Episode 92: Stephanie Evergreen

# KL: Katie Linder

# SE: Stephanie Evergreen

# KL: You’re listening to “Research in Action”: episode ninety-two.

# [intro music]

# Segment 1:

# KL: Welcome to “Research in Action,” a weekly podcast where you can hear about topics and issues related to research in higher education from experts across a range of disciplines. I’m your host, Dr. Katie Linder, director of research at Oregon State University Ecampus. Along with every episode, we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, full transcript, and an instructor guide for incorporating the episode into your courses. Check out the shows website at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast to find all of these resources.

On this episode, I am joined by Dr. Stephanie Evergreen, an internationally recognized data visualization and design expert. She has trained future data nerds worldwide through key note presentations and workshops for clients including Time, Adobe, Verizon, Head Start, American Institutes for Research, Rockefeller Foundation, Brookings Institute, and the United Nations. She writes a popular blog on data presentation at stephanieevergreen.com. Her book, *Effective Data Visualization* was published in spring 2016. Her other book, *Presenting Data Effectively: Communicating Your Findings for Maximum Impact,* was just published in its second edition in June, 2017. Both books hit number one on Amazon best seller lists.

Welcome to the Podcast, Stephanie!

**SE:** Yeah. Thanks for having me!

**KL:** So I have to say, I’m pretty excited to talk with you. I love your books, I follow you on Twitter, I feel like you’re kind of a researcher celebrity in some circles around data visualization, or as many people would refer to it, ‘data viz’ (Right. That’s what the cool people say). Yes! So I would love to hear from you, what is data visualization? Why is it important? You know, for people who might not be familiar with this. Give us a little intro.

**SE:** Sure, okay so, and this might be the most challenging question you can ask somebody who is involved in data viz; what is it? Um and the way that I see it data visualization is just illustrating raw data in some way so that it’s visual, because that’s how patterns and abnormalities become clear to us. And it’s important because humans were built to interpret information with their eyeballs. That’s just how our bodies have been designed. And a table of raw numbers challenges us in a serious way, because our brains have kind of limited processing capacity. So having to just bounce around between numbers in a table is very challenging for our brain, but when we visualize it and make it into a picture, our brains just pick it up so easily. So when we – when we’re doing data visualization we are turning raw numbers into some kind of visual and we’re playing right into how humans are designed to think and act.

**KL:** So as you’ve been working on this over time, you know, you’ve been doing this for quite some time, what got you initially interested in data viz? What really made you do a deep dive into this area?

**SE:** Yeah. Well it’s a good question. I was working at the university, I was in my Ph.D. program, and I was working there full time as a researcher at the same time. And my – you know, I got to work on so many cool projects, I love doing research. Especially with an interdisciplinary field – So I got to study everything. And I was working on cool projects where people are out there trying to change the world, but I was feeling like the information we were feeding to them wasn’t really landing, and I had a hunch it had to do with how boring our charts, and slides and reports were. I mean, we talked in very academic language, you know, super passive aggressive, like “One day the data may imply that we could suggest that there might be a solution.” Right? With further research needed. And I just felt like nobody was taking the kind of actions that we were seeing were very urgent needs. And so I tried – I started off trying to make my graphs and my reports look prettier. I was using this cool built in template and I was using my pie charts – 3D pie charts, thinking “This will jazz it up. This is how people will look at it.” And then I had the opportunity to do a dissertation, where you get to study something very deeply, and so I chose how we present our data, which was smart because it was the easiest dissertation in the world. The answer was, “not well” and so it was great. And that’s also where I got to become in expert in what effective data visualization looks like. And I just sort of fell in love with it then.

**KL:**  So I would love to hear a little bit more about this pathway, because I think for – there may be people who are listening to this who don’t seem super visually oriented, and they’re kind of wondering, “How do you pick up these skills?” And from looking at your books, and also I follow your blog and other sources, it seems like there are a lot of design skills that are related to this. In terms of how you’re choosing colors, and fonts, and different things like that. I’m wondering if you could talk about that a little bit, like how did you pick up those skills? What skills do you think are really needed for people to be able to do data viz well?

