

The background of the cover is black, featuring a bokeh effect of out-of-focus light circles in various colors including red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The main title 'The VISUAL ORGANIZATION' is prominently displayed. 'The' is in a light blue color, while 'VISUAL' and 'ORGANIZATION' are in a light green color. 'ORGANIZATION' is oriented vertically on the right side of the cover, while 'The VISUAL' is horizontal. The subtitle 'DATA VISUALIZATION, BIG DATA, AND THE QUEST FOR BETTER DECISIONS' is centered below the main title in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

The VISUAL ORGANIZATION

DATA VISUALIZATION,
BIG DATA, AND THE
QUEST FOR BETTER DECISIONS

PHIL SIMON

Award-Winning Author of
THE AGE OF THE PLATFORM

WILEY

Additional praise for *The Visual Organization: Data Visualization, Big Data, and the Quest for Better Decisions*

“In *Too Big to Ignore*, Phil Simon introduced us to the rapidly emerging world of Big Data. In this book, he tackles how we need to see, handle, and present this mountain of information, one unlike the old, familiar, transaction data that business people know quite well. *The Visual Organization* shines a much-needed light on how businesses are using contemporary data visualization tools.”

Brian Sommer

**Enterprise Software Industry Analyst; ZDNet Contributor;
CEO of TechVentive, Inc.**

“The fourth wave of computing is upon us, and the visualization of information has never been more important. *The Visual Organization* arrives just in time. Simon’s book helps enterprises learn from—and adapt to—this new adapt world. A must read.”

Larry Weber

Chairman and CEO of Racepoint Global and best-selling author

“Once again, Phil Simon has raised the bar. Like his other books, *The Visual Organization* takes a very current topic and instructs the reader on what not only what is being done, but what can be done. Simon provides a wealth of advice and examples, demonstrating how organizations can move from data production to data consumption and, ultimately, to action.”

Tony Fisher

**Vice President Data Collaboration and Integration,
Progress Software; Author of *The Data Asset***

“Today data is the new oil. Organizations need ways to quickly make sense of the mountains of data they are collecting. Bottom line: today visualization is more important than ever. *The Visual Organization* is a checkpoint on current dataviz methods. Simon’s book represents insightful thought leadership that is sure to help any organization compete in an era of Big Data.”

William McKnight

President, McKnight Consulting Group; Author of *Information Management: Strategies for Gaining a Competitive Advantage with Data*

“Through fascinating case studies and stunning visuals, *The Visual Organization* demystifies data visualization. Simon charts the transformative effects of data-viz. Only through new tools and a new mind-set can organizations attempt to compete in a rapidly changing global environment.”

Chris Chute

Global Director, IDC

“A rollicking and incisive tour of the organizations pioneering the next big thing: putting visual data at the center of the enterprise. Simon’s highly readable account points the way towards incorporating visualization into your own endeavors.”

Todd Silverstein
Entrepreneur and founder, Vizify

“Sure, Big Data is cool, but how can it move the needle? Today, it’s essential to uncover insights far too often unseen, but how do you actually do that? *The Visual Organization* answers those questions—and more—in spades. Simon demonstrates how, when done correctly, dataviz promotes not only understanding, but action.”

Bill Schmarzo
CTO, EMC Global Services; Author of *Big Data: Understanding How Data Powers Big Business*

“Data visualization is a secret sauce for visionary executives in today’s time-starved economy. Simon’s book provides the Rosetta Stone on how to get there.”

Adrian C. Ott
**CEO, Exponential Edge, and award-winning author
of *The 24-Hour Customer***

“Phil Simon’s latest book, *The Visual Organization*, superbly shows the potential of data visualization and how it can spark an organization’s imagination. As Simon makes clear, visualization is how organizations can ask the right questions needed to create real value from their big data efforts; instead of fumbling about with them as too many do today.”

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The Visual Organization

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The Visual Organization

*Data Visualization, Big Data, and
the Quest for Better Decisions*

Phil Simon

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The New Small: How a New Breed of Small Businesses Is Harnessing the Power of Emerging Technologies

The Next Wave of Technologies: Opportunities in Chaos

Why New Systems Fail: An Insider's Guide to Successful IT Projects

TO MY OTHER FAVORITE W.W.

