

Storytelling with Data

Module 6: The storytelling process

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Agenda

Upcoming deliverable – **final** storyboard

Today's objectives

Stories – why, what, how

Stories, in words and pictures

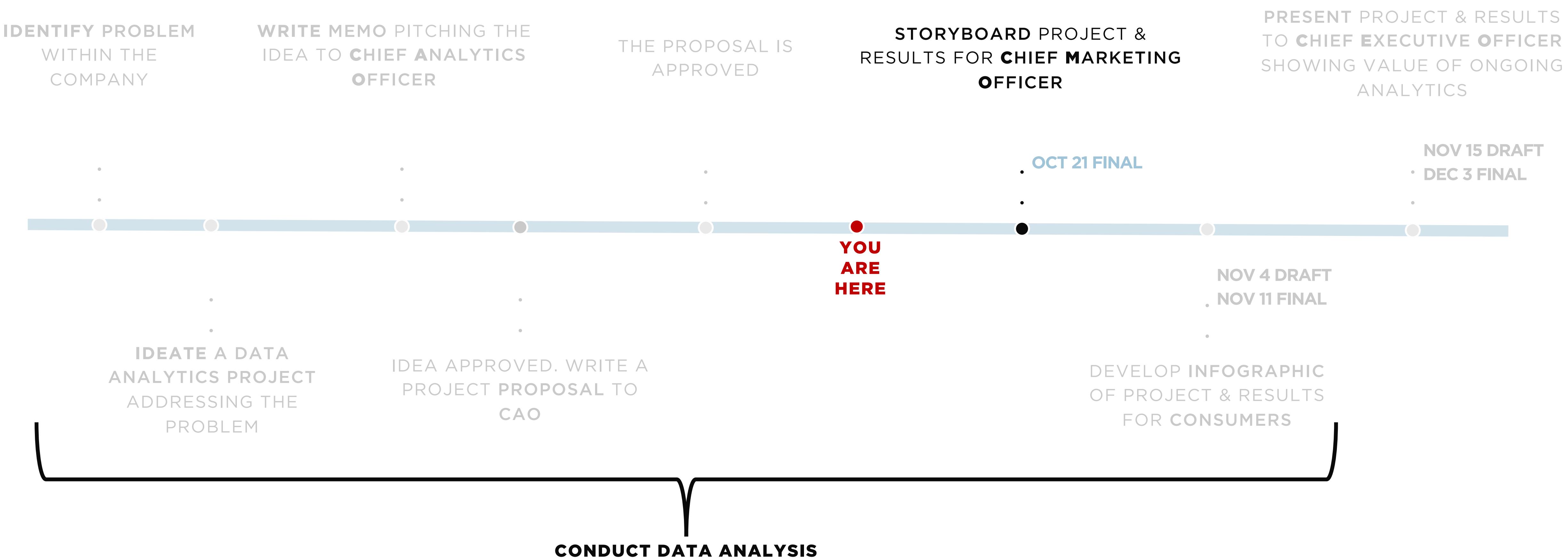
From data to visual

Questions or suggestions?

Upcoming deliverable

Upcoming deliverable

In **Storyboard** form – describe (1) your project, (2) preliminary results or insights so far, and (3) why those results are interesting for the marketing team. Use a distinct narrative arc (beginning, middle, and end), be clear and accessible for the **CMO**.



Today's Objectives

Objectives

1

Build a story around an analytics project.

2

Craft a narrative to captivate, convince, and inspire an audience.

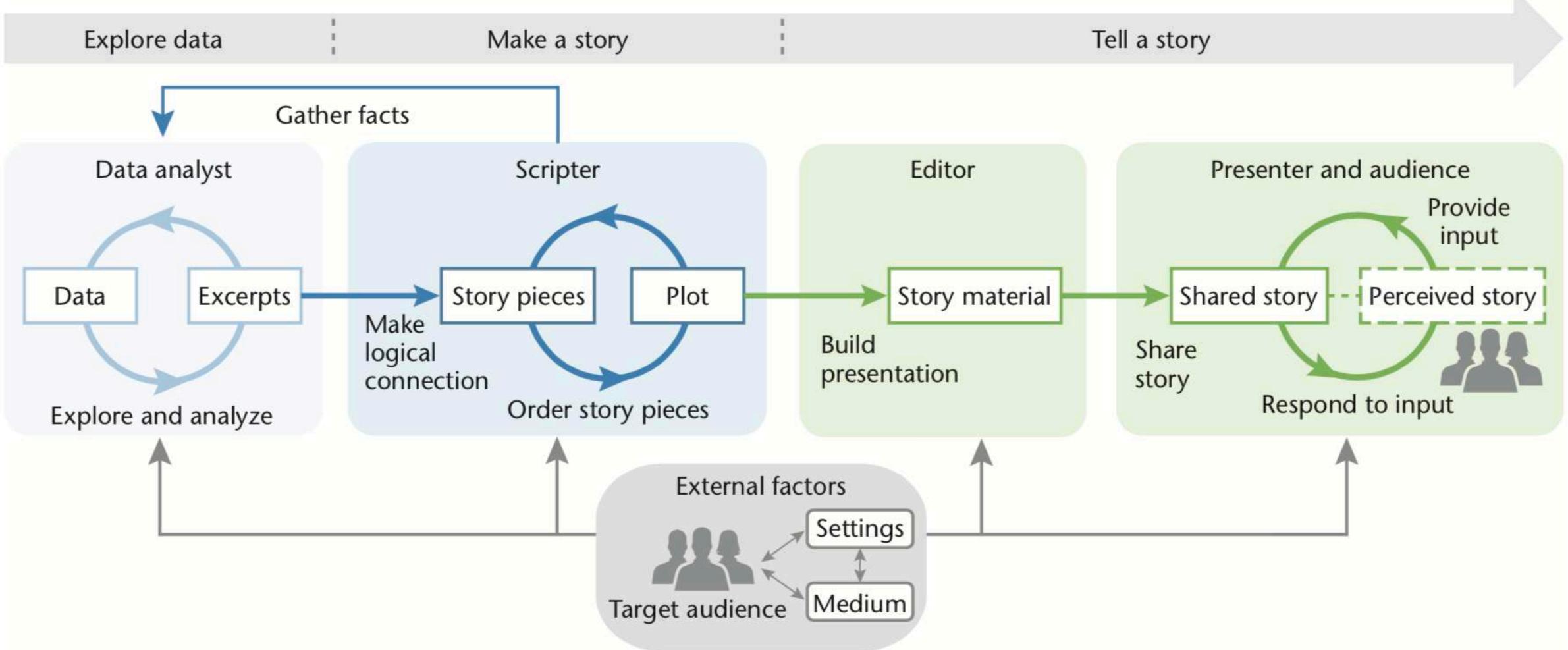
Stories – scope and process



Transforming data into visually shared stories

Lee & co-author

Authors Lee and Riche, who was also the main author of Data-Driven Storytelling, work at Microsoft, advancing research on data stories.



Scope of a visual data story

A visual data story is more than a visualization of data. They include a set of story pieces — that is, **specific facts backed up by data**.

They are **visualized** to support intended messages, include **annotations** (labels, pointers, text) and **narration** to highlight and emphasize the message and avoid ambiguity.

They are presented in a **meaningful order** or with a connection between them to support the author's high-level communication goal.

Stories – why, what, how



Management is much more than a science

Martin & Golsby

Professor Martin is director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the School of Management, University of Toronto. Golsby-Smith is founder of 2nd Road, a strategy and innovation firm, now part of Accenture Strategy.

Narratives frame hypotheses for what could be

To make decisions about **what could be**, managers should devise narratives about possible futures, applying the tools of metaphor, logic, and emotion.

Consider possibilities broader than data

The **absence of data does not preclude possibility**. If we are talking about new outcomes and behaviors, then there is no prior evidence. Consider not only what the data suggests but also what within the bounds of possibility could happen.

Metaphor helps compare unlinked ideas

The core engine of creative synthesis is “associative fluency”—the mental ability to **connect two concepts that are not usually linked** and to forge them into a new idea.

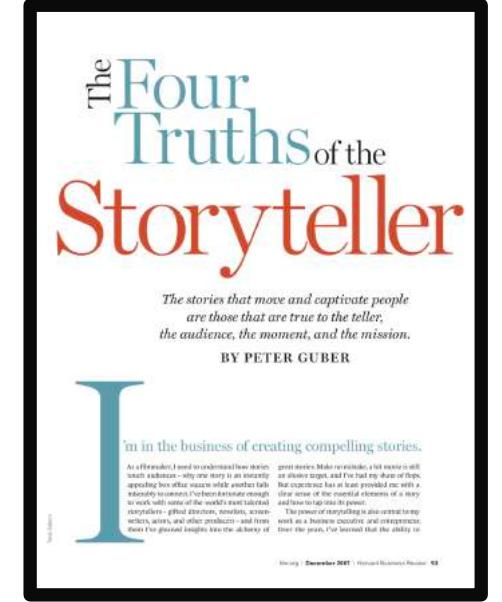
Clarify conditions, create new data

With new narratives—hypotheses—we must **hypothesize** what would have to be true for those narratives to happen and **validate** their hypotheses through prototyping.

The four truths of the storyteller

Guber

Peter is author of *Tell to Win*, has been awarded business person of the year by Los Angeles Business Journal, is owner of several pro sports teams and an entertainment company. He was top executive at Sony and Columbia Pictures.



Persuasive stories depend on four truths

Great storytelling does not conflict with truth. Stories that move people are true to the teller, audience, moment, and mission.

Teller. The teller must be congruent with the story, must share emotions felt, allowing the audience to identify with those emotions.

Audience. As a teller, we must take time to understand what our listeners know about, care about, and want to hear. And then, craft a story that resonates with what we learn. Test the story on others, skeptics. Include audience in the tale—/ becomes we.

Moment. Know the tale well enough to improvise, molding it to the moment's context.

Mission. The tale should capture the mission, and truth to the mission should win over any conflicts with truth to the audience.

Telling tales

Denning

Stephen is the former director of Knowledge Management at the World Bank, an author, and focuses on leadership strategy.



A story — narrative as sequence of events

Narrative patterns for business

Although good business arguments are developed through the use of numbers, they are typically approved on the basis of a story—that is, a narrative that links a set of events in some kind of causal sequence.

Stories can advance business objectives, e.g.:

Sparking action

Communicating who you are

Transmitting values

Fostering collaboration

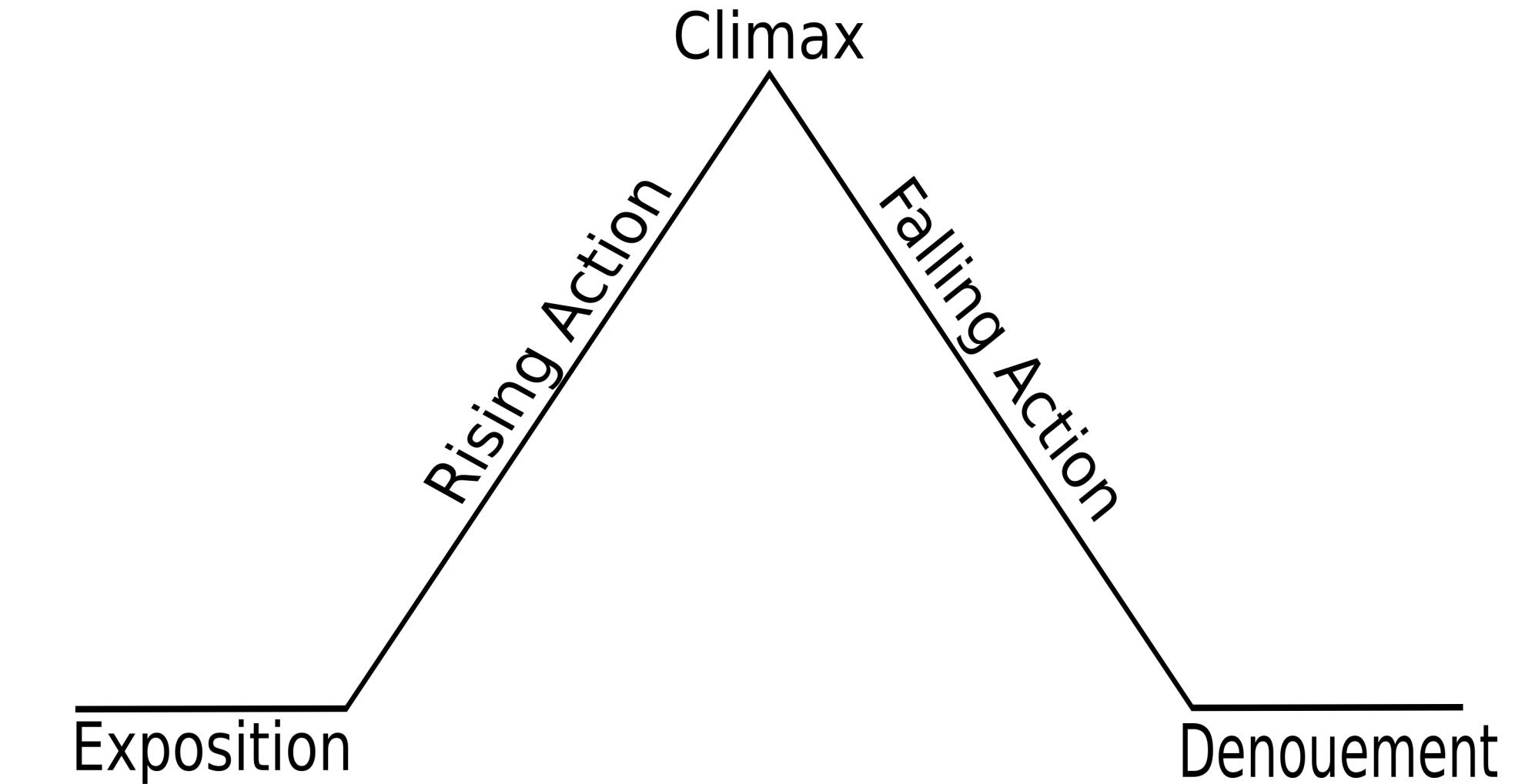
Taming the grapevine

Sharing knowledge

Leading people into the future

Stories – more about narrative and audience

One way to tell: analytics projects



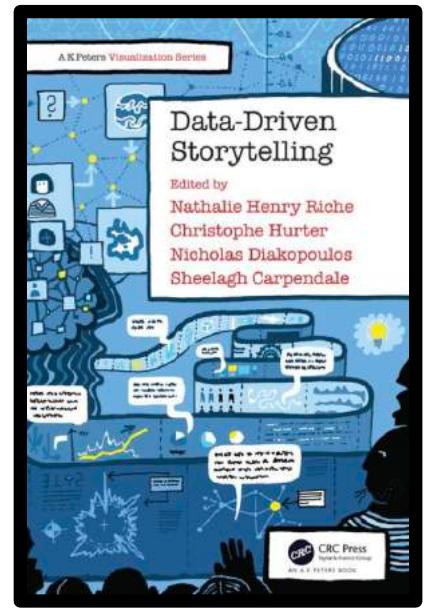
The primary elements of an applied analytics project are a well-articulated business problem, a data science solution, and a measurable outcome to produce value for the organization.

