Technical Support Instrument

Supporting reforms in 27 Member States

Building Capacities for Effective Communication of the Benefits of the Recovery and Resilience Plans

Third training:

Communication tools, channels and content

5 June 2024 | 10.00 - 16.30 CET

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Before we start

- This is a hybrid event, featuring a small group of participants attending in person, while the majority will join online in listen-only mode.
- To ensure call quality, your microphones are turned off. If you have a question, please, type it in the call chat.
- Please note that the presentations of the training are being recorded. The interactive parts (3 workshops throughout the course of the day) are organised and will be available only for the face-to-face participants. The recording and presentations will be shared with the registered participants after the event.
- Please respect speakers and other participants during the training.

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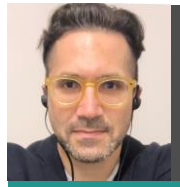
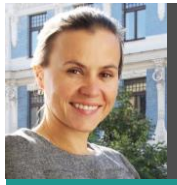
Speakers for today’s training



Stratis Kastrissianakis

DG REFORM

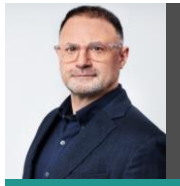
Stratis is a Policy Officer and Project Manager in the Sustainable Growth and Business Environment Unit and in the Horizontal Policies Unit of DG REFORM, European Commission. Previously he worked in various positions in DG GROW and in the Cypriot and Greek public sector (Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy). He also worked as a marketing manager in various multinational companies in the FMCG and Pharmaceutical sectors. Stratis has over 25 years of experience in project management, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis in public and private sectors at national and EU level.



Ieva Stūre

Komunikācijas aģentūra / Edelman Affiliate

Ieva is a strategic director at Komunikācijas aģentūra (Edelman Affiliate). Ieva has experience of over 20 years in the field of communication, consulting clients in financial, retail, IT and technology industries on strategic communication, media relations, crisis communication, B2B and B2C communication. She has been part of extensive public sector campaigns: euro launch in Latvia; vaccination against COVID-19.



Jeffery McMillan

PwC Central and Eastern Europe

Jeffery leads the Brand, Marketing, Communications & Business Development (MCBD) function for PwC CEE. He directs the regional brand, marketing & communications programme, managing a regional team of 30+ and overseeing the work of territory teams comprising 200+ people across 27 countries in the CEE region. He has over 15 years of professional experience with PwC, including a cycle of experience as a Director in the Global Marketing Team leading communications for PwC Chairman Bob Moritz, Olympic partnership activation and several international campaigns.

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Opening remarks by the DG REFORM

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Planned training sessions

1. **Training No 1**
   EU communication and visibility requirements on RRP communication
   April 30 (online) at 10:00 – 12:00 CET

2. **Training No 2**
   Strategic RRP communication planning
   May 16 (online) at 10:00 – 12:30 CET

3. **Training No 3 TODAY**
   Communication tools, channels and content
   June 5 (hybrid) | 10:00 – 16:30 CET

4. **Training No 4**
   Stakeholder engagement and media relations
   September 12 (online) | 10:00 – 12:00 CET

5. **Training No 5**
   Efficient use of digital communication tools
   September 19 (hybrid) | 10:00 – 16:30 CET

6. **Training No 6**
   Effective communication in crisis situations
   October 10 (online) | 10:00 – 12:00 CET

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Agenda

Objective

The objective of the training is to enhance participants' skills in crafting compelling messages and stories that effectively convey data-driven insights. By combining principles of messaging, storytelling, and data visualization, the training aims to empower individuals to communicate complex information in an engaging and easily understandable manner.

Time (CET)	Activity	Livestream
09.30 – 10.00	Arrivals welcome drinks and snacks	✗
10.00 – 10.15	Introduction	✓
10.15 – 11.00	Effective communication & basic principles for message creation; integrating channels & content	✓
11.00 – 12.00	Workshop No 1: Message creation for different audiences & discussion	✗
12.00 – 12.30	The art of storytelling (Introduction)	✓
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break	✗
13.30 – 14.15	Workshop No 2: Storytelling	✗
14.15 – 15.00	Data storytelling	✓
15.00 – 16.00	Workshop No 3: Creating a story from data	✗
16.00 – 16.30	Q&A and Wrap-up	✗

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Effective message creation

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> A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.
>
> **H. Simon**

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An Era of DRIP "data rich, insight poor"

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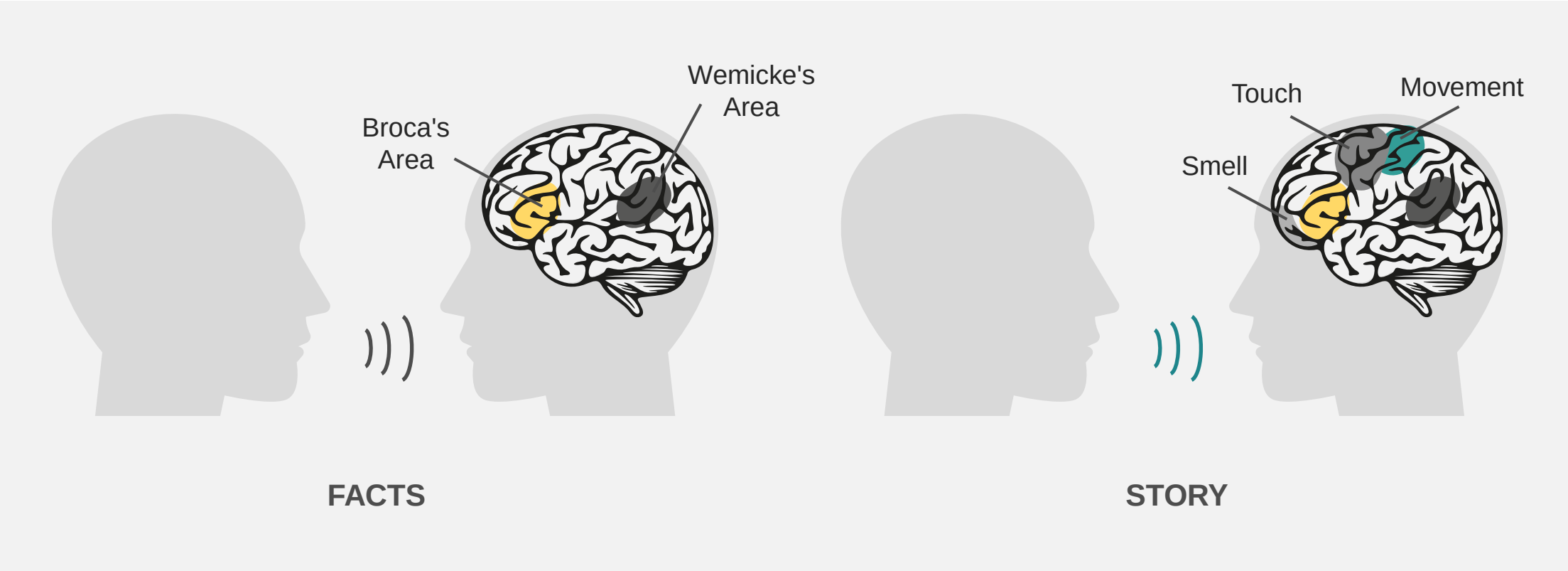
Why we are much more than "facts & figures"?



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Reaction to stories

- Stories engage more of our brain
- Stories form a unique connection between storyteller and listener
- Stories increase our attention and empathy
- Stories make us less skeptical and more open to change
- Stories enhance our comprehension

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What is a message?

> A brief, value-based statement that captures a concept and summarizes the idea or belief that the audience should retain.

Source: Brand Master Academy, (n.d.). Key Message Examples

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Common mistakes in message creation

- **Lack of clarity:** complex jargon, technical language. Audience fails to understand
- **Overloading with information:** too much information for the audience / not defined priorities
- **Ignoring audience needs:** failing to tailor message to audience interests, needs or level of understanding
- **Inconsistent messaging:** delivering messages that vary in tone, style, or content across different channels, leading to confusion
- **Lack of clear call-to-action:** not providing a clear, compelling action for the audience to take after receiving the message
- **Poor timing**
- **Not testing/iterating**
- **Neglecting visuals**

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Strategy comes first

Identify Purpose

Clearly articulate whether the communication aims to inform, persuade, or invoke an action.