**SE:** Uh huh. Yeah so, I think there’s a little bit of design that’s needed, and that’s not something we should lie about. I mean it will take a little bit of design skill, because that’s part of the story telling process. In fact, you picked up on fonts and colors, and those are two strong story telling principles. And the nice thing is, I mean I talk about fonts and colors in my workshops in a contexts of data visualization, and we touch on each one for possibly 90 minutes. And that’s really all it takes for some basic exposure for people to go, “Oh. I should be using blue on this section and I should be using red on this section to signal where the problem is.” And I mean, people kind of already intuitively know these things it’s just that they haven’t put it into a frame work where it’s applied to data visualization. So I hear people say things a lot like, “I’m a numbers person, I’m not a visual person, and I can’t draw to save my life” and neither can I. That’s not the point. You know, we don’t have to be artist here. We just do really need to know what our story is, and then very simple design strategies we can use to elevate that and make it come through.

**KL:**  So for people who are interested in kind of getting started in data viz, um obviously we will link to your books in the show notes, because I feel like they are excellent resources for people who are kind of just wanting to get a sense of, what is this? What are some of the basic principles? I’m wondering if you have other resources or things that you turn to, and I know that you have pointed to some tools at various places, you know, like color choosers online, and you know, different places to kind of think about the different elements of data viz. what are some places that you might point people to help them kind of get a handle on this if their just starting out?

**SE:** Well I think my blog is probably the first place to go,and I’m saying that to be self-promotional, but also because it’s super, super helpful. So on my blog, every other week, I’m putting out some kind of new post, and they’re very much oriented toward, how do I get started with this? What do I need to know? What are some simple things I can do to make huge changes in the way that my visuals look? Um and I think the thing is people think it’s going to take a lot more time, and effort, and energy than it will, because the change you get from a default graph is – a truly well designed graph, is monumental. And people think that means it’s going to take also a monumental amount of time, and effort and learning, but it really doesn’t take that much. And on my blog I have some very good beginner entry level resources on how to make the right kind of choices, how to actually make a graph, and tools that we already own that will tell you stories you wouldn’t otherwise see, and very basic stuff – Like on fonts, and how to deal with the title in a graph, and how to think about the colors, and which colors to use and when, and all that stuff. So people can get a very entry level view just by checking out the resources on my blog.

**KL:** Okay, so we will link to that as well. One of the things that I’ve always appreciated about what you do on your blog, and I’ve seen you do this in other places, is you bring in real world examples from data viz, and you show people, “Here’s a real world example. Here’s maybe something that’s really good about it” or sometimes you critique and say, “Here’s what I would do differently” or you redesign a real world data viz. And I’m wondering if you could talk about, you know, and how much are you out there looking for these examples? I mean, they’re kind of everywhere (they are), but to what degree are you kind of doing this research on your own practice in this area? Where are you going to find these things?

**SE:** You know, it’s so funny, but almost everyday people will send me these things. Either on Twitter, or by email, or I have a friend who will text me, she’s like – this just happened to me yesterday, a friend was like, “You are not going to believe what I am looking at right now.” And I’ll get a text message that’s like a slide from a presentation she’s sitting in, and she’s like “Look how bad this is.” So um, I always think it’s kind of funny that people think of me when they see a bad visual. Like it’s not necessarily the tie I want in people’s hearts and eyes, but I get it. So people just throw these at me all the time, but a lot of the examples that I share on the blog – I don’t like to pick apart people who honestly have just put out a good slide, or that they think is a good slide, you know? Those are not folks – I think those folks are already kind of trying hard, and don’t think anyone needs to come and beat them over the head. So the visuals you see on my blog are actually more from clients that I work with. Either people I’ve done workshops with or clients who come to me and say, “Hey, we know our stuff needs some improvement. Can you work with me?” and then um, when I come across a really beautiful before and after or some kind of makeover we did that just really illustrates a great point, I’ll ask them for permission to share it. So that’s the stuff that you’ll generally see on the blog where people have already come to the light, and come out with me on the other side.