The analytics project may thus be conceptualized as a story arc, with a beginning (**problem**), middle (**analytics**), and end (**overcoming of the problem**), along with characters (**analysts, colleagues, clients**) who play important roles.

Narrative Design Patterns for Data-Driven Storytelling

Riche, co-editors

The editors are researchers and professors with focuses on human-computer interaction and information visualization.



Narrative in time

The narrative can be linear, e.g., representing the actual order of events (the story) chronologically; or nonlinear, e.g., circular, where the beginning and end mirror themselves.

Narrative in an endless number of ways

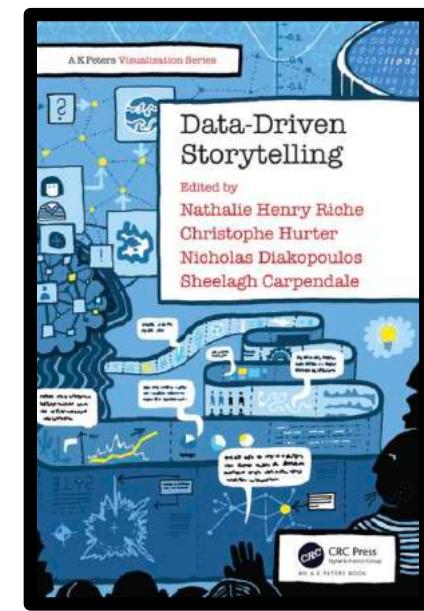
**Todo: clean up
quote and narrow**

A single story can be narrated in an endless number of ways. Beyond the temporal ordering of events, it can be told at a varying pace to create emphasis: slowing down the narrative pace can give the audience time to think about what is being “told” and to increase the importance of this moment in the story; speeding up the narrative pace can produce an overwhelming effect of information onslaught and reduce the importance of moments in the story. Arguments can be made explicit or kept implicit. The narrative can emphasize comparison and contrasting points of view; it can convey abstract concepts through the use of analogies, making them more concrete; it can address and engage the audience directly with abrupt questions, while interrupting the flow of the story; or it can draw the audience in so that it becomes a part of the story, releasing it with a call-to-action.

Narrative Design Patterns for Data-Driven Storytelling

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Narrative “Patterns”

Patterns for flow

A narrative pattern is a low-level narrative device that serves a specific intent. A pattern can be used individually or in combination with others to give form to a story.

Todo: Details.

Patterns for framing

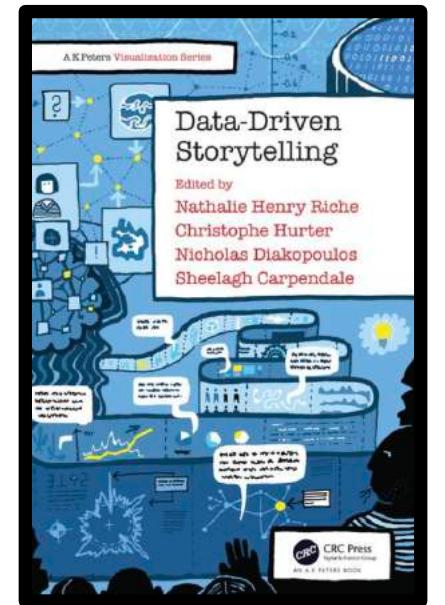
Todo: Details.

Patterns for empathy, emotion

Todo: Details.

Patterns for engagement

Todo: Details.

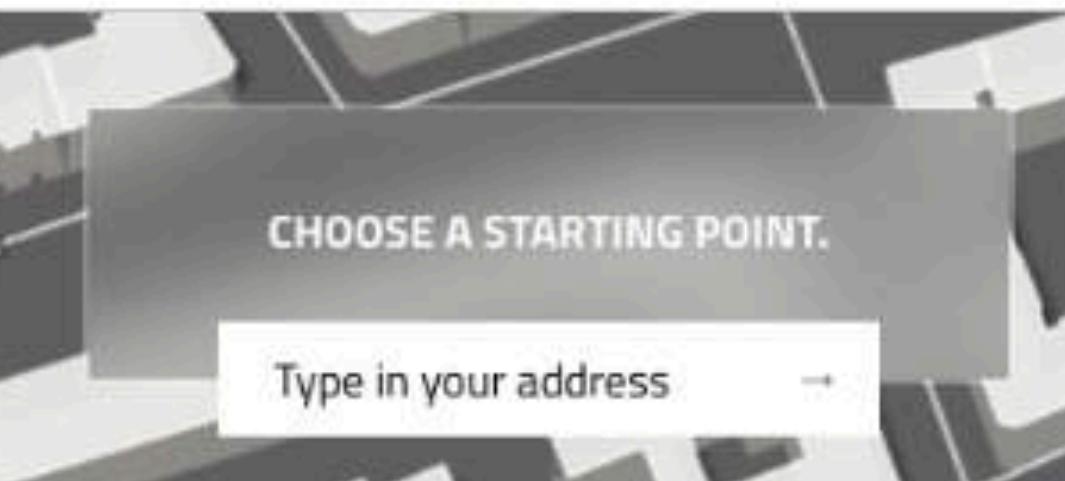


Narrative Design Patterns for Data-Driven Storytelling

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Todo: Examples from reading or experiences.

Incorporating the audience**HOW**

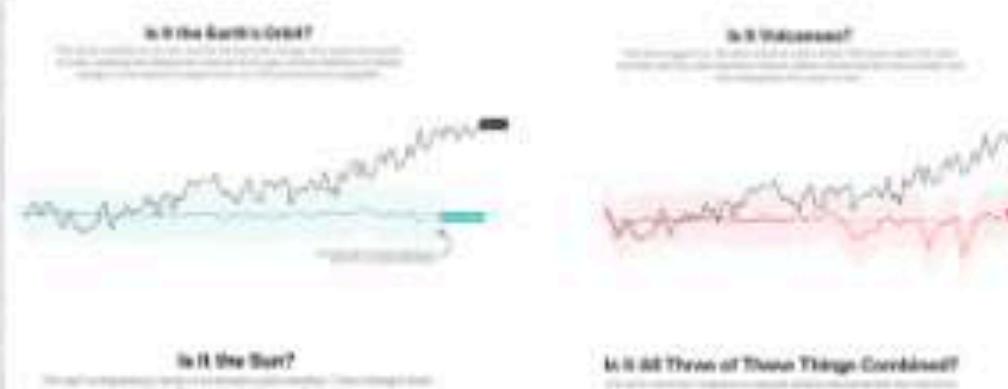
Audience becomes part of the narrative.

WHY

Increase empathy, facilitate personal comparisons. Helps make the data and information more personally relevant. To allow reader to use herself as measuring device.

EXAMPLE

Ubisoft: Collapse

Repetition**HOW**

A phenomenon is re-presented multiple times with changes to the main variable/dimension (the data) or the time frame or the animation pattern (see the example) while other elements of the story don't change. Note: this could be like running multiple simulations with the data to see which is most effective (and in this case, the story would be more reader driven)

WHY

To show that the same phenomenon happens over and over again. It also strengthens the narrative through rhythm. Establishing a constant reference frame can help to emphasize change and differences.

EXAMPLE

Bloomberg: What's really warming the world?

Juxtaposition**HOW**

Showing two or more complementary visualizations (pictures) juxtaposed.

WHY

Compare cases or samples, allows to highlight contrast, difference, absence of difference, change over time. Allows for individual exploration of (minor) differences.

EXAMPLE

David McCandless: Billion Dollar Gram

Breaking the fourth wall**Humans behind the dots****Make a guess**

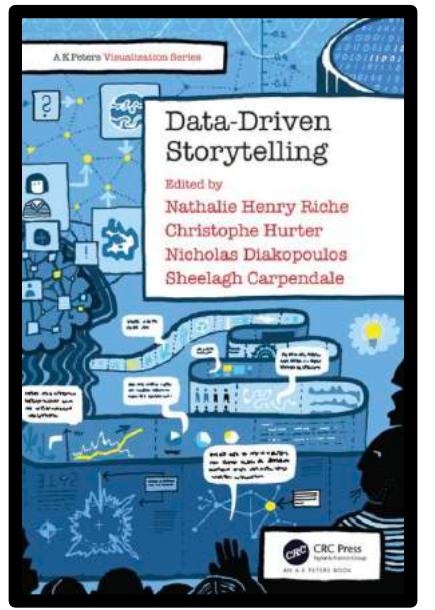
Draw your line on the chart below



Communicating data to an audience

Riche, co-editors

The editors are researchers and professors with focuses on human-computer interaction and information visualization.



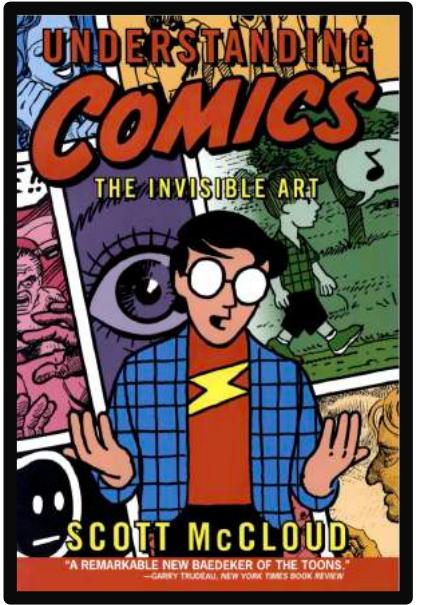
Point

Details.

Todo: Pull points from chapter.

Stories, in pictures and words

You can tell a story to your audience on a **Storyboard**, which—like comics—has **visual** components, corresponding **written narrative**, and **sequencing**.



Understanding Comics

McCloud

Scott provides the seminal reference, in the context of comics, on understanding the connection between words and visuals.

**Words and visuals
have shared meaning**

In comics, visuals and words complement one another, each contributing to a shared meaning.

Story in sentences

I CROSSED THE STREET TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE. THE RAIN SOAKED INTO MY BOOTS.

I FOUND THE LAST PINT OF CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP IN THE FREEZER.

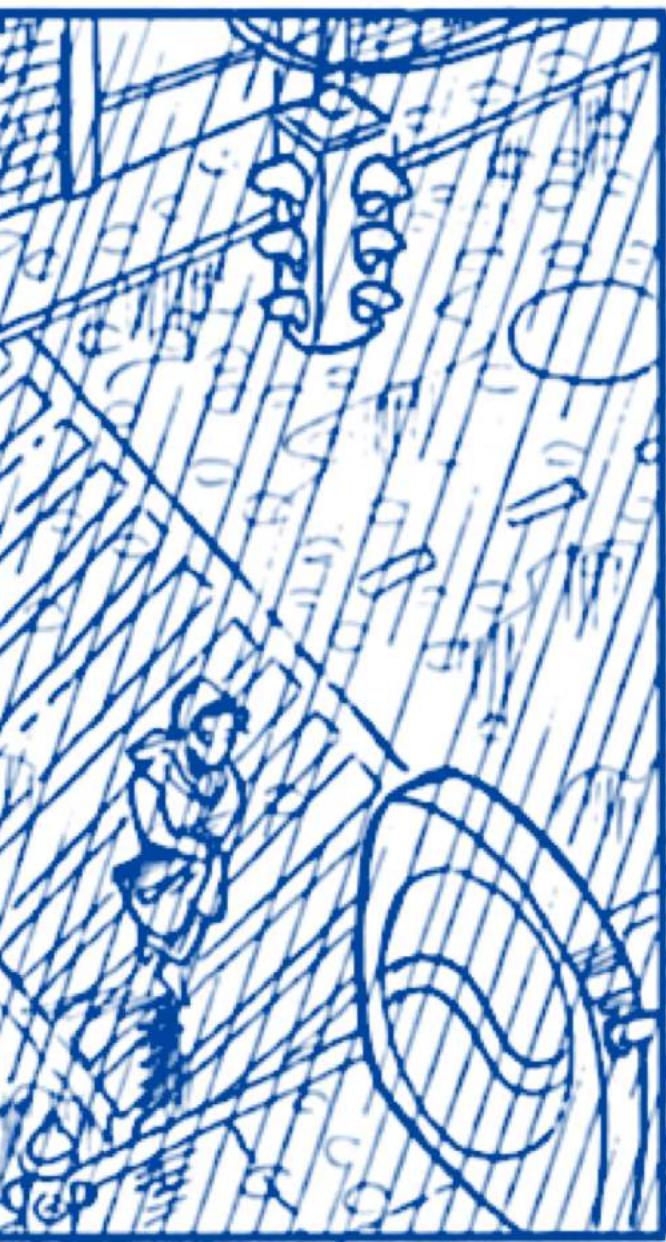
THE CLERK TRIED TO PICK ME UP. I SAID NO THANKS. HE GAVE ME THIS CREEPY LOOK...

I WENT BACK TO THE APARTMENT--

--AND FINISHED IT ALL IN AN HOUR.