Set Specific Goals

Define what success looks like for the message (e.g., increased awareness, behavioural change).

Align with Broader Strategy

Ensure that the message contributes to the overarching goals of the campaign or organisation.

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Before the messages are crafted....

DO YOUR RESEARCH!

Accurate facts

Latest data

Checked sources

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Three target audiences to be involved...

Government officials

Experts

Target audience

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Drafting & tailoring messages for different target audiences

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Know your audience

Demographics:

- Collect data on your audience's age, gender, location, education, and occupation.
- Use this data to tailor your message to be more relatable and relevant.

Psychographics:

- Explore your audience's interests, values, attitudes, and lifestyle choices.
- Create personas that represent different segments of your audience.

Needs and Pain Points:

- Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups to understand what challenges your audience faces.
- Craft your message to provide solutions or value propositions that address these issues.

Preferred Communication Channels:

- Analyze which channels your audience uses most frequently (social media, email, face-to-face, etc.).
- Customize your message for each channel while maintaining the core content.

Cultural Considerations:

- Be mindful of cultural norms, languages, and preferences.
- Avoid content that could be misinterpreted or offensive.
- Use culturally relevant examples and references.

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How familiar is the audience with the topic?

How familiar is the audience with the topic or service and what is their attitude toward it?

Is this a new area that they need more basic information about or are people fairly familiar with this topic or service, although they may have biases or misinformation?

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Drafting the messages

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Formula of 3

1

What is the problem?

2

Why does it matter?

3

What should people think or do about it?

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Framing & Priming

Framing

Present your message in a way that highlights its positive aspects and aligns with the audience's values and beliefs.

Priming

Use specific words, images, or concepts to prepare the audience's mind for the main message.

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Emotional appeal

Emotional Triggers

Identify and utilize emotions that drive the audience to engage with the message (e.g., joy, fear, surprise).

Tone and Mood

Choose a tone and mood that aligns with the emotional context of the message.

Storytelling Techniques

Employ narrative techniques that elicit emotional responses and make the message more relatable.

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What is the BENEFIT?

FUNCTIONAL

EMOTIONAL

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Example

Audience Insight	She wants an FP method that is discreet and low maintenance, but is afraid that the IUD will make her infertile.
Benefit (Functional)	Highly effective, reversible contraceptive that can prevent pregnancy for up to 10 years without using hormones.
Benefit (Emotional)	Quiet confidence in my busy lifestyle, this product offers discreet protection with no user maintenance that can be removed easily when I want to become pregnant.

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Acknowledge resistance

Acknowledge objections

Anticipate potential objections and address them proactively. This shows that you understand the audience's concerns and are prepared to respond.

Provide Reassurance

Offer reassurance and solutions to alleviate any fears or doubts. This can help build confidence and reduce resistance.

Use testimonials

Share testimonials and endorsements from satisfied customers or credible experts. This adds social proof and reinforces the message's validity.

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Metaphors

- Our language vs. Language of the audience
- Cultural, linguistic context

> Huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves.
>
> **(George Orwell)**

> The more familiar the expression, the less it activated the motor system.
>
> **(Neuroscientist, Dr. Benjamin Bergen)**

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Compare with caution

- Identify relevant comparisons
- Use clear and consistent metrics
- Visualise data
- Be objective

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Tone and style

Audience-appropriate Tone

Match the tone to the audience’s expectations and the message's level of formality.

Consistent Voice

Maintain a consistent stylistic voice that reinforces the organization’s identity.

Adaptable Styles

Be flexible in adjusting the style when needed to better fit different platforms or audience segments.

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Simplicity in messaging

Focus on Key Points

Identify the core message and focus on communicating it without deviation.

Reduce Cognitive Load

Design messages that are easy to digest and recall, avoiding information overload.

Repetition for Emphasis

Strategically repeat the core message to reinforce its importance and enhance retention.

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Building the Message House: main questions

1

Why does your project matter?

(Big Picture Message)

2

What do you offer?

(Utility Message)

3

How do you pre-empt likely criticism?

(Critics Message)

4

What do you want your audience to do?

(Call to Action Message)

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Message House tool

Key message/umbrella statement

- conveys your broad message as an overall guide to keep you focused, but doesn't need to be quoted.

For instance: "Help save our planet by using renewable energy!"

Supporting message 1.

E.g. "Switch to Sunny Solar Panels technology and never again pay for an electricity bill."

Supporting message 2.

You could pre-empt possible scepticism of your product or service, e.g. "Sunny Solar Panels clean energy technology is scientifically proven by the highly respected XYZ Institute to help save our planet." Or you can say how popular the product is with customers.

Supporting message 3.

Call To Action

Say what you want your audience to do. Specific actions, e.g. Their next step: "Visit

sunnypolarpanels.com to find out more about our world- leading starter panel set to-day."

Foundation

- supporting facts, proof points, statistics, etc.

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Message development tool No 2

WHAT	**What does your target audience need to know?** • Key piece of information • Avoid over-reaching • Specific and focused • Less is truly more	**Who is your audience?** **What:**
WHY	**Why should your audience care?** • How does this impact them? • How would this benefit them? • What are the opportunities? • What are the risks? • What are the emotional, fiscal and personal costs?	**Why:**
ACTION	What do you want your audience to do with this information? What ONE action do you want your audience to take?	**Action:**
STORY	Support your message with a compelling personal story	**Supporting story:**

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Adapt the message to different communication channels

- Align messages to a specific audience (tone, voice, language, etc.)
- Choose the appropriate communication channel & adapt to the specific channel requirements
- Keep the consistency in the main message!

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Principles of effective messages

- **Concise:** maximum 3 key messages per page; each statement only 1-3 sentences long or under 30 seconds when spoken
- **Strategic:** define, differentiate and align with benefits/value proposition
- **Relevant:** balance what you need to communicate with what your audience needs to know
- **Compelling:** meaningful information designed to stimulate action
- **Simple:** easy-to-understand language; minimal jargon and acronyms
- **Memorable:** easy to recall and repeat; avoid run-on sentences
- **Relatable:** active rather than passive voice; no advertising slogans
- **Tailored:** adaptable to different target audiences, with flexible language and depth of information

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Workshop 1:
Message creation for different audiences & discussion

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Workshop 1: Message creation for different audiences & discussion

Length

60 min

Task

Message creation & tailoring for different (hard-to-reach) audiences using the MS RRP projects as the content and applying the "Message House" approach.

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The art of storytelling

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> What stories have you got? Have you got a great story? Because you can have the most interesting story and you can still bore them to death. If someone can spend 90 minutes talking to you and you can't summarize what you've heard, they've failed. It's not enough to ramble incoherently.
>
> **(Simon Hattenstone, Guardian)**

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Information vs. ideas

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The goal of storytelling

To change the form, pattern and structure of our audience's world, their expectations and, ideally, their behaviour.

If we have not changed the mental structures of our audience (or reinforced them) we have failed. We have simply added to their data freight.

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> The secret of being boring is to say everything.
>
> **(Voltaire)**

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The value of surprise

The goal is to get out of information as much surprise as we can.

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The psychology of curiosity

1

The posing of a question or the presentation of a puzzle

2

Exposure to a sequence of events with an anticipated but unknown resolution

3

The violation of expectations that triggers a search for an explanation

4

Knowledge about the possession of information by someone else

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Six principles of human behaviour

1. **Reciprocity** − we return favours
2. **Commitment and consistency** − we tend to stick to our beliefs
3. **Social proof** − we copy others, so often find it hard to go against groupthink
4. **Liking** − we like people who share our goals and who are similar to us
5. **Authority** − we listen to experts (and people who pretend to be experts, as well)
6. **Scarcity** − we don't like being left out

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The structure of the story

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The reasons for the audience to listen

Your story is…

Useful

Interesting

Enjoyable

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Micro stories

Past	Now	Near Future	Far Future
The way we were	The burning platform	The springboard	The future is unwritten

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In the past: the way we were

What did we do in the past?

