

Infographics—

Usage recommendations from GDS

Colour

We have defined a colour wheel at GDS to help inform what colours we use.

We recommend all infographics adhere to this palette. The colour values are overleaf.



Colour values

R46 G49 B145		R111 G112 B180		R144 G39 B142		R46 G49 B145		R212 G55 B131	
R151 G152 B200		R183 G184 B218		R200 G147 B199		R151 G152 B200		R249 G204 B224	
R213 G214 B233		R226 G226 B240		R233 G212 B232		R213 G214 B233		R253 G235 B242	
R176 G17 B23		R221 G50 B45		R243 G121 B32		R180 G137 B45		R255 G193 B14	
R216 G136 B139		R238 G153 B150		R249 G188 B144		R218 G196 B150		R255 G224 B135	
R239 G207 B209		R248 G214 B213		R253 G228 B210		R240 G231 B213		R255 G243 B207	
R133 G154 B59		R0 G101 B46		R45 G161 B151		R46 G138 B202			
R194 G205 B157		R128 G178 B151		R150 G208 B203		R151 G197 B229			
R231 G235 B216		R204 G224 B213		R213 G236 B234		R213 G232 B244			

Typography

For clarity and consistency, we recommend you only use one typeface where possible in your infographics — Helvetica.

Try to use as few weights and sizes of the font as possible.

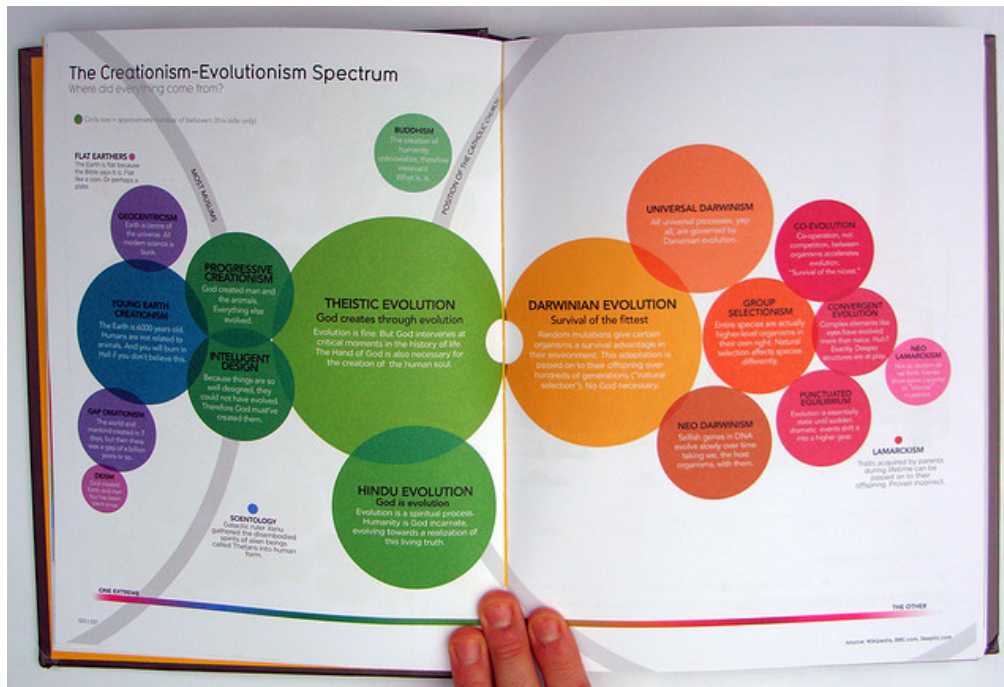


Helvetica

Graphic/illustration style

Graphics, shapes and illustrated elements should be created using flat, solid colour without the use of gradients and shadows.

The rule of thumb is to be as simple as possible and only to use graphics to communicate not decorate...



Disease Case Fatality Rates

Average % of infected who die



source: Worldwide figures from World Health Organisation, CDC, Guardian
*estimated from secondary sources // ** based on US figures

David McCandless // v1.2 // Sep 09
InformationIsBeautiful.net

Communicate, don't decorate

Infographics exist to explain data.

