SEVEN CORE SKILLS of DATA STORYTELLING

Data-driven stories can seem magical, giving professionals a superpower of persuasion. But showing workers how to create such stories can be a painful process. Follow these tips and tricks taught at <u>Boston University's Data + Narrative workshops</u>, and you'll discover that teaching data-driven techniques need not drive you crazy.

- 2. Get the data you want, often for free. Encourage students to explore data that might be most relevant to their work, including the 300,000 databases filled with government info at data.gov and statistics about 167 million companies at opencorporates.com.
- 4. It's essential to make sure your datasets aren't filled with duplicate or inaccurate information. Use tools that can standardize data in seconds and consider keeping a data diary, recording every step you take to locate and manipulate data.
- 6. Choose what type of graphic will best display your data. Beware of pie charts, which often create confusion. Better to rely on simpler bar charts and graphs.



- 1. Go beyond Google and gather more data than you think you need. Extra data can give people a richer understanding of an issue. Numbers can be used for benchmarking or add an unexpected dimension to a story.
- 3. Use the latest tools to extract data from PDFS and other documents. Tools like Cometdocs and Tabula will simplify tedious and aggravating work.
- 5. When it's time to examine data, think first about key points you may want to make. Search for patterns. Combine and compare datasets. It's easy to make lots of pivot tables to find outliers.

7. Use simple words, strong verbs, and consider a narrative structure, complete with a beginning, middle and end. Take your audience on a journey to solve a business problem, and think about ways to engage your audience's emotions.