How do we do it differently now?

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In the present: the burning platform

What's the problem?

What happens if we do nothing about it?

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In the near future: the springboard

What was I failing at?

How did it feel when I succeeded?

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In the far future: the future is unwritten

What's your vision?

What will be the emotional impact of your vision on the audience?

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The structure of the story

Campbell's hero's journey

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The details that make storytelling great

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Show, don't tell

> By the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.... His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth were of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.
>
> **(Frankenstein by Mary Shelley)**

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Show, don't tell

- Specific details
- Sensory information paired with visual information

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Invigorate the senses

Taste

Smell

Touch

Sound

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Power of three

- Dark blue carpet
- Orange striped pencil

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Show, don't tell: practical task

- Delightful
- Difficult

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The first sentence is key

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Take people on an emotional journey

- People are heroes of their own stories
- The significance of "returning back after the change"
- Messages about loss are effective

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Use the vocabulary of storytelling

1. Anchor your story in time
2. Make the sequence of events clear
3. Listeners like the logic of cause and effect
4. Make it clear when you change the point of view
5. Guide your readers when you introduce additional information
6. Highlight twists and surprises

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Be you

- Define how you want to come across
- Require feedback from your listeners (but speak to one person)
- Consider the writers/speakers that you like, but don't try to imitate anyone

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Polishing

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How to improve readability?

- Limit yourself to one idea per sentence
- Make a conscious decision to cut your adverbs
- Use active voice instead of passive voice
- Choose everyday language over biz-speak
- Cut out redundant words

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Last, but not least: the feedback

- All feedback is not equal: good, bad, ideal
- Be grateful to those who give you feedback
- Feedback can be painful

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Not done yet: the proofreading

- Keep a "Before" copy
- Print & hide
- Focus on names
- Be careful with numbers
- Check the structural markers
- Look for error clusters
- Read aloud

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Tips & tricks that might help

- Record yourself
- Imagine yourself playing in a movie
- Adapt as you present

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Workshop 2:
Storytelling

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Workshop 2: Storytelling

Length

45 min

Task:

Storytelling task. The offline participants are asked to prepare a short 2-3 min presentation about themselves and a work triumph (or fail) using the techniques of storytelling.

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Data storytelling

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> There are no facts. Only interpretations.
>
> **(Friedrich Nietzsche)**

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> Facts are up to 22 times more memorable when presented in the form of a story.
>
> **(Jerome Bruner, cognitive psychologist)**

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How we react to facts versus stories

- We mainly scrutinize facts we don't like
- We may fight conflicting facts like a physical threat
- Our brains may bend or break facts to support our existing biases
- Corrective facts can potentially strengthen our misinformed position
- When facts are visualised, it is harder for us to reject them

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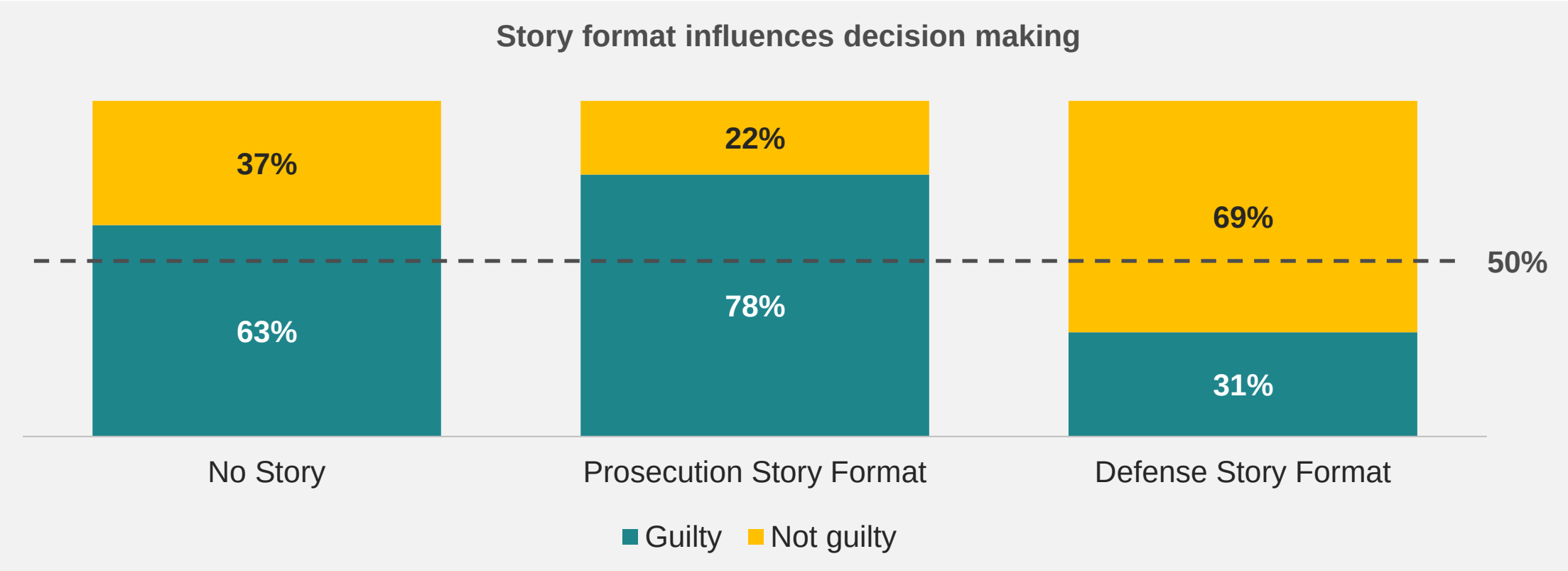
How we react to facts versus stories



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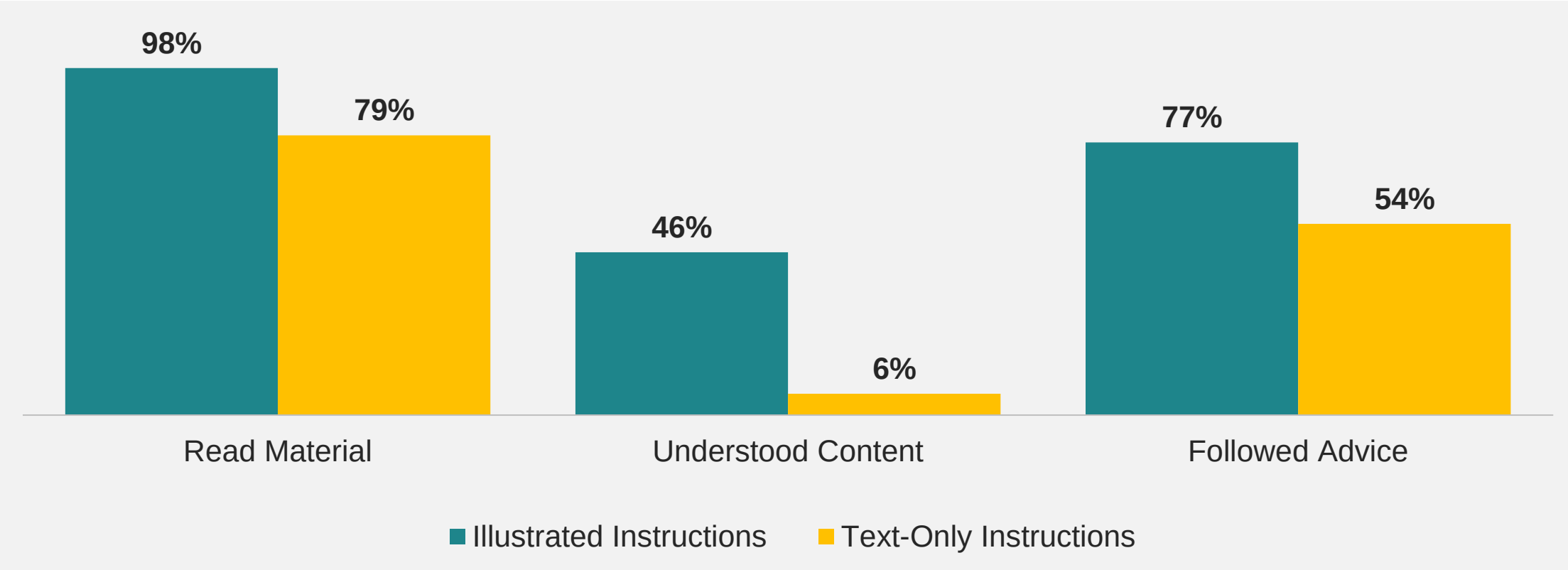
Why visualisation is important?



