Data Visualisation: looks great but what does it do?

blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2010/10/01/data-visualisation-looks-great-but-what-does-it-do/

I am very excited by the idea of data visualisation as journalism. With so much information being put online by governments and other organisations, this is the new frontier for journalists. But too much of it remains either complex or static.

I am certainly not saying it can't work. The Guardian's Datablog has loads of good examples of how to convert complex numbers and facts into graphics. But until today I hadn't seen a nice, simple, human version where someone had combined data visualisation with some simple reporting. And it's funny, too.

http://thisisntfuckingdalston.co.uk/ attempts to report on an 'important' urban problem – where do I live? Or rather, what do people who live in this part of the city think it's called?

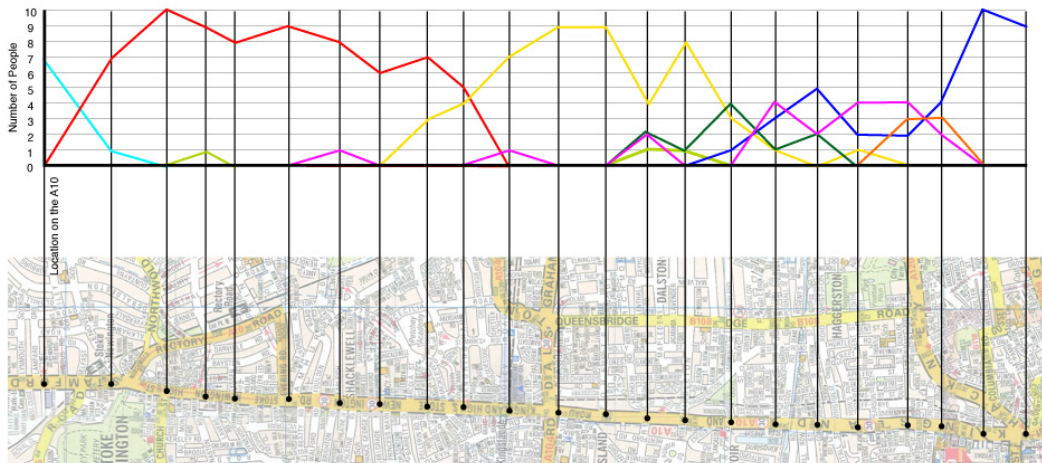Designer Euan Mills can explain why he created this:

I like it because it doesn't just use existing data, it goes out and creates its own. There's no complex interactivity or complicated graphs or different shaped blobs and pie-charts. It's easily read and reflects a reality that is hard to capture in any other way.

I can imagine that you could do this exercise with other local issues. You could create maps of identity and perception by asking different questions. How bad is crime here? Who is your MP? Where Do You Get Your Drugs?

Anyway, I leave that to more creative folk than I. But thanks Euan for a lovely bit of crowd-sourcing data visualisation to finish the week.