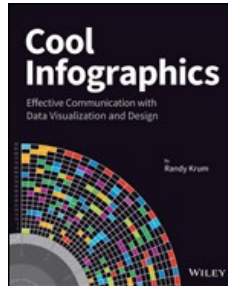# Cool Infographics: Effective Communication with Data Visualization and Design

by Randy Krum

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Chapter 3: Infographics and SEO

Relevance is a search engine's holy grail. People want results that are closely connected to their queries.
**—Marc Ostrofsky,** *Get Rich Click!*

Overview

Normally, the objective of an online infographic design project is to increase traffic and links to the company website. The company that publishes an infographic wants to build the awareness and equity of its brand (or product) and increase its position in search engine results related to its business.

This is the realm of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies, and in the last few years infographics have become a powerful content tool for companies to employ that encourages site links and increases their overall site relevance. When a company publishes an engaging, well-designed infographic on its site, many people post it on their own sites with links back to the company and share it within social media with their own networks of friends and followers.

Search engines calculate a score for a web page's credibility and authority as one way to quantify its relevance to specific keywords. They use complex, proprietary algorithms that use many different signals. Some of these classify for relevance, others for quality of content, and others for overall importance on the Internet. One of the most famous is the Google PageRank classifier, which considers both the number and quality of links pointing at a page to determine its standing. All of these combine together to determine the search engine rank score of a web page for a specific search.

The higher a specific company's website page scores for a particular search, the higher the link to that page appears in the search results for users searching with those keywords. The goal is to have the company website appear as high in the list of results as possible. The best results appear on the first page of search results for the keywords related to the business, and the best result a company can achieve is the coveted top position of the #1 ranked search result.

Google's PageRank is a logarithmic scale (not linear) from 0–10. To help people understand the concept, Elliance designed the infographic shown in Figure 3-1 in 2008, and it's still used by people everywhere to help explain PageRank. The "climbing a mountain" visual metaphor is effective, but it's important to understand that every page on a website has its own PageRank. So, the homepage of a company site may have a PageRank of 5, but an internal page may only have a PageRank of 2.
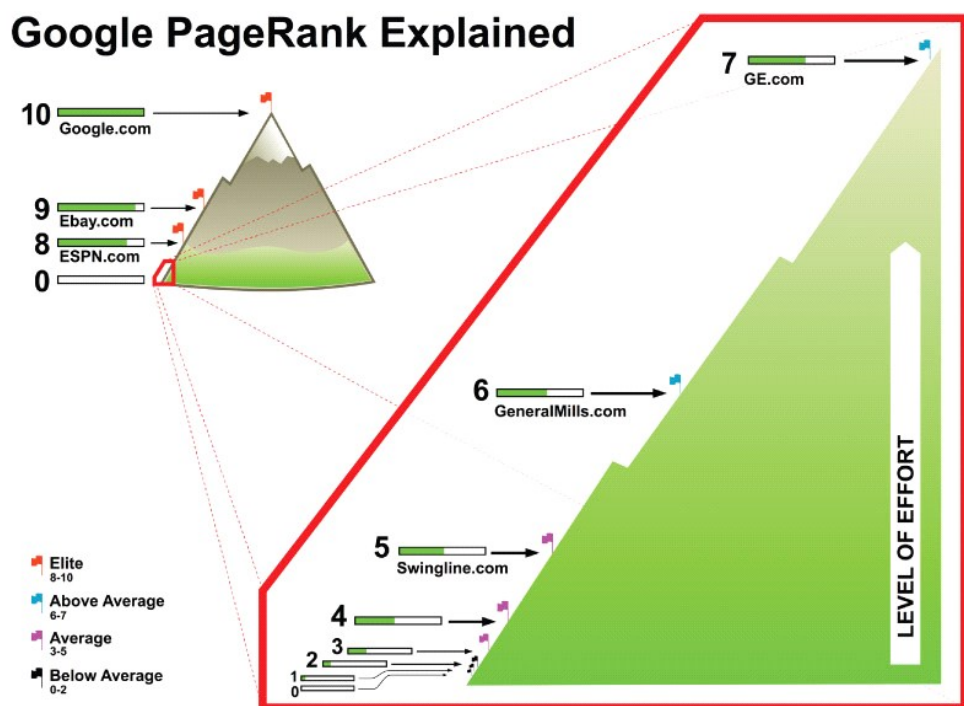
coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-1

Source: Google Page Rank Explained, *Elliance*

Figure 3-1: Google PageRank scores pages on a logarithmic scale from 1-10.

In general terms, the more links to a specific company web page from outside websites, the higher that page's rank becomes. Links from web pages that have high PageRanks of their own are more valuable links. However, it's a moving target. All the search engines frequently change their algorithms to improve their services, and the most recent links and visitors to a site are what matter most. A website could be on the front page of search results today, but tomorrow appear on page four because an algorithm was updated.

This chapter won't make you an SEO expert, but it covers the basics of effectively using infographics as a part of an SEO strategy.

The Search Engine Challenge

Search engines are in business, too, and they need to provide a valuable service to their customers to keep them coming back to use their search service. If you perform a search, and the results aren't close to what you are looking for, that reflects poorly on the search engines' brand. They want to provide the right results to their users because that's their business, and it's what convinces people to return to use their search engine again in the future.

Producing the search results that you rely on (and take for granted) is an incredibly tough technical problem, as shown in the infographic in Figure 3-2, from Stone Temple Consulting. According to Matt Cutts, head of the Webspam team at Google, the size of the Internet was measured at more than 100 trillion web pages. Each search engine company (Google, Microsoft Bing, and so on) has its own spiders crawling all these pages on the web to parse both the text and the links from every page. They create their own massive index of the Internet and then query the index to provide the search users with a clean list of relevant results.
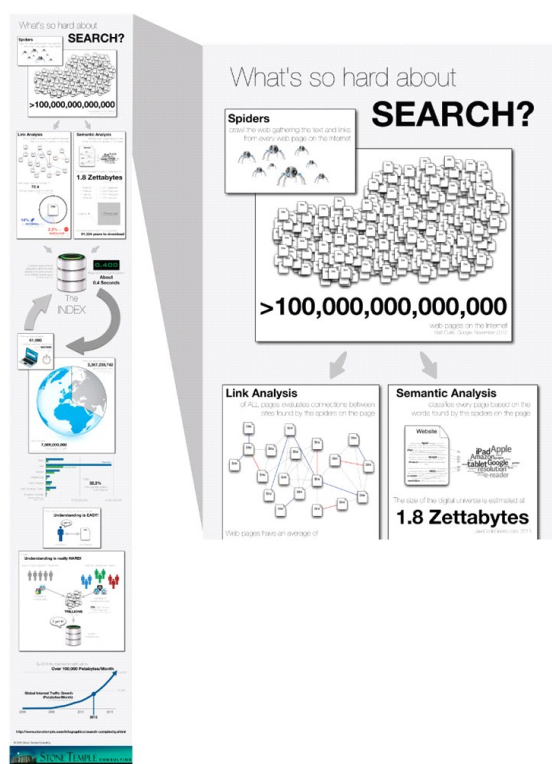
coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-2

Source: What's so hard about search? *by Eric Enge, Stone Temple Consulting*

Figure 3-2: 100 trillion web pages on the Internet as of 2013

According to comScore, in August 2011, there were 61,000 Internet searches performed every second[1]—which makes it impressive that the search engines can query their own index of the Internet and return valuable results in less than a second every time.

When you, as a search engine user, consider the benefits of a good search engine, you can easily evaluate four aspects of the results to judge the success of the search:

- **Speed—** How fast did I get my results?

- **Quantity—** How many results did I get?

- **Relevance—** How relevant were the results I got?

- **Coverage—** Were all of the important pages included in the results? Any major pages missing?

When searching for the term infographics on Google today, 14,300,000 results are found in 0.15 seconds. Wow!

However, the most important of the four aspects is relevance. It's not how many results or how fast they appeared. If all 14 million of those results aren't what you are looking for, you would be extremely unsatisfied. In fact, you would probably be happier to get fewer, excellent results even if it took a little extra time.

In 2013, the Microsoft Bing search engine started an ad campaign comparing the relevance of its search results directly head-to-head with Google (Figure 3-3). The folks at Microsoft know what's important to users, and its marketing campaign competes with the market leader, Google, directly on the aspect that users care about most: relevance.
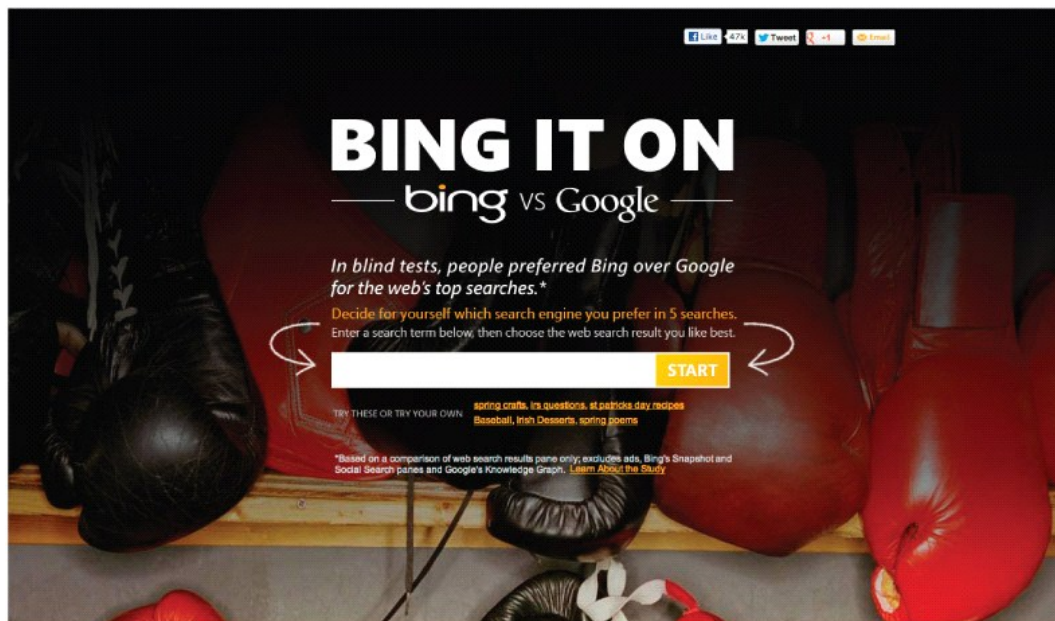

www.bingiton.com

Source: Bing It On advertisement from Microsoft

Figure 3-3: The Microsoft Bing search engine is competing directly against Google on the basis of relevance.