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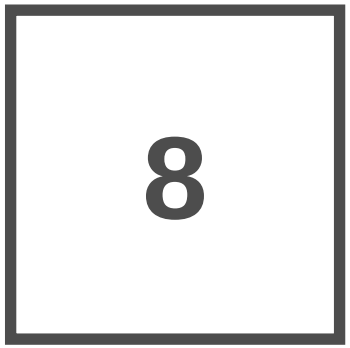
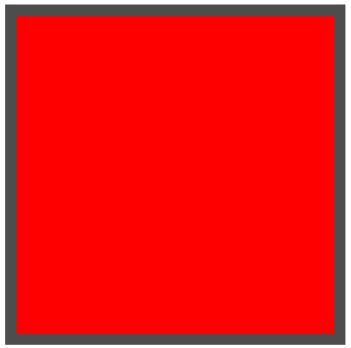
Wason selection task

A set of four cards is placed on the table. Each card has a number on one side and a colour on the other side. Which card(s) must you turn over to test the truth of the proposition that if a card shows an even number on one side, then its opposite is red?





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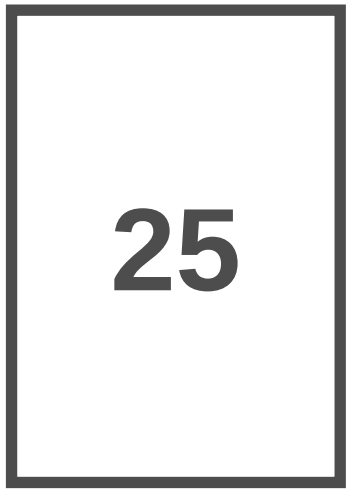
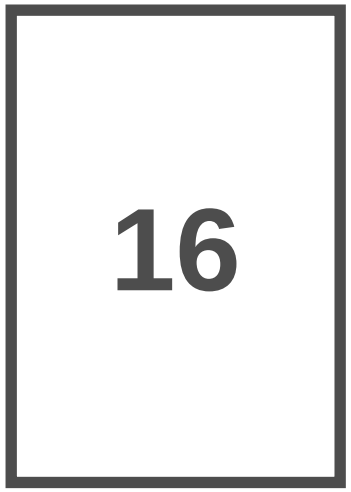
Wason selection task

As a bartender you must enforce the rule that if someone is drinking beer, they must be at least 21 years of age. Each of the four cards represents a person sitting at the table. Each card shows their age and what beverage they are drinking. Which card(s) must you turn over to verify if the rule is being violated?





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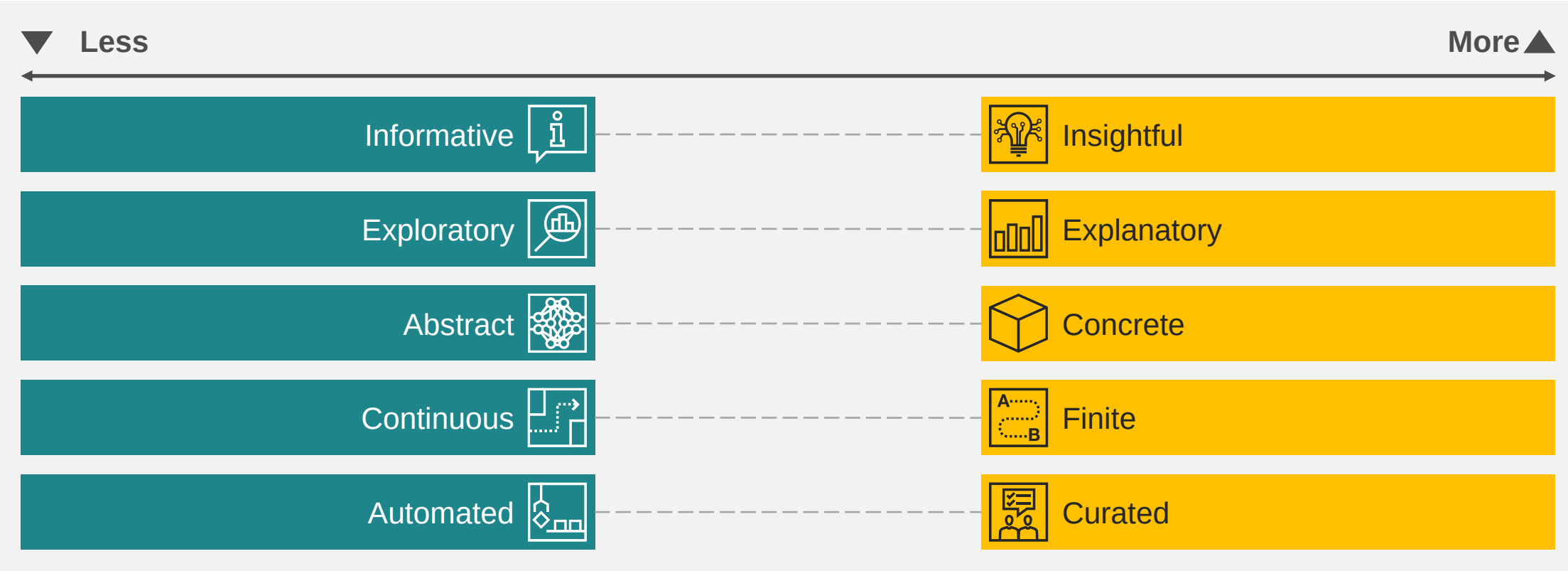
The data storytelling continuum



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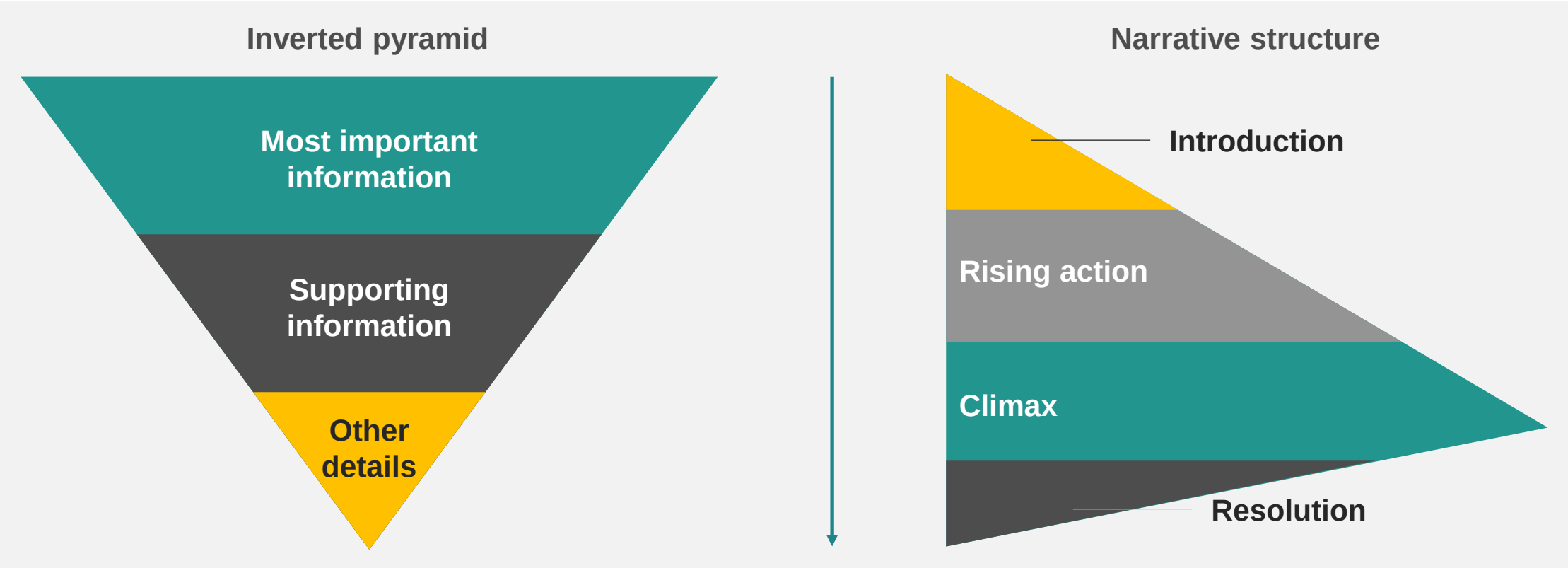
The news format vs. Narrative structure