**KL:** So, you have this amazing kind of free resource that you’re putting out with the blog, and most recently you have started something else, um called Evergreen Academy. I’m wonder if you could talk a little bit more about that, what was the decision behind creating a course where people can learn about this material?

**SE:** Well the reason was because I’m on the road all the time. I’m on the road giving workshops so much, and I am one of those people who is built for it. I do very well in airports, in airplanes, living out of my suitcase. It’s great. I love being on the road. But even still, there are a lot more people who want workshops with me than I can possibly have in my calendar. So I designed the academy to basically be my online workshop. And everything that I talk about in my workshops, in my full two day workshops, is all online and it’s a video, so people can follow along. But that’s a lot different than my workshops in person, where I want to walk through an activity together, like how to make a dot plot, but people are going to have to remember the details and the steps the next day, where as in the academy there’s a video that you can always return to. You can pause, you can rewind, and it’s got a great community feel to it as well, so people are always asking eachtoher questions, uploading their example saying, “Hey give me some feedback on this thing.” Um we have monthly office hours where people write in – this is probably my favorite part of the academy – where people write in with questions and problematic data viz they’re working on. Or recently we’ve been getting people who are working on research posters because it’s like conference time, you know? So people will share their posters and ask for feedback in this really safe place, and everybody will chime in, and then they’ll come back again with heir improvements and it’s just a beautiful to see. So it’s been a great place for people to come and get the kind of access in the workshops that they can’t otherwise get, and the nice thing too about the academy is that they are able to go into tutorials that are deeper than what we could ever do in a workshop in person where we’re making interactive message boards in excel and stuff like that. It’s super fun and accessible for people all over the world, so they don’t have to worry about trying to fly themselves into the U.S. to try to get into my workshop.

**KL:** Well, full disclosure, I am a member of Evergreen Academy and it’s been super helpful for me to learn about different aspects of data viz. We will definitely link to it in the show notes as well incase people are interested in learning more. We are going to take a brief break, when we come back we’ll hear a little bit more from Stephanie about some common data viz problems, and their solutions. Back in a moment.

# Segment 2:

**KL:** Stephanie, one of the things that I’m excited to talk with you about are some common data viz problems and what those solutions are. And I know you probably see a lot of these in your work as you’re consulting working with clients. What is some of the common data viz problems? I would love to hear a few from you and then some of the solutions as well.

**SE:** Sure. So I think, you know, if you ask a majority of the data viz community, probably the first thing they’re going to say is, “Oh pie charts.” Um but, I know about another problem, a common one but I don’t want to go there. I think that the first problem – the main problem that I really see is that people don’t know their point. And I think it happens because people – you know, the world became very data driven, you know, maybe ten years ago. All of a sudden everyone became like, “Oh my gosh. If we have data then we can orient decisions, this is going to be a beautiful thing.” And so they started collecting every single piece of data that they could get their arms around, and then they were up to their eyeballs in data and nobody could figure out how to sift through it to get to the important stuff, you know? So I think it leads people to a place where they’re just kind of data puking, you know? They’re just like, “Well all I can really do is throw these numbers on a slide and cross my fingers and my audience will be able to make sense of it” and that’s not going to happen. Readers just aren’t going to go there. And you know, I get it. We’re short on time, now we have like a hundred tables we have to talk about every part, how are we ever going to make this stuff happen? And I think people also think that better data visualization is time intensive and that it doesn’t have to be. What takes a long time is a bunch of splitting around between chart choices and not even knowing what the point is in the first place. So I have always thought, and I see this work every single time I consult with somebody, is if you start by looking at your data and going, “Okay, what is important here? What is my point?” then you don’t have to throw up a hundred tables. You just have to throw up like two great graphs that illustrate that point. And that’s what our audiences come to us for in the first place. They come to us because we are the people who know the story, we’re the ones that are the experts in this area. That’s why like, you’re bored? Well come to and we’ll have you give a presentation, that’s what your CEO wants, that’s what your journal readers want, that’s what your students want. They want to know what’s important about this. And so if we can start there, if we do some of that pre-thinking ahead of time, it makes everything else go so much easier.