The Objective of SEO

From a marketer's perspective, the objective of using an infographic as SEO content online is to improve where its company web pages appear in search results for related keywords, and ultimately increase the number of visitors to the site. Infographics have become a popular tool for this because they are so easy to read and easy to share, which creates more links and views for the company that published the infographic.

When an infographic becomes extremely popular online, it's referred to as "going viral." How popular? There's no numeric threshold value of views that content has to reach to be considered "going viral." The process of going viral online means that an ever-increasing number of people are viewing and sharing the content, usually increasing with each generation. An example of this is shown in Figure 3-4. If 10 people share the original infographic, and each of those shares is shared again by two followers, and each of those shares is shared again by two followers of the second generation, and so on, the growth could be exponential, but it's still measured in comparison to a web page's normal traffic.
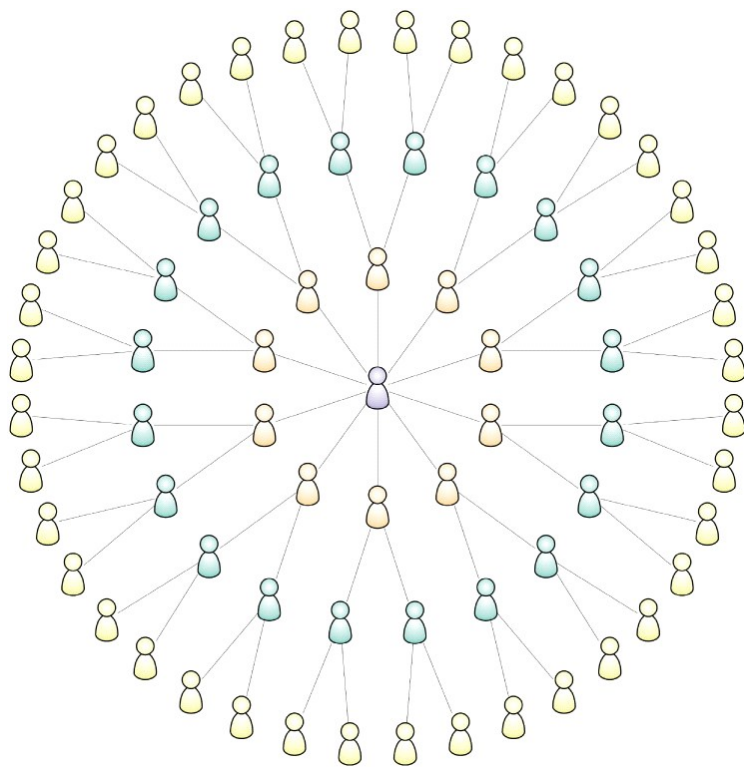
Figure 3-4: The viral phenomenon where each generation of social-sharing causes at least two additional posts

In practice, when an infographic goes viral, it means that the page views and shares on social media outpace your normal content by a significant margin. It's all relative. So if a post on your company blog normally gets 500 views per day, but suddenly one post gets 5,000 views because you posted a cool infographic, it probably "went viral." You have to consider its success in comparison to other content you have published because there is no easy way to observe or measure the sharing phenomenon.

A more ambitious goal is to achieve publication on one (or many) of the major online news sites. Links from sites with high PageRank scores can be much more valuable than links from small, personal blogs. So, the goal is not only to get a high number of views, but also to get links from high value sites. The high value sites that are the most valuable depend on your industry. Which news sites post articles about your company, your industry, and your competitors?

The Link Bait Challenge

Link bait is a phrase used to describe any content that has been specifi-cally crafted to attract a significant number of views and links from other websites. Usually, the content used for link bait is something chosen to have broad appeal to the widest possible audience. That way, the company that publishes the content has the best chance to get as many links and views as possible.

For many, link bait has earned a bad reputation and can be perceived to be a shady form of online marketing. Even the term link bait sounds like it's related to spam, but it really isn't. Every infographic online could be considered link bait, because they are all trying to attract more traffic with visually engaging content. You'll see link bait online in different formats, things like shocking gossip, surprising news, amazing photos, funny videos, Top 10 articles, and of course, infographics. The best topics for link bait are controversial subjects or topics with strong emotional appeal. Link bait is neither good nor bad; it depends on how it is used. All of the cool infographics shown in this book are good link bait designs. In contrast, an infographic that leads readers to a malicious site that loads malware onto their computers would definitely be considered to be bad link bait.

The problem comes from content that isn't relevant to the site that publishes it. When the topic of the infographic is not related to the site that publishes it, the search engines have a hard time determining if a link should be considered as an endorsement of the company.

As an example of infographic link bait, the *James Bond: 50 Years of Movies* design in Figure 3-5 is a well-designed infographic. It contains lots of great information for fans of James Bond movies, a beautiful color palette, engaging icons, and the data is easy to understand. The infographic was popular online with tens of thousands of views, thousands of shares in social media, and hundreds of outside pages posting the infographic with links back to the H&R Block web page. By all accounts, the info-graphic "went viral" and you can see in Figure 3-6 that a Google image search found 284 sites that had reposted the infographic.

coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-5
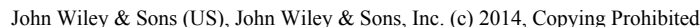
Source: James Bond: 50 Years of Movies, *H&R Block*

Figure 3-5: An example of a cool info graphic used as link bait

Figure 3-6: Google image search finds 284 sites that reposted the infographic image.

This is a good use of link bait to drive traffic to the site (there's no malicious intent). The challenge for search engines is that the topic of James Bond movies has nothing to do with H&R Block's business of preparing tax returns. Algorithmically, all those views and links back to the
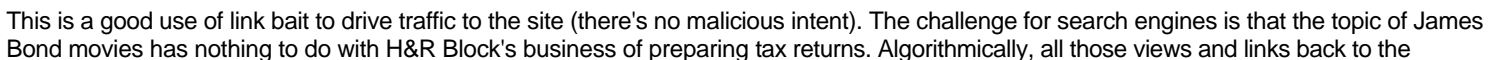
infographic landing page on H&R Block's site have the potential to increase the site's overall score in each of the search engines. In turn, the higher score causes H&R Block's site to appear higher in search results.

However, this is not what the search engines want to happen. This could be perceived as a method of gaming the system that uses infographic link bait as a strategy to raise the score of the H&R Block website. Is it a good infographic? Absolutely. Should links to the infographic page raise the credibility of H&R Block for tax preparation services? Probably not. The act of people linking to the infographic because they like James Bond movies should not be interpreted as an endorsement of H&R Block's services.

It's All About Relevance

At this point, the search engines don't have a good way to solve this challenge. Today, link bait infographics are effective as an SEO tactic and can successfully raise a website's overall score.

This is a problem that Google is actively trying to solve. In 2012, Matt Cutts, head of the Webspam team at Google, specifically mentioned this challenge with infographics during an interview with SEO expert Eric Enge[2]:

> *In principle, there's nothing wrong with the concept of an infographic. What concerns me are the types of things that people are doing with them. They get far off topic, or the fact checking is really poor. The infographic may be neat, but if the information it's based on is simply wrong, then it's misleading people.*

> *The other thing that happens is that people don't always realize what they are linking to when they reprint these infographics. Often the link goes to a completely unrelated site, and one that they don't mean to endorse. Conceptually, what happens is they really buy into publishing the infographic, and agree to include the link, but they don't actually care about what it links to. From our perspective this is not what a link is meant to be.*

> *I would not be surprised if at some point in the future we did not start to discount these infographic-type links to a degree. The link is often embedded in the infographic in a way that people don't realize, vs. a true endorsement of your site.*

This comment has a number of companies, SEO consultants, and infographic designers worried that Google may start discounting all infographic links across the board. Even beyond infographics, it's a challenge for all types of link bait content (text articles, photos, videos, interactive pages, and so on) but infographics in particular have been used heavily for this type of SEO tactic.

Now, a year after Matt Cutts' comment, you haven't seen this type of change yet, but Google makes major updates to its algorithms multiple times each year. They might figure out a method to differentiate unrelated link bait content and lower the impact of those links to the PageRank calculation.

To protect against any form of link bait discounting in the future, companies and designers should focus on publishing relevant infographics. This can protect links to your site that are relevant to your business and should always be considered to be a valid endorsement of your site by the search engine algorithms.