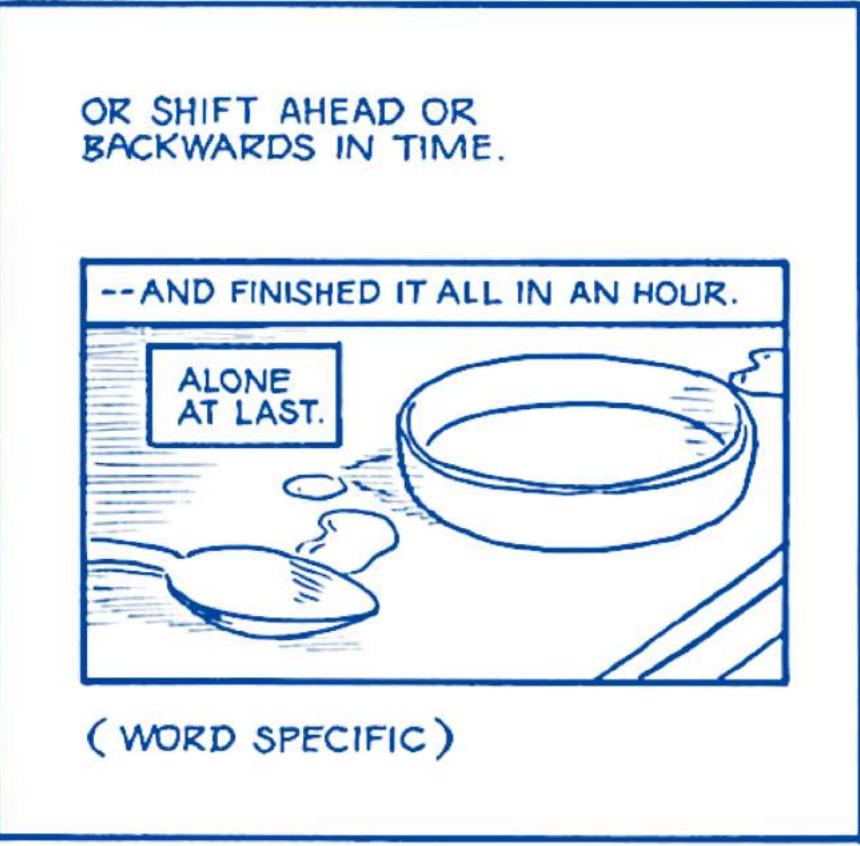
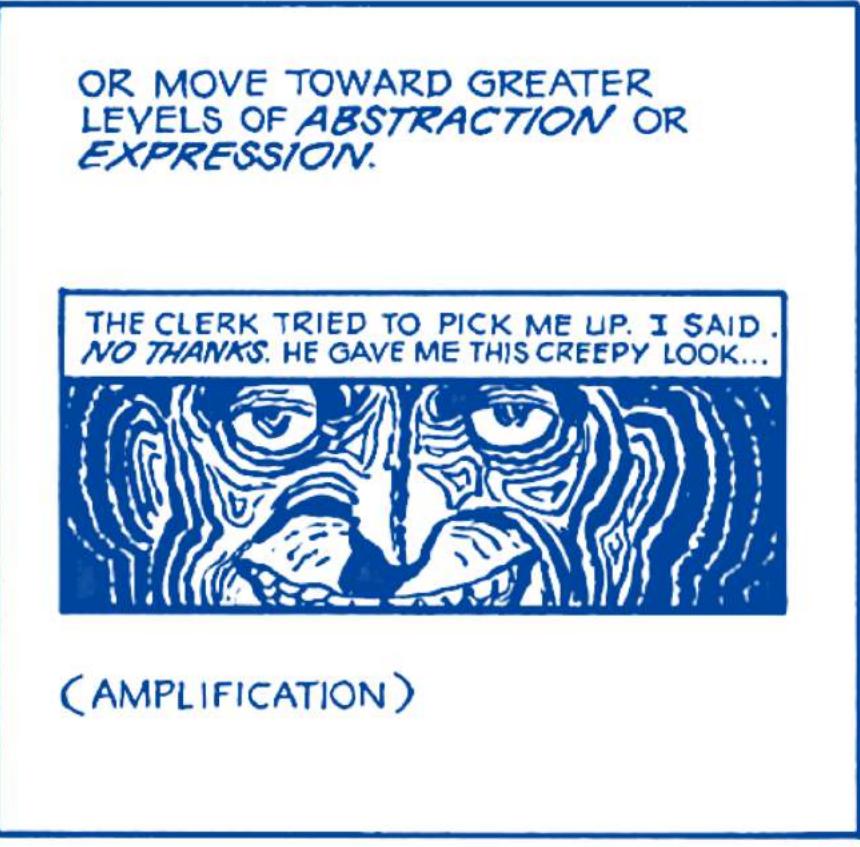
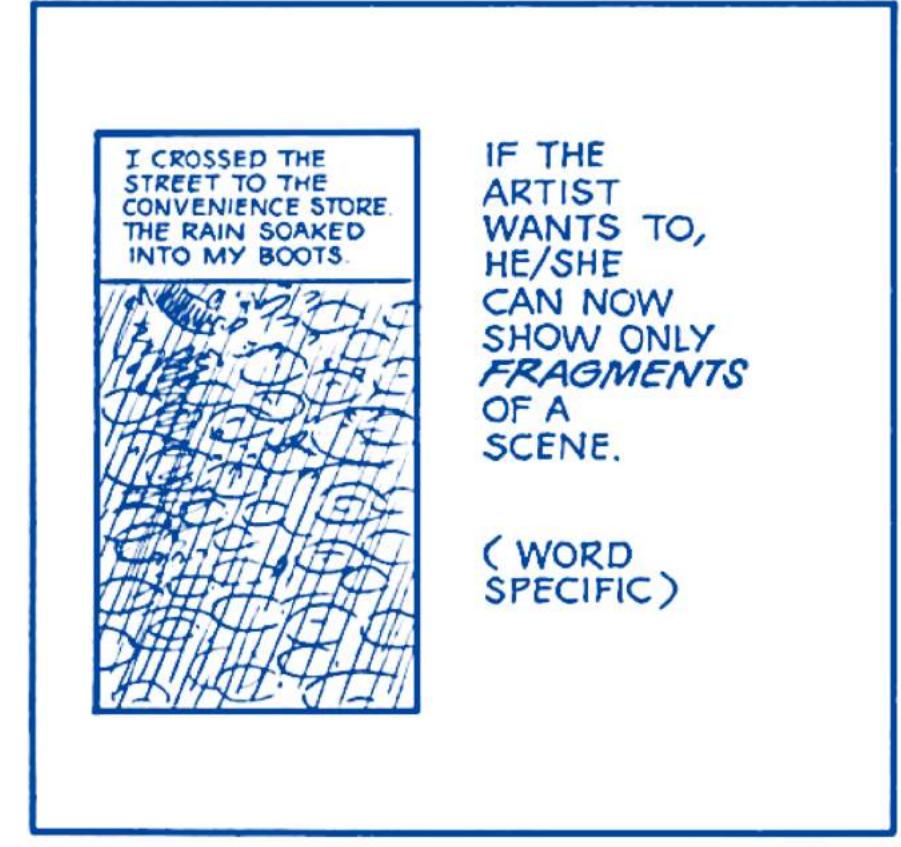
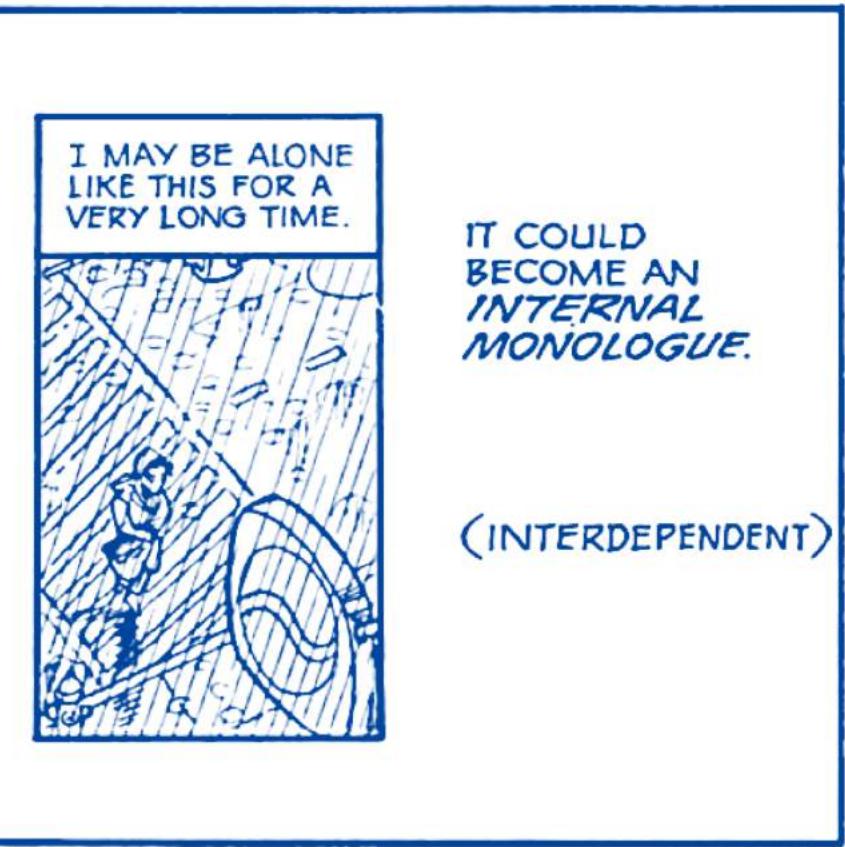
ALONE AT LAST.

Story in pictures





Use words and images for different purposes



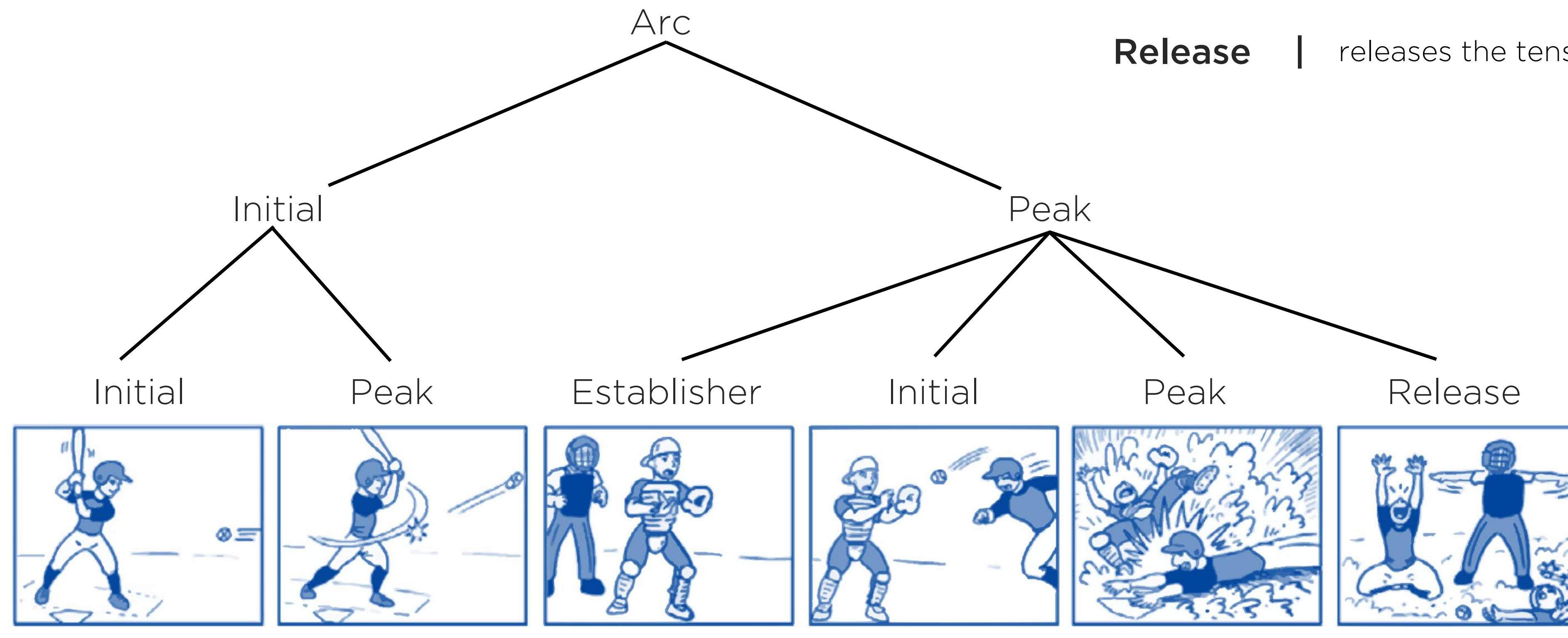
Like written narrative, sequential pictures can have grammar

Establisher | sets up an interaction without acting upon it

Initial | initiates the tension of the narrative arc

Peak | marks the height of narrative tension and point of maximal event structure

Release | releases the tension of the interaction



INTERDEPENDENT COMBINATIONS AREN'T ALWAYS AN EQUAL BALANCE THOUGH AND MAY FALL ANYWHERE ON A SCALE BETWEEN TYPES ONE AND TWO.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE MORE IS SAID WITH WORDS, THE MORE THE PICTURES CAN BE FREED TO GO EXPLORING AND VICE VERSA.