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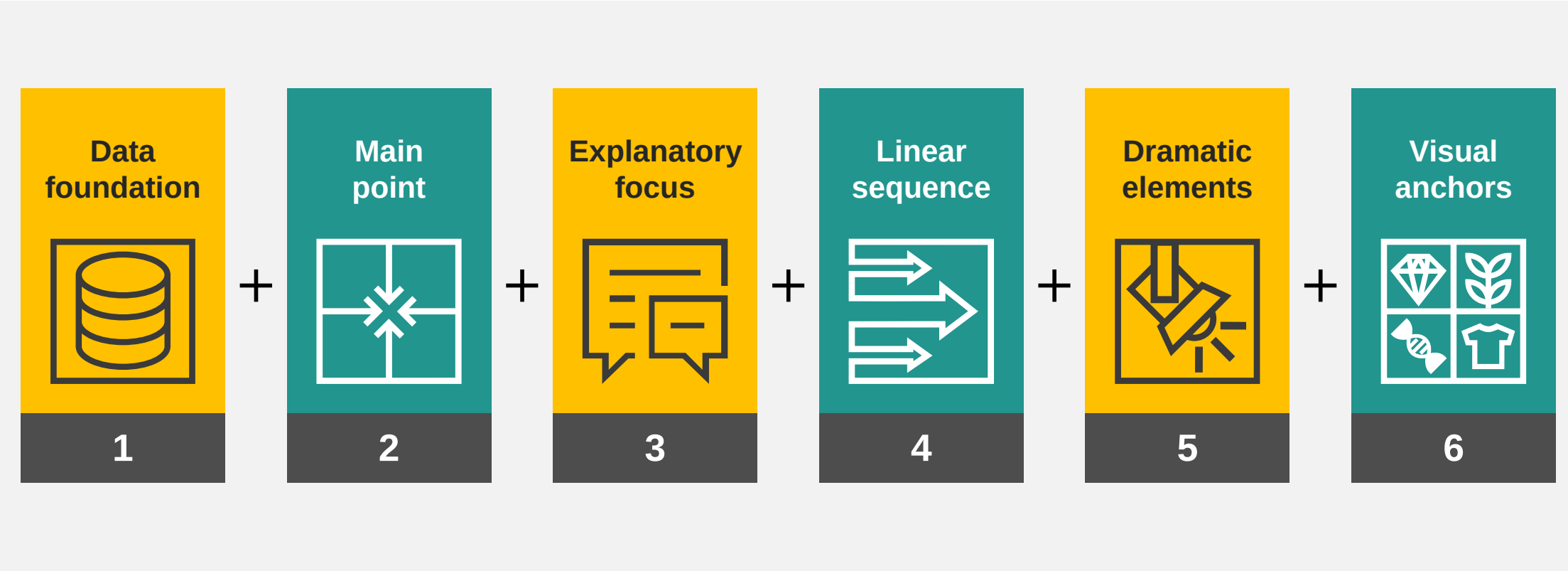
Six elements of data story



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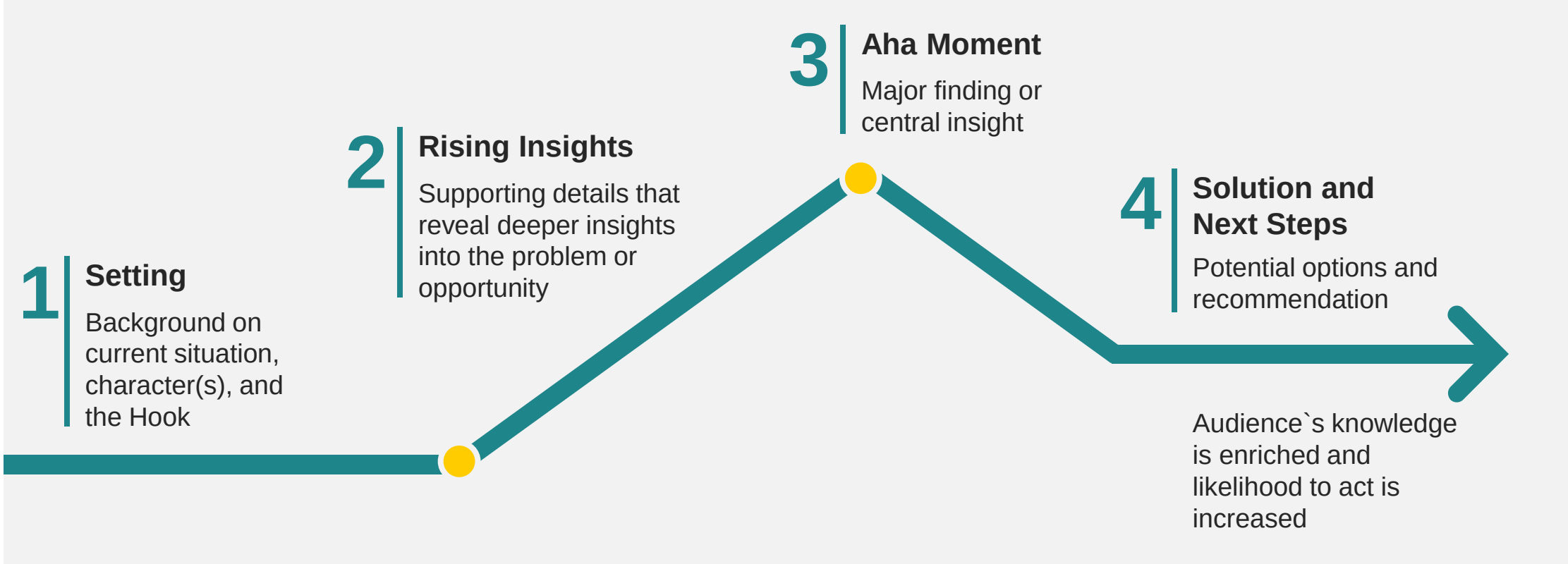
Data storytelling arc



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How to build up a data story?

- How long has it been an issue?
- How frequently does it occur?
- How widespread is the problem?
- Who is impacted by the problem?
- What are its contributing factors?
- How difficult is it to address?
- What are the consequences if it isn't fixed?

