Strategic Indicators Report

This report links strategic indicators to the themes of the University’s Strategic Plan, and thus provides another path by which to review critical components of our planning and assessment processes from a quantitative perspective.

Enhance Your Reports with Sparklines

What are Sparklines?

Small-scale, high-resolution, information-intense longitudinal data lines, coined “sparklines” by informational graphics expert Edward Tufte, can add much value to dashboards, spreadsheets, reports, and presentations.

Edward Tufte is an outstanding author and he is a professor Emeritus at Yale University. For information about Edward Tufte, his books and a one-day course Presenting Data and Information, go to http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/courses.

In Georgia Southern’s Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, we were looking for a better way to present data and we found it when attending an Edward Tufte seminar.

Examples of Sparklines by Edward R. Tufte

The first example is measuring a medical patient’s current level of glucose.

![Glucose Sparkline](http://example.com/glucose.png)

The point in red on the line graph is linked to the number in red.

A gray band has been added to show a normal range. Readings above the band are elevated and below it are reduced.

A second example is a data table with sparkline(s) depicting the euro exchange rate (dollar cost of one euro) for every day in the previous year. The sparklines and numbers are tied by the colors used.

![Euro Sparkline](http://example.com/euro.png)

The color red shows the first and last numbers; blue is the low and high exchange rates. The table depicts the price of the euro in terms of 3 other currencies for 65 months and for 12 months.

Examples of Sparklines by Edward R. Tufte presented are from a hand-out we received in one of his seminars and may also be found in his book Beautiful Evidence.

Office of Financial Aid’s Automated Telephone Message System (ATMS) Usage Survey Report

An online survey aimed at assessing financial aid students’ perceptions of the ATMS and its usefulness as they sought information from the Office.

![Survey Results](http://example.com/survey.png)

Below and to the right are more examples of how sparkline types are being used in Institutional Research practices.

Enhance Your Reports with Sparklines presentation is located at:

http://services.georgiasouthern.edu/osra/ofcStaff.htm
A redesigned table by Tufte. Gill Sans typeface does better in comparison to Helvetica as shown in the table above. This sparkline table is only 21% larger.

Of the 10 funds, only PIMCO deviates from the pattern among the stock funds when comparing PIMCO’s sparkline with the stacked pile of the 9 other sparklines at right.

Microsoft Excel 2007 & Bissantz Sparkmaker Pro

Steps to create a Sparkline in Microsoft Excel 2007 without Bissantz SparkMaker Pro.

1. From an existing data table, highlight the row of data you wish to chart.
2. Insert → Line (with Markers)
3. Right click on Y-axis → Format Axis
   a. Change Minimum to Fixed (insert minimum value)
   b. Change Maximum to Fixed (insert maximum value)
   c. Close
   Note. 0 to max may be selected instead.
4. Chart Tools → Design
   a. Chart Layouts → Layout 11
5. Right click on line graph → Format Data Series
   a. Select Marker Options → Select Built-in (Size: 2)
   b. Select Marker Fill → Solid fill
      i. Choose a color
   c. Select Line Color → Solid line
      i. Choose a color
   d. Select Line Style → Width: 0.25 pt
5. Now minimize the size of the line graph and add it to the row of data. Select Chart Tools → Format → Size to minimize, then move next to row of data.

You have just created a sparkline. The steps shown above may be modified to your choosing. The point of the steps is to minimize a line graph to be embedded into data tables and text. A faster and easier way is to use Bissantz SparkMarker Pro, an add-on to Excel.

Examples of Sparklines Used in Institutional Research Practices

Graduate Fact Book

The first example is a Fact Book focusing on graduate studies information for Fall 2008 and provides 3-5 year trend data.

Graduate Enrollment by College, Degree, and Major, Fall Terms

For the equivalent of a single word, the embedded graphic gives us six years worth of fall terms. Notice over the last three years the patterns are very similar in College of Business Administration and College of Health and Human Sciences.

For any questions concerning SparkMarker, please contact sparklinetools@bissantz.de.