P

w



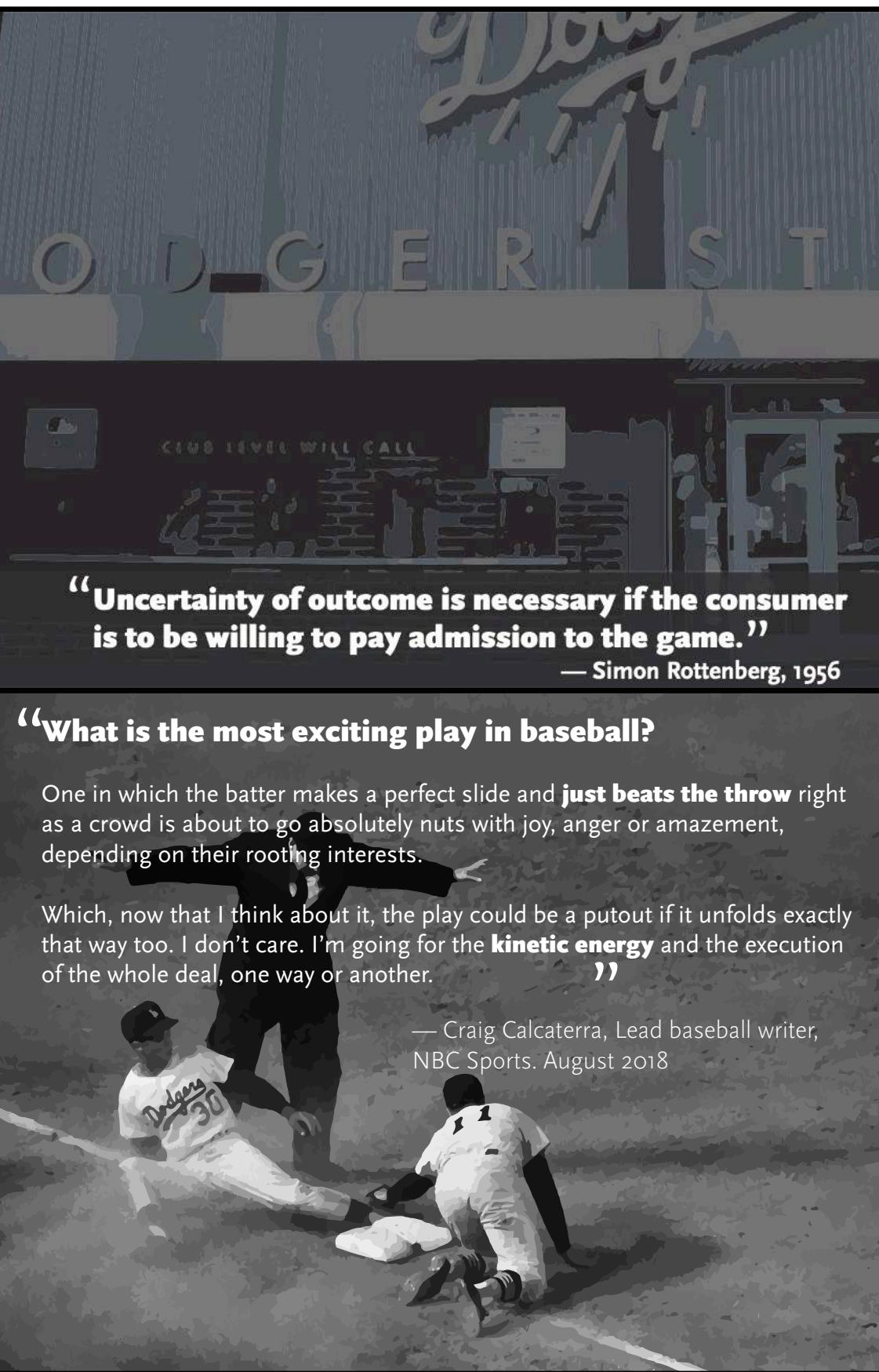
W

P

Back to storyboards

Example: Dodgers project

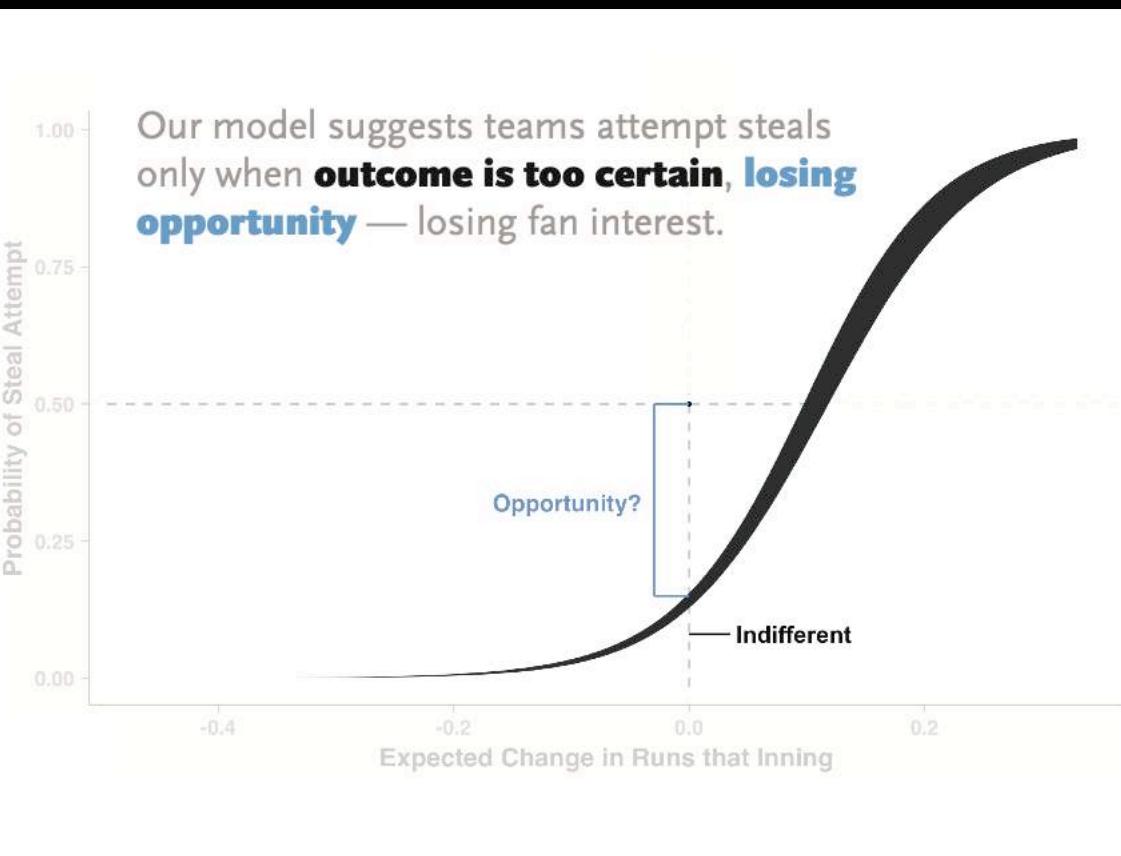
Visual narrative

**“What is the most exciting play in baseball?**

One in which the batter makes a perfect slide and **just beats the throw** right as a crowd is about to go absolutely nuts with joy, anger or amazement, depending on their rooting interests.

Which, now that I think about it, the play could be a putout if it unfolds exactly that way too. I don't care. I'm going for the **kinetic energy** and the execution of the whole deal, one way or another.

— Craig Calcaterra, Lead baseball writer, NBC Sports. August 2018



1

Written narrative

Our average game attendance hovers around mid-80 percent capacity — we have seats to fill, despite having multiple winning seasons.

To draw more fans, consider the words of famed economist Simon Rotenberg, who said “uncertainty of outcome” is necessary for consumers to pay admission to ball games. While winning is important, it’s the not-knowing that creates excitement.

2

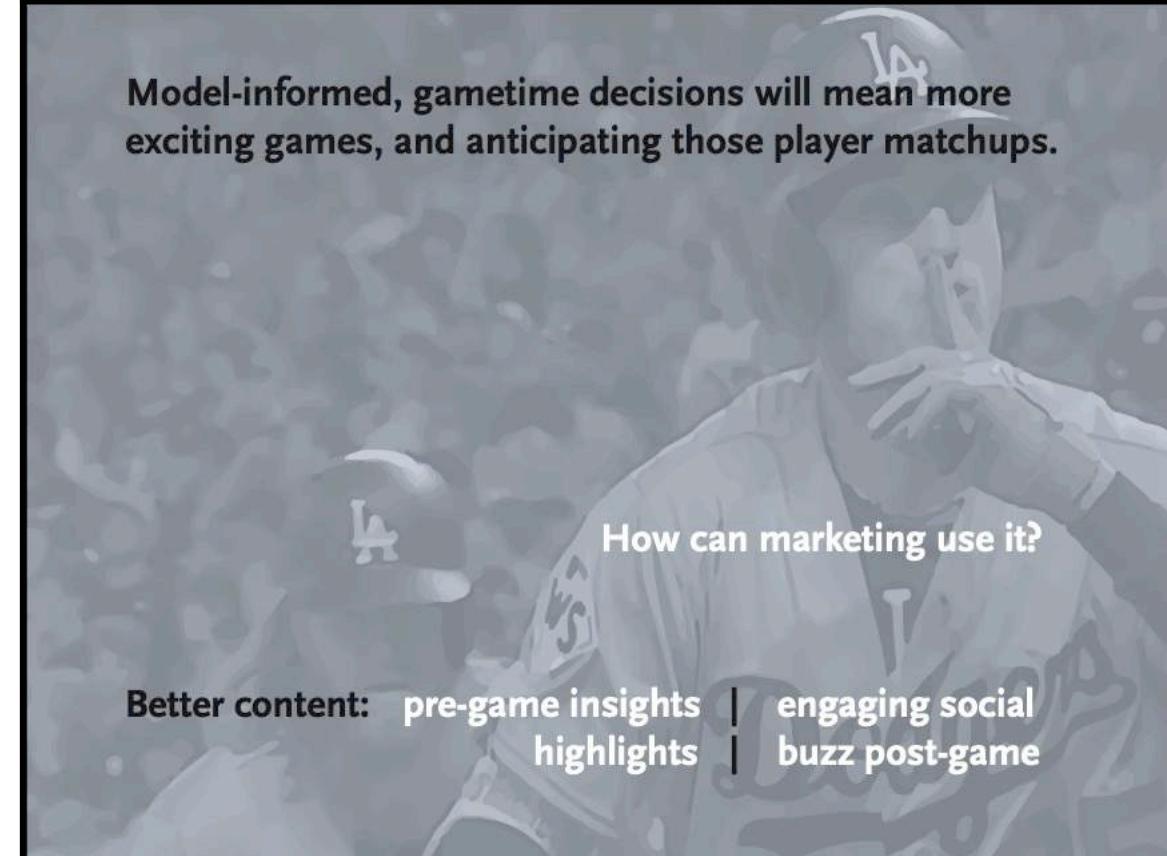
Visual narrative



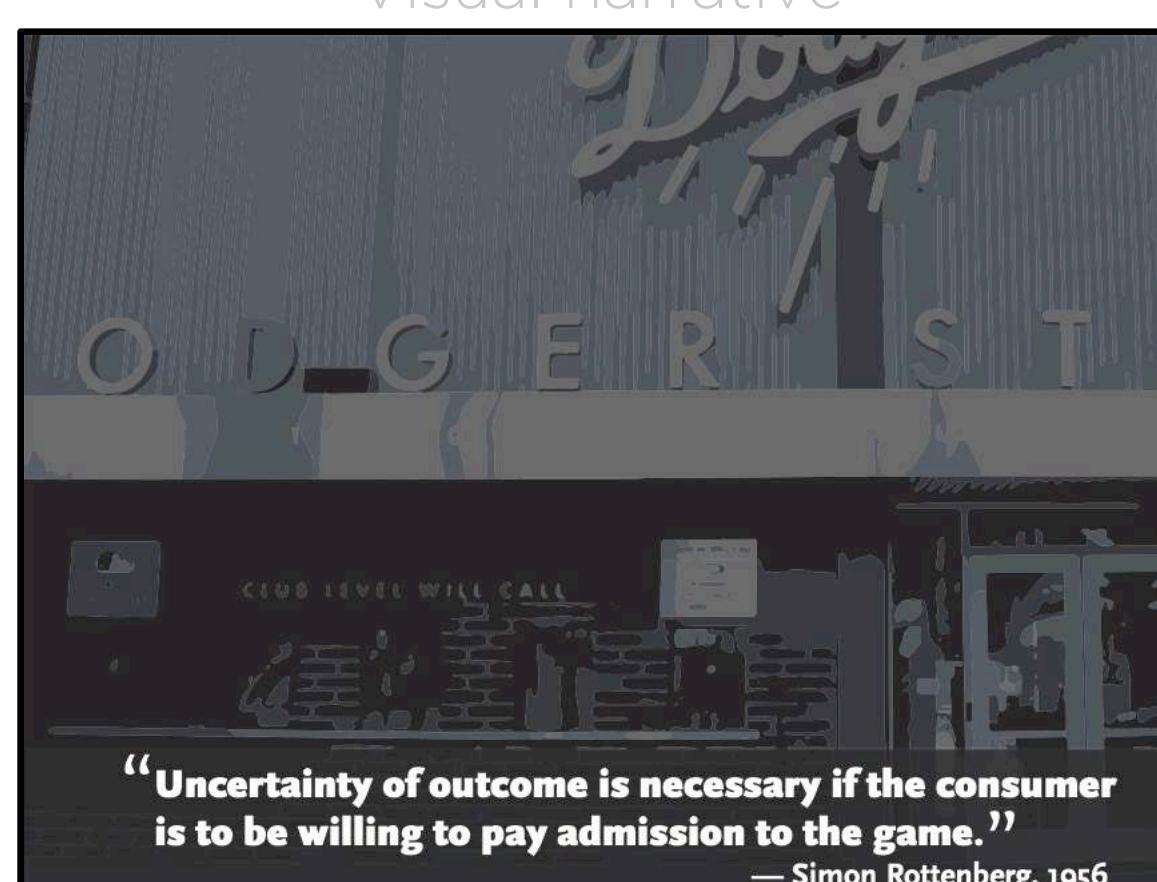
4



5



6



3

Using our model, we asked whether we are maximizing base-stealing excitement. We considered running speed of the player on first base, catcher throw time to second base, the latent talents of the specific pitcher, catcher, and baserunner, and estimated the probability of successfully stealing second.

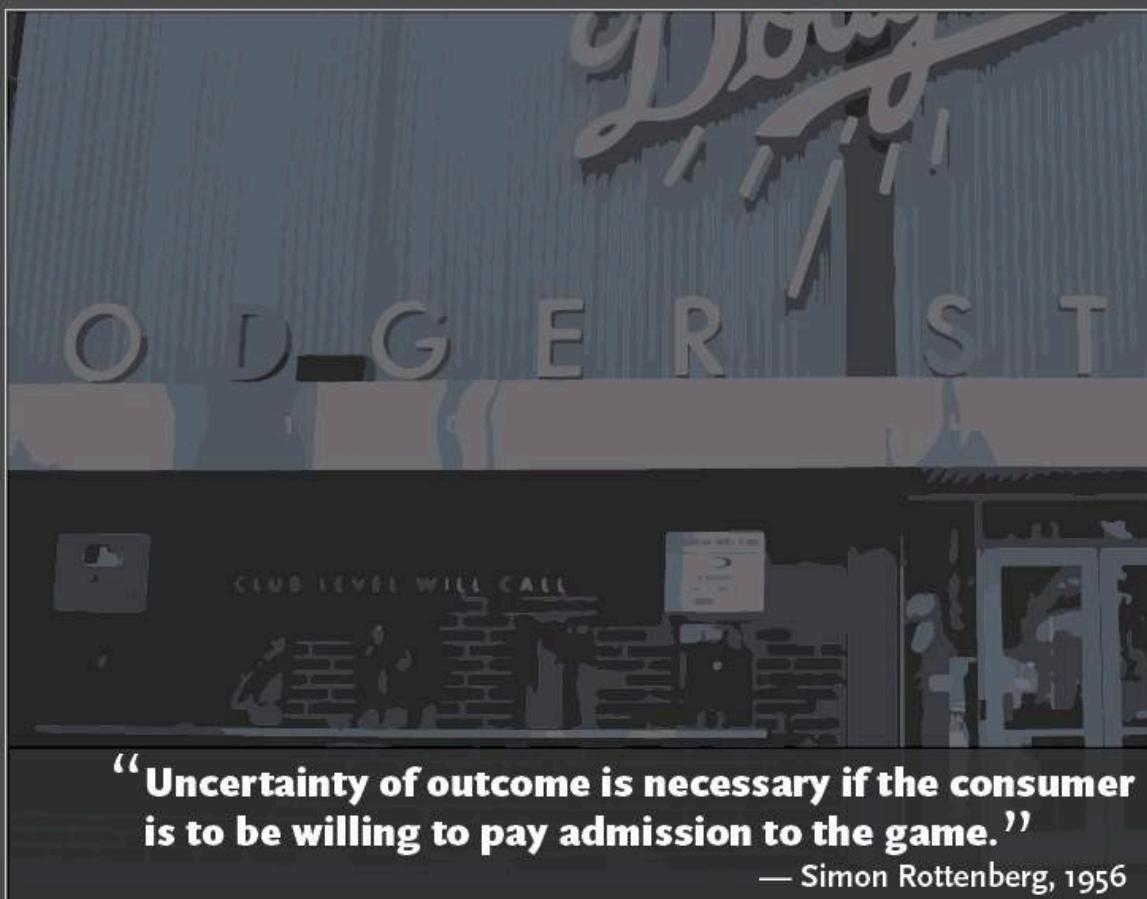
From a game outcome perspective — whether teams win — managers should be indifferent if a baserunner steals when the expected change in runs is zero. The model suggests baserunners are too conservative.

