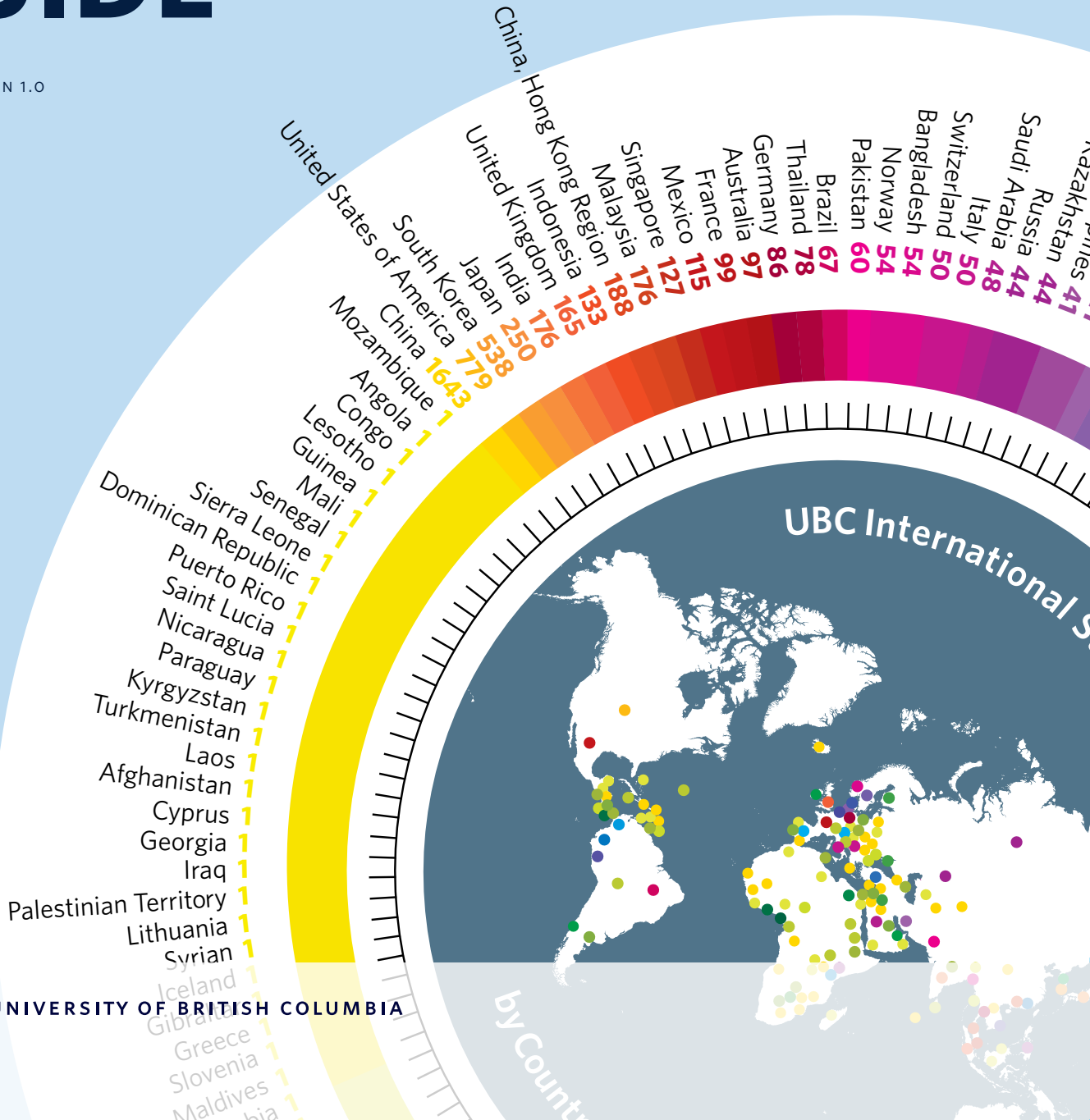


UBC BRAND AND MARKETING

INFOGRAPHIC PLANNING GUIDE

2017 | VERSION 1.0



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Infographic Planning Guide

2017 | VERSION 1.0

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The simplicity with which an infographic tells a story masks its complex production.