Figure 3-7, *Streamlining your digital life with the new iPad*, an info-graphic from NextWorth, is an example of relevance. Published shortly before the release of the iPad 3 in 2012, this design focused on many of the older electronic gadgets that the iPad's functionality had replaced. NextWorth is in the business of buying back older consumer electronics gadgets from people and recycling them. The infographic design is fun, engaging, and relevant to the NextWorth business. A link to the infographic inherently should imply an endorsement of recycling old gadgets and supporting its business.
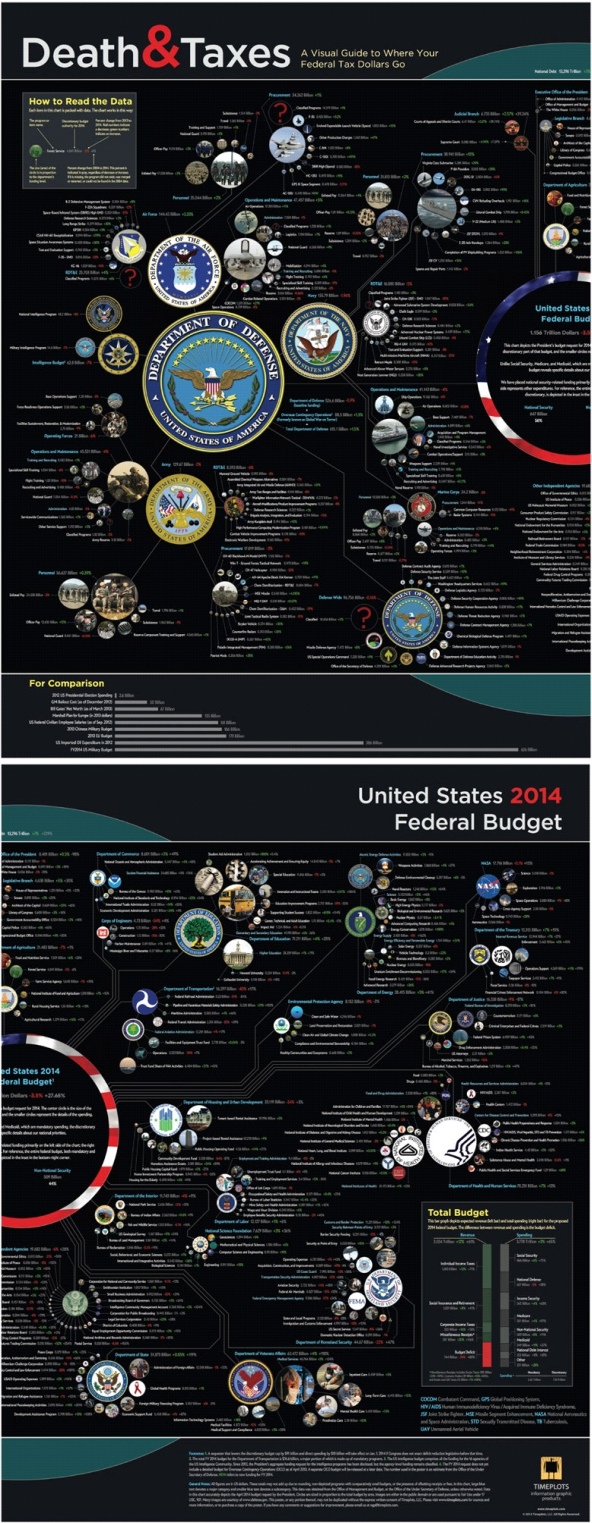
coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-7

Source: Streamlining your digital life with the new iPad, *NextWorth*

Figure 3-7: The topic of replacing electronic gadgets is directly relevant to Next-Worth's business.

To remain relevant and in the good graces of the search engine companies, you should avoid any actions or practices that could be considered "spammy." Search engines continually work to improve their algorithms, and something that helped a web page score yesterday could actually hurt the score today as the algorithms are improved and the programmers devise ways to detect any questionable promotional efforts. Some algorithm updates have even punished websites that were seen as practicing unscrupulous methods of increasing their page value, by actively lowering their page scores.

Online Lifespan

Online lifespan is the amount of time that an infographic remains relevant to audiences. Topic and data selection here are crucial. When choosing the topic of an infographic, many companies fail to understand the importance of online lifespan.

From a designer's perspective, it generally takes the same amount of time and effort to fill an infographic design with current, trending information as it does to include information that can have long-term value to the readers. In a financial sense, it costs about the same to design an infographic that will only be popular for one week as it does to design an infographic that will be useful to readers for a year or more. The infographic design will be roughly the same size, with a similar amount of illustrations, text, and data visualizations.

You need to consider the goal of the infographic project when choosing the topic and the range of data included. If the objective of the infographic project is to drive traffic and build links to the company website, you don't want an infographic that will be outdated or forgotten a week after you publish it. If the objective is to increase brand awareness in a short amount of time, a hot, trending topic could be more successful.

From an SEO perspective, the most recent views and links are often more heavily weighted. So even if you publish an infographic that goes viral, if it happened three years ago, it probably isn't providing much of a positive effect on your search engine score ranking today.

On May 1, 2011, the big news story of the day was the U.S. operation that killed Osama Bin Laden. There were a handful of infographic designs developed quickly that were published within 24 hours of the news breaking. Figure 3-8 shows one of these designs from Column Five Media that does a great job of clearly telling the story of events leading up to the operation and visually showing readers what was known about the operation in Bin Laden's compound. A lot of effort went into creating the design in a short period of time, and the end result is a well-designed infographic. However, the topic was so tied to the hot trending news of the day that when the news cycle moved on to other stories, interest in the infographic went away as well. The online lifespan of this infographic was only about one week. After that, views and links diminished rapidly.

coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-8

Source: Bringing Down Bin Laden, *Column Five Media*

Figure 3-8: Breaking news as an infographic topic—online lifespan = one week

The *Death & Taxes 2014* poster in Figure 3-9 is a popular design that visualizes the President's proposed budget and is redesigned and republished each year. It's a huge undertaking for the designers, and the final design becomes obsolete a year later when a new budget cycle begins. Its online lifespan lasts for one year.
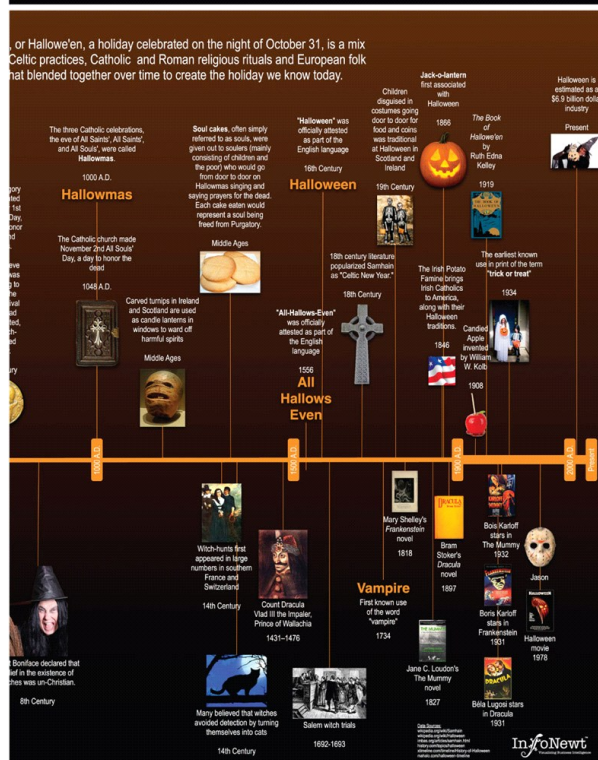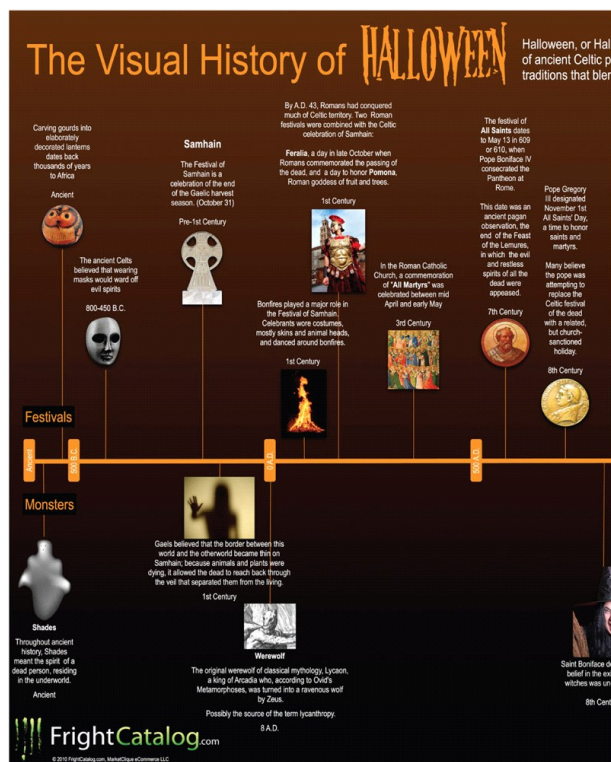
coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-9

Source: Death & Taxes 2014, *Timeplots*

Figure 3-9: Online lifespan lasts as long as the data is current—budget data = one year

Many designs can have significantly longer lifespans. *The History of Halloween* in Figure 3-10 from FrightCatalog.com is an unusual case. The infographic is a timeline of events that have led up to the modern day Halloween holiday, so even though its online lifespan will be many years, it's mostly only relevant during the month of October. This actually works nicely for the publisher, an online retailer of Halloween costumes, because it adds visitors and traffic to its busiest month… every year.

coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-10

Source: The Visual History of Halloween, *FrightCatalog.com*

Figure 3-10: Online lifespan = one month, every year

The online lifespan of the *Pairing of Wine & Food* infographic in Figure 3-11 also spans many years. Twenty years from now, the information will still be the same, and the design will still be relevant to readers. It's not like suddenly dessert wine will go well with vegetables!
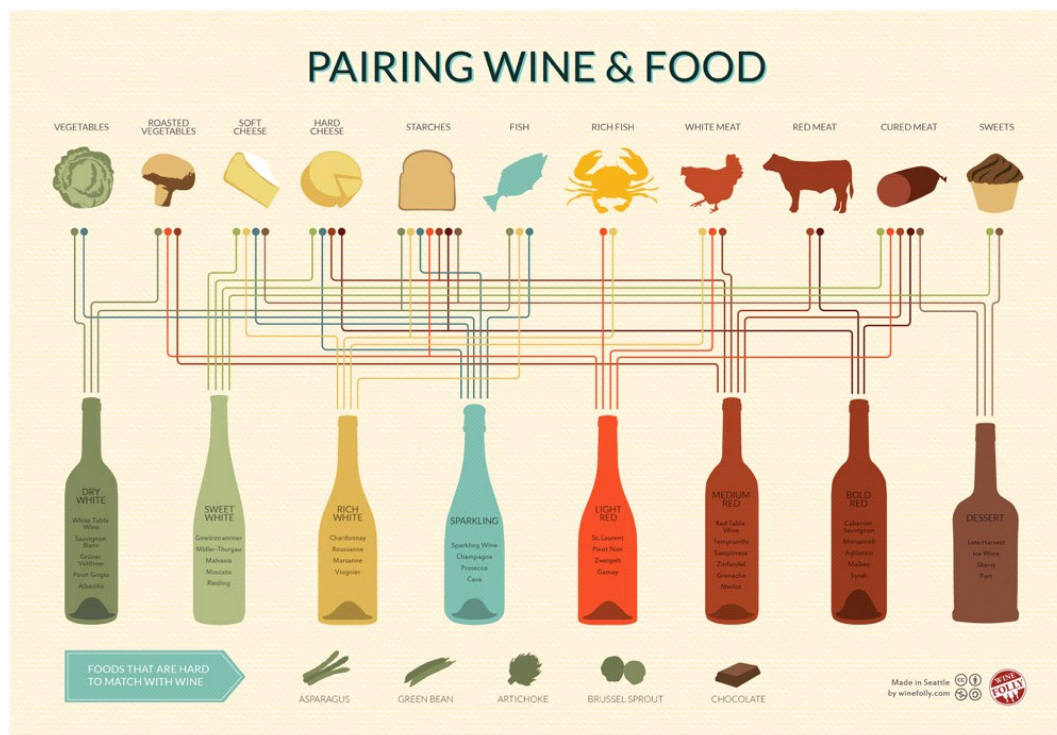
coolinfographics.com/Figure-3-11

Source: Pairing Wine & Food, *Wine Folly*

Figure 3-11: For general information topics, online lifespan = many years

Online lifespan can make a huge difference to the ongoing SEO value of any infographic and should be an integral part of the topic selection process.

Infographic Release Strategy

It's disappointing to see how many companies publish their new infographics online, and then just wait for people to come and find it. Many companies will spend a lot of time and resources to research data and design a good infographic but then choose not to spend any effort on marketing or promoting the infographic. Infographics are content pieces that need as much marketing support as articles, videos, advertisements, and even products.

Before a company publishes an infographic, it should carefully consider a comprehensive Infographic Release Strategy to promote the info-graphic. When you have a good infographic design ready to publish, you want to make sure that you maximize the benefit you get in return from the infographic.

Following are three key steps in an infographic release process:

1. Landing page
2. Self-promotion
3. Outreach

A company doesn't need to follow through with all these steps, but effort put into promotion can significantly improve the success of publishing an infographic. Most of this activity is just a commitment of effort on behalf of the company and doesn't cost a lot of extra money.

Landing Pages

The first question that needs to be addressed is, "Where should you publish the infographic?" Infographics can be published online in a hundred different ways, but many of them are not effective. Should you host the infographic on your own site, your Flickr page, as a photo in Facebook, in a guest post on another site, on an infographic gallery site, or in a blog post?

The answer depends on the company's goal for the infographic project. Normally, a company wants to attract links and visitors to its website. In that case, a company should create a dedicated infographic landing page within its own website. That way it's on a site that the company controls and is not dependent on any outside companies or services. Also, publishing and hosting the infographic on its own dedicated page gets all the benefit from the links and page views, as well as retaining complete control over the content on the page.

The landing page should have a short, simple URL, which can be used as the clear destination for links to the infographic. By pointing all the traffic and links to one dedicated landing page, it can have the best chance to achieve a high score within the search engine rankings as opposed to spreading the links across multiple locations. Also, a number of people will be typing in the web page address to find the infographic, so a short and simple URL can be important. A long, complicated URL may discourage visitors.

There are exceptions, though. If the goal is to build an audience for the company's Facebook Fan Page, developing an infographic and publishing it as new image content on Facebook would be perfectly acceptable. Links would bring new people to the company Facebook page and attract new followers.

The Image Problem

When it comes to infographics, here's the problem. Figure 3-12 shows how your infographic appears to the search engine spiders. It's just an image asset on the page with no content because the web spiders crawling sites for content can't tell what's included in an image or an infographic. They can't determine your topic, your keywords, your data sources, your key message, or any relevant information. Without text to gather and parse, the spider has nothing to send back to the search engine index.
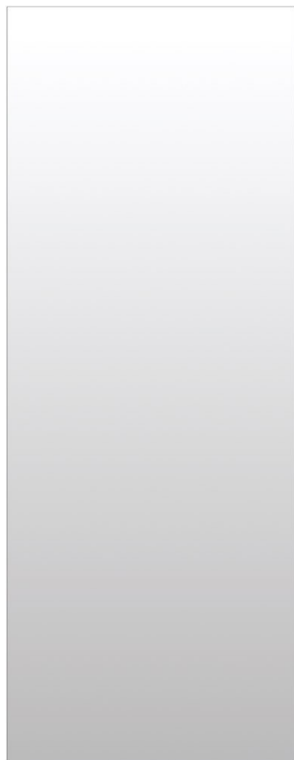
Figure 3-12: Search engines just see a blank image asset on the web page.

The search engines have begun to experiment with software for face recognition, optical character recognition (OCR) and similar image searches to add context to an image, but these tools are not very effec-tive. It's up to the infographic publisher to tell the search engines all about the infographic by adding text to the page, both visible and hidden. The dedicated HTML web page where the original, full-size infographic is hosted online is called the *infographic landing page*. You need to add text to the page describing the content and using the keywords that you want to be related to the infographic. The text is what determines the context and relevance of the infographic, and it's also the only way a search engine can truly know when to display a link to the infographic when it shows search results to its users.

There are a number of important page elements that should be included on an infographic landing page. For this purpose, imagine publishing a fictional infographic called *SEO Strategies Used by the Experts*. This doesn't exist as an infographic on the Internet today, but it may in the future. For purposes of this example, also make the assumption this is a well-designed infographic that tells a visually engaging story that people will want to share. That might be a big assumption, but if you start with a bad design, most of this effort to support the release of the infographic won't have much impact.

Keywords

The cornerstone of any SEO strategy is focusing on a short list of keywords. Keywords can be defined as the most common words entered into search queries when people search for information about a specific topic. Different keywords exist for various company sites based on the differences in industry, products, services, and information that each company offers—even different keywords for the different pages on each company's website.

Companies want to make sure that their site pages are considered by the search engines to be highly credible and relevant to the words related to their business. As a very simple example, Nike wants to be relevant for keywords like *shoes* and *footwear*, and Ford wants to be relevant for keywords like *cars* and *trucks*.

It's important to understand the keywords that people are actually using when searching. If a car dealership creates content using the words "pre-owned car," their content may not appear in the results for someone searching with the more common words "used car." Sometimes, search engines will understand that the two terms are related, but often they don't. Research should be done ahead of time to determine the most popular terms already being used to find similar content.

When publishing an infographic, it is helpful to create a short, specific list of target keywords that you would like the infographic be associated with and then use those keywords consistently on the landing page. For your fictional infographic, the list of keywords might look like this:

1. SEO

2. Search

3. Experts

4. Strategies

5. Marketing

This fictional infographic example is fairly simple with single keywords, but you can also promote multiple-word keyword phrases.

Landing Page URL

Search engines will take into account the words used in the URL of the infographic landing page on your website as a potential place to find relevant keywords. So, the best URLs use natural words that are easy for the search engines to parse and separate the words with hyphens (dashes) to clearly break them apart because spaces are not allowed in a URL address.

Google has publicly acknowledged that it considers hyphens to be word separators and underscore characters as word joiners. Don't use an underscore character unless you are purposely trying to combine words together. If you use the underscore character to separate words such as SEO_Experts, the search engines combine the words together in the index as the one-word SEOExperts. So, your landing page URL should look something like this:

```
http://coolinfographics.com/SEO-Strategies-Experts-Infographic. html
```

It's also helpful to keep the URL as short as possible because some readers get to your infographic by typing in the address.

Title Tag

The title tag is an HTML code element that should be on every web page. The title element is included in the `<head>` portion of the page, and the text displays in the browser window title bar or tab.

```
<head>
<title>Expert SEO Strategies Infographic</title>
</head>
```

This is one of the first things that identifies the page content to the search engines and is especially important because the title tag is often used as the link text displayed on the search results pages. Consider using natural language with spaces and including the word "info-graphic" as the last word of the title tag. This helps identify the content as an infographic to both the audience and the search engines, and the last word is considered to be the least important but still relevant.

The title tag is also used by social media sharing buttons as the proposed default text for posts or tweets if no other suggested text is available. For example, unless you create some specific suggested text for Twitter, when someone uses the Twitter button on the page to share the infographic, it will propose the text from the Title Tag as the content of the tweet.