Written narrative

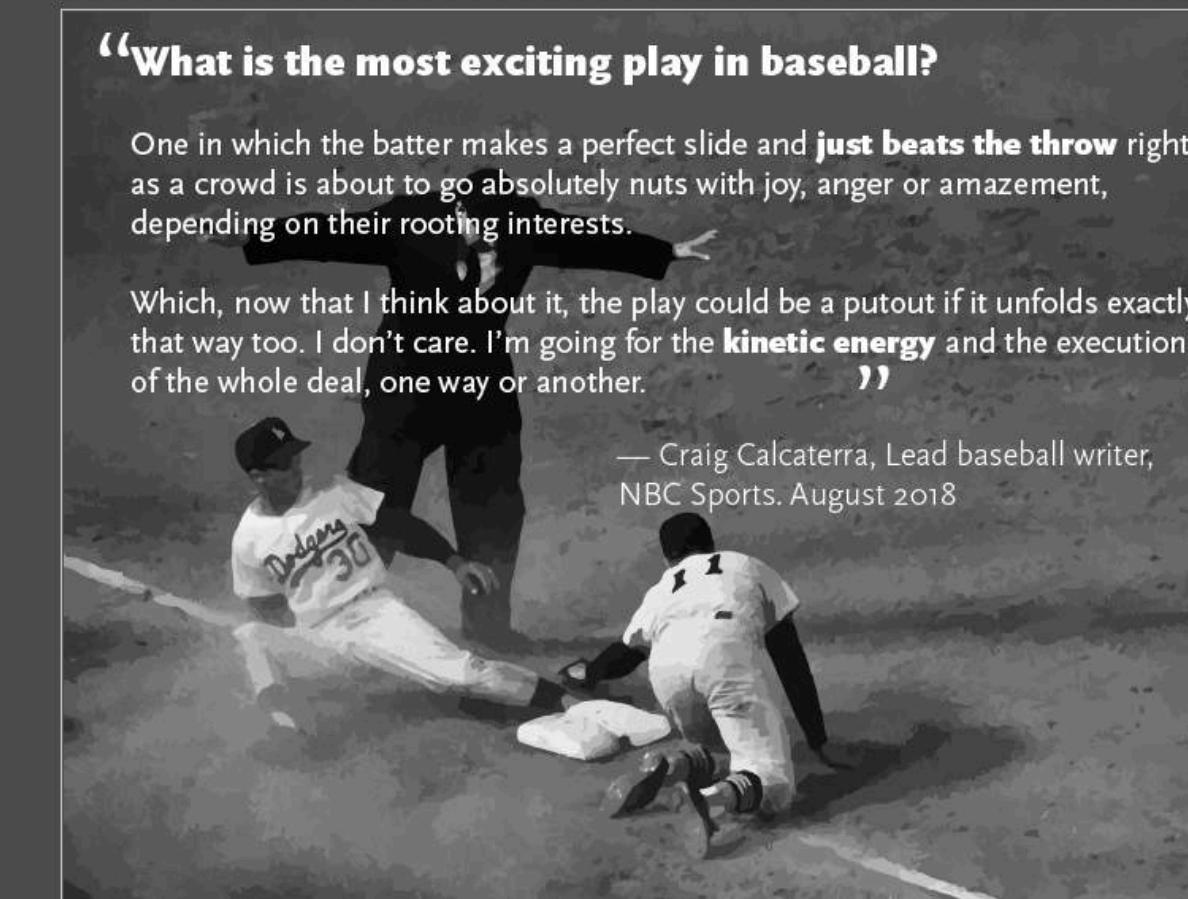
Among teams, we were only average in attempting Calcaterra’s most exciting play in baseball. Following the model, our baserunners will know to steal more often, when the outcome is less certain, but the probability still favors our team.

We still have room to take more risks, to give consumers more uncertainty in what happens, to entice more fans into seats.

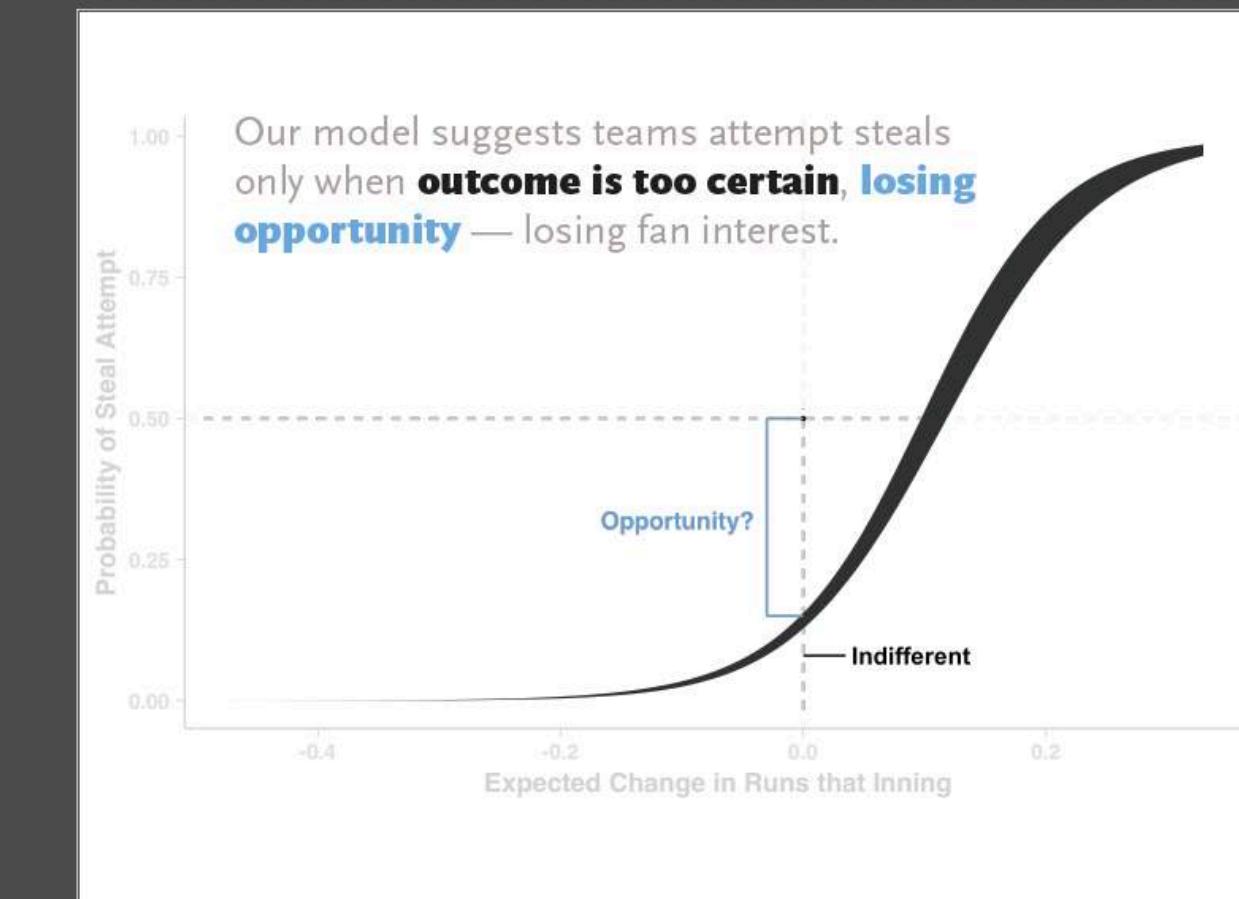
Storyboarding something relevant, with insight, from our preliminary results



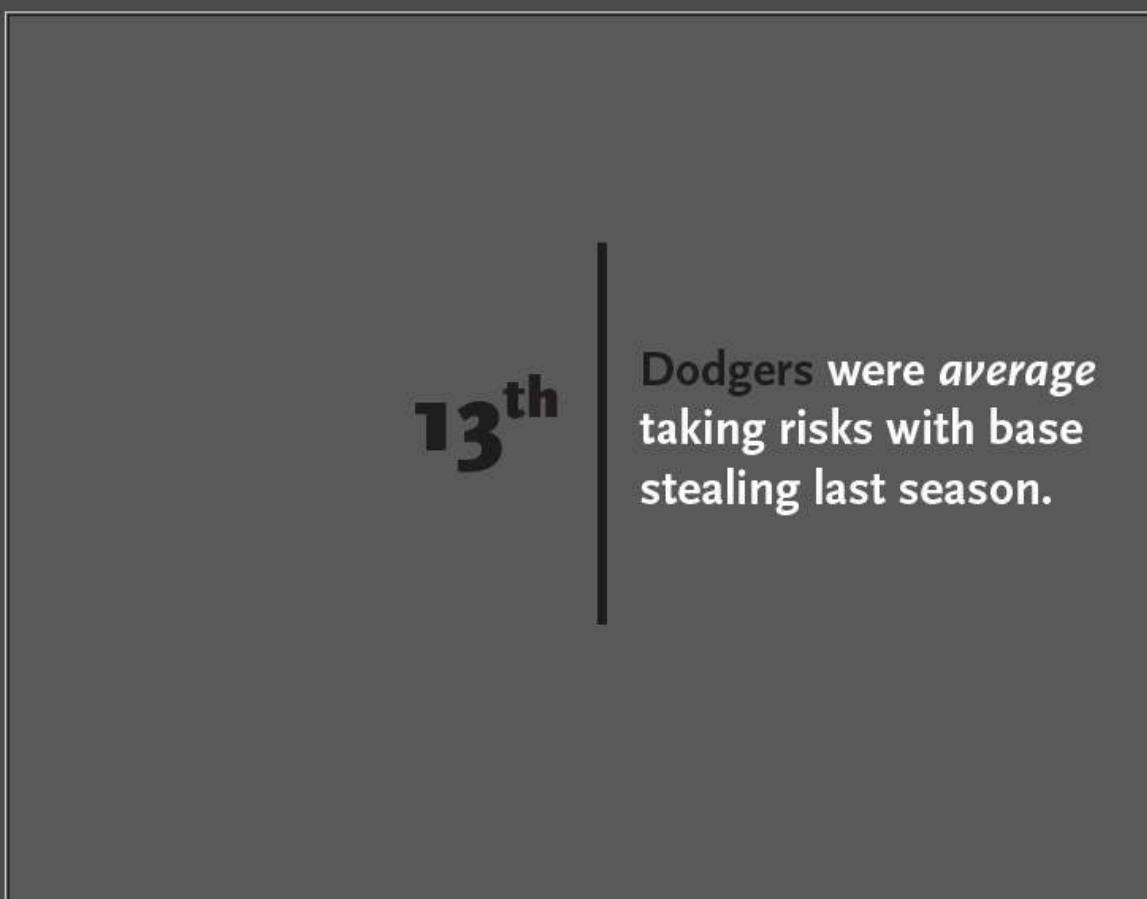
1



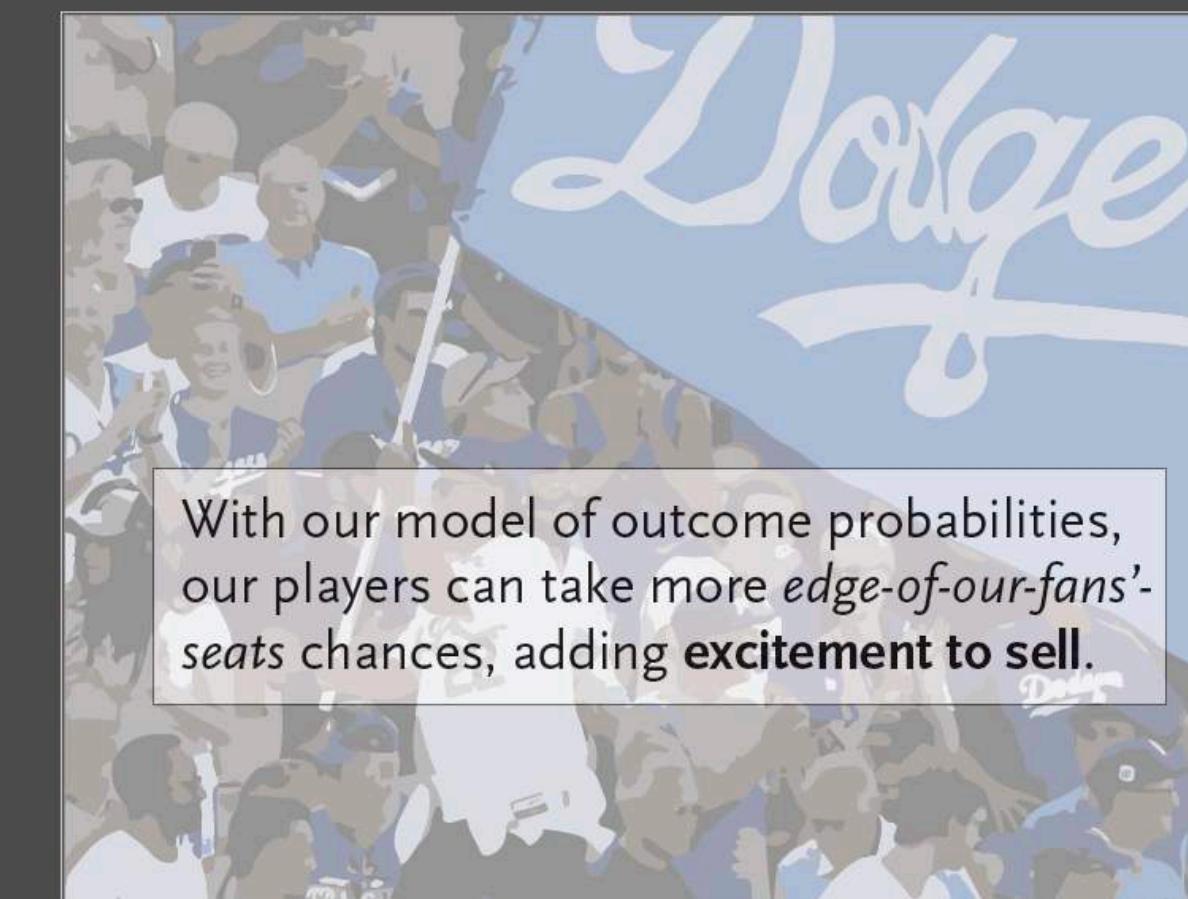
2



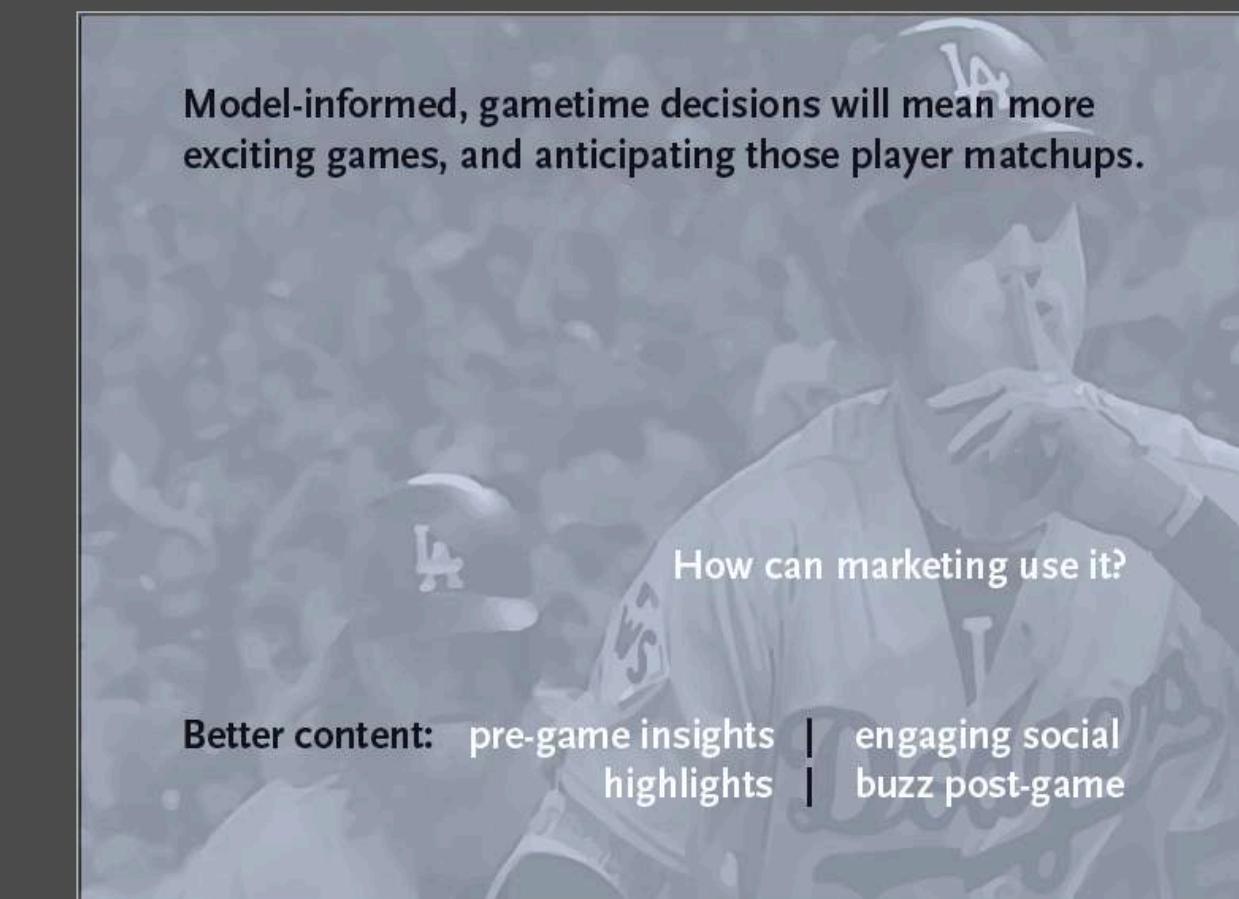
3



4



5



6

Did we show any change? Consider Duarte's tool.