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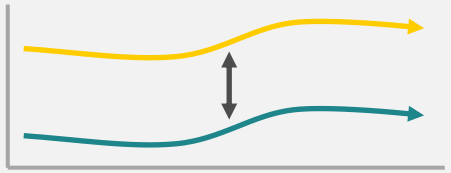
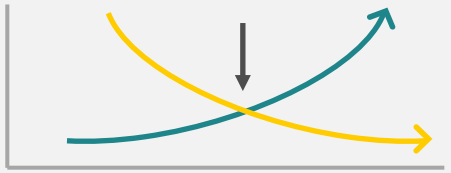
Nine common types of story points

Change over time

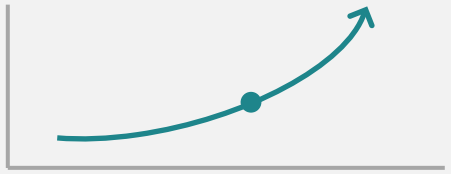
Relation-ship



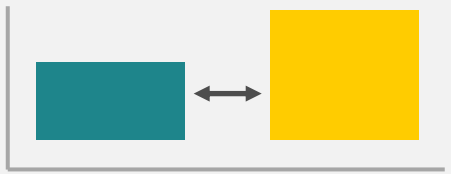
Inter-section



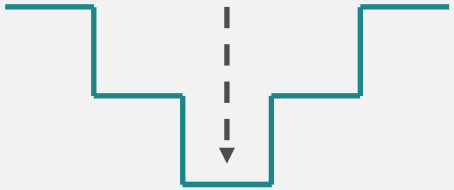
Project forward



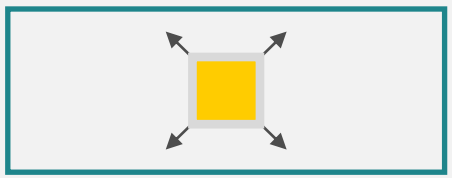
Compare and contrast



Drill down



Zoom out



Cluster

Outlier

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How to create a trustworthy story?

- Identify a key insight
- Minimize or remove bias
- Gain adequate context
- Understand the audience
- Curate the information
- Assemble the story
- Provide narration
- Choose the visuals
- Add credibility

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Seven principles for better visual storytelling

Part 1 – The setup

1. Right data
2. Right visualizations
3. Right configuration

Part 2 – The polish

4. Remove noise
5. Focus attention
6. Make approachable
7. Instill trust

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How to improve the data story?

- What data is irrelevant?
- What data is redundant?
- What data is confusing or ambiguous?
- What data is weak or questionable?
- What data is not aligned with your central insight?

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Tricks & tips

- Don't overexplain
- Simple headlines with "a hook"
- Additional information ONLY to focus on the message

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Use of colours

- The same colour for the same data set
- Red – negative; green – positive
- Contrast between the colours (light/dark grey)
- Some of the colours are more visible. Are they used with any reason?

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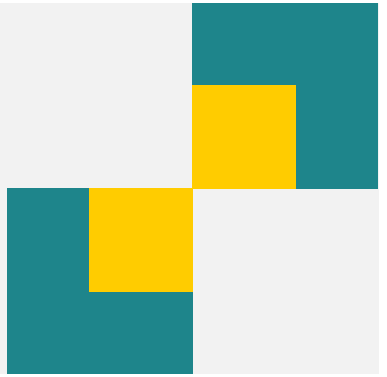
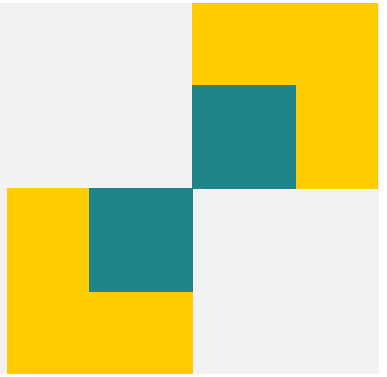
Order of the data

- Intuitively right order (increasing/decreasing)



- The same order in the visual as the label



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Infographics

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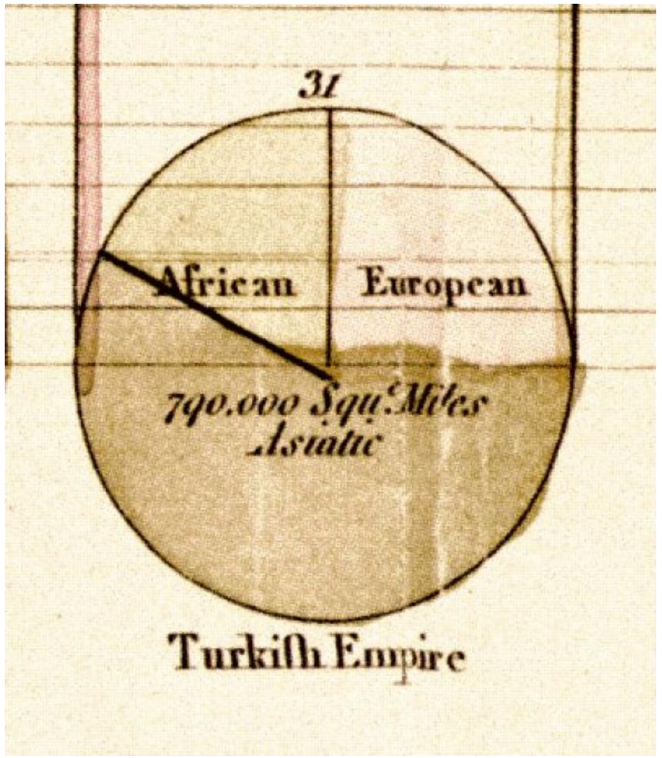
Data visualisation in history

First pie chart
Pie chart from Playfair's *Statistical Breviary* (1801), showing the proportions of the Turkish Empire located in Asia, Europe and Africa before 1789.



Source: History information, (n.d.). William Playfair Invents the Pie Chart

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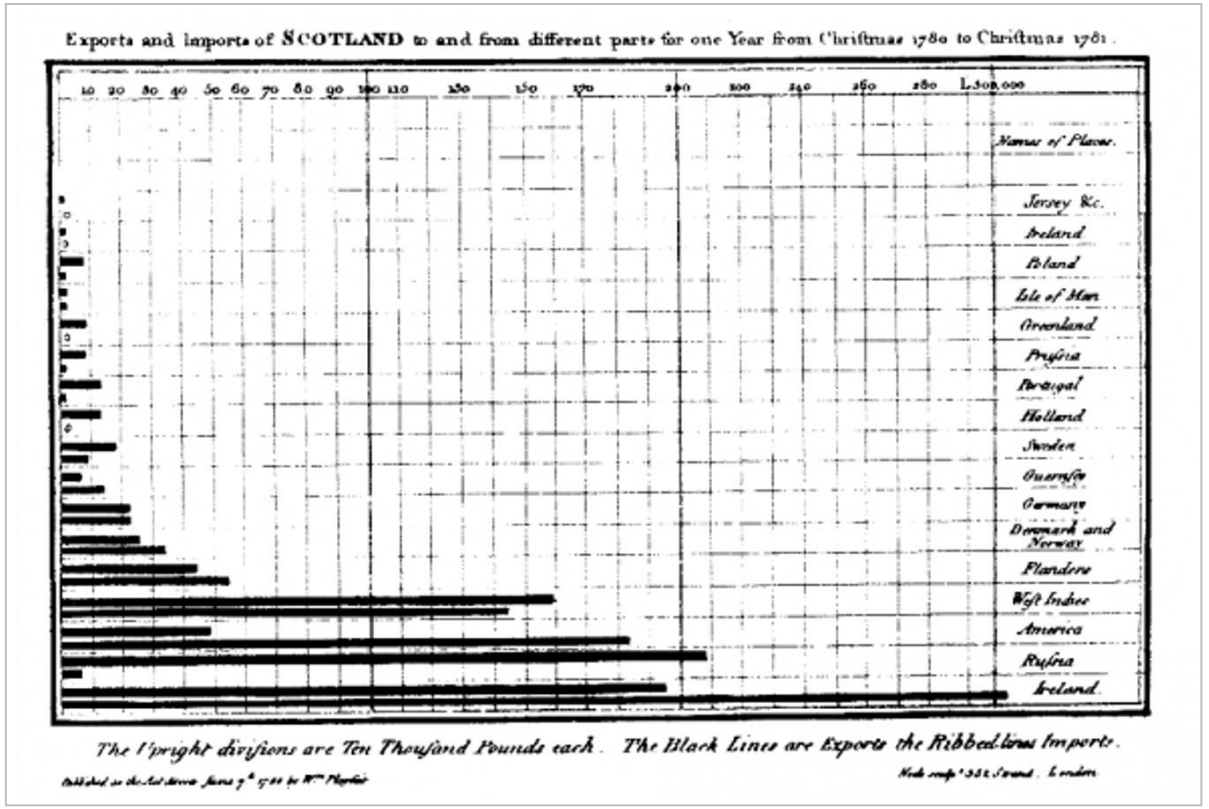
Data visualisation in history

One of first bar charts
William Playfair represented the Exports and Imports of Scotland to and from different parts for one year published in The Commercial and Political Atlas which makes it known to be the first bar chart in history.

