

Geosci. Commun. Discuss., referee comment RC2
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Comment on gc-2021-39

Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "GC Insights: Rainbow colour maps remain widely used in the geosciences" by Richard M. Westaway, Geosci. Commun. Discuss.,
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While it is concerning to note that over half the papers surveyed contained visualisations that were problematic I feel the paper is not really very interesting or useful to the general reader. It would be made more interesting to readers if the discussion could be expanded to consider the principal factors contributing to the generation of poor visualisations and to suggest some more concrete proposals to improve the situation.

Certainly a lack of guidance from journals and conferences is an issue. Journals and conferences typically mandate LaTeX or Word templates to ensure a standard of typesetting and layout, it would seem visualisation deserves a similar level of guidance. The requirements for manuscript figures as specified by Ocean Science is excellent.

However, while lack of guidance to authors is an issue perhaps the main contributors to the problem are the vendors of visualisation packages who, in many cases, provide poor default colour maps and fail to provide much, if any, guidance in their use.

Another contributing factor is that while authors, reviewers and editors have ready access to numerous guides for english writing and expression there is no concise and accessible equivalent to Strunk and White for visualisation. Also, while courses in scientific writing are widely given at educational institutions equivalent courses in scientific visualisation are perhaps not so common.