What is

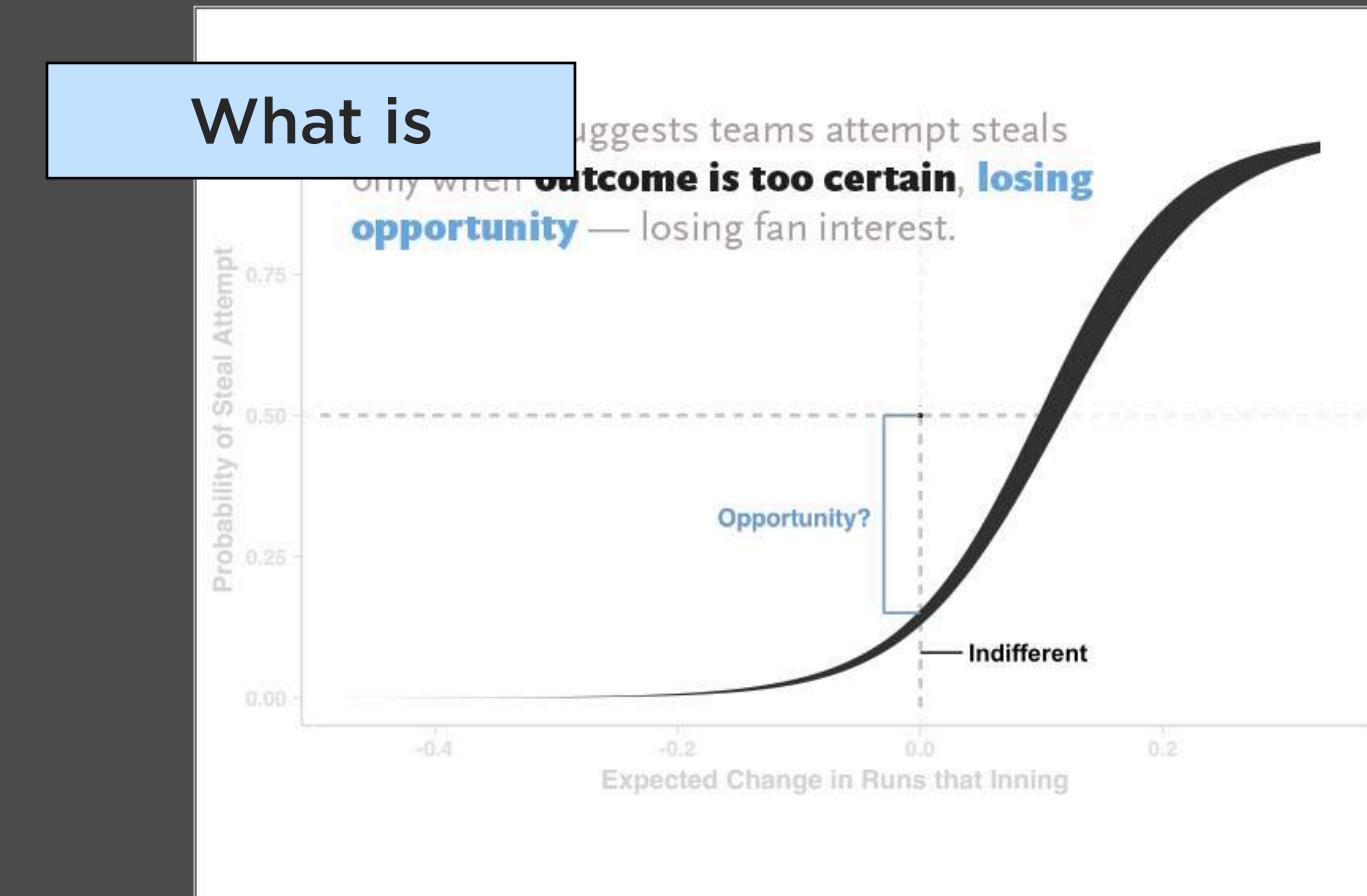
“Uncertainty of outcome is necessary if the consumer is to be willing to pay admission to the game.”
— Simon Rottenberg, 1956

1

“What is the most exciting play in baseball?”
What is? What could be?

Just beats the throw right as a crowd is about to go absolutely nuts with joy, anger or amazement, depending on their rooting interests.
Which, now that I think about it, the play could be a putout if it unfolds exactly that way too. I don't care. I'm going for the **kinetic energy** and the execution of the whole deal, one way or another.
— Craig Calcaterra, Lead baseball writer, NBC Sports. August 2018

2



3

What is

13th

Dodgers were *average* taking risks with base stealing last season.

What could be

With our model of outcome probabilities, our players can take more *edge-of-our-fans'-seats* chances, adding **excitement to sell**.

4

What could be

, gametime decisions will mean more and anticipating those player matchups.

How can marketing use it?

Better content: pre-game insights | engaging social highlights | buzz post-game

5

6

One approach to structuring this example. Are there other ways to arrange the narrative?

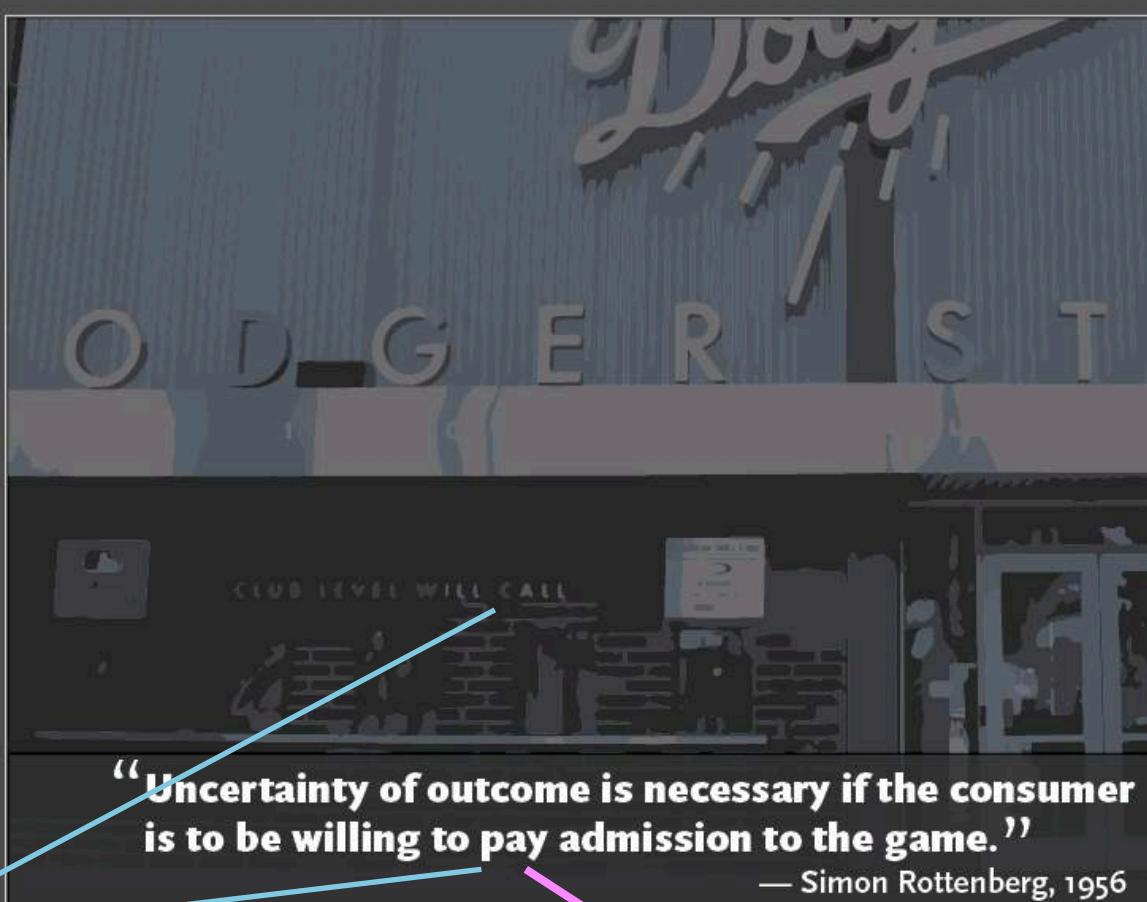
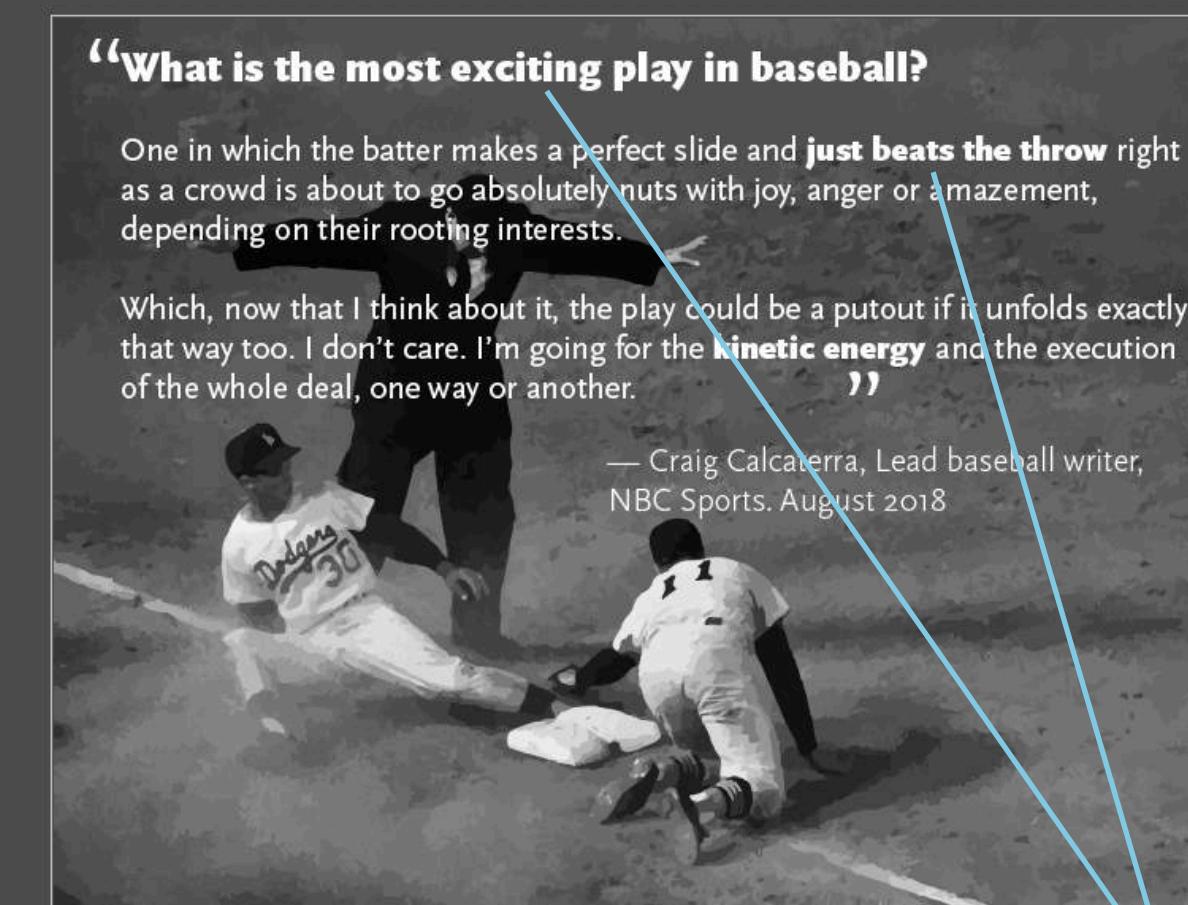
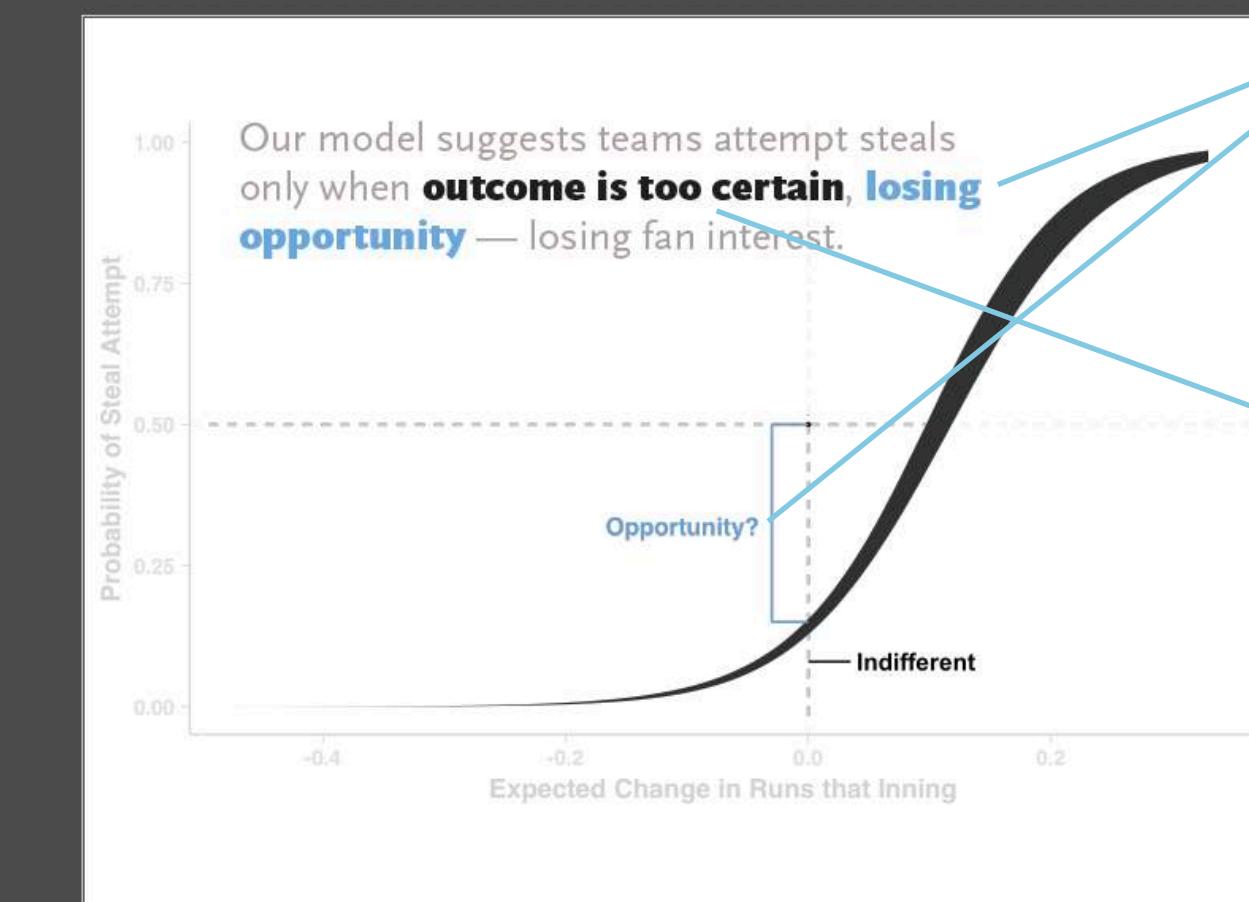