1.0

Due to their ability to distill complicated subjects into understandable and engaging visuals, infographics have earned a reputation as being powerful communication vehicles. At UBC, an infographic's ability to simply communicate detailed information on research, theories, timelines or other scholarly topics makes them an appealing content type.

However, while an infographic's messages may come across as straightforward, the process involved in creating an infographic is not. This content type often requires intensive researching, writing, illustrating, editing, and reviewing.

This guide aims to help UBC communicators gain a deeper understanding of content needs and processes in order to increase preparedness and confidence when initiating infographic projects.

What is an infographic?

2.0

An infographic is ***a visual representation of data and copy that clearly reveals information in a way that tells a narrative.***

The following is a list of some of the more common forms of infographics, but there are countless ways to combine data, visuals and narratives in order to meet your final communication goals.

INFOGRAPHIC TYPES

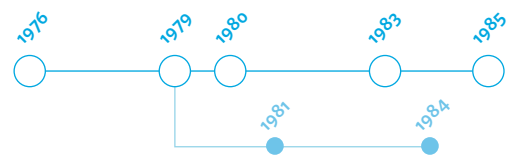
Geographical Infographics

Geographical infographics show data trends based on location and often involve a map element.



Chronological Infographics

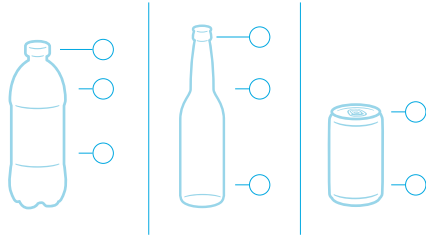
Chronological infographics, such as a timeline, can be used to explain the history of a topic, or how a topic changes over a certain time period.



2.0 WHAT IS AN INFOGRAPHIC?

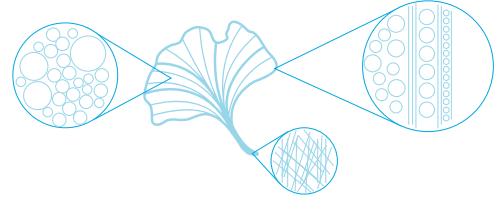
Comparison Infographics

Comparison infographics show how much two or more things have in common, how much they differ, or how superior or inferior one thing is over the other.



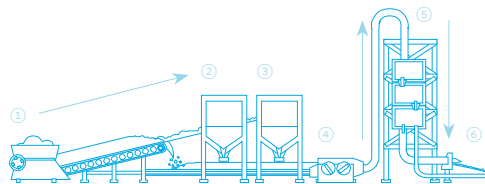
Anatomical Infographics

Anatomical infographics break down a subject's structure or composition, show how a subject is built, what a subject is comprised of or how a subject works.



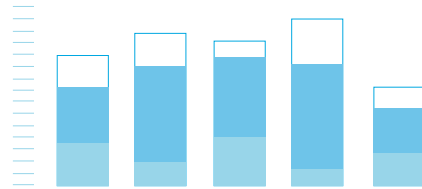
Process Infographics

Process infographics illustrate the potential steps required to complete an action.



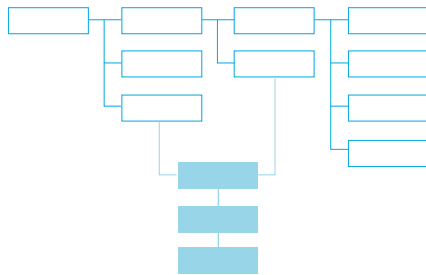
Statistical Infographics

Statistical infographics show multiple datasets and important statistics through charts and graphs.



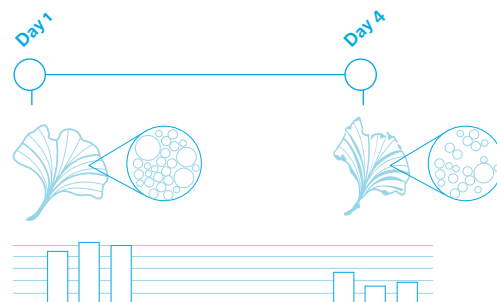
Hierarchical Infographics

These infographics show how information is collected at different levels, and how it is connected.



Combination

Some stories require a collection of different infographic types to tell a complete narrative. These narratives are often more complex, or have several layers of information.



