

Data Story Project Guide

COMM5501

Introduction

The major project for COMM5501 is structured to provide students a step-by-step guide to building their own data story on a topic of their own choosing, related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A link to the SDGs is included [HERE](#) for your convenience.

Students will need to select a contemporary challenge related to the SDGs, find the relevant data, process and present this data in an insightful and coherent manner, and apply their own judgement based on their findings to give an evidence based recommendation to the identified challenge.

Whilst there is a “Data Story Content” assessment and a “Data Story Project” assessment as part of this course, we will use the term “Data Story Project” to refer to the overall process of creating your data story.

The first three components of the Data Story Project will focus on building content for your data story. The fourth component will combine the content from the first three into the final version of the data story, and students will present their collated work in an appropriate format (guidance will be provided). The fifth component will require students to showcase their work as part of their professional portfolio.

This Data Story Project has a total weighting of 80% of your final grade for this course. The 5 components mentioned above will be submitted throughout the term. The key details for each component are provided below.

Please note that this document is only a guide for what to expect, as we may make changes during the term to respond to unforeseen circumstances. This document should not be seen as being set in stone.

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1 Choosing your Challenge

1.1 Description

The first component of the Data Story Project will introduce students into this task by proposing a topic that is both of interest to them and has a meaningful impact to the broader society. The chosen topic will need to connect to at least one of the UN SDGs.

For this chosen topic students will need to provide:

- An Impact Statement explaining why that proposed topic is important, both in general and to them individually, and
- Identify a relevant data set from a reputable source that can support this topic.

This will serve as a starting point for subsequent components of the Data Story Project.

The purpose of this submission (in particular, proposing three topics) is to receive feedback from a member of the teaching team as well (students would already have received peer feedback before submitting).

NOTE: Students are NOT locked into this topic for the final version of their data story, and are allowed to adjust their topic statement/question as they progress through the semester.

This component has a 5% weighting towards your final grade.

1.2 Supporting Activities

Topic 1 will contain various activities to support students in exploring the SDGs broadly. The lecture for Topic 2 will provide an introduction into writing an effective Impact Statement, and the corresponding workshop in week 2 will contain a guided activity for students to write their own Impact Statement.

Students will also post a copy of this component for their formative forum post for week 2, where they will receive peer feedback. Students are encouraged to take any additional feedback they receive here into consideration before submitting the deliverable for this task.

1.3 Deliverables

Students will gather all the feedback they've received and make any changes they feel are necessary, then post an updated version of their work to the *Deliverables* section on Moodle to receive feedback from the teaching team. Your post will need to contain the following:

- A single-sentence topic statement/question,
- A corresponding Impact Statement (max 150 words),
- A link to the chosen data set, a brief description of the data set, and a proposal for how the chosen data set might be used to support the Impact Statement (max 50 words).

1.4 Due Date

Early week 3 to receive feedback from a tutor. If you submit later during week 3, there's a chance the tutor has already completed giving feedback and you may miss out.

Aim to submit your work by Friday 11:59PM in week 3 at the latest. Any submissions made after Friday 11:59PM in week 4 will likely not receive feedback.

1.5 What makes a good submission?

N/A, the first component is formative in nature and it is assumed that students have already incorporated feedback they've received. Students will receive some additional feedback from the teaching team for their work.

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2 Good Graph, or Good Grief

2.1 Description

The second component of the Data Story Project will take the ideas of “good” and “bad” data visualisations and apply them to their chosen topic.

Students will take the data set they chose from the “Choosing your Challenge” component (or another data set if necessary) and document their process of improving their first chart, the types of feedback they received, and how they implemented this feedback.

This task serves multiple purposes:

- Documenting the process with clear notes creates a reusable resource for referring back to the process you used to create your graph.
- It reduces the chance of repeating the same mistakes and speeds up the process for creating your subsequent graphs.
- More broadly, it reinforces the learning process. You are very likely learning a relatively new skill, and it’s very easy to forget a detail if you don’t write it down (this is still true if you’re refining an existing skill).

You will receive peer feedback throughout this process. This component will have very limited tutor feedback.

This component is has a 15% weighting towards your final grade.

2.2 Supporting Activities

The lab in week 3 will contain guided activities to help students build effective data visualisations, and receive peer feedback on their work before submitting. The formative forum post in week 3 will give students an opportunity to get additional feedback from other students. The lab in week 4 will also have an activity to help you start on the **Thank You** deliverable (Section 2.3.2).

Some of the elements from Topic 4 on stakeholders may also be relevant for this component, as a large portion of understanding the purpose of a graph comes from understanding the target audience as a stakeholder.

2.3 Deliverables

There are 2 sets of deliverables for this second component.

2.3.1 Growing my Graph

Students will submit a single PDF document to Turnitin containing the main iterations of their graph supporting the Impact Statement. You do not need to include every single version of your graph, just key checkpoints and major changes.