Source: Think design, (n.d.). Bar chart



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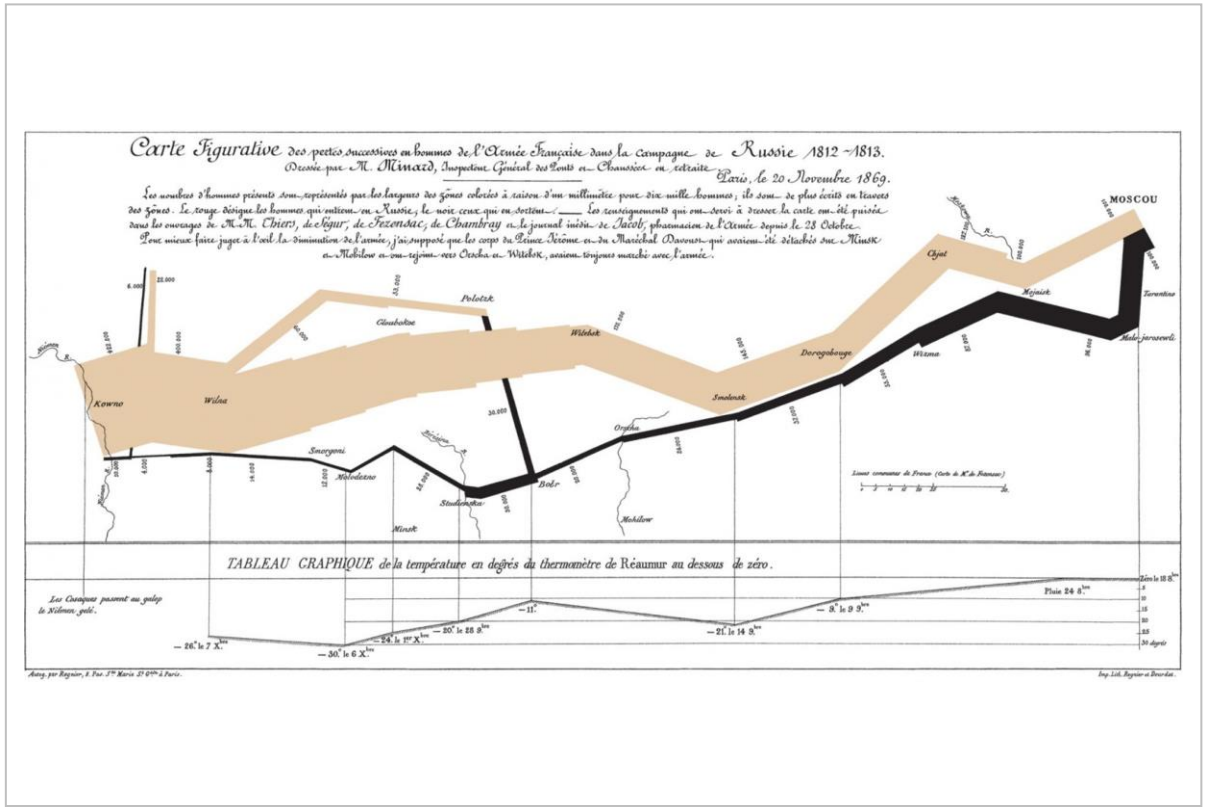
Infographics in the history

Charles Joseph Minard
a French civil engineer famous for his representation of numerical data on maps. His most famous work is the map of Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812 displaying the dramatic loss of his army over the advance on Moscow and the following retreat.



Source: Inforgam, (5 October 2016). A Brief Look at the Fascinating History of Infographics

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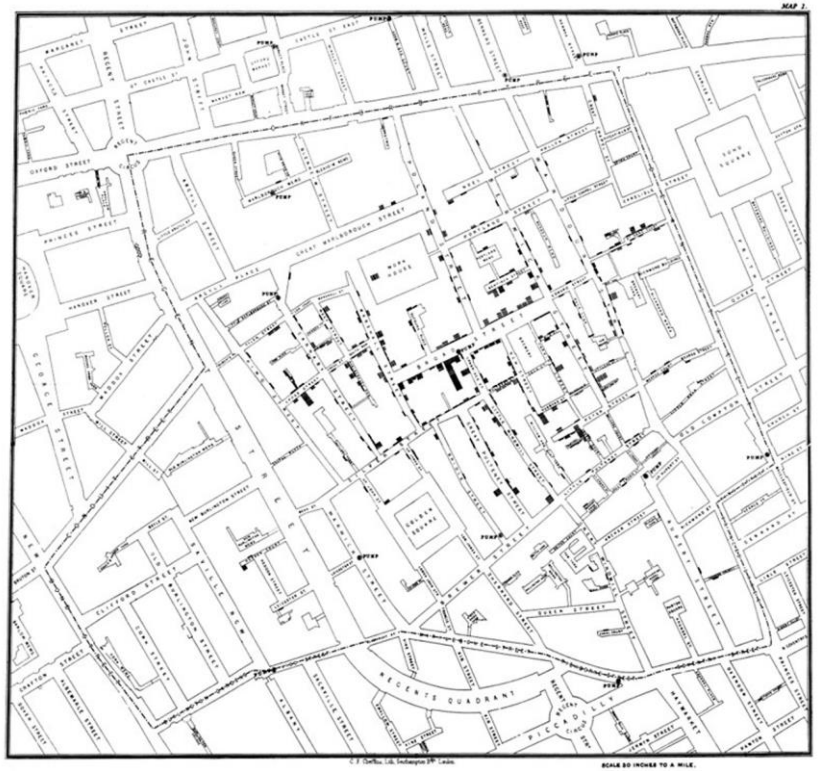
Data visualisation in history

John Snow's famous map of cholera cases during an epidemic in London, showing clustering around the Broad Street pump, 1854.



Source: Propublica, (16 March 2016). Infographics in the Time of Cholera

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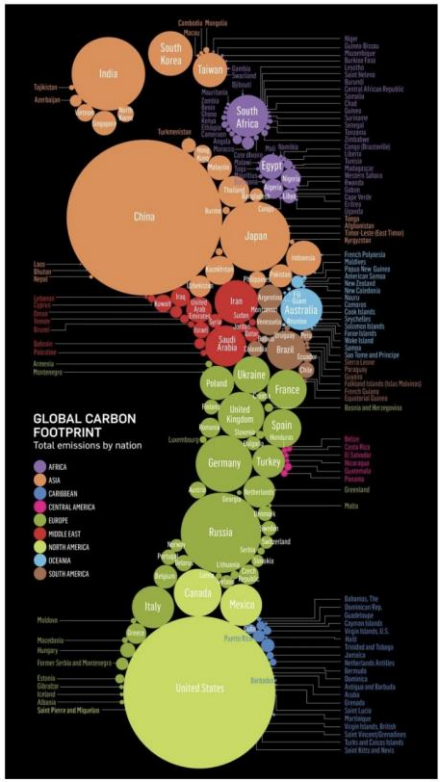
Some examples

Global Carbon Footprint by Nation

Source: Smart Cities Dive, (n.d.). Global Carbon Footprint by Nation



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Some examples

The best career for your personality type

Source: Truity, (n.d.). The best career for your personality type [Infographic].

