Motivation:

Studies have showed that weight loss is often best achieved in groups and with support from others so it is in this spirit that WeightWatchers offers messages boards for users to communicate with another to aid in weight loss. However, it has also been shown that this can go both ways. Your relationships can help you lose weight, but if your friend gains weight you, yourself, are more likely to gain weight. The point of this visualization is to help individuals find the message board that encourages the most weight loss and the social groups that are the most helpful and to help the user stay away from those boards and social groups that are the least helpful and potentially works against your goals.

Context:

WeightWatchers host fifty six different message boards each of which are targeted to a users need. These boards include: On the Flex Plan, On the Core Plan, What I Ate Today, Men's Health, Fitness Challenge, Newbies Welcome, Student Lounge, 100+ Pounds to loose, and Bravo Board. A user profile can hold a lot of information. It can include a bio, a website but all profiles include the user's starting weight, their current weight, their goal weight, and all of their posts. From this information we are going to look at which message boards have the most crossover audience which social groups have the users that have the most positive weight loss experience. This experience will be measured as the percentage of weight loss to goal weight loss as a function of time. This function of time is to differentiate long time members from new members and to differentiate a long time member who has been at their goal weight for a long amount of time and a long time member who has been far from their goal weight for a long amount of time.
Part I: Boards Overview

This part of the visualization is looking at all 56 message boards.

Each board is represented by a distinct circle whose size is based on the number of users who post to the board each day. The more users that post to a board the larger it is.

The location of the circle is based upon user crossover. For example, we can think that the 20-year old board is going to have a lot of crossover posts with the Student Lounge board and they will be closer together but that the Family Man and the Women's Health board will not have much and will be further apart.

The color of the message board is dependent upon the users' weight loss experience. Users with positive user experience will be in the darker blue. Boards that have larger areas of dark blue are boards with larger amounts of users with positive weight loss experience. For example, the a board that mostly lightly colored could be the Newbies Welcome but a board that was almost all dark blue would be the Maintenance board.
Part II: Individual Board

In this part we are looking for trends in users replies to one another.

Each user is of the same size.

The positions of the clusters are based on openness to new individuals. Clusters that are further away from others are social groups that are not as easily broken into while clusters that are closer together are more open.

The user's node is based upon their weight loss experience. Users of a darker green have the most positive experience while users that are red have the most negative experience. Red can signal weight gains or users that have been far from goal for longer amounts of time. We can see clusters of 'friends' that have had overall positive experience and it is these social circles that an individual should try to get entry to. We can also see red and orange clusters where the users could possibly not be the best 'friends' that would be conducive to weight loss.