

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 improving their **experience** reading a lengthy article. I make sure the reader doesn't have to fight the story's medium to make sense of it.

I have extensive professional experience with **responsive web development**, **data visualization** and **user interface** design. My **work** on **data-driven** series blended traditional reporting with skills like Python, SQL and Excel. Additionally, in my Python courses I created web applications, scraped websites, made exploratory data visualizations and more.

I'm well suited to make the Wall Street Journal's thorough reporting more approachable without over simplifying it. My work as a designer and data reporter lets me understand the author's point of view without losing sight of the reader's experience. I could quickly find information for charts or use javascript to make an interactive user interface. I'll make stories clear to the uninformed readers as well as engaging to the experts.

At Reuters I played an integral role creating a first of its kind database that accounted for over a thousand Taser related deaths. I demonstrated my ability to acquire data, whether that was through asking nicely, FOIA or some creative googling. My Python skills allowed me to clean data given to us on deadline, and automate tasks like identifying important quotes in deposition PDFs.

My first love is with visual journalism because it makes the complicated approachable and the abstract tangible. A **map** I made of campus crimes and the locations of Indiana University's security beacons lent credibility to our story, which questioned their value without burdening the reader with statistic laden paragraphs. For another story about the **opioid** crisis, I connected the individual's stories to the broader crisis by finding and visualizing multiple datasets. My focus on user centered design was even more valuable as the project manager and art director for the Indiana Daily Student's website **redesign**.

Beyond telling stories, I've addressed inefficiencies with programming. A **template** I developed allowed others to focus on designing and not debugging. It's trained more than fifteen designers, became integral to the curriculum of the most advanced visual storytelling class at Indiana University, and drastically reduced my time designing longform stories. 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'm a curious developer who enjoys experimentation almost as much I love telling stories. My work as a designer, reporter and programmer allow me to empathize with everyone on the team and build the best product for the reader.

Thank you in advance for considering my application for the Interaction Designer and I hope to hear from you soon.