They are to visually aid communication of information to make it easier to digest and understand.

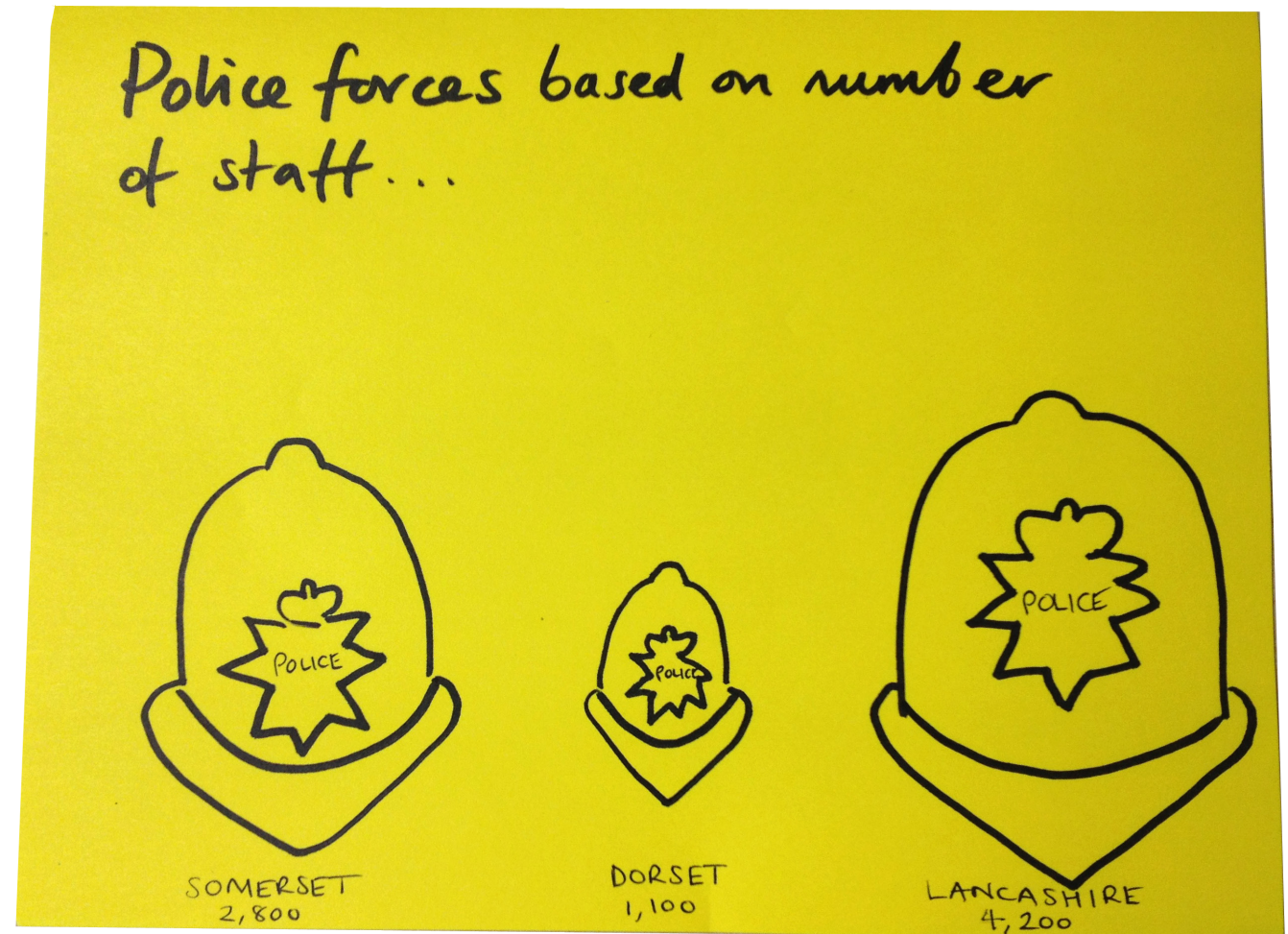
Any graphics used should support the message being communicated. If they don't (no matter how beautiful they are), they will undermine and confuse the message.