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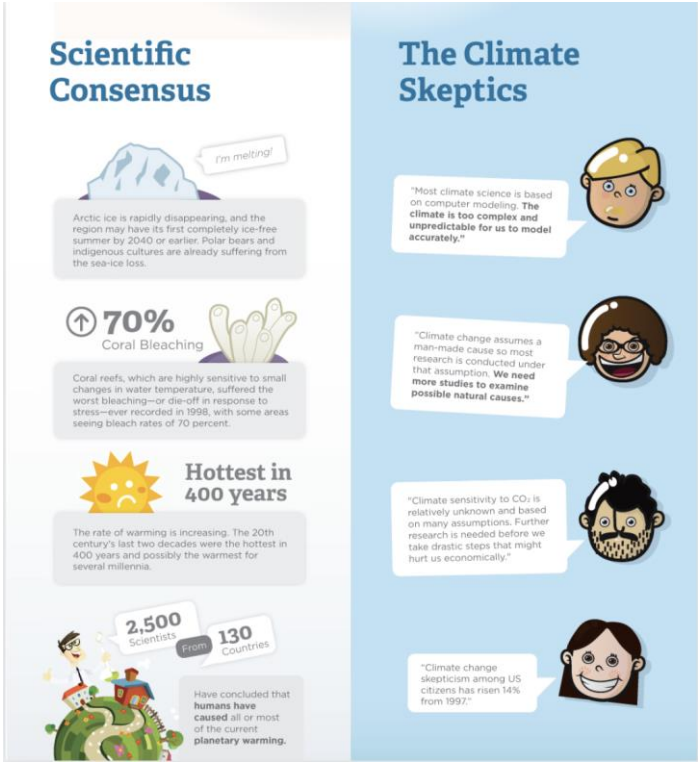
Some examples

Facts and statistics about global warming

Source: Douglas Lober, (28 September 2020). Facts and statistics about the global warming debate [Infographic]. ReuseThisBag.



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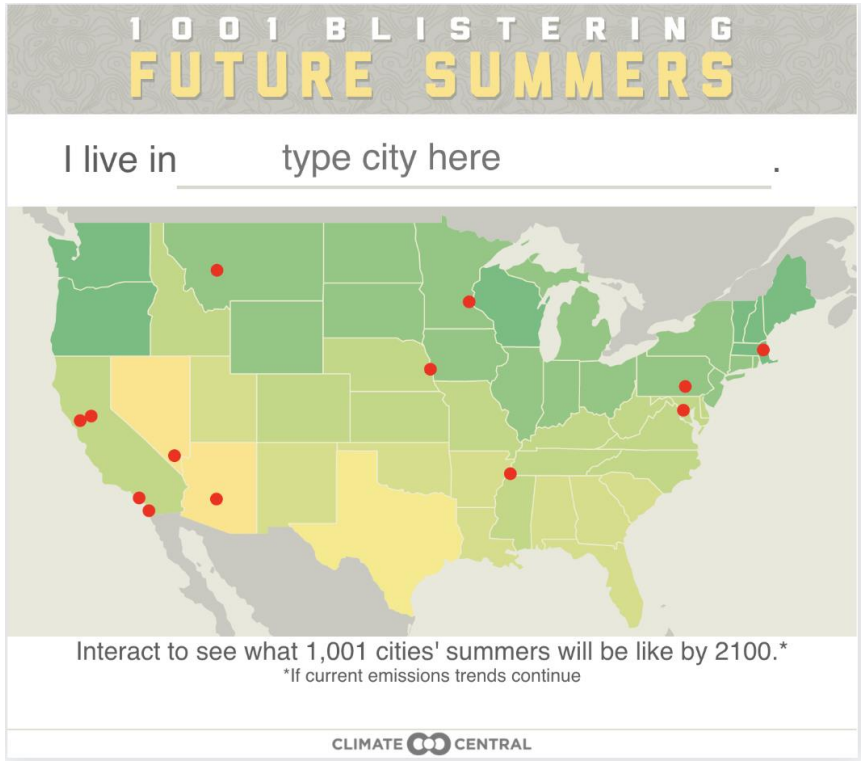
Some examples

1001 Blistering Future Summers

Source: Climate Central, (1 August 2014). Blistering future summers for 1,001 U.S. cities.



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Some examples

The Most Googled Artist in every Country in the World

Source: Evans, G., (9 March 2021). The most Googled artist in every country in the world. Art Supplies.

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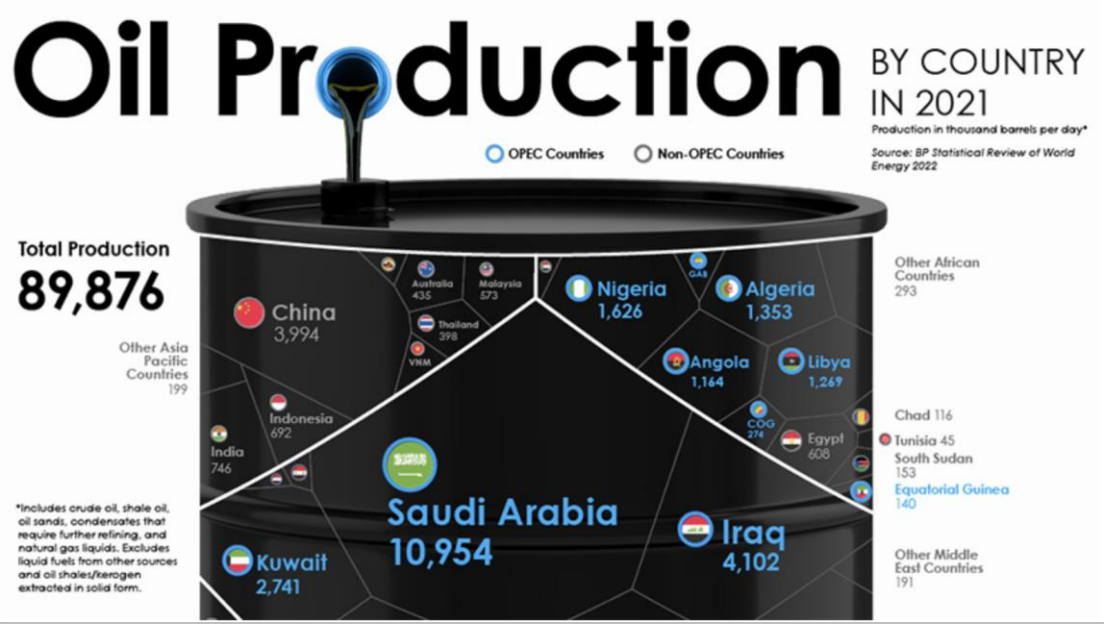
Some examples

World's largest Oil Producers



Source: Visual Capitalist, (28 July 2022). Visualizing the world's largest oil producers.

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Workshop 3:
Creating a story from data

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Workshop 3: Creating a story from data

Length

60 min

Task:

Work together to build a data story, using facts & figures from a sample RRP data set.

- **In breakout:** Choose 1 of 3 data sets provided, apply techniques to build a data story (40 mins, on flipchart)
- **Available data sets:** 1. Common indicators for all RRP policy pillars 2. Green Energy policy pillar information 3. REPowerEU program information
- **Back in room:** Stories presentation & discussion (20 mins)

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Q&A and Wrap-up

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Complimentary information sources for communication tools, channels and content

SOURCES

- Loizou, A. (2022). The Story is Everything. Mastering Creative Communication for Business.
- Dykes, B. (2020). Effective Data Storytelling. How to drive change with data, narrative, and visuals.
- Storr, W. (2020). The Science of Storytelling. Why Stories Make Us Human and How To Tell Them Better.
- Rosling, H. (2018). Factfulness. Ten Reasons We're Wrong About The World – And Why Things Are Better Than You Think.
- Unknown author (n.d.). Message development.

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Technical Support Instrument

Supporting reforms in 27 Member States

This presentation was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the author(s). The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

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