Infographic criteria

3.0

For an infographic to be successful in both process and final output, there are certain requirements that should be met.

The following pages outline suggested criteria that should be met before an infographic project begins at UBC. In cases where a project doesn't fit all criteria, suggested alternative content types are listed on the next page.

INFOGRAPHIC CRITERIA

DATA

- Data should be “hard data” that is based in research (*ex. Quantifiable statistics that are representative of a large population instead of survey results from a small group*).
- If data is UBC-centred and comes from administration, it should have been previously published and/or approved (*ex. Data that comes from the metrics committee, data that has been published in the annual report*).
- If data is from a researcher, it should have been published in a peer-reviewed journal.
- All data should be available before production starts and should be reviewed for accuracy.
- There should be a way to contact the researcher for questions, clarification and accuracy checks.
- In some cases, a reputation risk ‘check’ on the data should be made in consultation with Public Affairs.

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3.0 INFOGRAPHIC CRITERIA

NARRATIVE

- There needs to be a compelling narrative.
- The narrative should have broad cultural appeal and should speak to a wide audience.
- If the subject is centred on UBC, the narrative should avoid touching on subject areas that will open UBC up to criticism.
- The narrative needs to support a strategic initiative or topic pillar.

VISUALS

- The narrative and data needs to be something that can be visually represented.
- The visual should further the understanding of the information and/or narrative, and should not be reduced to a 'pretty picture'.
- The visual needs to communicate the data in an ethical manner.
(ex. Don't arbitrarily change the units on the axis to create a more dramatic visual difference).
- The visual layout and dimensions must work for the distribution channel.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- There must be capacity to fill all needed roles for project, with the understanding that infographics are a labour intensive type of content. For best results, roles should be defined early on in the process.
- There must be a sufficient amount of time available for the completion of the project.
- Ensure that there is a process in place for reviewing the final infographic's accuracy. There should be a sufficient amount of time budgeted for this accuracy check, with the understanding that requested edits will take additional project time.

If your content project does not meet the above criteria, do not fret—there are other content types that may be a better match for your project. Some other types to consider include:

- *A written narrative (with or without photos and/or editorial illustrations).*
 - *An editorial illustration (image is conceptual and not based on hard data).*
 - *An icon with a short blurb of copy (ex. A "Did you know?" fact with a representative icon).*
 - *A photo essay.*
 - *A chart that shows data, but doesn't include a narrative or visual element.*
 - *A written stat displayed as a pull quote on a graphic or photographic background.*
-

Distribution channels and considerations

4.0

The channel that you share your infographic on can have considerable impact on how you write for and build your graphic.

The following pages outline specific parameters for a variety of distribution channels you may encounter at UBC.

PRINT

ADVANTAGES

Printed materials are an attractive choice for infographics that require ample space, as you can size down to a postcard size or expand to fill an 18x24" poster. Additionally, print is an ideal option when you want to display high resolution photographs and illustrations, as print has a higher resolution than web or some video files. Print also allows for type to be layered on top of a photo or illustration, which isn't always possible in web or social.

DISADVANTAGES

Unless you are able to incorporate flaps or other custom features into your piece, print does not allow for much audience interaction with your infographic. Printed materials also run the risk of having a smaller audience than web or social materials, as the number of readers is more-or-less confined to the quantity of your print run.

PRODUCTION TIPS

- Determine the final print size and page layout before starting on the visual elements of the infographic so that you know the correct size to build.
- If using photos, ensure that they are at least 300 dpi at their final size.
- If using illustrations, use vector files for the best results.
- If the infographic will be spread across a fold or gutter, ensure that important copy or data is not obstructed by creases, glue or staples.
- If adding special print techniques to the graphic, speak with a printer representative during the planning stage to ensure that your desired effect is achievable.

4.0 DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS AND CONSIDERATIONS

WEB

ADVANTAGES

Websites are an attractive distribution channel when you want to reach a broad audience, as they can be seen by anyone with an internet connection. As well, websites allow for a variety of interactive elements, which create a richer audience experience and give space for additional layers of information.

