

# Storytelling with Knight Lab TimelineJS

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Developed and taught by  
Yana Mommadova and Claire Tratnyek  
SOCL 1255 Sociology of the Family  
Linda Blum  
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# Workshop Agenda

- Learn about Timeline as a mode of conveying data and content
- Best practices and questions to consider before creating your Timeline
- Steps for using Knight Lab TimelineJS
- Start building!

Slides and handout available at

<https://bit.ly/diti-su2021-blum>



# Check out the KnightLab Timeline Handout for...

- General KnightLab Timeline information
- Components of an effective timeline
- Questions to consider before building a timeline
- Timeline examples



# Knight Lab TimelineJS Examples

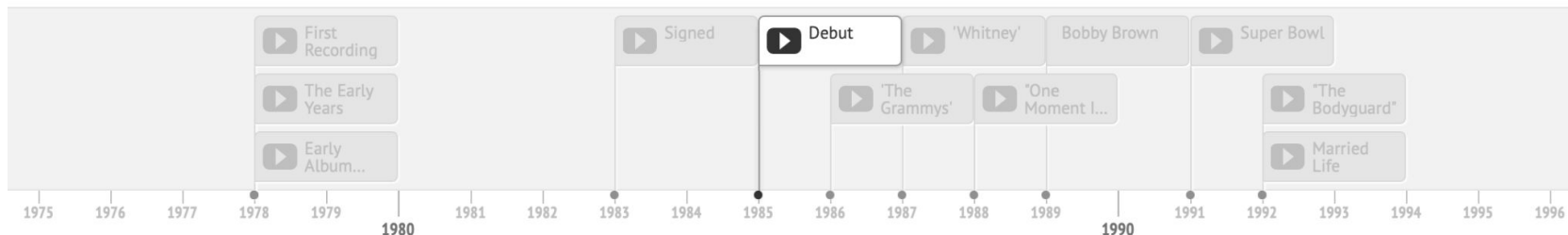
- [Whitney Houston 1963-2012](#): Telling the life of Whitney Houston through key dates and events



1978

## EARLY ALBUM CREDITS

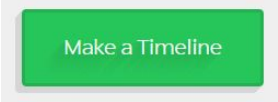
As a teen Houston's credits include background vocals for Jermaine Jackson, Lou Rawls and the Neville Brothers. She also sang on Chaka Khan's, 'I'm Every Woman,' a song which she later remade for the *Bodyguard* soundtrack which is the biggest selling soundtrack of all time. It sold over 42 million copies worldwide.



- [Professor Blum's example timeline](#)



# Create a Timeline (step 1 on the Timeline website)

- Go to <https://timeline.knightlab.com/>
- Click “Make a Timeline” 
- You don't need an account to create a timeline
- Click "Get the spreadsheet template" and follow the instructions to copy it to your Google Drive
- The main place where you build your timeline is Google Sheets, so when you make a copy, the file will be saved in your Google Drive



# Using the TimelineJS Google Sheets

Template available on their website (make a copy on your drive)

Official TimelineJS3 Template

USE TEMPLATE

Year	Month	Day	Time	End Year	End Month	End Day	End Time	Display Date	Headline	Text	Media	Media Credit	Media Caption	Media Thumbnail	Type	Group	Background
									Google Spreadsheet Example	This is a test of using google spreadsheets as a source for the timeline tool. This is a 'title' slide, so it doesn't need a date. It automatically occurs first, and doesn't appear in the timeline below.	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/</a>	Zach Wise/verite.co	href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/" title="Chicago by zach.wise, on Flickr">Chicago by zach.wise</a>		title		
2011	11	1		2011	12	15			Another Flickr Example	It's Easy to Make Your Own Timeline	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6894476777/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6894476777/</a>	Zach Wise/verite.co	Chicago to NYC				#333333 <a href="http://knightlab.northwestern.edu/content/uploads/2015/03/front-page-image.jpg">http://knightlab.northwestern.edu/content/uploads/2015/03/front-page-image.jpg</a>
2011	11	16	05:58:44	2011	11	16	07:30:00		Vimeo Example	Illustrate your Timeline with photos, videos, tweets and more.	<a href="https://vimeo.com/143407878">https://vimeo.com/143407878</a>	Knight Lab	A video about how to make timelines!				

