



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.”

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**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.”

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**Vice President Data Collaboration and Integration,
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“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.”

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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.”

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“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