This document also needs to have brief notes on the changes made between each iteration. These notes should contain not only the change being made, but should also mention the rationale behind the change (i.e. Why did you make that change?). The notes can be dot points, but you can also have more text if you feel this is necessary.

These notes should be detailed enough to be a convenient reference material for yourself later in the term. A sample has been provided on Moodle for what this may look like.

2.3.2 Thank You team!

The deliverable for this task is a completed "Thank you team!" form (available on Moodle) and a follow-up Moodle post.

The activity for completing the form will be completed in the week 5 lab and the form will be collected by your tutor. Details for this task can be found in the week 4 and week 5 lab activities document, as well as the form provided on Moodle.

After the activity, students will need to make a follow-up post in the *Deliverables* section on Moodle to summarise the key parts of your presentation. A sample has been provided on Moodle for what this may look like.

2.4 Due Date

This activity will be conducted in the week 5 labs.

2.5 What makes a good submission?

The purpose of deliverable 2.3.1 is to create a record that you can revisit when making subsequent data visualisations to speed up that process and make better visualisations. The information below is a more detailed guide for making a better set of resources for yourself (traditionally, this might sometimes be called a "marking rubric").

2.5.1 Good and Bad Visualisations

What separates a poor from a useful resource lies in the notes. It's entirely possible that you created a very good graph in your first attempt and you didn't need to make many changes. If there were elements of your first draft that were good that you deliberately kept the same, document your reasons for doing that as well.

Poor	There is little documentation explaining the process of iterating the graph. At best, the documentation is largely declarative, e.g. "colour scheme changed from bright red to dark blue", instead of explanatory, e.g. "The bright red colour scheme was uncomfortable to look at, so I changed to dark blue. Much more comfortable".
Acceptable	Changes (or lack thereof) are largely driven by the visualisation principles covered in class (e.g. Gestalt or Tufte's principles), and this is documented.
Excellent	Changes are driven primarily by the underlying <i>purpose</i> of the graph: the message being conveyed and the target audience. The visualisation principles covered in class are also considered, but these are secondary concerns.

2.5.2 Thank You team!

The “formal” term for this deliverable is a “reflection”, and should be based on the Gibbs’ Reflective Learning Cycle. For example, if you want to reflect on a particular piece of feedback (e.g. your group did not see the pattern you intended in your graph), then run through the six steps. Use the table below to help you write your reflection, then again to help you make a self-assessment.

Criteria	Poor	Acceptable	Excellent
Use of reflective process	The reflection does not seem to engage with the reflective cycle at all or only minimally, missing a number of elements or misunderstanding their purpose. There does not appear to be any genuine attempt to engage with feedback received.	The reflection covers most of Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle adequately, perhaps lacking comprehensive coverage in some places. At least attempts to genuinely engage with the reflective process linked to the feedback received.	Covers all aspects of Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle to an appropriate degree, showing genuine engagement with the reflective process directly linked to the feedback received.
Areas of Improvement	Does not highlight any areas for improvement, perhaps believing there are no gaps or opportunities to grow.	Highlights some areas for improvement, whether self-assessed or noted by teammates, and provides limited reasoning as to why these gaps occurred. Reflects on what else could have been done, but this may be limited, perfunctory, or not particularly relevant.	Shows a strong self-awareness by highlighting areas for improvement, whether self-assessed or noted by teammates, and provides clear reasoning as to why these gaps occurred. Displays a growth mindset by reflecting substantially on what else could have been done.
Action Plan	Does not include an action plan for the future, or does so to a bare minimum in a way that is not particularly specific, actionable, relevant or realistic.	Has outline a reasonable action plan for self-improvement, though it may not be specific or clearly actionable in the near future.	Has clearly outlined an actionable, realistic, relevant and specific action plan for self-improvement in the future.

3 Writing a Wrong

3.1 Description

The third component of the Data Story Project will explore an opposing perspective to that chosen by the student. It is very easy to find information supporting any given perspective (confirmation bias), so students will need to genuinely consider this opposing perspective, assess its merits, and create an appropriate counter-argument. Students will need to find a source that opposes their chosen stance, analyse this stakeholder using the framework from Topic 4, and provide an evidence-based assessment of the validity of this source. The focus of this component is to use data to provide the counter-argument.

The purpose of this task is for students to show versatility by working outside their own boundaries and considering an opposing perspective. There will again be opportunities to receive feedback from peers and from a tutor.

Please note that this component is a *summative* task and will be graded by tutors.

This component is has a 25% weighting towards your final grade

3.2 Supporting Activities

The lab in week 5 will contain guided activities to help students nominate and analyse the opposing perspective, including identifying the corresponding stakeholder that might hold this opposing perspective. The stakeholder framework from Topic 4 can then be used to understand this stakeholder further, so that a response can be planned.