Date, end date (optional), and display date (also optional)

Text and headline for the slide

Entering media and related info

Additional options with slides



# What the end result looks like



Bob Burchette/The Washington Post

Former IRS Commissioner Randolph Thrower

1971

## Commissioner Thrower leads defiance

Nixon [fires](#) one of the commissioners, Randolph Thrower. [As the story](#) goes, he returns a few years later for a visit to the agency. Employees hear that he's in the building and they stream into the hallways to greet him with applause.



1978

IRS tests for racial discrimination met with protest



# What the end result looks like

Slide



Bob Burchette/The Washington Post  
Former IRS Commissioner Randolph Thrower

Date

1971

Headline

Commissioner Thrower leads defiance

Nixon **fires** one of the commissioners, Randolph Thrower. **As the story goes**, he returns a few years later for a visit to the agency. Employees hear that he's in the building and they stream into the hallways to greet him with applause.

Text

1978  
IRS tests for racial discrimination met with protest

Image and details

Timeline





# Slides

Each slide represent a different point or period in time. Each one contains:

- **Headline** and **text**. The text box reads basic HTML.
- A **background image**/color
- **Media**: images, videos, and sound files. Only **one** media file can be uploaded per slide. Special columns in the spreadsheet are dedicated to incorporating the media onto the slide.



# Dates

- Slides in the final timeline follow the order of the dates, not the rows
- You can choose how specific you want to make your dates, but you must enter at least the **year**
- Entering the end date is optional
- The “display date” is useful when the exact date is unknown/unknowable

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Year	Month	Day	Time	End Year	End Month	End Day	End Time	Display Date
2011	11	1		2011	12	15		
2011	11	16	05:58:44	2011	11	16	07:30:00	



# Headlines and text

Headline	Text
Google Spreadsheet Example	This is a test of using google spreadsheets as a source for the timeline tool. This is a 'title' slide, so it doesn't need a date. It automatically occurs first, and doesn't appear in the timeline below.
Another Flickr Example	It's Easy to Make Your Own Timeline
Vimeo Example	Illustrate your Timeline with photos, videos, tweets and more.



# Adding media

- Timeline supports various online media platforms (but you **can't** upload from your computer directly)
- Go to the “[Supported Media Types](#)” list on the KnightLab TimelineJS site to find more information on file types and embedding

Media	Media Credit	Media Caption	Media Thumbnail
		<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/" title="Chicago by zach.wise, on Flickr">Chicago by zach.wise</a>	
<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/</a>	Zach Wise/verite.co	Chicago to NYC	
<a href="https://vimeo.com/123456789">https://vimeo.com/123456789</a>	Knight Lab	A video about how to make timelines!	
<div>Using urls</div>			
<div>Using &lt;iframe&gt;</div>			
<pre>&lt;iframe id="inlineFrameExample" src="https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f8/Mosaic_of_Theodora_-_Basilica_San_Vitale_%28Ravenna%2C_Italy%29.jpg" /&gt;&lt;/iframe&gt;</pre>			
	commons	looking at iframe example	



# Adding media

- **Markup language** (used for writing the content of web pages) can be used to import the media that is not supported by by TimelineJS
  - This is done by adding **<iframe>** instead of the URL in the column L: you can find the model for entry [here](#)
  - You can also use **<blockquote>** markup in the same column to add text next to your media: you can find the model for entry [here](#)
- In the example to the right, markup language is used to turn the media caption into hyperlink

