.

The one navigational aspect that had me confounded was editing data sets. For instance, I wanted to change the data source URL of my data set to correct a mistake. It seemed intuitive to choose the edit data set option, and I did so, but could not find an option to change the data source or its URL. I spent quite some time trying to figure this out, and when I was about to resort to deleting the data set and uploading it again, I noticed the edit metadata option. I see why you grouped the title, data source and the URL separately; you wanted edit data set to refer exclusively to the data set itself. Though this conceptual grouping is correct in theory, it makes life confusing. I would suggest doing away with the concept of metadata and enable editing the title, data source or URL in the edit data set option.

Speaking of the edit data set option, I found the process of editing the data set to be counterintuitive. It took me a while to figure out that the way to edit data points is to double click the data point to be edited. When I clicked a data point, the entire row was highlighted, which distracted me from what I was supposed to do, i.e. double click the data point. I would ideally have preferred to see a textbox or an HTML form containing the data set, where it is straightforward to set the focus to the data points and begin editing. Also, I could not find a way to edit the column headings.

Kudos on creating this fantastic application, and I wish you success in enhancing future versions of ManyEyes, as well as in any other endeavor that you embark upon.

All the Best,
Prahalad