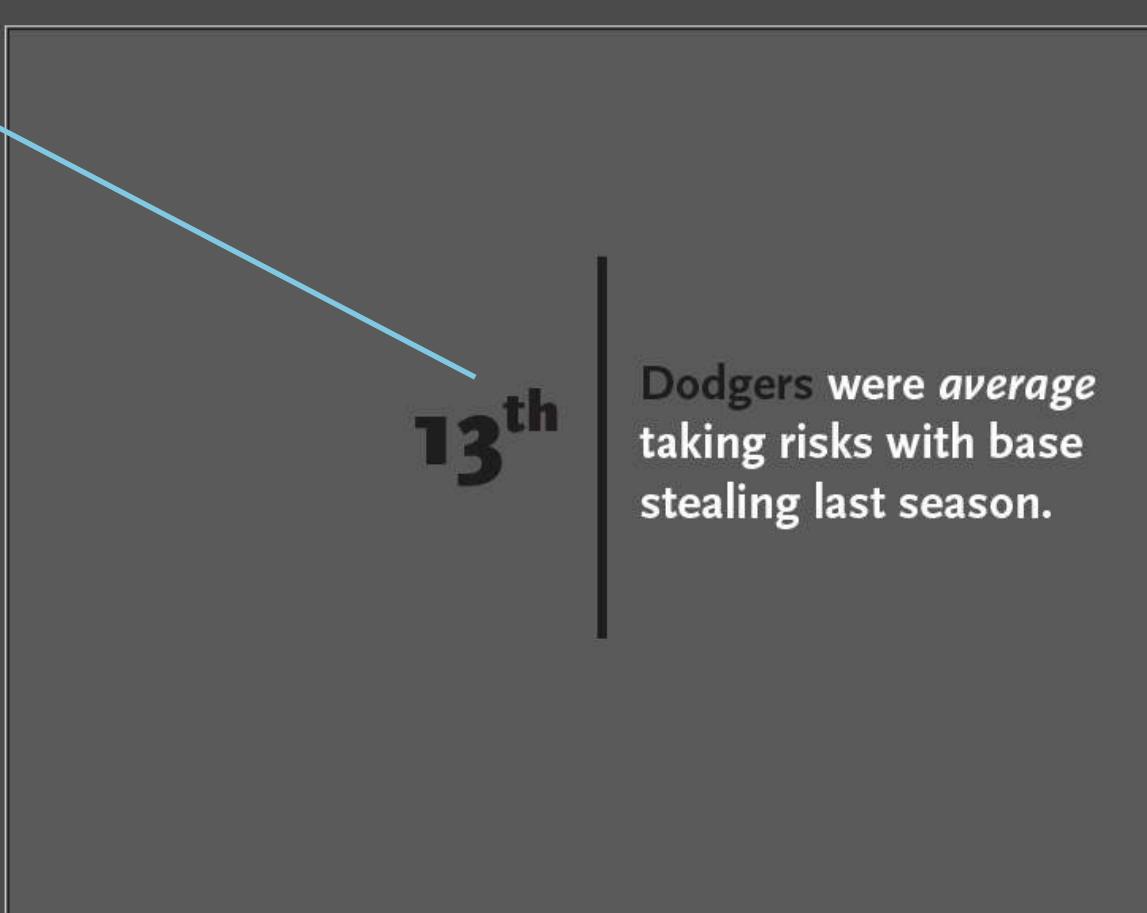
Illustration congruent with words



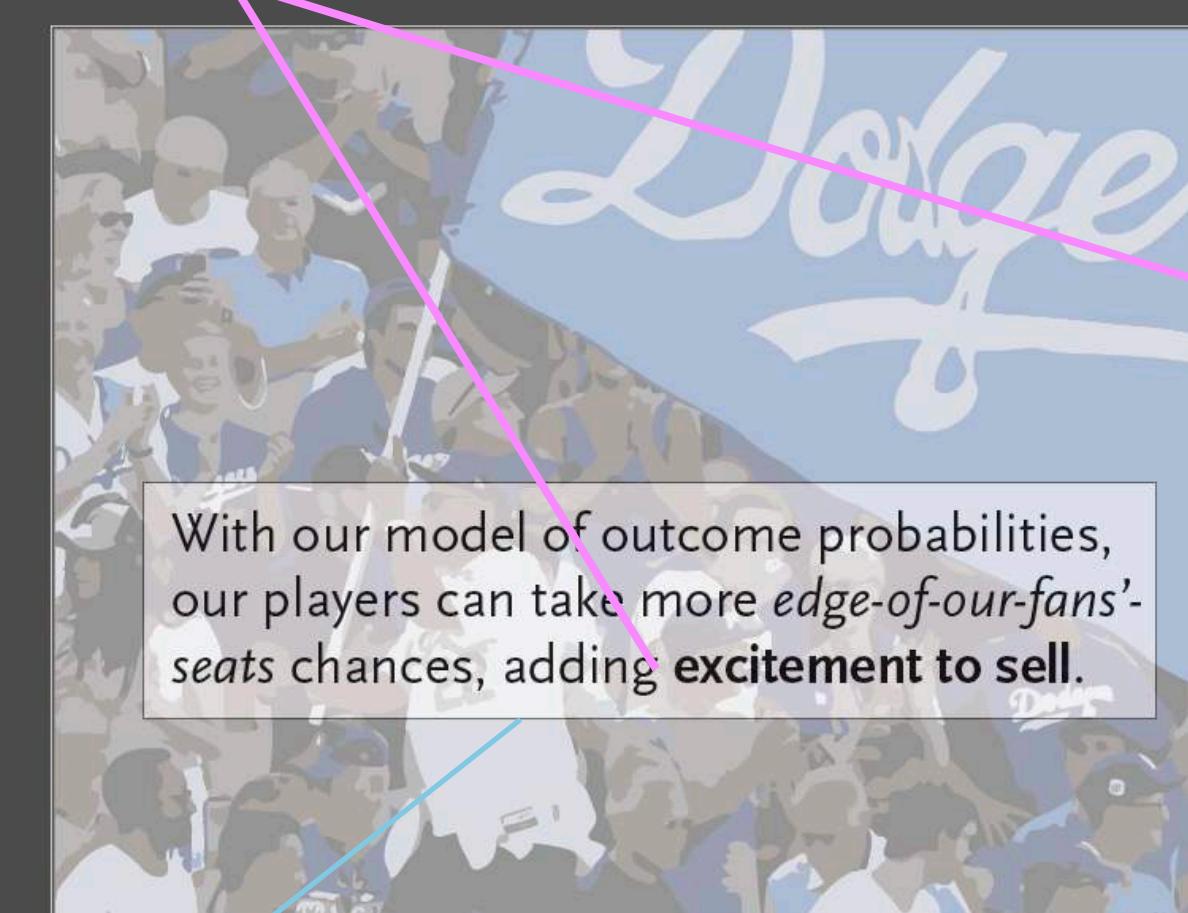
Rhetorical question, answered



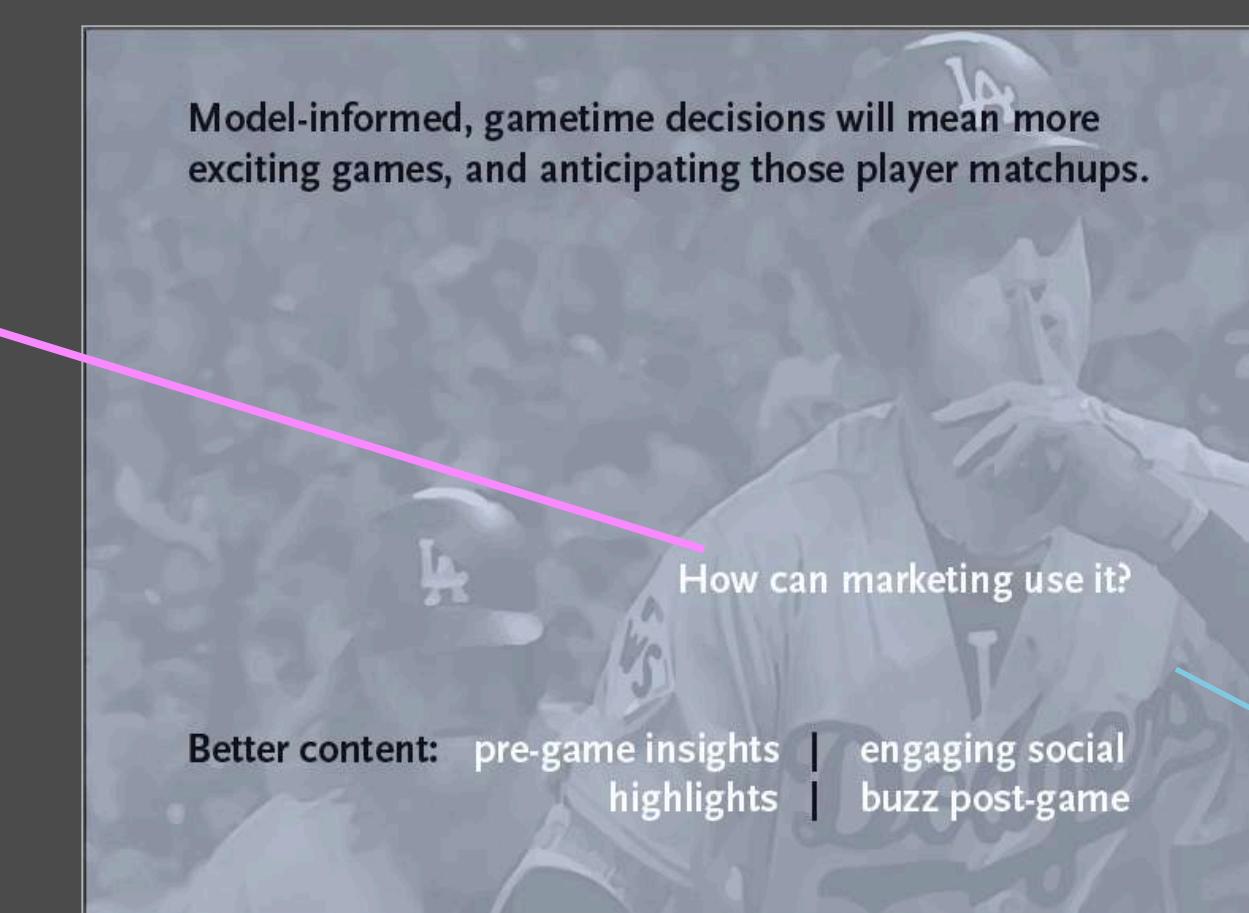
Color relates words to data display



Climax or peak (analytics)



Falling action or release (solution)



Rising action or initial (problem)

Imagining a storyboard for *The Next Rembrandt*



Visual narrative

1



Written narrative

We should market ourselves as data-driven, forward-thinking, and creative.

To demonstrate this, we created algorithms to turn paintings into data, analyze it, and create an entirely new painting perhaps indistinguishable from the master, Rembrandt. This one. It's new, not a copy.

Curious about how we researched, developed, and created something entirely new, and can touch, from data?

2



3



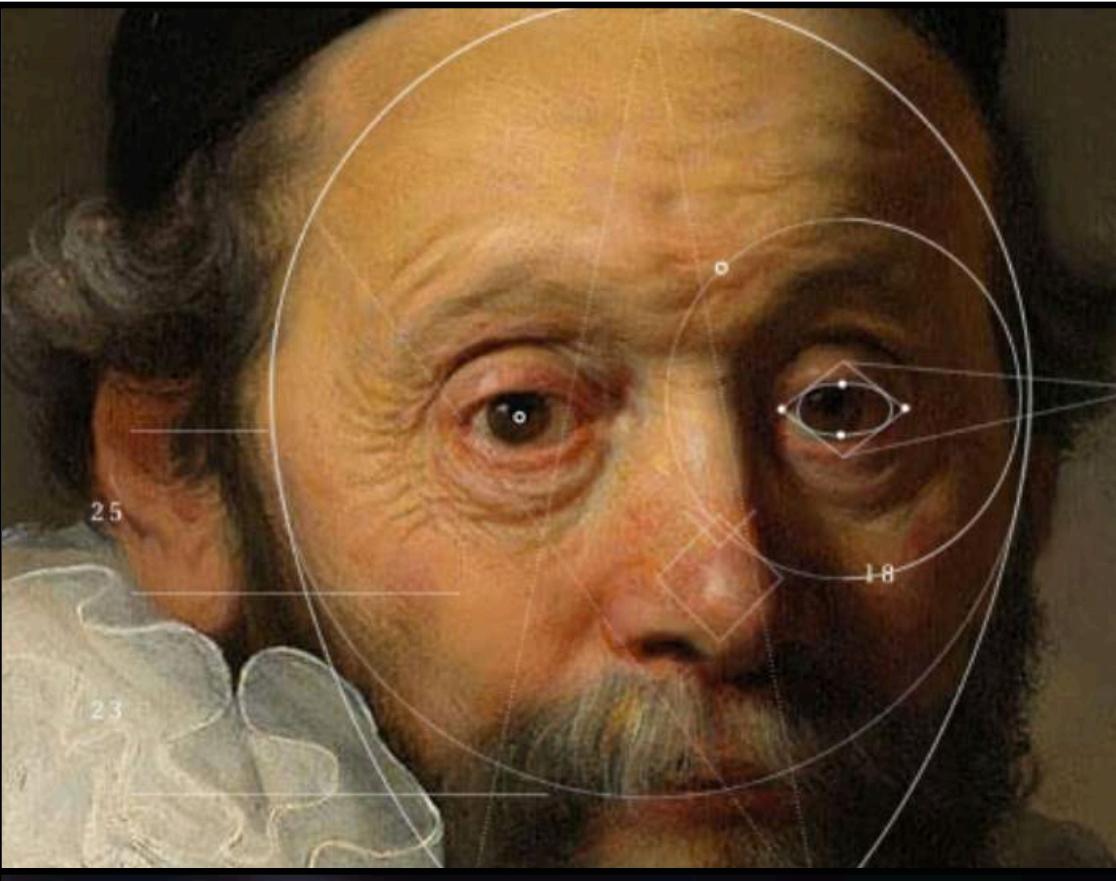
First we gathered a extensive pool of data. Perhaps to some, a large collection of paintings are not data. But we partnered with museums to collect many of Rembrandt's works.