IT'S AN HONOUR WORKING WITH YOU.

FONDLY,

G.B.

A good sketch is better than a long speech.
Quote often attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte

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Preface: A Tale of Two IPOs

Every word or concept, clear as it may seem to be,
has only a limited range of applicability.
—Werner Heisenberg

Christian Chabot had to be at least a little nervous when he woke up in Manhattan on the morning of May 17, 2013. More than a decade’s worth of work would be coming to fruition in only a few hours. In 2003, Chabot—along with Chris Stolte and Pat Hanrahan—founded a little data-visualization company by the name of Tableau Software. (Tableau had started in 1996 as a research project at Stanford University funded by the U.S. Department of Defense.) Chabot served as the company’s CEO, a position that he still holds today. At 9:30 a.m. EST on that May morning, Tableau would go public on the New York Stock Exchange with the apropos stock symbol of \$DATA. Adding to the day’s tension, Chabot and his team would be ringing the opening bell to commence the day’s trading.

Now, under any circumstances, any company founder/CEO would be anxious about such a historic occasion. Chabot, however, was probably more restless than most in his position. Tableau’s public launch was taking place in an environment best described as ominous. This initial public offering (IPO) was by no means a slam-dunk. To Chabot, the halcyon days of the dot-com era must have seemed like a million years ago. And, more recently, May 17, 2013, was almost exactly a year to the day after Facebook went public in arguably the most botched IPO in U.S. history. It was a day that would live in infamy.

Facebook was originally scheduled to begin trading on Nasdaq at 11:00 a.m. EST on May 18, 2012. In short, all did not go as planned. Trading was delayed for half an hour, a veritable lifetime on Wall Street. Amazingly, some investors who thought they had bought \$FB shares didn’t know *for hours* whether

their transactions were actually executed. Aside from investor consternation, as Samantha Murphy wrote on Mashable, “The IPO caused a series of issues for finance sites, including Nasdaq.com and etrade.com.”¹

That was a bit of an understatement.

Once trading finally began, things continued to spiral downward for Mark Zuckerberg’s company. Originally priced at \$42 per share, \$FB quickly lost one-third of its value during that fateful day. The Securities and Exchange Commission investigated the glitches, ultimately fining Nasdaq \$10 million. Lawsuits were soon filed. Many early Facebook investors like Peter Thiel sold virtually all their shares as soon as they legally could—and looked shrewd for doing so. At one point in 2012, the stock slid under \$20 per share, and only in August 2013 did Facebook rise above its IPO price. As of this writing, investor sentiment finally seems to have shifted.

The Facebook IPO debacle—and resulting media frenzy—reverberated throughout the financial markets in mid-2012 and well into 2013. Its effects were felt far beyond the offices of Mark Zuckerberg, COO Sheryl Sandberg, rank-and-file employees, and investors. The Facebook IPO allegedly deterred many a company from listing on the NYSE and Nasdaq. Generally speaking, Wall Street analysts believed that the fiasco poisoned the short-term IPO well for everyone, especially technology companies. In the aftermath of the Facebook IPO, many high-profile companies, including Twitter,* reportedly adjusted their own plans for going public. Of course, there were a few exceptions. Enterprise software companies Workday and Jive Software bravely went public in October and December of 2012, respectively. Their stock prices have held up relatively well after their IPOs, as did Big Data play Splunk.

APPLES AND COCONUTS

On many levels, Tableau Software is the anti-Facebook. Yes, both companies rely upon cutting-edge technology to a large extent, but that’s just about where the similarities end. In many ways, the two are apples and coconuts, and no intelligent investor would ever confuse the two.

Facebook is a consumer company based in Silicon Valley with a world-famous CEO. Tableau is an enterprise technology company based in Seattle, Washington. Compared to Zuckerberg, relatively few people would recognize Tableau’s CEO on the street. Tableau doesn’t sport anywhere near 1.2 billion users. Nor do its eponymous products seem terribly sexy to John Q. Public. In fact, most people would probably consider them a bit drab. At a high level, Tableau’s offerings help people and organizations visualize data. This data need not be transactional, structured, and internal to an enterprise. Rather, Tableau can handle data from a

* On September 12, 2013, Twitter announced its plans to finally go public. On November 7, 2013, the company began trading on the NYSE.