

# INFOGRAPHICS

**“ IF A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS....  
HOW MUCH IS AN INFOGRAPHIC WORTH? ”**

Elaine Gerada Gatt

MA English and the Media  
January 2014

# Definition Infographics

- The Oxford Dictionary defines Infographics as “a visual representation of information or data”.
  - Eg. As a chart or diagram
- The definition however lacks the dimensions of
  - Time
  - Appeal
- A worthy infographic helps the user process the information easily and in an engaging way.
  - Raw data → Meaningful information



# The Origins

≈ 35,000 BC



1908



## Key

1857 – Coxcomb Chart

1908 – London Tube Map

1972 – Infographics for Munich Olympic Games

## Key

≈ 35,000 – Altamira Cave Paintings

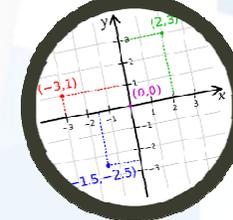
≈ 3,200 – Egyptian Hieroglyphs

1637 – Cartesian Graph

1786 – Line & Bar Graph  
Histogram

1857

1972



1637



# The Father of Infographics

- **Edward Tufte** is today considered as the father of data visualisation.



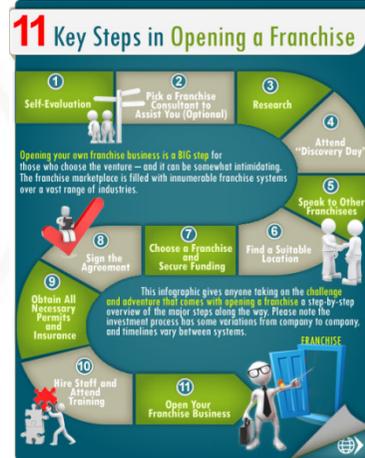
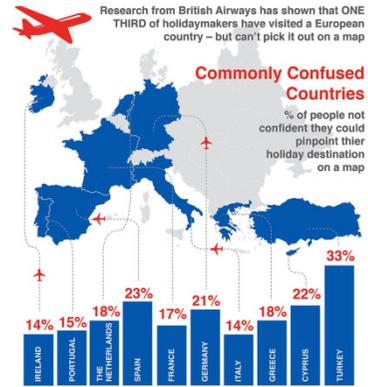
## Visual Display of Quantitative Information (1983)

- Infographics should:
  - Make large amounts of data understandable;
  - Encourage the eye to compare different pieces of data – focus on content rather than design;
  - Reveal data at several levels of detail;
  - Serve a clear purpose;
  - Be closely integrated with the statistical and verbal description of a data set.

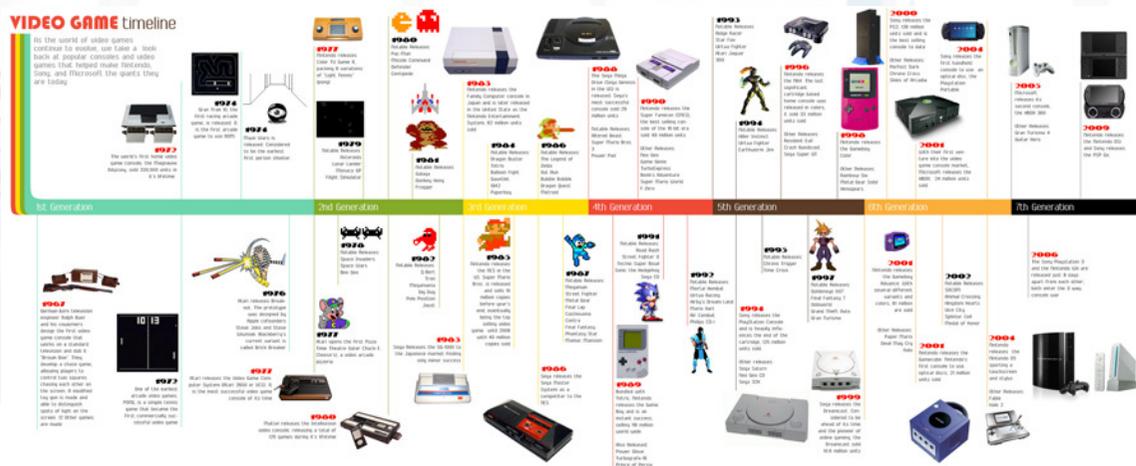
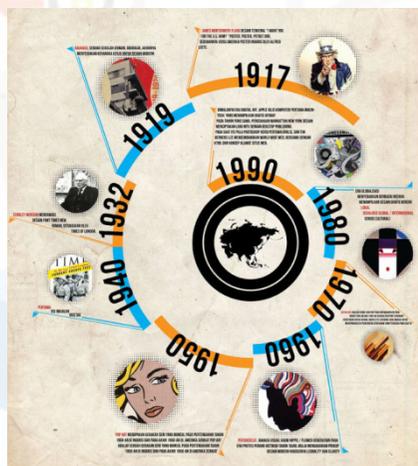


# Main Infographic Types

Travelling somewhere new is always a fun and exciting experience – but it helps if you know where you're going



Location	Process	Research	Activities
----------	---------	----------	------------