Page Title

The page title is the visible title displayed in the <body> section of the page as text. If you use the HTML code for the H1 header, the search engines knows this is some of the most important text on the page, and any included text displays on the page in a large bold font. Words in the page title are often given more importance or value than the rest of the text on the page.

```
<body>
<h1>SEO Strategies Used By The Experts</h1>
</body>
```

The actual text of the page title is often the same as the title tag, but it doesn't have to be. From a content perspective, authors usually want the page title to be as short as possible so that the text doesn't wrap on the page. Too many words here make the overall page look complicated and messy, and you can omit the word "infographic" in the page title to help shorten the text. The readers viewing the page can already see that the content is an infographic.

Description Text

The easiest thing to add to your landing page is a short paragraph of description text about the infographic. It could be text from the infographic or text that is written specifically for the landing page. This provides additional text for the search engines to index, but keep it short! The

highlight of the page is the infographic; so don't scare off your visitors with too much text. When readers see too much text on the page (or within the infographic), they often tune out and leave the page without reading it because the content appears to be too dense.

Consider including a couple text links to other relevant pages within the same site in the description text. This provides two benefits. First, as the page value of the infographic landing page increases with views and links over time, these text links to other pages within the company site become more valuable. Second, people that post the infographic on their own blog or social media account often copy the entire description text as extra content to include in their post. Remember, they need text for the search engines to index on their own pages, too, and this can create additional valuable text links to the pages on your site.

However, keep any included text links relevant to the infographic topic. Some infographic landing pages have text links to unrelated pages, so they could build on the success of the infographic. Although it can be effective, readers see this as spammy.

Infographic Image Filename

The search engines even look at the name of the infographic image file to try to find words that describe the content. If the image filename is just numbers identifying the image, such as IMG1234567.jpg, the search engines just ignore it, but you don't want to miss any opportunities to link your keywords to the infographic. The easiest thing to do here is to use the main words from the title tag as the filename. So following your fictional infographic, this could be the filename of the infographic image you load onto the landing page:

SEO-Strategies-Experts-Infographic.JPG

Just like the preceding landing page URL, the filename should use hyphens as word separators. Avoid using underscore characters between words, because Google considers those to be word joiners.

Alt Text Description

An important HTML element for infographics is the alt attribute of images that enables the browser to display text describing an image when displaying images on-screen has been turned off in the browser. Due to modern Internet access speeds, the practice of viewing web pages without displaying images is rare, but the HTML element remains and is used heavily for search engine indexing.

The alt text description should be written as a brief description in natural language. The content here should ideally be a single sentence to describe the info graphic and can also be used by many screen readers for people with visual impairments. Accessibility software will speak the text of the alt description out loud for people that have trouble seeing the images, which makes a natural language description that much more important.

The alt text description is included in the HTML code that identifies the actual image file displayed on the page.

```
<img src=" SEO-Strategies-Experts-Infographic.jpg" alt="Top SEO strategies
used by expert marketing consultants to improve the PageRank of web pages">
```

The one thing you don't want to do is to stuff the alt text description with a long string of keywords. Not only is this practice spammy, but also the search engines can recognize this and will reduce any value the alt text description would have provided to the page. This is also incredibly rude and irritating to the visitors that use a screen reader.

Social Media Sharing Buttons

An infographic landing page should absolutely include sharing buttons for the major social media networks. Companies should make sharing their infographic as easy and painless as possible, and including the sharing buttons on the landing page is the most popular way to share the infographic.

One way to add buttons to the landing page is to use separate, individual, dedicated buttons from each of the social networks. A web developer can copy and paste the HTML code provided by each social network site onto the page. This method keeps the relationship simple and direct between the landing page and the social network but requires more work by the web developer.

The more popular way is to use one of the sharing button aggregator services. These services enable developers to add only one block of HTML code to the landing page which displays a number of buttons for the various networks. The major advantage of this method is the convenience of one central service for both the code and the tracking analytics. The downside may be that the aggregator also has access to your analytics, if that is a concern.

The major sharing button aggregator services are:

- AddThis: www.addthis.com

- ShareThis: www.sharethis.com

- AddToAny: www.addtoany.com

In practice, sharing buttons should always be displayed "above the fold" on the landing page—meaning, they should be visible at the top of the page without any scrolling. Many readers will only view the top portion of the infographic and make the choice to share it in their social networks. Only a small portion of the readers make it all the way to the bottom of the page, so it's less effective to place the sharing buttons there.

In some cases, especially for very tall infographics, sharing buttons can also be repeated at the bottom of the page as an added convenience

for the reader.

Embed Code

Embed code is a section of HTML code that displays on the web page as text. The code is similar to the HTML image display code used on the landing page, but this code is intended for other blog authors to copy and paste as an easy way to display the infographic on their own sites. This code is included in the `<body>` section the page.

The advantage of making the embed code available on the landing page is huge for the publisher. The code can be written to display the correct infographic image and provide a link back using the correct URL for the infographic landing page. In addition, using the embed code can make the process of posting an infographic incredibly convenient for bloggers.

There are two parts to adding a block of embed code to your infographic landing page. First is writing the HTML code you want bloggers to copy, and second is adding the `<textarea>` code to your own page so the code appears on your page as text instead of actually displaying the infographic. This is important because when people view your infographic landing page, you want their browser to display the code instead of trying to interpret it and display the infographic image a second time.

The embed code for your fictitious infographic might look like this:

```
<body>
Please share this infographic on your site by copying and pasting the
code below
<p>
<textarea style="width:540px;height:100px">
<a href= "http://coolinfographics.com/SEO-Strategies-Experts-Infographic.
html">
<img src=" SEO-Strategies-Experts-Infographic-small-500px.jpg" alt="Top SEO
strategies used by expert marketing consultant to improve the PageRank of
websites">
</a>
<p> SEO Strategies Used By The Experts - An infographic by the team at <a
href="http://coolinfographics.com">Cool Infographics</a>
</textarea>
<body>
```

On your infographic landing page this will display the embed code text in a small text box as shown in . This is an easy way to make the image display code available to anyone to copy and paste into their own site or blog. Instead of uploading the image file onto their own server, this code will display the infographic image from your server when someone views their page. It's a nice way to help bloggers save space on their servers because they don't need to host the image file.

Please share this infographic on your site by copying and pasting the code below

```
<a href="http://coolinfographics.com.'EO-Strategies-Experts-lnfographic.html">
<img src=" SEO-Strategies-Experts-lnfographic-small-500px.jpg" alt="Top SEO strategies used by
expert marketing consultant to improve trie PageRank of websites"></a>
<p> SEO Strategies Used ByThe Experts - An infographic by the team at <a
href="http://coolinfographics.com" >Cool lnfographics</a>
```

Figure 3-13: The <textarea> element will display the HTML code in a small text box.

Following are six key aspects to understand about what is included in this example embed code:

1. A simple request above the code asking bloggers to use the embed code.

2. All of the HTML code is visible in the box. Too much code text would run past the bottom of the box, which would hide a portion of the code from view. The box will display a scroll bar, but it can feel like you are hiding some of the HTML code on purpose.

3. When displayed on the blogger's site, the infographic has a click-able link back to the original infographic landing page at the URL defined by the publisher. This lets you choose where you want the link to go.

4. A smaller, 500 pixel-wide JPG image file of the infographic is used as the source for the image that is displayed on the blogger's site. This is more likely to fit into the smaller space of blog formats (see Chapter 2, "Online Marketing Infographics"), and will load faster than using the size parameters to display a larger image.

5. An alt text description is written by the publisher to maximize its SEO value.

6. An additional line of text can be displayed under the infographic as a caption with a text link to the front page of the company website.

With the help of a good web developer, much more could be done within the embed code, including some spammy SEO practices you should avoid like adding a long string of keywords or linking to unrelated pages. Filling the embed code with keywords and text links is obviously unnatural, and the search engines are smart enough to ignore that type of content. Publishers should be transparent about the code they offer to bloggers by making all the text visible on the page so that bloggers can see what code they would be adding to their own sites.

The code should also be short and simple like the example embed code above. Even if all the code is written with good intentions, a long, complicated block of code has a greater chance of including spammy code hidden within it. Most bloggers are not web developers proficient with HTML and may not understand what all the embed code means. A long block of code has a high probability of scaring off bloggers because putting unknown HTML code they don't understand on their site is potentially risky.

The embed code is also just a suggestion to bloggers to use. They can paste the code as-is into their sites, or modify the code any way they see fit. If they want to change the alt description, they are free to do so. As the publisher, you are providing the code as a convenience.

In practice, only a small portion of bloggers actually take advantage of using the embed code to display an infographic on their blog. Usually, they download the JPG image file itself or display the image by linking directly to the hosting server. That leaves the flexibility to choose their own link, write their own alt text description, or choose not to include them at all.

However, it is definitely worth the effort to make the embed code available on the infographic landing page because it can maximize the value of the links from those bloggers that do use it. The reality is that the infographic has a life of its own on the Internet, and the publisher has little control over how it is shared.

Self-promotion

The second part of the release strategy is self-promotion. Many companies already have existing communication channels established with customers, investors, suppliers, and the media. After an infographic has been published publicly with a dedicated landing page, a company should broadcast that URL as widely as possible through their own channels. You never know whose network of followers will reach the right audience.

This is where you should blow your own horn. This is marketing, and you are pitching the infographic to your audience as valuable content. If they like the infographic, they will share it with their own net-works…and if those followers like it, they will share it with their own networks…and if those followers like it they will share with their own networks…and so on. That's one way a worthy design can "go viral."

