Data Storytelling Studio
personal stories

CMS.631/831
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This sketch is about telling personal stories. In many ways this is most nebulous of the techniques I'm offering up. The goal is that you'll work with some qualitative data to find and tell a story with a more personal touch. This sketch is three class sessions over a week and a half. The first is this lecture; the second is in class group work time, and the third is project presentations.

Agenda

- [20] Readings / storytelling pair & share
- [20] Background & Inspirational Examples
- [10] Word Web activity
- [15] Tools
- [15] Datasets and team-forming

Readings

- Beyond the TED-like hyperbole, what do you think of DuBois' "data portraits"?

- Boyd points out that context and goals matter. Crisis Text Line is a success story.

- Slobin is a journalist reminding us of the evocative power on an image.

Moth Storytelling

reverse engineering their model

- Who was it about? What did you learn about them?

- What is the arc of the story? (beginning, change, end)

- Were there any descriptions? How was the thing described?

- Was there any dialogue? How was it told?

- How did they tell the story? Did they mix emotional approaches?

You should have listened to a Moth episode, as indicated in the syllabus. Pair up and discuss these questions as you describe the story you listened to with a partner.

After sharing have the group highlight anything they were surprised by, or thought was intereseting.

What is a Data-Driven Personal Story?

"Flat" Inspirations
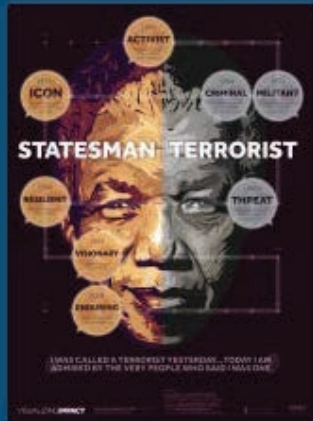
Nelson Mandela Funeral Memorial, Visualizing Impact
Courtesy of Visualizing Impact. License CC BY-NC-SA.

By the Numbers: four ways to win an Oscar, The Guardian 2016
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Emerson students, 2015
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Radiolab Numbers Episode (short clip)

Here are some examples to inspire:
- The Mandela image uses strong design and a timeline to discuss the timeline of his life
- The Guardian photo highlights the women nominated for Oscars in 2016. This editing tells a strong story about the lack of women represented in the award show's list.
- The RadioLab episode turns a discussion about numbers into an audio piece, bringing the data to life with a story-arc and humor.
- The project from Emerson students turned quotes from a survey about transit in Boston into animated GIFs.

This example highlights a clever approach to images. Moving the bar lets you compare the two images, telling a strong story about the loss of forestry by using qualitative (image) data.

Word Webs

from abstract words to symbols

- Climate / Weather
- Danger
- Pollution
- Worry / Concern
- Change
- Policy
- Empowerment

Some concepts are abstract and hard to create symbols for. Run the word webs activity to explore this. Have each group pick one of the terms on the right and make a word web for it.

Tools

Text Analysis

- WordCounter
- SameDiff
- NLTK
- usenineteen.com
- Overview

Image Analysis

- Google Vision API
- OpenCV

Publishing

- Cowbird
- Fold

Video/Audio Creation

- Gifs.com, giphy.com (other anigif tools)
- p5.js
- GarageBand

There are lots of tools to help, depending on what you are trying to do.

Data Sets

pick one, or use your own

GoBoston2030 data *from the City of Boston*

Pew "Concerns about Climate Change" study (report and data)

Food for Free data

...or something else

I've provided some clean datasets they can use (see the syllabus for details). They can use something else, but it should be clean (so they don't waste time cleaning it).

Team Forming

Find people to work with

What do you know?

What do you want to make?

What dataset are you interested in?

Have everyone stand up and think about these three questions. Then have everyone pick someone else in the room to talk to. Give them 2 minutes to discuss. Then have them switch to someone else and do the same. Repeat for 3 rounds and then tell everyone to form groups of ~3.

CMS.631 Data Storytelling Studio: Climate Change
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