Media	Media Credit	Media Caption	Media Thumbnail
		<code>&lt;a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/" title="Chicago by zach.wise, on Flickr"&gt;Chicago by zach.wise&lt;/a&gt;</code>	
<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/</a>	Zach Wise/verite.co	Chicago to NYC	
<a href="https://vimeo.com/123456789">https://vimeo.com/123456789</a>	Knight Lab	A video about how to make timelines!	
<code>&lt;iframe id="inlineFrameExample" src="https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f8/Mosaic_of_Theodora_-_Basilica_San_Vitale_%28Ravenna%2C_Italy%29.jpg" /&gt;&lt;/iframe&gt;</code>	commons	looking at iframe example	

Using urls


Using <iframe>



# Timeline Types: *Title vs. Era*

The **Type** column (P) can be used to activate a few more specialized features in Timeline.

- If you use the word **title** in this column, then Timeline will use the row as a "title slide," which is shown before all others, and which does not require a date.
- If you use the word **era** in this column, then Timeline will use the row to label a span of time in the "axis" area of the timeline navigation component. Eras should have start and end dates (at least the year for each) and a headline.



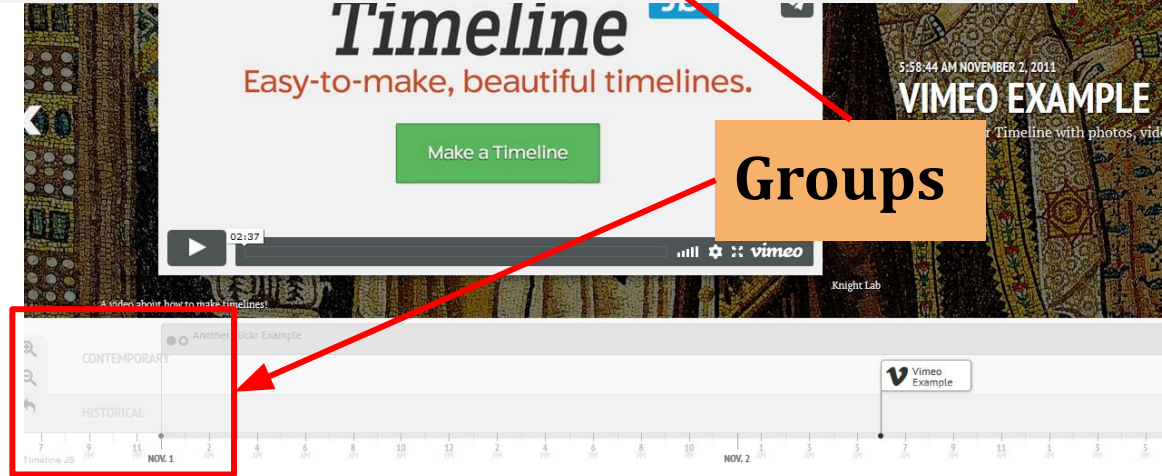
M	N	O	P	Q
Media Credit	Media Caption	Media Thumbnail	Type	Group
Zach Wise/verite.co	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/zachwise/6115056146/</a> title="Chicago by zach.wise, on Flickr">Chicago by zach.wise</a>		title	
Zach Wise/verite.co	Chicago to NYC		title	
Knight Lab	A video about how to make timelines!		era	



# Groups

- 'Group' - text entered in this column acts as a subheading for moments that you want grouped together
- Moments in the same group will appear in their corresponding row at the bottom of the timeline

Type	Group	Background
title		
	contemporary	#333333
title	contemporary	<a href="https://upload.wikim">https://upload.wikim</a>
era	historical	





# Background

You can customize your background with a color or an image.