The opportunity is that promoting your infographic through the existing company communication channels is essentially free. It just takes some effort by the employees, and companies can control how much time they ask employees to spend on promotional activities. This is also an opportunity for a company to take advantage of the different forms of presence they have established on the Internet.

Company Communication Channels

How can visitors find the infographic on the company website? If you establish a dedicated infographic landing page as previously mentioned, it's now a custom page within the website that's accessible only to people that know the URL or click a link from another site. What about people who visit your website on their own? How can they get to the infographic or even know it exists?

Depending on the company policies surrounding control of website development, the ability to make changes to the website varies dramatically. A large, global corporation may need months of review and even legal approval to add a single link to the website homepage. A small, nimble startup might be willing to add a link to the homepage within minutes.

Table 3-1 shows the most effective places companies can add links to an infographic they have published.

Table 3-1: Effective link locations

WEBSITE AREA	DESCRIPTION
Navigation	Most sites have a consistent form of navigation throughout the site. A navigation bar across the top or navigation links down the sidebar are common. Where you add the link to the infographic depends of the topic of the design.
Front page link	A small thumbnail image on the front page is the best way to draw viewers in to see the full-size infographic, but even a text link on the front page can drive a lot of your website's organic traffic to view the infographic.
Product page link	If the infographic topic is specifically related to one of the company's products or services, a thumbnail or text link to the infographic on the product page can also help reach the target audience.
Blog	The company blog is an ideal place to promote the infographic. Use the smaller 500-pixel version of the image in the blog post and link to the dedicated landing page, so that readers can find the full-size version.
Press Releases	If press releases are a part of the website, write a press release about the key message of the infographic that includes the image and a link to the landing page to reach an entirely different audience than the blog.
Media Library	Upload a copy of the infographic file to the media library on your website to allow media contacts access to download the design and include it in any articles.

Often companies also have some more traditional, legacy forms of communication. You might include the infographic in regularly scheduled emails or printed newsletters physically mailed to customers. Use these communication channels as an additional way to share the infographic with a broader audience and include the link to the infographic landing page.

Company Social Accounts

These days, it's highly likely that your company maintains its own social network accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Flickr, Pinterest, and so on. Companies should absolutely post links to their own infographic on every social media account they have and should post it multiple times. If you post only once, most of your audience will miss it. Your social media followers aren't watching all the time, and if they aren't paying attention, your post will scroll off the bottom of the page before they have a chance to see it as other new content is posted into their news feeds. When you log in to Facebook, you probably don't scroll back to where you left off yesterday and read everything. You probably read only the top few pages and then move on to other things. Anything further down in your feed is never seen.

There's some good data supporting this behavior. Bitly.com is a popular link-shortening service. Because it is so popular across many services, it has some amazing quantitative data about social media links. As you might imagine, when new content is posted online, there is an initial surge of activity by readers clicking the links to view the new content, but then the traffic decreases over a long period of time. Nothing truly dies on the Internet, so the content may continue to get a small number of views even years later.

In 2011, bitly.com published an analysis of what it calls the mean half-life of the links posted to various social networks using its service. By its definition, the *half-life* of a link posted to social media is the amount of time at which this link will receive one-half of the total number of clicks it will ever receive.

What bitly.com found was quite surprising. You can see the chart it created from the data in Figure 3-14, and the initial surge of clicks is obvious. From the bitly.com blog post:[3]
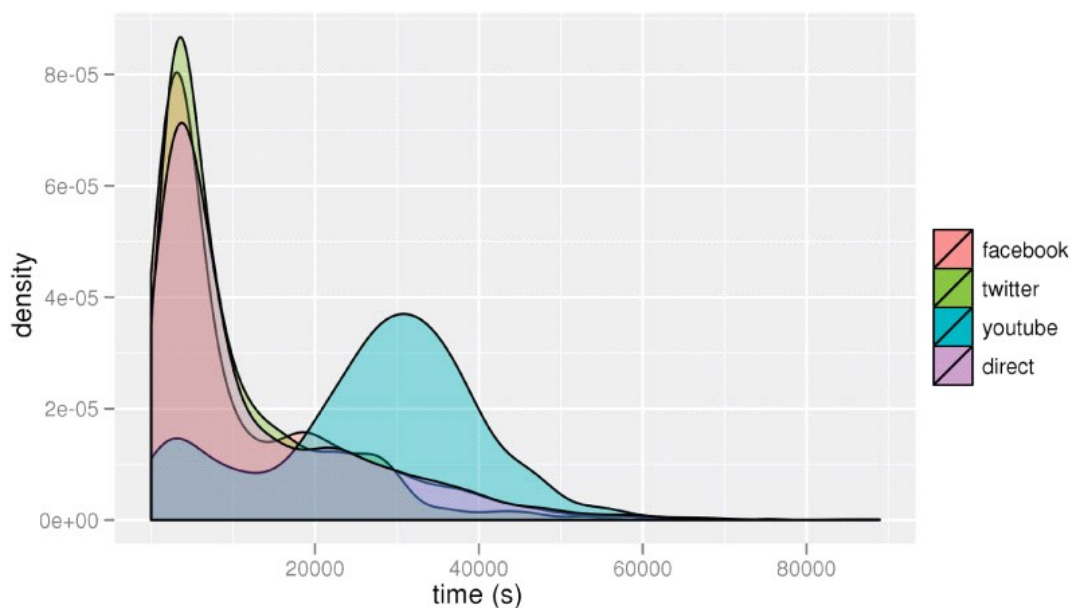
Source: Half-life of social media links, bitly.com

Figure 3-14: A posted link will get half of the clicks it will ever get in the first 3 hours.

We looked at the half-life of 1,000 popular bitly.com links and the results were surprisingly similar. The mean half-life of a link on Twitter is 2.8 hours, on Facebook it's 3.2 hours, and via "direct" sources (like email or IM clients) it's 3.4 hours.

On average, this means that after about 3 hours, your link has dropped low in the news feeds of your followers and they aren't seeing your post anymore. Not surprisingly, if they don't see the link, they don't click the link. This is data from 2011, and since then more people have joined social networks, and more content is posted every day. If this analysis were repeated today, the half-life would probably be even shorter because of the increasing velocity of tweets and posts as they scroll down the page faster and faster every day.

You can also see on the chart that videos on YouTube had a much longer half-life of 7.4 hours, but that information is not applicable to the majority of infographics posted online. Most infographics are not videos and don't get posted to YouTube. However, this strategy wouldn't be much different for infographic videos, based on the much longer scale of an online lifespan that covers months or years.

So how can you use this information to your benefit? There are two parts to a company's social media strategy based on this data:

First, a company should post links to an infographic multiple times over a period of time. How long? Post once a day for a week and no more than twice in one day. Posts should be at least 5 hours apart to catch a different portion of your audience that pays attention to its social networks at different times of the day. Some people check Facebook on lunch breaks and other people don't check until they get home in the evening. Spread the posts out to different parts of the day.

Second, there is a high likelihood that a small portion of your audience will see a few of your posts linking to the same infographic. You don't want these people seeing you repeat that exact same text from earlier. Each post should be written differently. Highlight a different piece of

information from the infographic and include both an image (if the social network allows images) and the link to the landing page. Some social networks can automatically find and display the image when you add the URL link.

Each post should be treated like a headline. You want to catch the attention of your audience and entice them to want to read more. If your company has them, involve the copywriting and PR staff to help write the text of the different posts. They are experts at writing these ready-for-press releases and advertisements.

Kickoff Sharing

The last thing you should leverage from within a company is the existing pool of employees. Share the infographic internally and invite all your employees to share it publicly within their own social networks. This has the potential to kickoff the sharing counters on the infographic landing page and may reach some networks of people that don't follow any of the company's communication channels.

The social networks rely on the momentum of frequently shared content to promote the most popular posts. A popular post is shown to more users, which, in turn, can make it even more popular. Asking your employees to help kick-start this cycle of sharing can trigger the promotion of posts linked to your infographic. Many people also look specifically for the current trending posts or most popular topics.

The challenge is that many companies have a big hurdle to overcome here with their employees. Most employees don't work for the marketing or PR departments and they may fear that posting anything related to their company could impact their continued employment. That is, they don't want to get fired. They may want to keep their work life separate from their personal life. It may be fear that they could be misunderstood as speaking on behalf of the company. The company may have specifically asked them not to post any information about the company to protect confidential information.

However, online infographics are a different type of public company information. The objective is to share the infographic with as many people on as many different sites as possible. Hopefully, the infographic is sharing some type of new, surprising, insightful data about the company's industry, market, research data, or products. The company should be proud of this message and want everyone to share it.

To overcome this hurdle, companies need to proactively give employees permission to share the infographic…in writing. Usually an internal e-mail is all it takes. Normally, this message mentions something about the topic of the infographic, how excited the company is to share this information with the public, and, of course, the link to the infographic landing page. Politely request that employees become involved to help kickoff the launch of the infographic and use the sharing buttons on the landing page to share the infographic with their own social networks. Some employees won't participate, but many will.

The one thing you should never do is demand or require employees to share any of your content. This quickly becomes a lose-lose scenario. A company can quickly create a lot of animosity from employees and put the company at risk of a lot of bad publicity. Seriously, if people don't already want to share the infographic on their own, and you feel like you need to compel people to share the infographic, you're doing it wrong.

Promotion, Publicity, and Outreach

The third part of the release strategy is Outreach. This is the activity of marketing the infographic to other authors and sites outside of the company. The hope is that they will appreciate your infographic and post a link. This can be a murky practice that gets into some questionable, spammy practices, but you should remain strong and stay focused on the best practices to build organic links to your infographic.

