To whom it may concern,

I would like to commend the authors of the London 2012 Olympic Results visualization, found at http://london2012.nytimes.com/results. The visualization is easy to understand, yet allows users to inspect the data and discover deeper insights to some degree. The three panel layout - including the bubble chart, the medal count and the medals-by-sport table - provide a dynamic interface that supports the discovery process.

There are a few ways that I think the visualization and the interactions it uses could be improved to help maintain context for the user. A selected country (via the bubble chart) should have been highlighted to indicate a filter had been applied to the medal-by-sport table. That country’s row, in the medal count table should have also been highlighted such that all three panels reflect the currently applied country filter. To go one step further, allowing the same sort of country selection via the medal count table would have given the user even more control.

The length of the medals-by-sport table made inspecting that data somewhat difficult. The user is forced to choose between maintaining context of the bubble chart or scrolling down a very long list. At least for larger displays, an alternative option could have been to scroll the table independently of the other two panels. That way the broader context is maintained especially if a country filter had been applied.

One last major enhancement I might suggest is the ability to filter by sport as well as country. If a sport filter were applied the medal-by-sport table would be limited to just that sport, and the medal count panel and bubble chart would each show just those countries that had medaled in that sport.

I did find myself somewhat confused by the choice of colors and positioning in the bubble chart. It was initially unclear why some bubbles were colored differently, or what dictated the positioning of the bubbles. This is made especially worse when there were just a few bubbles and the “land masses” metaphor wasn’t clear yet. If I understand correctly now though the color of each bubble and the shape of the collections of bubbles represented the continent from which each country came. To make this more obvious, consider using less color if the color attribute does not convey much information or include a color key.

To conclude I’d like to give a couple minor suggestions to improve usability on various devices. On both the desktop and the iPad, it would have been nice to click on the timeline itself, rather than the small year label, in order to change the selected year. Additionally, it would have been nice to use a dragging gesture to move this slider and watch the bubble chart change as the years progressed.

Also on the iPad:

- When zooming in on the bubble chart the circles were not very crisp; they became blurry at high zoom
- Interactions were a bit slow and led to users repeated tapping and cause multiple actions at once
- Display issue viewing tooltip in bubble chart when country was very close to right edge of the graphic (screenshot attached)

All in all, the London 2012 Olympic Results visualization is very good. Thank you for your work.

Chris Imbriano