Here are some simple principles and good and bad examples to help demonstrate this.

Simple principles

Sketch— Relative scale

If you are making a comparison about the relative sizes of different things, represent these scales graphically.



Examples— Good Non Government

Scientific evidence for popular dietary supplements by
David McCandless.

Strong evidence at the top, weak evidence at the bottom.

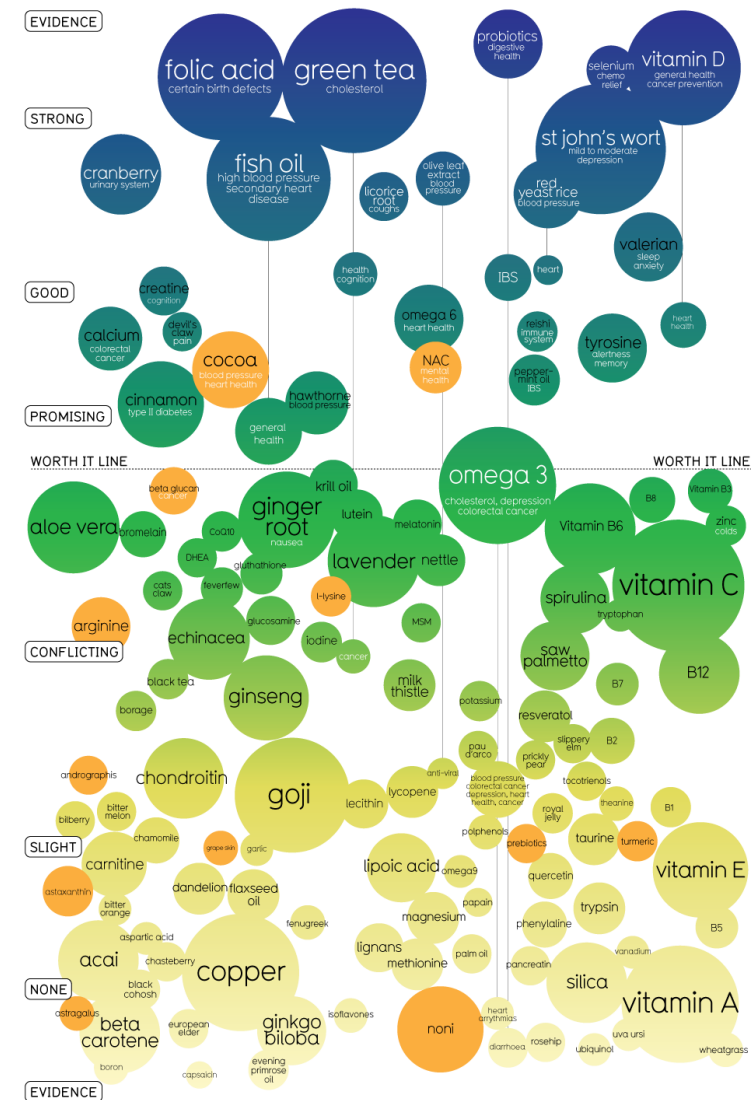
This is definitely far easier to read than a long list or a table.
It also exposes patterns you might not otherwise see.

Snake Oil?

Scientific evidence for popular dietary supplements
Showing tangible health benefits when taken orally by an adult with a healthy diet

Popularity
(google hits)

One to watch
(low evidence, promising results)



David McCandless // v2.0 // Oct 2 010
InformationIsBeautiful.net

source PubMed, Cochrane.org - <http://bit.ly/Snakeoil>
Only human, randomised placebo-controlled trials used
Complete sources & interactive version: informationisbeautiful.net/2010/snake-oil-supplements

Examples— Good

Non Government

The Billion Dollar Gram by David McCandless.