**KL:** I love that idea, and I think you’re right, that sometimes we – especially when we get under pressure to kind of hit a deadline, or we’re trying to get a journal article out or something, we’re not always pausing to think about, “What are we really trying to do here?” So that’s an excellent suggestion. What are some other common data viz problems that you found?

**SE:** Well I think one that I see often when I’m consulting with organizations is that people think a data viz solution has to be expensive and involve a millennial programmer, um and I don’t think that’s the case. Uh but I do see people do it. I see companies that do it all the time. They’ll invest like tens of thousands of dollars into dashboard software. They’ll buy some kind of dashboard package that they’ve been sold, and then what always happens is it doesn’t do what they want it to do. Six months later, no one is using the dashboard at all because it’s uninterpretable, and they wasted the time, they wasted that money, they wasted that opportunity, when they could have been making action based decisions, or data base actions. So I think that – the mistake that I see people do is thinking that because data visualization is the sexy thing these days, and because it can tell you a lot, people think that it needs to be expensive. And it doesn’t. It can easily be done with free tools, or things that you already own, like Excel, which is what I tend to push. Bu there are so many platforms out there today, that will just fold right into your website, and you can make the kind of data visualizations you need to try and make some decisions, especially if you know your point. So one and two are always connected.

**KL:**  So I do think that dashboards, I mean, they seem to be the solution across the problems. That people think, “Oh, we’ll just build a dashboard.” And I’m wondering if you could talk about that briefly, like when are dashboards helpful, and when are they something that we are kind of just putting a square pin into a round hole?

**SE:** Yeah, well. Dashboards can be helpful I think the closer you are to the data. Like if you are monitoring your data carefully, you already know what the metric means, you already know how that metric is measured, how often that metric is measured, where that data comes from. If you already understand all of the foundation behind what’s on the dashboard, then dashboards become very, very easy tools for seeing where there are problems and for seeing patterns. And that’s really what they are designed to do, but I think that they become problematic when we think what one dashboard will work for everyone, and there are often different dashboard needs, like what your board would need to see is different from what your manager would need to see. The people who are like really in the ground. And that can be different from what the public dashboard needs to be. So I think people try to have a one size fits all dashboard situation, and that doesn’t work. People have different needs. Some people want to drill down, some people need to see the 30,000 foot view, and I think that’s when it becomes trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Um and it’s hard because dashboards can become time intensive to me. There’s a lot of data in there, a lot of conversation that has to happen. And so – you know, I was reading an article by Veronica Smith, um and she said the dashboard development process usually takes about a year, and I think people don’t realize that. It takes that long. And that’s after you have your metrics figured out. Most of the time when people call me and say they want a dashboard, they’re not even really sure what’s going to go on it yet. Um so I think that know that it’s going to take that long, to go through the whole design process, you know, the draft, and having people review those drafts. It does take quite a while for something like that. And so I think people need to know that it’s going happen, that’s just for one dashboard.

