

Data & graphics in multimedia

First of all, let's clarify things: **data journalism is NOT eye-catching graphics**. If anybody still thinks that, there is a big issue. I will cover here however both data-driven journalism and graphics.

Currently for "data-journalist"

ddj time split

- about 20% of my time for supporting journalist (datawrapper, deal with data, filing and reporting bugs)

Types of outputs

Mix of short terms (> day) and long term projects (days). Explanatory and data-driven journalism are well suited for background in-depth stories. The whole process to dig data is generally time-consuming, more than interviews and gathering sources. It is important however to go for short data/graphic stories when there are opportunities.

- Projects often requires setting new "tools"/libraries. Time consuming (sometimes less than 1 day, often more) but always designed to be reusable, i.e. extend our toolkit which largely pays off in the long run.

Data & graphic service

Graphic

- At the end of the editorial/journalistic process -> nice to have
 - By experience, little point investing time and efforts for having a "nice to have" graphic
 - If the whole story was already written, adding a graphic will never make the story great.

Hence as data-journalist, I provide the strict minimal as graphic service.

Reasons:

- I am not a graphic designer
- Impact and improvement on the story is limited -> Nice to have
- Providing a sophisticated graphic at the very end of the editorial process (after most of the text being written) leads to typically a mismatch of the text with graphic.
- Such "nice to have" graphic re-packaged and re-published as standalone story would typically be much more succesful than the initial story it was incorporated into.

Data

- **data-driven** journalism : By contrast to pictures that typically come at the very end of editorial process to decorate a story, usage of data should come as early as possible. Even before any text is written or interview conducted. That is why I like to say data should not be a service, but used in **collaboration** with journalists.
- What should be fostered: collaboration between a journalist knowledgable about a topic and the data-journalist

Outlook

Graphics

Historically, graphics is typically a service within the newsroom. With the web, technology developments, digital graphics have undoubtly undergone a revolution over the last 10 years. One can only produce engaging graphics if people working on it have the lead. Please check this interesting interview , I firmly believe this is the way to go: [NYT graphics](#) (it is 4 years old but there are probably still people stuck with the mindset described in the article).

Hence, as little as possible ressources should be spent providing graphics as a service Foster instead collaboration.

It would be important to collect as many ideas as possible from journalists and of course redchef. Here is for instance an old document I used.

Tools and workflow for data & graphics

The area of digital graphic is a large field and one can no longer rely on generalist for it. Technically, there is such a wide range of frameworks and programming languages that medias have typically different people with different specialisations for it. The minimum setup is a person strong on the data side (acquire and analyse data) and a person on the front-end (build apps and/or graphics, minimum skills: Adobe, CSS, javascript, d3.js).

Relying solely on propriatary softwares to craft graphics has no future. Adobe or alike softwares can/will still be used to sketch or create the backbone of a graphic. But one wants truly mobile-first graphics, there is no way around relying solely on standard web technologies (HTML5, CSS and javascript). The day the web moves to HTML6, I suppose we do not wish to have to trash all our graphics. (Think of Adobe Flash and now Adobe Edge, heavily used by SRF, which was discontinued this year).

This means several things:

- Tools and technolgies used in the long run need to be carefully assessed.
- Keep staying informed about the developements and trends.
- Data & graphic people spend most of their time coding. They need to build a modular and reusable IT infrastructure.

Misc

Beyond providing support, it is important to bring a "data-culture" within editorial. Covering a topic should not just involve interviews and press releases. Digging the data should become another automatism (one of the best ways btw to come with original angle on well-known topics).

Mobile-first, more interactive, eye-catchy and misc conflicting stuffs...

- No ressources for an art director, UX and visual identity