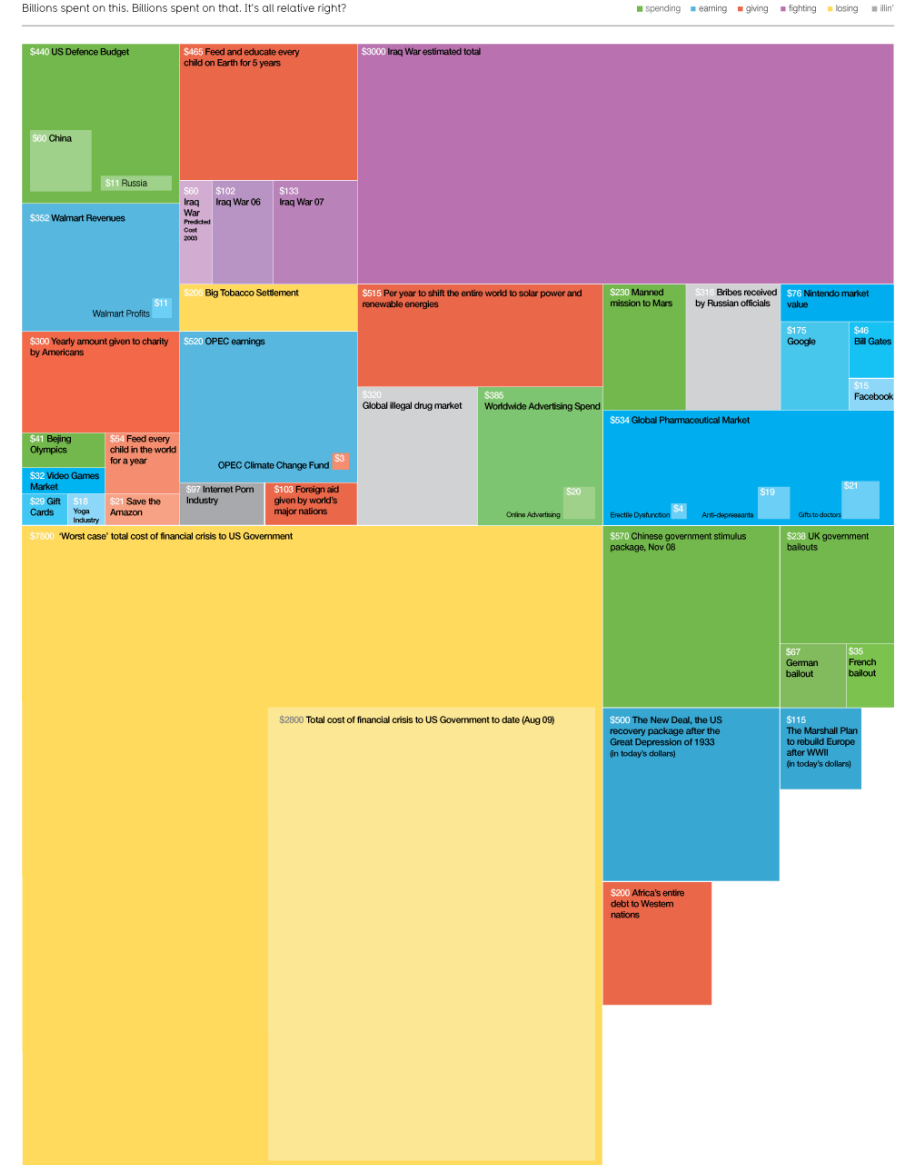
Showing the real value/cost of things by their relative value/cost.

Larger sums are represented by larger graphics and colour coded according to their category.

Clearly The Iraq War estimated total cost and 'Worst case' total cost of the financial crisis to the US Government are numbers of a massive magnitude.

The Billion Dollar Gram

Billions spent on this. Billions spent on that. It's all relative right?



David McCandless // v12 // Sep 09

InformationIsBeautiful.net

source: New York Times, The Guardian, Fortune and others // see: informationisbeautiful.net for full list
figures mostly from 2006/07 // a little visual cheating to make everything fit