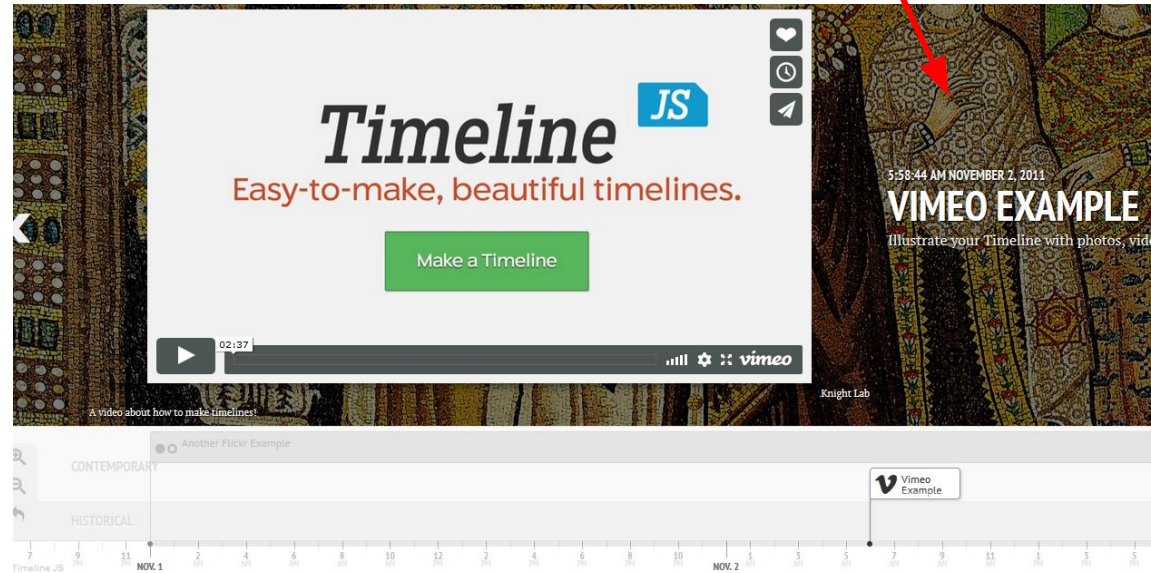
You enter a color by its **hex code** (#333333 in the example on the right).

You can Google a color name, or browse [here](#).

Type	Group	Background
title		
title	contemporary	#333333
title	contemporary	<a href="https://upload.wikim">https://upload.wikim</a>
era	historical	
	historical	

Using CSS color names for background

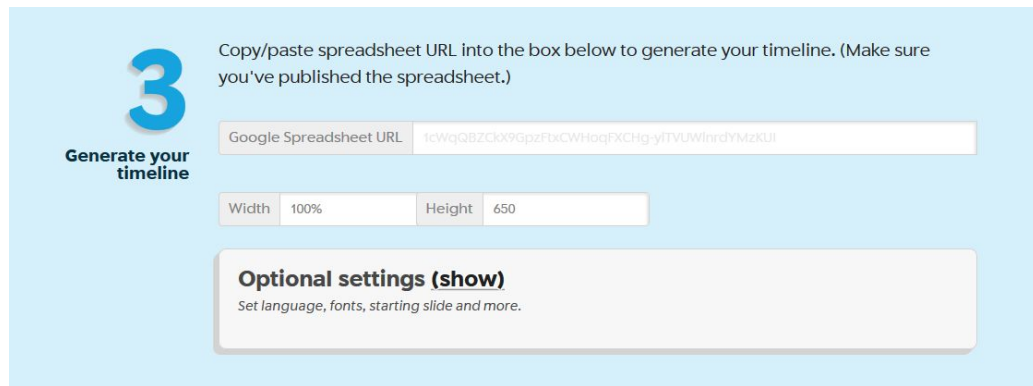
Using image URL for background





# Uploading the spreadsheet (step 2 on the Timeline website)

- In the spreadsheet, select the "Publish to the web" option under "File"
- In the settings box that pops up, check "Automatically republish when changes are made," select "od1" under "Entire document" drop down box, then click "Publish"
- Copy the Page URL (**not** the Publish URL) into the Timeline website <https://timeline.knightlab.com/#make:>