## Timeline

# Infographics and Newspapers

1 Appealing and easy to understand



2 Increase readership



3 Financial gain and Power



4 Greater ability to influence population



# The Power of Infographics

***“Maps provide powerful images. For people who want to change the way we think about the world, changing our map of the world is often a necessary first step. For those defending their status quo, maps are equally important.”***

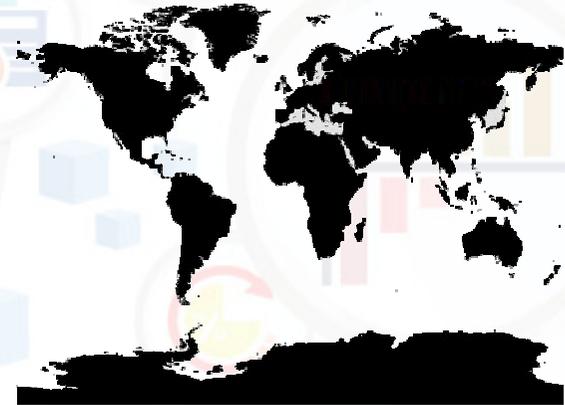
Dorling & Fairbairn (1997)

- Maps to represent international issues.
- Instant reports on international events are a must.
- A new public understanding of international relations.



# Maps – Real or Distorted View?

- The type of worldview chosen makes all the difference.
- Maps might reinforce a distorted world view in which the states of the higher latitudes are exaggerated at the expense of the countries of the south or developing worlds (Vujakovic, 2002).



Gall Stereographic



1984 Web Mercator

# Simplification

- We are constantly working to create ways through which we can represent data (Latour, 1986).
- Representation:
  - is not the real thing;
  - has to be simple enough to be understood;
  - involves simplification.
- Simplification
  - is more costly;
  - involves a lot of work;
  - but then, this is only a representation of the real.



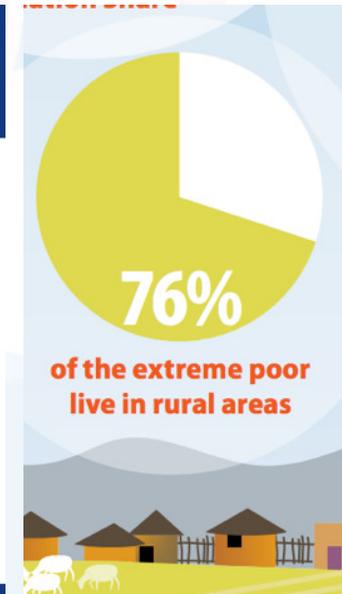
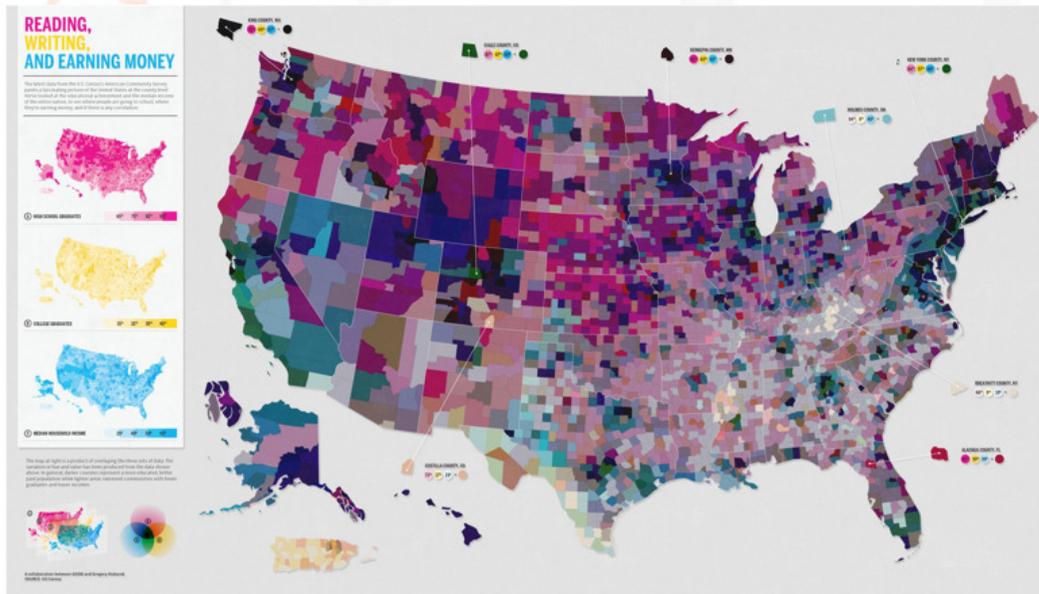
# Difficulties of Infographics

- They are inefficient and inconsistent at communicating abstract concepts.
- Very often graphics on their own are not enough, text is also required.
- The concept of a world view – it is all about “how a culture sees the world” and how this culture is made visible (Alpers, 1983).
- Sometimes, infographics create confusion rather than clarity.



# 'Infaxgraphics'?

- Sometimes the aim of presenting data clearly is not reached.



## Concluding Remarks

- As the amount of information in our lives continues to increase, information designers must continue to design solutions that optimally match users' requirements. (Kendler, 2005)
- Can infographics create a common language for all?