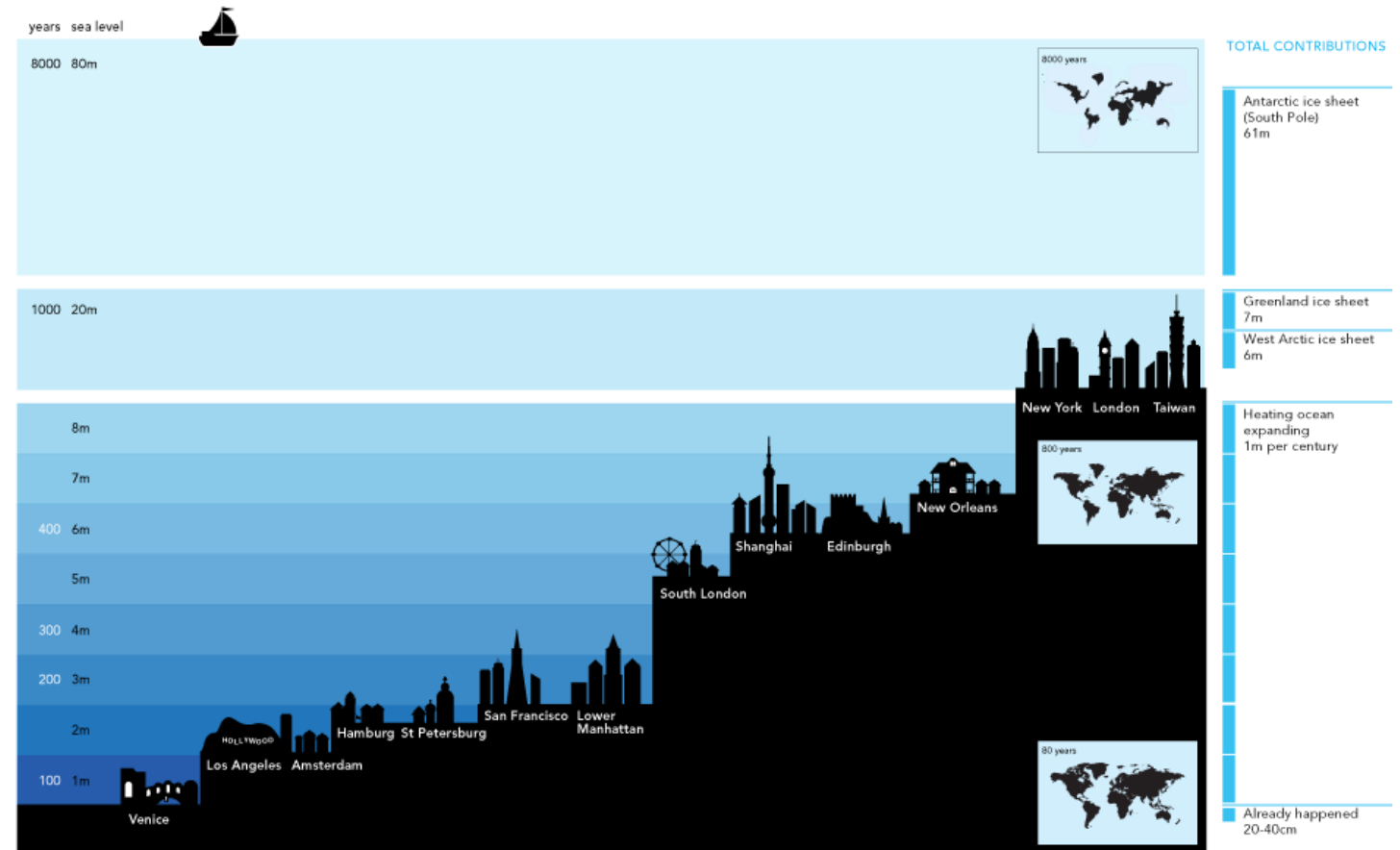
Examples— Good

Non Government

When Sea Levels Attack! by David McCandless.

The rate at which sea levels are expected to rise over the following 80 years. Plotted against notable locations and landmarks.

When Sea Levels Attack!



David McCandless // v1.0 // Jan 2010
Illustrations: Laura Sullivan & Joe Swainson

InformationIsBeautiful.net

source: IPCC, NASA,
NewScientist.com,
Potsdam Institute,
Sea Level Explorer

Examples— Good

Government

Projection of the number of people with dementia.

Taken from the Prime Minister's Office Flickr stream.

The scale of the problem is demonstrated by the graphics and the diagram has hierarchy.