Again, the search engine companies are constantly trying to improve their algorithms to filter out spam and artificial links so their users get good search results. You want your outreach activity to focus on contacting actual authors and bloggers that may have an interest in the infographic. If someone posts your infographic because they like it, and they think their audience will like it, you don't need to worry about future algorithm updates.

Remember that links from sites with high scores are the most valuable. There are a number of tools that can help you determine the rank of a particular web page. A simple one to use is PRChecker.info (`www.prchecker.info`) that enables you to enter the URL of any web page to determine its current Google PageRank.

Topic-Specific Blogs

Unless it's someone's personal blog, most blogs have some focus on a topic they specialize in. The Cool Infographics blog obviously focuses on infographics, but you can consistently find blogs related to any niche topic you want. If your infographic design is about chocolate cupcakes, you can find hundreds of cupcake-themed blogs to consider for your outreach plan.

Research online to find the blogs related to your infographic topic. You can easily use Google Blog Search (`www.google.com/blogsearch`) to search for blogs related to keywords from your infographic. Click the Search Tools button at the top of the results page and you can choose between Posts to find specific authors that have posted articles related to your topic or homepages to find entire sites.

An effective method is to look at the list of sites that already link to your existing website content. You have to dig into your company's web analytics or use one of the site explorer tools listed next. These sites are aware of your company and liked some of your prior content enough to post it on their site. They are likely to be receptive to any additional quality content from your company.

After you make a list of potential sites, a little extra digging can help narrow it down by determining which blogs are most valuable to include in your outreach plan. No one has time to contact 500 blogs, so focusing your effort is important.

The following list covers five different aspects of blogs that you should research and use to help evaluate the value of any links to your infographic:

- **Active?—** Blogs are created easily and abandoned just as easily. Check the dates on the most recent posts to make sure they still actively post content. If the last post was a year ago, cross it off your list. Don't waste your time on abandoned blogs.

- **Rank?—** The easiest statistic to check is the Google PageRank of each blog you find. There are a number of different tools online that can reveal SEO data about websites, some free and some paid. Try using the PageRank Status extension for the Google Chrome browser (`pagerank.chromefans.org`) to display the PageRank of any page you visit. There are other SEO tools that score websites using their own metrics that are also useful to help determine how valuable a link to your infographic could potentially be. Open-SiteExplorer from SEOmoz (`www.opensiteexplorer.org`) scores sites with a measure called Domain Authority, and the MajesticSEO Site Explorer (`www.majesticseo.com`) evaluates sites based on measurements called Trust Flow and Citation Flow.

- **Traffic?—** It's harder to determine how much traffic a site receives, but it's certainly helpful information to determine the potential reach of a posted link to your infographic. Because site traffic is not public information, a few sites have tools that can estimate site traffic, such as Quantcast (`www.quantcast.com`) and Compete (`www.compete.com`). The numbers are an estimate, but a ballpark number is probably good enough to evaluate an outreach target site.

- **Followers?—** It's fairly easy to determine a rough estimate of the social audience of blogs. In addition to the traffic estimate, check out their social media presence. How many Facebook followers do they have? How many people follow them on Twitter? If available, how many people subscribe to their RSS feed? How many people have them in circles on Google+? How many followers do they have on Pinterest? These can all help paint a picture of how many people might be exposed to your infographic when posted to their social networks.

- **Infographics?—** Browse or search the site to see if they have posted infographics from outside web pages before. Some sites post only their own content, so it's good to know if a blog is open to publishing good infographics from outside sources.

After you narrow down your list of blogs to include in your outreach plan to something more manageable, the next challenge is determining how to reach them. Of course, you can always use the Contact page of the blog (if there is one) to reach the blog author, but a cold contact like that can get lost among all the other contact messages.

A more effective way to persuade an author or site to share your infographic is to establish some form of direct communication. Email is best, but many people hide their email addresses to reduce the amount of spam they receive. Find and connect with them through their social media accounts. For example, you could follow them on Twitter. If they follow you back, that would enable you to send them a private Direct Message (DM) to make contact. If they accept a connection from you on LinkedIn, you can send them a message or view their email address on their portfolio page.

When writing a message to a blog author, make it personal. I receive approximately 400 submissions every week to the Cool Infographics blog, and if the message is obviously a template or a form letter, I ignore it. I've seen the exact same message submitted 10 times on the same day with only the link changed. Humans are pattern recognition machines (Chapter 1, "The Science of Infographics") and it's easy to spot the scripted messages that have been copied and pasted into the e-mail. These go straight into the trash.

A good message should be written directly to the blog author and should contain relevant information. Why would their blog audience be interested in the infographic? What prior posts have they published on similar topics? What content have they posted from your company before? What prior posts from the bloggers have you helped share in your own social networks?

Make sure you include the URL link directly to the infographic landing page. Don't try to send them the infographic JPG image file as an attachment. You don't want them to host the infographic image on their site because then they don't need to link to your page. Just send the URL link, and let them use the embed code or sharing buttons from the landing page. They can also get the JPG from the landing page if that's how they would like to post it on their own site. It's often helpful to include a short text description of the infographic in the e-mail so that they can paste that into their blog post as additional text, even if it's the same text description from the landing page.

After you release your infographic into the wild, it takes on a life of its own. Ultimately, you don't have control over what happens to it. You will undoubtedly see both positive and negative comments about it, and from an SEO perspective, it's all good. If people post links and talk about your infographic, your web page rank can benefit.

News Media Sites

News related sites are always looking for good content to publish, but they are also constantly bombarded with hundreds or thousands of story ideas, editorials, press releases, and infographics. If you work for a medium- or large-size company, you may already have an internal PR department or contract with an external PR firm that has an existing list of media contacts. You know these media contacts already post articles relevant to your industry, so take advantage of them. That's a huge benefit of working for a larger company.

In addition, many popular, high-ranking media sites often post info-graphics submitted from the outside, but the challenge is getting your infographic onto their radar. Some have a system for submissions on the website, but some obscure that process so that they don't get thousands of submissions every day.

Many news sites are focused on a specific topic area, like politics, the environment, health issues, or technology. The selection of news sites to include in your outreach plan depends on your specific infographic topic; however, many news sites cover a wide variety of topics that could be applicable to many different infographic topics.

- **GOOD Magazine**—`www.good.is`

  Good Magazine loves infographics. It has made data visualization and infographics an integral part of its culture both online and in print. Create a free account on its website and upload your own infographic as content that the community can learn from.

- **Mashable**—www.mashable.com

  Mashable is a popular online news site that generally focuses on technology, business, and innovation content. It has a dedicated page for story submissions open to the public and includes links to its editorial staff on Facebook and Twitter.

- **Smashing Magazine**—www.smashingmagazine.com

  Smashing Magazine posts content generally related to technology, online lifestyle, web development, graphics, and design. The Contact page has a form to submit suggestions that are reviewed by its editorial staff.

- **The Next Web**—www.thenextweb.com

  The Next Web covers content related to the latest news about Internet technology, business, and culture. On its Contact page, it lists tips to pitch a story (your infographic) and has a contact form to use at the bottom of the page.

You can also submit press releases about your infographics to a number of PR distribution services. These services can make your infographic, along with text and links, available online to news services and websites, and accessible to the search engine spiders. Your company may already have an account with one of these services, but if not, they offer affordable pricing options for individual press releases.

- **PRWeb**—www.prweb.com

  PRWeb offers a variety of paid options to upload a press release that gets submitted to major news sites and search engines.

- **PRLog**—www.prlog.org

  PRLog offers both free and paid options to submit a press release for distribution.

- **PR Newswire**—www.prnewswire.com

  PR Newswire offers a handful of plans at different price points to distribute and track your press release. There are separate plan options for small businesses and nonprofit organizations.

A different strategy would be to approach specific authors instead of news outlets because they may post content across multiple sites. This is more likely to succeed as a long-term strategy. Find authors that post about your company's industry and start interacting with them. Add comments on their published content, post links to their articles, share links in your company social media accounts, and follow them on the social networks they use. Cultivate an on-going relationship with authors related to your industry, and they will be more receptive when you have quality content to share. They may even follow you back and pick up on your infographic from your own self-promotion efforts without any prompting.

Infographics Sharing Sites

When I started the Cool Infographics blog (coolinfographics.com) in 2007, it was one of a handful of websites on the Internet that focused on information design, data visualization, or infographics. I could count on my fingers the number of sites online that published similar content. As a fan myself, I had to visit only a small number of sites to keep up with infographic design news online.

However, in 2013, there are now hundreds of blogs, Tumblr pages, Flickr photo groups, Pinterest boards, Facebook fan pages, and sites that exist for the sole purpose of posting infographics. Over the last few years, a large group of people have become fans of good infographic designs, regardless of the topic of the design. There's an audience that loves to see good infographics that have made infographics a part of their daily information consumption.

These curated gallery and review sites are the easiest group of sites to approach as a part of an outreach plan. They are actively looking for infographics to post as content for their readers, and many of them allow you to self-publish by creating a user account and uploading your infographic to the site. These sites can help generate a large number of views and links to your infographic landing page.

Different sites approach the process of accepting infographics for publication differently. Some sites post every infographic they can get their hands on to build a huge showcase of infographics and some sites filter the infographics and choose the ones they post based on review criteria such as topic or design.

For example, I'm selective about which infographics I post on the Cool Infographics blog. I mentioned earlier that I get approximately 400 submissions every week to the Cool Infographics blog, but I post only a handful on the blog every week. With that many submissions through the site contact page, it's a serious challenge to keep up. A good infographic submission might be unread in my inbox for months before I find it, and then it might be much longer before I get around to writing a blog post about it.