DISADVANTAGES

Websites present production challenges, as infographics must be built to fit a variety of screen sizes. Due to this, detailed or complex infographics that need to be seen at a large size do not work as well on the web as simple graphics. As well, in order to meet web accessibility standards, text should be a separate element from an image. This results in difficulties in placing type in a specific spot on an image. Finally, interactive elements can be production intensive, and will require extra time to complete.

PRODUCTION TIPS

- For best results, keep infographics simple. A reliable format is to have a static image or icon that is separate from a text block. Arrange the elements so that they will stack on mobile screens.
- Make the infographic accessible for all audiences: provide a text alternative for the infographic that conveys the same meaning and information that is represented visually; use HTML/CSS to create your infographic rather than using an image file so that screen readers can capture the information; and use an accessible colour palette.

- Graphics built as vectors should be saved as .svg files, as .svg is scalable on the web (no loss of resolution).
- A .svg file can be animated with CSS, and an animated .svg is much leaner for performance than a .gif or video file.

Looking for .svg animation tutorials? Try these:

- [How SVG Line Animation Works](#)
- [Animating SVG with CSS](#)
- [A Guide to SVG Animations](#)

-
- Recreate your infographic at different sizes for each screen size (ie., desktop, tablet and mobile size). Ensure the graphics and images in your infographic look good at various resolutions by testing on multiple devices.
 - Don't include text inside the image as this yields poor legibility on small screens and limits accessibility.
 - Don't include just an image with text embedded, as the infographic as this yields poor SEO results.

There are many web tools that can help you display data on your site in a responsive manner.

- [Google Charts](#)
- [Chart.js](#)
- [Chartist.js](#)

MOTION

ADVANTAGES

Animation has many features that can help to enhance understanding of certain types of information. Motion can be particularly useful in showing a change over time or a view from different angles and distances. Motion also allows for control over the pacing and sequence of the narrative, which can be useful for content that show sequential steps. Sound can also be added to a motion file, which opens up a new level with which to provide information from.

DISADVANTAGES

The additional features of motion design that add to audience understanding also add to production time and issues. Infographic producers must be aware of more variables, such as speed, transitions and sound. As well, motion infographics are production intensive, as the motion and sound elements bring extra levels of work. Motion infographics also carry the risk of audiences not gaining the full narrative, as they may stop watching the animation before the entire story is told.

PRODUCTION TIPS

- Give your team plenty of time to complete a motion infographic, and ensure that all roles needed will be filled.
- Check the specific dimensions that you are building to before starting the project, as changing dimensions partway through is very time consuming.
- If possible, keep your video short. Audience attention spans can be short, so it is advisable to keep the animation under ninety seconds.
- Complete speed checks to ensure that a visual or caption is on-screen for enough time for full comprehension.
- Be mindful of any audio that is used. Sound can distract from the viewing experience if it is not well-considered.
- To make a video accessible to all audiences, ensure that any voice-over narration is also available as captions.
- Ensure that you have the rights to all sound files that are used in your motion piece. Some distribution channels, such as YouTube, will delete videos that do not have full rights to soundtracks.

SOCIAL MEDIA

ADVANTAGES

Social media channels help infographics reach a broad audience, as they can be easily shared. As well, infographics often stand out from typical social media posts, and will capture attentions when users scroll through a feed.

DISADVANTAGES

Images typically work best at specific sizes for most social media platforms, which reduces the amount of detail and information that can be added to an infographic. Additionally, most social media users view content on mobile devices, which further limits the amount of information that can be seen at a glance. Some channels require that an image file can only contain small amounts of text when you do paid promotion (less than 20% of total image area), creating difficulties in providing a narrative or explanation through words or type-based graphics. Finally, some channels will compress an image, which leads to a pixelated and less attractive image.

PRODUCTION TIPS

- Check the specific social media channel's preferred image dimensions and restrictions before starting on the graphic. Please be aware that these sizes and restrictions frequently change, so it is best to check before the start of each project.
- Consider using a small piece of the infographic as a teaser on social media, and then linking to the full infographic on the web.
- Remember that most social media users are on mobile devices, so check what your infographic looks like on a small screen.
- Instead of fitting all the information into one image, try chunking the infographic into separate images and posts.
- Some channels offer layered or interactive posts that infographics can work well on. For example, Facebook's Canvas has motion, carousel and tilt features that can benefit an infographic experience.