Future projections

The number of people in the UK with dementia will double in the next 40 years.

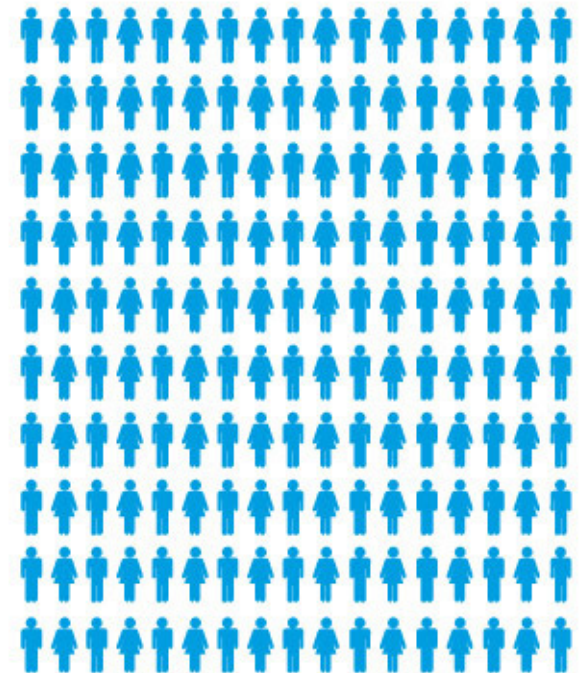
 = 10,000 people



800,000 people
with dementia in
2012



1,000,000 people
with dementia in
2021



1,700,000 people
with dementia in
2051

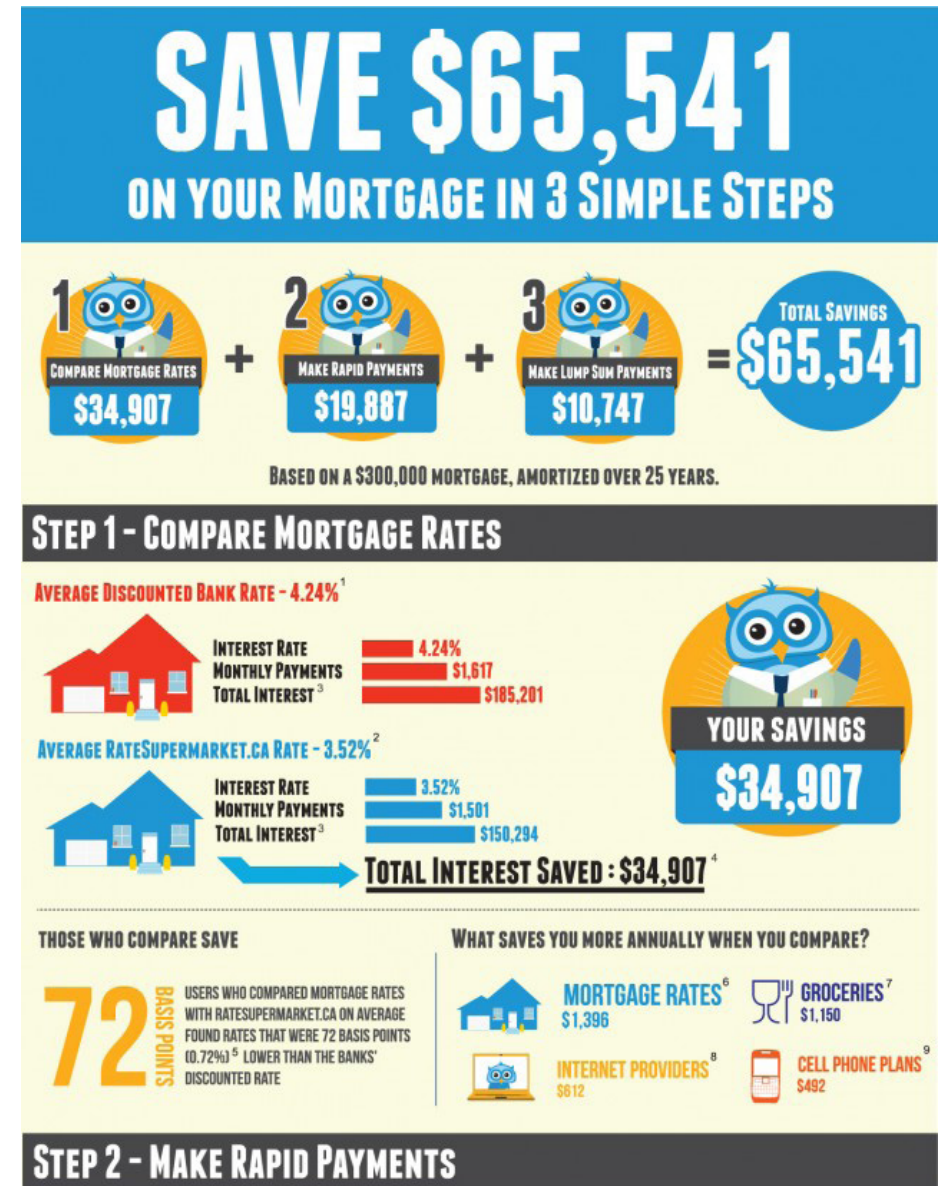
Examples— Bad

Non Government

Save \$65,541 on your mortgage in 3 simple steps by RateSupermarket.

The graphics here serve only to make the calculations harder to read. It might be attempting to make a dry topic more playful, but it is overcomplicated with too many type sizes and graphic elements.

The audience has to decode the graphics as well as try to read the calculations. Very confusing.



Examples— Bad

Government

What will the minimum prices be?

Taken from the Prime Minister's Office Flickr stream.

