

# James Benedict



I am a visual journalist specializing in user experience and interactive design. The reader is always my first concern, whether that means contextualizing a story with **graphics**, engaging them with a **photo illustration** or developing **tools** to train designers to build better websites. A reader shouldn't have to fight the story's medium to make sense of it. I think of myself as a quick learner who adapts to tell stories in approachable ways.

I have extensive professional experience with responsive web development, user experience design, and data visualization. I've managed large projects, like **redesigning** the Indiana Daily Student's website, that required me to evolve my mockups based on users' feedback.

This spring I started a six month internship at Reuters where we investigated the role **Tasers** played in more than a thousand deaths. While it was fantastic to get a hands on education about data reporting, I want to return to my first love of designing the news.

My history as a designer and reporter lets me understand my teammate's point of view without losing sight of the reader's experience. I'll make stories understandable to the uninformed readers as well as engaging to the experts.

A few ways I've done this is by contextualizing a story about the **opioid crisis** through clear graphics, mapping **campus crime** to avoid explaining my finding with statistic laden paragraphs and developing a website that best displayed my **story and photos** from my time reporting on HIV in Uganda. As a reporter I've tried to make confusing stories understandable, like breaking down the **money** spent on Indiana elections or creating the first comprehensive database of **Taser** related deaths.

I'm always looking to improve my efficiency, which led me to create a **web design template** that standardized styles and user interface for the Indiana Daily Student. Beyond reducing my time designing longform stories, it's trained more than fifteen designers and became integral to the curriculum of the most advanced visual storytelling class at Indiana University. My Python proficiency allows me to quickly solve problems like sorting images, developing web applications and cleaning data on deadline. When working on a team I believe writing documentation is more important than writing code because it encourages cooperation and makes me more conscious of my decisions designing.

I am a multidisciplinary developer who enjoys experimenting almost as much as I love telling stories. My work as a designer, reporter and programmer allows me to empathize with the whole team and makes me well suited for this collaborative job.

You can view the works referenced above on my **portfolio** and see how they were made on my **github**. I've attached two letters of recommendation, or you can contact my former supervisor at Reuters directly if I am a finalist. His name is Jason Szep and his email is Jason.Szep@thomsonreuters.com.

Thank you in advance for considering my application for the Digital Design internship and I hope to hear from you soon.