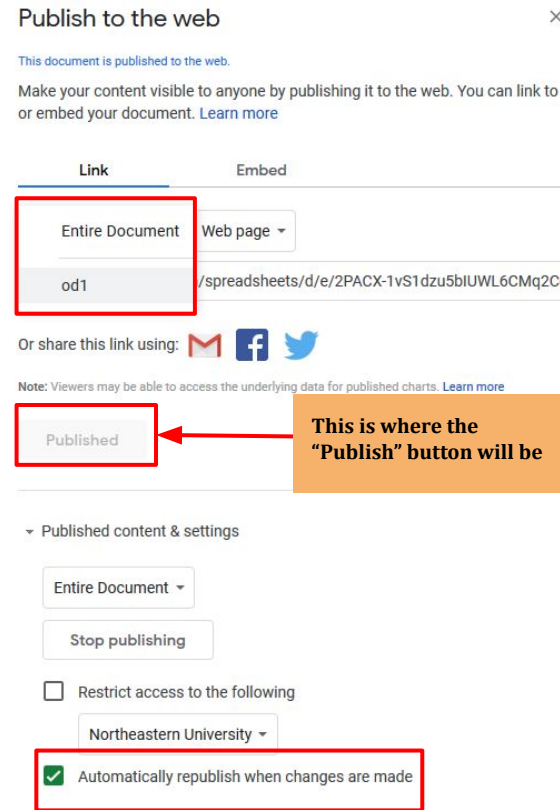
3  
Generate your timeline

Copy/paste spreadsheet URL into the box below to generate your timeline. (Make sure you've published the spreadsheet.)

Google Spreadsheet URL

Width  Height

**Optional settings (show)**  
Set language, fonts, starting slide and more.



Publish to the web

This document is published to the web.

Make your content visible to anyone by publishing it to the web. You can link to or embed your document. [Learn more](#)

Link Embed

Entire Document Web page ▾

od1 /spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vS1dzu5biUWL6CMq2Cxc

Or share this link using:

Note: Viewers may be able to access the underlying data for published charts. [Learn more](#)

Published

Published content & settings

Entire Document ▾

Stop publishing

☐ Restrict access to the following

Northeastern University ▾

☒ Automatically republish when changes are made



## Viewing the timeline (steps 3 and 4 on the Timeline website)

After you have entered the link from the spreadsheet URL, you will get a **shareable link**.

Copy and paste the **'share link'** in your browser to open your timeline or to share it with others. **USE THIS OPTION!**

(ONLY use the **'embed' code** if you are going to embed your timeline on a website.)

4

Share your timeline

Share Link

Embed

Use this to link directly to your timeline.

*If you're embedding on Medium.com or other oembed-aware services, just paste this link on a line by itself where you want your timeline to appear.*

```
https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline/latest/embed/?source=1cWqQBZCkX9GpzFtxCwHoqFXCHg-y1TVUWlnrdYMzKUI&font=Bevan-PotanoSans&mapttype=toner&width=600&height=600
```

Copy this embed code and paste it on your site where you want your timeline to appear (just like a YouTube video).

```
<iframe src='https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline/latest/embed/?source=1cWqQBZCkX9GpzFtxCwHoqFXCHg-y1TVUWlnrdYMzKUI&font=Bevan-PotanoSans&mapttype=toner&id=1cWqQBZCkX9GpzFtxCwHoqFXCHg-y1TVUWlnrdYMzKUI&title=Timeline of the 1960s' width='600' height='600' frameborder='0' allowfullscreen'></iframe>
```

Preview

Open Preview in a new window



# Discussion

What do you think of this tool? Do you find it accessible?

Are there any features you think you will need help with?

Do you find timeline useful? What for?

What type of information, stories, and narration are especially compatible with the timeline format?

What do you see yourself using it for?



# Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact DITI at [nulab.info@gmail.com](mailto:nulab.info@gmail.com)

**Developed and taught by**

**Claire Tratnyek**

DITI Assistant Director

**Yana Mommadova**

DITI Research Fellow

Slides, handouts, and data available at <https://bit.ly/diti-su2021-blum>

Schedule an appointment with us! <https://calendly.com/diti-nu>



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*Feel free to ask questions at any point  
during the presentation!*