An additional advantage of these sites is that you may reach an audience you had never considered before. Readers of infographic sites may not have any reason to visit sites related to your company's product or service, but when they see your infographic, it may attract their attention and build awareness.

Here's a short list of infographics sites for your reference. This list is constantly changing as smaller sites collapse and new sites are launched every day, so I attempted to include the more long-lasting sites. I do maintain an ongoing list of current infographics sites on the Cool Infographics blog. You can check for the most current list at coolinfographics.com/links/.

Infographic Self-publishing Sites

These sites enable people to create a free account and upload their own design work. When people view the infographic you uploaded on these sites, they also have easy sharing buttons and embed code automatically generated so viewers can share them easily. This might not be as powerful as using the embed code from your own infographic landing page, but it's convenient and easy to use.

- **Flickr**—www.flickr.com

  Use your own account (free or paid) to upload the infographic image into your own photostream. After the infographic is in your account on Flickr, you can add it to groups focused on sharing infographics by joining them. If your infographic topic is relevant to other photo groups, you can also join them and add the infographic as well.

- **Visual.ly**—visual.ly

  Visually has built a tremendous showcase of infographics. After you create a free account, you can upload your infographic to be included in the gallery. The site enables you to include a short text description and links to the source site and designer. When you view infographics on Visually, there are tools for easy sharing and it also allows viewers to like or comment on the info-graphics. Popular infographic designs are featured on Visually's homepage.

- **Visualizing.org**—www.visualizing.org

  Visualizing.org is a free community site to share data visualizations and infographics designs. Upload your own infographics; they are made available to anyone for viewing and commenting. They also maintain a large library of public data sets and host visualization design challenges.

- **Graphs.net**—www.graphs.net

  Graphs.net is a free gallery site that enables you to upload your own infographics. The site also provides space to include a text description and a link to the original source URL.

- **Love Infographics**—www.loveinfographics.com

  Love Infographics is a free gallery that enables people to create an account and upload their own infographics. The infograph-ics can include a text description and links to the original and enables other designers to add comments.

- **VisualizeUs**—vi.sualize.us

  VisualizeUs is an image-sharing site that includes a large collection of infographics intended as inspiration for designers. Create an account and install its browser widget to upload your infographics to the site.

Free Infographic Submission Sites

Free infographic submission sites can be run by anyone, and new sites appear (and disappear) every day. Just like researching the topic related blogs, you should also research the web analytics of any infographics gallery sites to help determine which sites can be most valuable in your outreach plan.

These sites have free reign to control the content they post and are under no obligation to post any infographic you submit. Just like the blogs, try to connect with the author to break through the clutter. On free sites, there's no barrier of entry. So, every infographic gets submitted to these sites, often multiple times, which is annoying. That's a lot of noise that your infographic design has to break through to get noticed.

- **Cool Infographics**—coolinfographics.com

  On Cool Infographics, I strive to post the best examples of info-graphic designs I can find. I post only a handful of infographics each week out of the hundreds of submissions and infographics I find on my own. This careful selection has built the site into one of the strongest links you can get from an infographics gallery site. Submit your link and message through the Contact page.

- **Visual Loop**—www.visualoop.tumblr.com

  Tiago Veloso has built Visual Loop into one of the largest and most popular infographics galleries. You can find infographics, portfolios, interviews, Pinterest boards, and much more. This site makes the commitment that every infographic submitted will be posted to its Tumblr page, which then has the chance to be posted on its other channels. Submit your infographic through the Contact link on the page.

- **Chart Porn**—www.chartporn.org

  Chart Porn is a great collection of the most visually appealing data visualizations, maps, charts, and infographics designs. The site is curated by Dustin Smith, and you can submit your info-graphic to the e-mail address on the About page.

- **News I Like**—www.newsilike.in

  Bharat Prajapati posts infographics along with his own reviews of the designs on a frequent basis. Use the Submit page to send the URL link to your infographic landing page.

- **Submit Infographics**—www.submitinfographics.com

  Submit Infographics posts selected infographics along with descriptive text, links, and a review by a designer. It requires a minimum of 100 words in your description to be considered.

- **NerdGraph**—www.nerdgraph.com

  NerdGraph posts multiple infographics each day and enables anyone to submit infographics for review through its Submit page. Although it doesn't post them all, it includes a text description, keywords, a link back to the original, and a promise to send an e-mail notification when the infographic is posted.

Paid Infographic Submission Sites

A number of infographic gallery sites charge for submissions to be considered. Usually it's a small fee to cover the author's time to review the infographic and compose a blog post. The pay wall also helps reduce the amount of submissions the site receives to only those publishers serious enough to pay the fee. Some sites even offer a range of services with different prices, from free up to expensive premium listings.

Unlike the totally free sites, there's an implied agreement that your infographic will definitely get posted if you pay the fee and probably not if you don't pay. If you pay the money, you should expect to get coverage and links. This addresses the uncertainty of submitting to the free sites that have the freedom to ignore your submission. Fees listed next were current as of 2013 and will change over time.

It's unclear whether the search engine companies will consider these to be spammy paid links in the future, but currently these small fees seem to fall below their radar. In the SEO industry, paid links are considered to be a questionable practice of link building, and the search engine companies are constantly developing ways to eliminate the impact of paid links in their algorithms. Your company must choose its own level of risk tolerance and if the value of links from these paid sites are worth the fees. On the other hand, for a small marketing expense (approximately $1,000 total) you can be guaranteed to get your infographic onto all these sites.

- **Infographics Showcase** ($100)—www.infographicsshowcase.com

  Infographics Showcase will post a review of your infographic design with grades for both design and information. Pay the fee, and within 7 days it will post the infographic, along with a thorough written review. Use the PayPal button on the Submit page to start the process. As it states on the page: "*We will take the good and the bad, but we prefer the good. Bad infographics, get bad reviews.*"

- **Infographic Journal** (Free-$25)—www.infographicjournal.com

  Infographic Journal accepts both free and paid submissions. The staff filters free submissions to choose which ones get posted, but it guarantees that paid submissions will be posted. Use the form on the Submit page to send it the URL link, description, and embed code of your infographic.

- **Infographic Love** ($60)—www.infographiclove.com

  Infographic Love requires that a text description of at least 200 words be submitted along with the infographic, and it features only well-designed infographics with good research. Use the PayPal button on the Submit page to start the process.

- **Daily Infographic** (Up to $350)—www.dailyinfographic.com

  Daily Infographic consistently posts one good infographic every day and has built a large following. If you submit your e-mail address, it will send you details about the fees to submit and feature your infographic on the site.

- **Infographics Archive** (Free-$399.95)—www.infographicsarchive.com

  Infographics Archive offers a range of prices from free submissions with no guarantee to be listed, up to $399.95 for a 10-day spotlight package. Use the PayPal button on the Submit page to start the process.

- **Amazing Infographics** ($100)—www.amazinginfographics.com

  Amazing infographics will post your infographic along with a text description and two supporting links that you can use to link back to your landing page or company website. Use the PayPal button on the Submit page to start the process, and your infographic should be posted within 7 days.

- **Infographic Gallery** (Free-$30)—www.infographicgallery.co.uk

  Infographic Gallery enables both free and paid infographic submissions. Only paid submissions are guaranteed to be posted. Use the forms on the Submit page to start the process.

- **Info-Graphic** (£20)—www.info-graphic.co.uk

  Info-Graphic posts only paid infographics submissions. On the Info-Graphic Submit page, you can send your infographic along with a preferred title, text description, URL link, keywords, and embed code. Use the PayPal button to submit payment.

Hundreds more free and paid infographics sites exist online, so this list will naturally change over time. Do your own research and leverage this community of infographic fans to help build an audience for your own infographic designs.

Final Thoughts

The goals of most online infographics are to build awareness, reach customers, drive website traffic and improve placement in search engine results. A cool infographic design alone is generally not enough. Don't publish an infographic and just hope that people show up to see it. It takes some extra effort to maximize the return on investment a company makes into the data research and infographic design efforts.

Leverage these insights and tactics to give your infographic the best possible chance for success. Your infographic needs to be visible to the search engines and easy to find for readers. Build a good infographic landing page, share the infographic through all of the company's communication channels, and reach out to authors and sites that will consider your design to be valuable content for their readers.

Combine all of these efforts together with a cool infographic design and you have the formula for an extremely successful project.

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2. Matt Cutts and Eric Enge Talk About What Makes a Quality Site, July 2012, http://www.stonetemple.com/matt-cutts-and-eric-talk- about-what-makes-a-quality-site/

3. bitly.com, How long will people pay attention? September 2011, http://blog.bitly.com/post/9887686919/you-just-shared- a-link-how-long-will-people-pay

Links

Many of the images in this chapter can be viewed by using the following links or going to www.wiley.com/go/coolinfographics.

1. *Google PageRank Explained*, Elliance:

    http://www.elliance.com/aha/infographics/google-pagerank- explained.aspx.

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    http://www.stonetemple.com/infographics/search-complexity. shtml

3. *James Bond: 50 Years of Movies*, H&R Block:

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4. *Streamlining your digital life with the new iPad*, NextWorth:

    http://www.nextworth.com/ipad3_infographic

5. *Bringing Down Bin Laden*, Column Five Media and Namesake:

    http://columnfivemedia.com/work-items/namesake-infographic- breakdown-of-the-takedown-%E2% 80%94-osamas-last-hour/

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7. *The Visual History of Halloween*, FrightCatalog.com:

    http://www.frightcatalog.com/halloween-history/

8. *Pairing Wine & Food*, Wine Folly: http://winefolly.com/review/5-tips-to-perfect-food-and- wine-pairing/