As with previous components, there will also be formative discussion forum posts for getting further peer feedback.

3.3 Deliverables

Students will submit a single PDF document to Turnitin containing their finalised work from week 5. This document will need to include:

- Citing the chosen opposing perspective (for example, a link would suffice), and the likely stakeholder with this view.
- A brief summary of the opposing perspective. (max 200 words)
- Any relevant data visualisations used in the opposing perspective (clearly label and caption these as appropriate).
- Data visualisations created by the student that form the bulk of the counter-argument.
- Accompanying written notes to give context to student's data visualisations and express the overall approach of the counter-argument. (max 200 words)

To help markers, students will also include their topic question/statement and summary of the challenge for reference. This will not be marked. This can be the same as what was submitted in the first component of the Data Story Project, or changed as appropriate if the topic question/statement has changed since submitting the first component.

NOTE: Whilst the stakeholder framework from week 4 is not an explicit part of the deliverables for this component, it is highly recommended that you use it to help structure your counter-argument.

3.4 Due Date

Friday of flexibility week. The teaching team will try to do our best to provide feedback in a timely manner. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee a 1-week turnaround. However, there will still be peer feedback from the week 5 formative assessment to help you refine this third component for use in the fourth (and fifth) component(s).

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4 Making your Case

4.1 Description

The fourth component of the Data Story Project will put together all three components that students have created so far, as well as all feedback received in the process, to create a final artifact for their professional portfolio.

The format of this artifact is (almost) completely open-ended! Students are encouraged to be creative with the format of this artifact. For example, it can be a report, a video presentation, an infographic, or a self-produced music video, the possibilities are endless! There are only 2 requirements on the format:

- It **MUST** be appropriate for the chosen target audience.
- It needs to have a video/audio element (i.e. it can't be purely written).

This artifact for the student's professional portfolio. You will also publish this presentation in the final component of this project. This artifact gives insight into your own passions, who you are as a professional, and possibly where you want to go in your future career.

Please note that this component is a *summative* task and will be graded by tutors.

This component has a 25% weighting towards your final grade.

4.2 Supporting Activities

The labs in weeks 8, 9, and 10 will contain guided activities to help students put together your artifact. More specifically:

- The week 8 lab will help students plan a narrative to give overarching structure to their data story.
- The week 9 lab will give guidelines to help students plan their data story more concretely.
- The week 10 lab will be a final opportunity for students to get feedback on their artifact.

4.3 Deliverables

Students will submit a single PDF document to Moodle. This document will need to include a cover page containing the student's name and zID, as well as either:

- The artifact itself, if it is static media (such as a poster or infographic)
- Basic instructions for accessing the artifact if it is a non-static format (e.g. a video presentation or a music video). This might simply be a YouTube link.
- A separate bibliography citing data sets and any other resources you have used.

If you are unsure about your chosen format, please speak with your tutor or the LIC for clarification.

Whilst the list above contains a separate bibliography, your artifact also needs to explicitly show your bibliography. Please also make sure your any links you've included in this deliverable works and can be accessed by anyone with the link (for example, you can send it to one of your group members to confirm it works).

4.4 Due Date

Friday week 11. Specific instructions for submission will be provided on Moodle.

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5 Publish your work

5.1 Description

The fifth and final component of the Data Story Project will share the student's work on the professional social networking platform LinkedIn (alternatives will be discussed in more detail later in the term) as part of the student's professional portfolio.

Students will use the artifact they have created in the fourth component as part of a LinkedIn post to showcase their work. The post will also give students an opportunity to introduce their work (and possibly themselves) to the online professional community. Students are also encouraged to share why their chosen topic is important to them as part of this post, and any other relevant information (guidance will be provided here).

This component is has a 10% weighting towards your final grade, and is a HURDLE assessment (you just have to complete this component, you don't necessarily need to have 5 marks). This means that students MUST complete this final fifth component to be eligible to pass this course.

5.2 Supporting Activities

There will be time in the week 10 lecture and lab allocated to helping students with this final component. There will also be relevant instructional resources posted on Moodle to guide students. We will also discuss the requirements of this post in the week 10 lecture.

5.3 Deliverables

Students will need to upload a screenshot of their LinkedIn post to Moodle as evidence that this component has been complete. Note that the LinkedIn post needs to meet the requirements that we will discuss in week 10.

5.4 Due Date

Friday week 11. Specific instructions for submission will be provided on Moodle.

5.5 What makes a good submission?

The 10% weighting for this component will be based on a student self assessment. As part of the LinkedIn post, students will need to give themselves a rating of their work out of 10 for their work. We recommend using the table in Section 4.5 as the criteria for this rating. This self-rating will be the mark they receive for this component.

Weighting Summary

A table containing the weighting of each component towards the final grade is included below for your convenience.

Component	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Weighting	5%	15%	25%	25%	10%	80%