The Visualization Development Group,  
The New York Times 

Dear all,

I must first appreciate the commendable job you do in making information (news) so easily perceivable by the NY Times readers. I was analysing some of your Wordle visualizations and wanted to share some of my views regarding the same.

- The first thing a particular visualization is expected to do is to capture attention of the reader. The very look of your Wordle visualizations does lure the reader to have a look at it. The varicoloured appearance with the random arrangements of the word is the catch here.
- Associating the font size of the words with their frequency of occurrence in the dataset is intuitive for the readers to understand.
- One important and very useful option you have provided is in restricting the number of words to be considered for the visualization. That enables the user to select the top few words of highest frequency, according to his/her need.
- You have also provided the readers with the option to explicitly remove a word from the visualization which may prove useful in different contexts.
- When one analyses a person’s talk or writing, he would be interested in the main keywords rather than the common words used. The option that you provide to omit the common words in the many languages is very beneficial. The reader would find irrelevant words like “a”, “the”, “and”, “but” in the visualization which would make no sense, but for this option.
- You have provided the user enough options to play with the colours according to the readers’ convenience to perceive the information better.

I would also want to share some suggestions that I have:

- You could have provided the option for the user to click on a word to find its occurrences in the dataset (the sentences it belongs to). That would help the reader to understand the context of the usage of the word.
- The visualization tells the use which word occurred more frequently, but does not mention how many times actually it occurred, which many readers may prefer to know. When the mouse pointer is dragged over a word the frequency of the word can be displayed.
- The words are aligned vertically and horizontally to compact the visualization. The alignment of the words could be used to convey some information to the user. (Like the emotion associated with the sentence to which the word belongs to). Colour assigned to the words can also be used in similar fashion, instead of assigning it in random.

With Regards,
Shiv.