**KL:** Mhm. Mhm. Any other common data viz problems you want to talk about?

**SE:** Um I think that the third problem I see is that people will often rely on software defaults – and this applies to any software. It’s not just Excel, which I work in a lot and have a lot of default problems, but I think that what I see is even if people are able to get their point straight, and they’re able to get the right tool in front of them for visualizing, even if they’re able to get the right dashboard in front of them, I still see charts that are so cluttered and so hard to read, because of the defaults that are baked into the programming. So this happens a lot, and the issue I think is that we’ve put a little too much faith in to the software, or maybe we’re not even thinking about this in the first place, but no matter what software you use, it will never know the story that you’re trying to tell. Even if you hand your data to a human, like a programmer or a graphic designer, they’re not the ones who have been up to their eyeballs in the data for six months. So they’re not going to know how to pull out the right story. And I think we often, because exactly where you started off saying a lot of researchers don’t think they’re visual beings, they don’t think that they’re visual oriented, they will hand their data off to someone else to visualize it, but because whoever it is, whether it’s the software or the human, those people do not know the story. We data nerds know the story. And so that means we’re always going to have to see that first chart that gets generated. Whether it’s by a graphic designer or whether it’s by Excel, we’re always going to have to see that as a draft, and we’re always going to have to do some kind of tweaking to that draft in order for the right visual to come through. So that has to become part of our built in expectations. That doesn’t mean that has to take a lot of time, it just means that that’s always going to have to happen, or that’s always going to look at that thing that was produced and go, “Okay. What needs to be taken out and what needs to be elevated here?”

**KL:** I love that advice, I think that we often think of our writing as coming out in drafts, but not necessarily our data viz. So that’s such a great mind set to shift to. So Stephanie, you’ve mentioned a few this idea of data and storytelling, and I’m wondering if you could talk a little about that. Especially for people who feel they may not know how to tell compelling stories with their data. Are there certain principles, or things that you look to, or resources that you can point people to if they are trying to figure out that story telling aspect?

**SE:** Well, one of my favorite questions is ‘so what?’ And I love it because that’s what people are saying when they’re listening to us talk about our data. Everybody is like, “Yeah, yeah, yeah. So what? What does this matter to me? How is important here? How do I need to know about this? So what?” And that’s what we really need to lead with. Our job when we’re talking about our data, especially when we’re trying to persuade people, or get them to take action, is to answer that ‘so what?’ question. And when we think about it from that perspective, our answer from that ‘so what?’ question is going to be the story. That’s how we get to the story that’s in our data. And so what I’ll see people do when we’re I workshops, I’ll lead people through this exercise where I’ll ask them to tell me the point. Tell me the story. What’s the ‘so what?’ about the data. And people will say things like, “Well the story is that these are the demographics.” And I’m like, “That ain’t a story.” Nobody want that. Nobody wants a story where we’re just being shown some data. There’s not ever a valid point. We want to put ourselves in the audience’s position and say, “What’s important here. What’s the ‘so what’?” So I think that will help us get to the bottom.

**KL:** Excellent advice. Well we’re going to take another brief break. When we come back, we’ll here a little bit more from Stephanie. Back in a moment.

# Segment 3:

**KL:** Stephanie, one thing I know that a lot of institutions and probably a lot of companies are really struggling with right now is creating a culture around data, and a culture around data visualization that everyone can kind of be engaged in. I’m wondering if you could speak to that a little bit. Especially sense you have consulted with so many different companies and higher education institutions, what are you seeing around that?