Not clear what's being shown and the graphics don't help communicate the message. They feel more like a barrier to understanding it.

The type butts up against the edges of graphic elements.

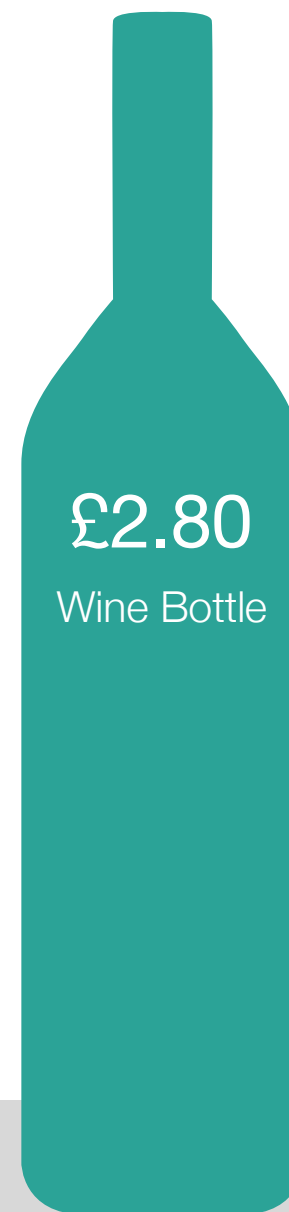
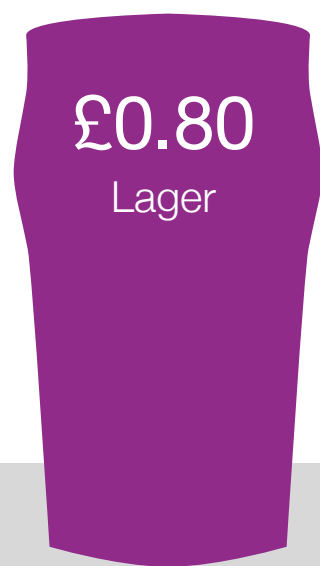


Redesigned

What follows is an attempt to redesign and simplify the previous 'What will the prices be' infographic to demonstrate some of the things we've pointed out in this document.

The new minimum price for one unit of alcohol is 40p.

What this means...



Further examples online

Here are a selection of other examples that may be of use.

A lot of these examples don't fit with the GDS aesthetic of solid flat colour and no gradients or shadows, but are examples of successfully executed ideas and should be referenced on that basis.

Illustrated & interactive

[Information is Beautiful](#)

Moving image

[35mm](#)

[Titanic — for BBC History](#)

[RSA Animate](#)