

# Data Journalism in the Digital Era

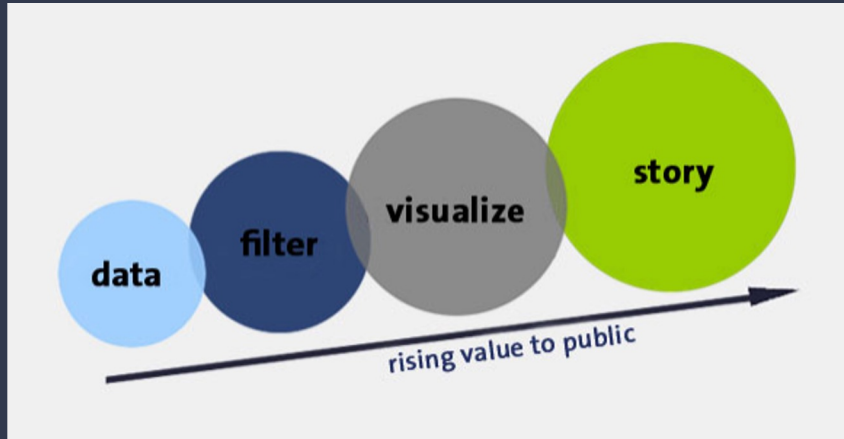
Discussion by: Michelle Blumberg and Natasha Baptist-Mohseni

PSYC 6135: The Psychology of Data Visualization

March 28, 2024

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# What is Data Journalism?



Data journalism or data-driven journalism (DDJ):

- Journalism based on filtering and analyzing data to create or elevate a news story
- Works to increase the role of numerical data in the communication of information

Data journalism is interdisciplinary and requires expertise from various fields:

- Journalism
- Computer Science
- Statistics
- Data Visualization

# Why is DDJ important?



## Data-driven stories...

- Match the increasing demand for long-form journalism
- Summarize important content in a meaningful and memorable way

In recent years, some of the most urgent and compelling stories have been data-driven.

2016: *Panama Papers* vs global capitals flows & tax avoidance

2019: satellite data & human causes for Amazon Forest fires



# Where do non-data driven journalists stand in the current digital era?



Beyond the most popular, well-funded newsrooms in the world, data journalists are usually working on their own..

So, where does that leave us...

- What if you don't have the **budget of the *New York Times***?
- Or the **developer chops** to create data visualisation web apps?

Well, there's **good news!**

- Journalist roles available today are more accessible and powerful than ever before

... and there's **even better news:**

- There are plenty of beautiful, long-form feature stories created and made accessible by other data journalists
- The best part: a background in data science or a robust data team of external experts is not always necessary!

# Data Journalism in 2023

What we can learn from 2023's outstanding examples of data journalism?



# The Green Divide: How Wealth Buys Shade in a Warming World

By: Kate Newton (Data  
Journalist based in New  
Zealand)



# Detroit Segregation Wall Still Stands, a Stark Reminder of Racial Divisions

By: Erin Einhorn, NBC News,  
and Olivia Lewis,  
BridgeDetroit





## PROS TO DATA JOURNALISM

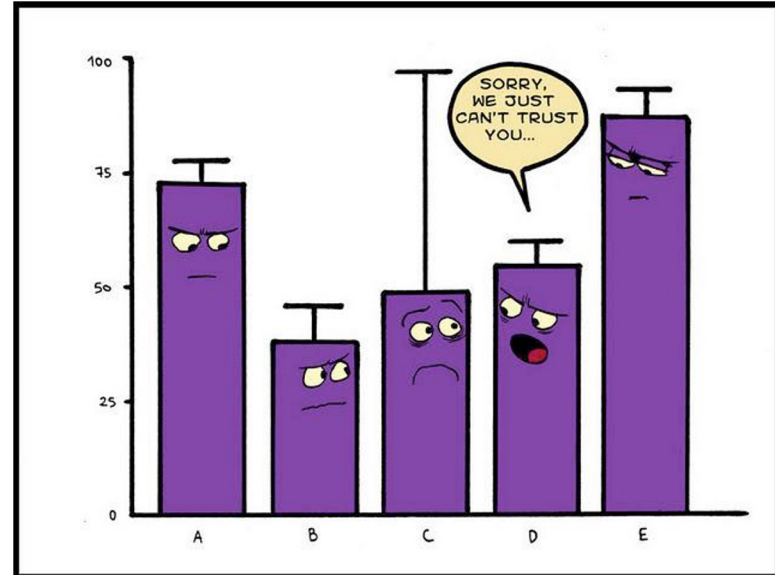
1. Outlines significance of the information being reported
2. Can increase accessibility and understanding of information
3. Similarly, we live in a time where we access resources and information via technology
4. May encourage critical thinking in an era of easy access to online information



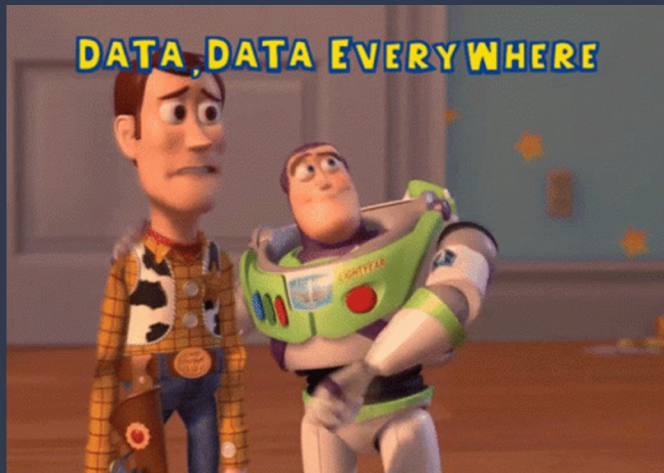
# Cons?

## CONS TO DATA JOURNALISM

1. Can be misleading or biased
2. Risk of domination of graphics vs. content, or overloading with content  
→ message becomes illegible and/or lost in translation
  - Key: optimal balance between content and graphics



# Conclusions



1. Numbers and data can be an invaluable way of interpreting and communicating big, important stories...
2. But they can also be invaluable for smaller, more personal ones.

Your daily inspiration:

He inspired [me] to realize there was a “different way of doing journalism... and you didn’t have to be a mathematician... you just have to be a storyteller”.

– *Pamela Duncan*