**SE:** Yeah so I totally agree with you. I think that culture is a huge issue that we still have to work on, because of while there is some movement happening, what I tend to see is that it’s not – that not everyone is on the same page. And especially the larger the institution, the fewer amount of people who are on the same page about this. So what I tend to sometimes see happen in my workshops is I’ll see that a boss has sent their data analyst or some of their research assistants to my workshop, and they get super excited. They learn all kinds of great new ways of visualizing stuff, and they take it back and they put it into their papers – their journal article drafts, or into their slides, or whatever and they get their hand slapped. You know, upper management or the department chair is like, “Yeah. What is that? I’m sorry. Get that out of here. What is that? I don’t know how to read that graph” and they’re just like, you know, their bump up against culture. Where some parts are moving faster than others. And especially I find the younger, more energetic folks tend to be the ones who are hungrier for this kind of change, and especially in academia, the people who have been around the longest are the ones who are most resistant to this kind of change. Well I think that – that figuring out how to get everyone on the same page there is one of the hardest pieces I see. Whether its academia, or it’s a fortune 500, I see that struggle happening quite a bit. Um and so we really do need to get the people at the top on board, even if they’re not ever going to know how to make a better pie chart. They still need to endorse the fact that other people are heading in that direction and say, “this is something important to our company. This is something important to our future.” And so I’ve seen – successfully, I’ve seen in several of the people I’ve worked with, create change here, and create culture movement, by doing some ground work. Sometimes before they’ll bring me into a workshop, sometimes after they’ll bring me in for a workshop. So I’ve seen several groups for example, have reading circles, where everyone will get together and they’ll read a chapter of my book every two weeks, and then they’ll have biweekly meetings where they talk about what they just learned and how they could apply it to their work. So you know, reading about it first can help people shift in their thinking without having to even push a button yet. I also see groups who will get together and have, like, brownbag lunches, you know, where they could get feedback on work in progress, get some people to give them comments on their slides or on their visuals in a friendly place, you know, without – among peers and colleagues without having to go out on Twitter or something like that. Um and another – another way I see people go about doing this is trying to get some early wins, and to do it in a way that’s very low risk. Very low investment. So one of the ways I see people do is subscribe to the academy that you mentioned at the start of the show. It’s a very low level investment, but it’s a place where people are going to learn how to make great data visualization without the cost of software, or the workshop, or flying in the consultant. So it’s a great place where people get really skilled, they learn how to apply awesome visualization to their own work, and then they can share their own work, their own before and after, with their colleagues, with their teammates, with their departments and that sets up a lot of really low risk wins, and that is a great way that people are convinced that better data visualization is something that everyone needs to learn.

**KL:** One of the things that I think we mentioned earlier on the show, Stephanie, is how people can feel kind of overwhelmed by this and they’re not sure where to start, they’re not sure what’s going to have the biggest impact for them and it just stresses people out. And I know that something that you’ve been committed to in various components of your work is making data viz fun. I’m wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that.

**SE:** Yes. I do think this is a very critical, important component to data visualization, because people who are data nerds like you and me, we love this stuff! Just playing with a spreadsheet is fun for us, but I do realize that, like, we are a special breed and not everyone out there thinks the same way. Especially if you just start showing them a table of numbers. It’s a quick way to get people to fall asleep, or check Facebook, or something. So we’ve been trying to work in ways that people can interact with data that are going to be a little bit more fun. And we’re – I partnered up with a group called Fast Forward and we Chart Chooser cards. So it’s like a deck of cards, where each card is its own chart type, and there’s all kinds of fun games and activities that you can do with that when you’re developing your own data visualizations when you’re by yourself or with a group that can make it a little bit more fun than looking through your chart choices in Excel or something like that. Um so the cards, they are a really fun thing to work with. We’ve also got fun stuff on the blog like our scratch-off graphs. Which I love this idea. I came up with this idea because I knew I was presenting to a group who was kind of data scared. They weren’t even really ready yet to talk about colors or fonts, they just needed to get excited about data, and that was like the first step in them building up their data culture. Uh so we made scratch-off graphs. It was just a simple bar graph, we covered up the labels and the bar with scratch-off paint, um and then printed these out so that everybody would have to go scratch. And it’s crazy. There’s something weird about the way humans were built, we love scratching. So it was really exciting and fun, because it kind of became a game too. They had to guess what was under the paint; what the labels would say in the chart, and then scratch it off to show. So we’re always coming up with games and fun activities like that to get people thinking and invested, and then once they’re involved with us, then maybe we can start talking about what color choices look like, or what fonts are going to help us tell our story.

**KL:** So I think one of the other areas of your work that you had quite a bit of fun with in terms of data viz is your books. And I want to dig into this a little bit, because I could imagine that with data viz being so visual, it can actually be challenging to write a book on the topic. Can you speak to that a little bit?

**SE:** Yes, and you know, it’s been a challenge for my publishers as well, because I was the first person they worked with who had a lot of visuals. You know, they’re used to - I work with SAGE, they’re an academic publisher, and they’re used to your typical academic textbook that might have, I don’t know, two visuals in an entire chapter? And here I have like twenty. So we had a lot of early discussions about how is this stuff all going to work? Um and because I was publishing on this topic so early, it was before full colored printing was the norm. So I was writing chapters on how to use color effectively in an exclusively black and white printing environment. So those are fun challenges to try and work around, and SAGE has evolved with me in this process so that they’re not printing in full color as they should be. Um but I think what’s also been an interesting challenge that’s been kind of fun is, because the books have a lot of pictures for sure, the narrative can’t – the narrative is still really important, because it’s what’s supporting people making the right kind of visual, but it can’t just be this super dry, academic wrote set of instructions about which button to push next. It still needs to be lively, and engaging, and accessible if we want people to keep reading throw and using it and trying out new things. Um so I fought hard with my publishers to let me write like I talk, to let me keep my personality in the writing. And if you hear me on this podcast and then you go read this book, you’re going to hear my voice right in there. And I’m saying things like, “super cool” and “Awesome” and stuff like that right in the book, and boy they wanted all that stuff taking out. But I won that battle, and many of my readers and my fans are drawn to my work precisely because of that accessibility – because I talk about how a stacked bar chart is like your friend that drank a little too much at your party, you know? Um and I still have – I still definitely have especially the more academic type of people who will review my book and they’re completely put off by that kind of language. Um but, I don’t know. I’m doing the stuff that I feel has been missing in the academic world for a long time, and I’m saying that as someone with a Ph.D. I was up to my ears in academic textbooks in how dry and cumbersome they can be. So I went in a different direction, and I think that’s – that’s made it more fun for me. To let me be myself and my work, too.

**KL:** Love that. Okay. What’s next for you, Stephanie?

**SE:** So there are always so many different projects that are happening under the radar. Just waiting to get published here. But I just finished developing a version of Data Viz Against Humanity. And I can’t really get into more details on that, but its super fun. So I’m testing it out with a live group in a couple of weeks, and then hopefully we’ll be testing it soon after that. We’re also reworking qualitative chart choosing. So as far as I know, and I’m pretty tapped into the data viz field, we’re the only group that – Evergreen Data – that has tried to put some kind of bones in the structure around the qualitative visualization. Quantitative visualization is so much more advanced than qualitative viz, but it’s time that we start to make some of the chart choices when it comes to qualitative viz as well. So we’ve been putting together some chart choosers around that, and the current one that’s on my website, we can link to it in the show notes is good but not great. And so we had a little mini retreat over the summer where we hacked that thing apart and put it back together again. So we’re repping that up now and we’ll be talking about qualitative visualization as we go. Um and I have a couple of writings in progress -when I finish a book I’m always like, “I’m never writing again” but I can’t help myself. So I have a chapter in progress that’s going to be part of a compilation on failure, and boy, there’s so much that I have to talk about in terms of data visualization and failures so that chapter has been therapeutic to write.

**KL:** Love that. Well we will post what we can in the show notes, and keep an eye out for things that are coming up in the future – update the show notes as we can. Stephanie, I want to thank you so much for taking the time to come on the show and share a little bit about your experience and expertise in data viz.

**SE:** Yeah great to be here, Katie. Thank you!

**KL:** And thanks also to our listeners for joining us for this week’s episode of Research in Action. I’m Katie Linder, and we’ll be back next with a new episode.

# Show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, a full transcript, and an instructor’s guide for incorporating the episode into your courses, can be found at the show’s website at [ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast](http://www.ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast).

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