Our analysis of these works — these data — helped us understand how to paint like Rembrandt.

With these paintings, we coded and trained an algorithm to see what we can see through our own eyes, to identify the subject of each painting, to learn the demographics of this master painter's focus.

Visual narrative

4



5



6



Written narrative

That wasn't enough. Then, our algorithm identified the features of his subjects, like the shape of the face and eyes.

To make a painting like Rembrandt, though, we would need it to look and feel like his originals. Paintings have texture and depth. We measured the actual depth of his paint strokes on each of the works we collected, turning messy, real-world information into structured data for our algorithm.

After transforming the data generated by our algorithm, we were able to create the new painting by feeding it back into a 3D printer.

We apply this same dedication using technology to inform our customers. We can do even more with data for our clients. Let's make them curious about how we can use data to create solutions for them.

Questions for discussion.

Do you see a beginning, middle, and end? Where?

Where, in the visual-text combinations, do you see comparisons or contrasts or change?

What other structure or ideas that we've learned in class so far do you see?

Why might it be more or less useful to only have images, or only have words?

Why might it be helpful to hear additional context in, say, a written narrative?

Storyboarding tips

1

Focus on the outcome of your persuasion. What are you trying to persuade your audience to think or do differently?

2

Include storytelling tools in your storyboard. In the beginning, middle or end of your narrative, include one of the tactics described in class to help you connect emotionally with your audience.

3

Combine images, graphs, and headlines to tell your story. Make it easy for the reader to follow your story by using less copy and more instantly “telegraph” images, graphs and headlines.

4

Include your written narrative. The slide images, data, and copy may not be clear enough to tell your story; tell us your written narrative (e.g., what you would say) beside the visual.

5

Use real data and, as needed, strong supporting images. Do the analysis required to tell your story, show the key data. If your story depends on the images, then you should absolutely find them to make a bigger impact.

“It’s hard to have a story if nothing moves or nothing changes.”

- Jonathan Corum: the science graphics editor at The New York Times and founder of 13pt LLC, an information design studio.

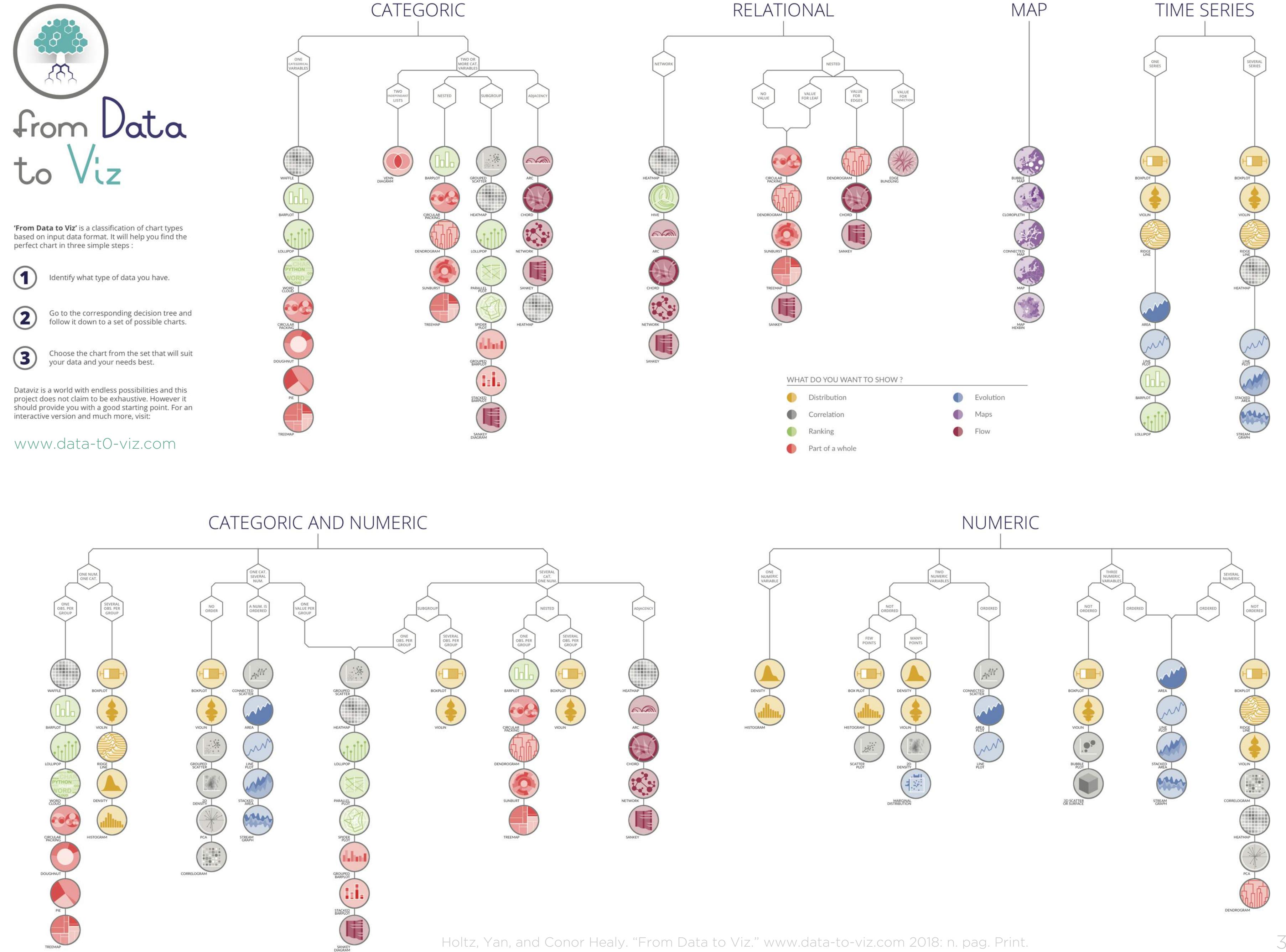


A resource for making data visuals for your storyboard



from Data to Viz, Winner, Information is Beautiful Award

Holtz & Healy



Conveying comparison and change, examples in data visuals

Example of comparison in Malofiej award-winning data story.

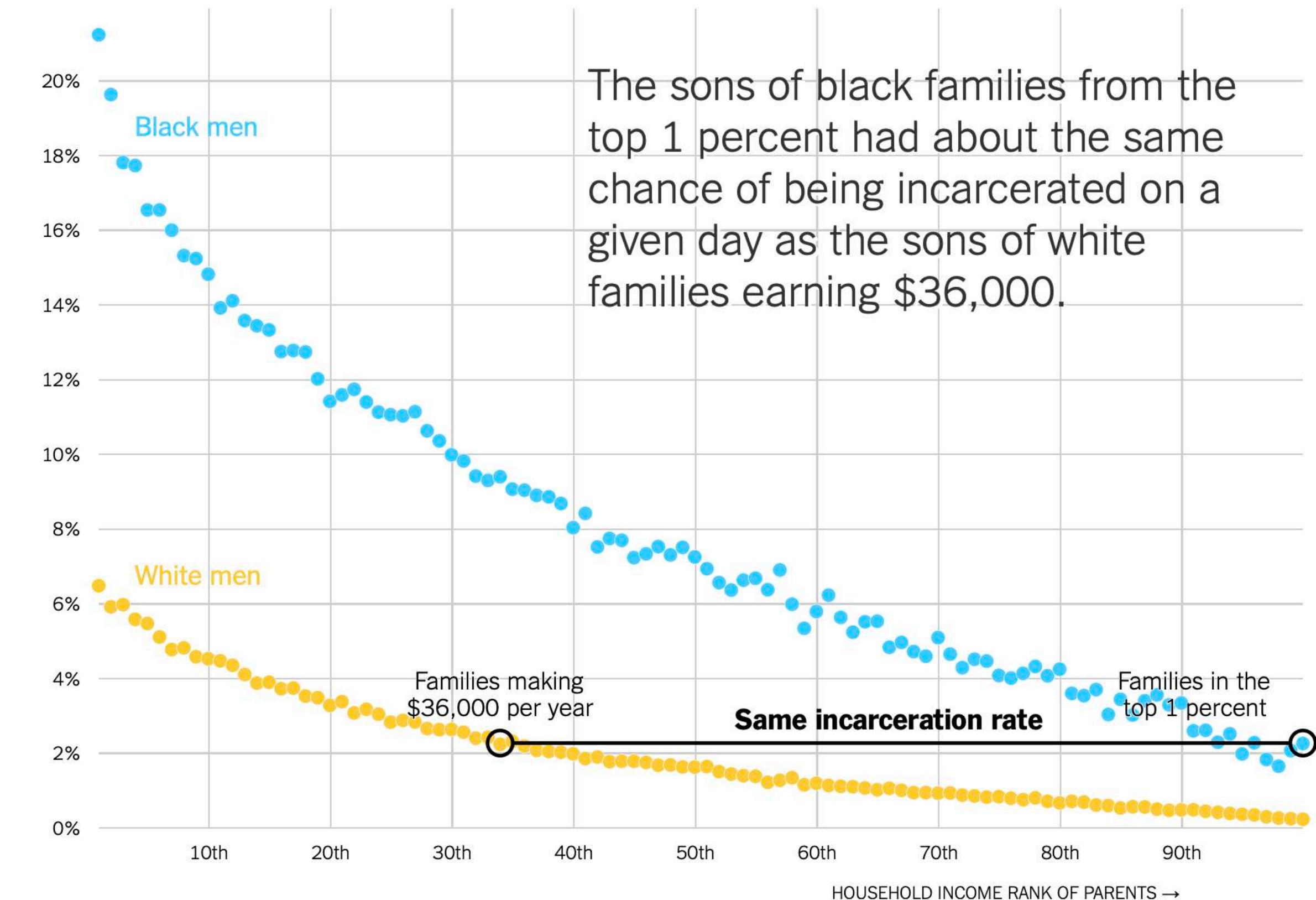


Extensive Data Shows Punishing Reach of Racism for Black Boys

Badger, co-authors

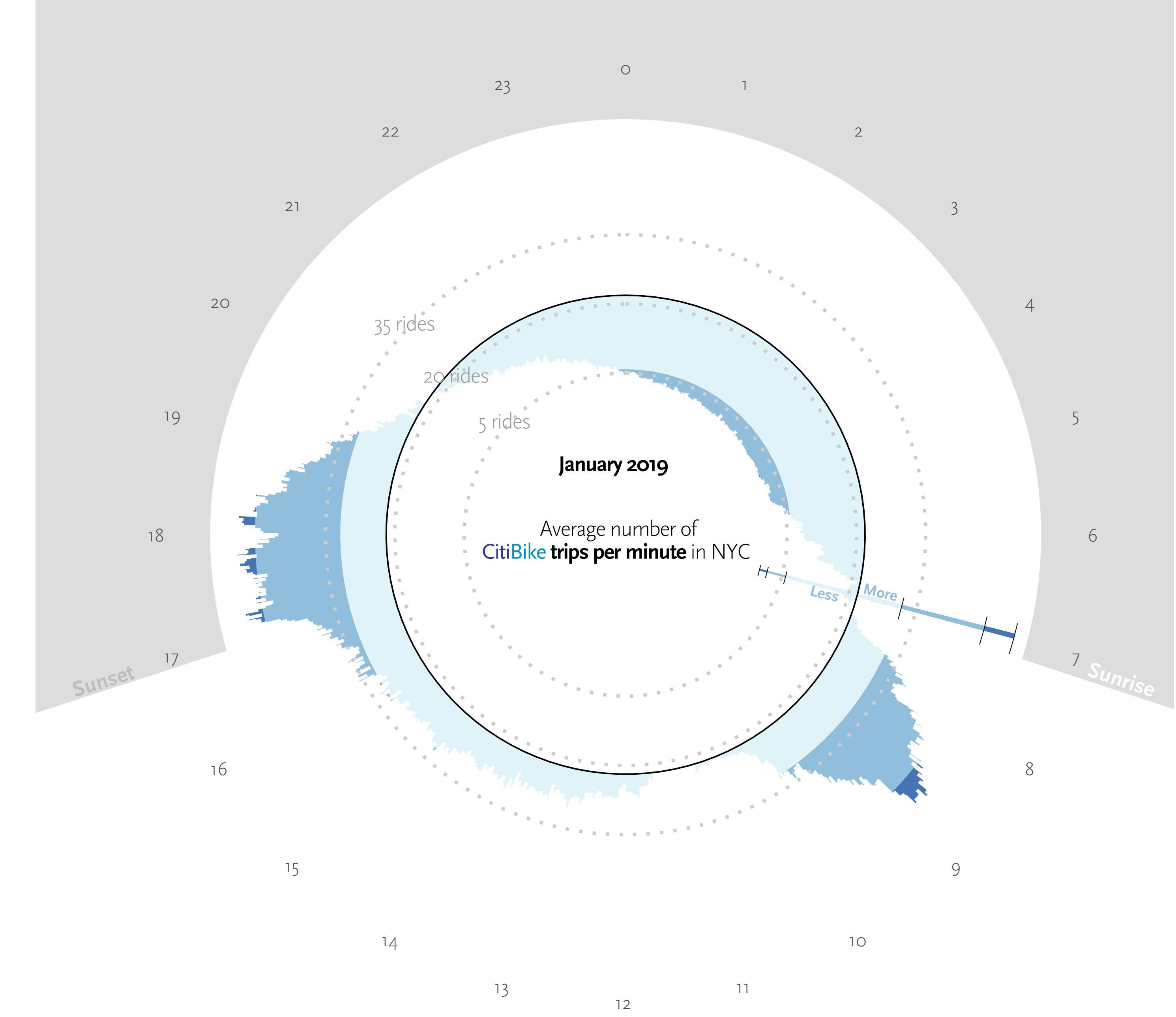
Emily writes about cities and urban policy for The Upshot from the Washington bureau. She's particularly interested in housing, transportation and inequality — and how they're all connected. She joined the Times in 2016 from The Washington Post.

Share of the men incarcerated on April 1, 2010



Includes men who were ages 27 to 32 in 2010.

Revisiting CitiBike, showing temporal changes in activity



Between now and next class

For Next Week, Module 7:

Agenda next week

Next deliverable, **final** storyboard

Storytelling continued

Theory and best practices for the data visual components of an analytics story

The minimum

Corum, Jonathan. See. *Think. Design. Produce.*
28 Mar 2016. Web. <http://style.org/stdp3/>

Consider the perspective of a leading visual story designer on the process of visual data storytelling.

Tufte, E. R. (2001). Ch. 6 and 9. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information.* Graphics Press.

Understand what “data-ink” includes, how it can be maximized, and whether there are limits to the idea. Further consider the interaction that graphics and words have in a narrative, and how placement matters.

Healy, Kieran. Ch. 1, *Look at Data. Data Visualization.* 2018. Web. <https://socviz.co/>

Consider how we perceive types of data encodings and how that influences our communications.

Show and ask

Show and ask

Find a non-moving data visualization that is also a story—one you really like—but that you don’t know how you could make it. Share the visual on Campus Wire and explain what part you don’t know how you could make.

Learning with practice

Aside from your assigned projects, briefly describe one of your attempts in the past week to use any of the techniques we have discussed in the course.

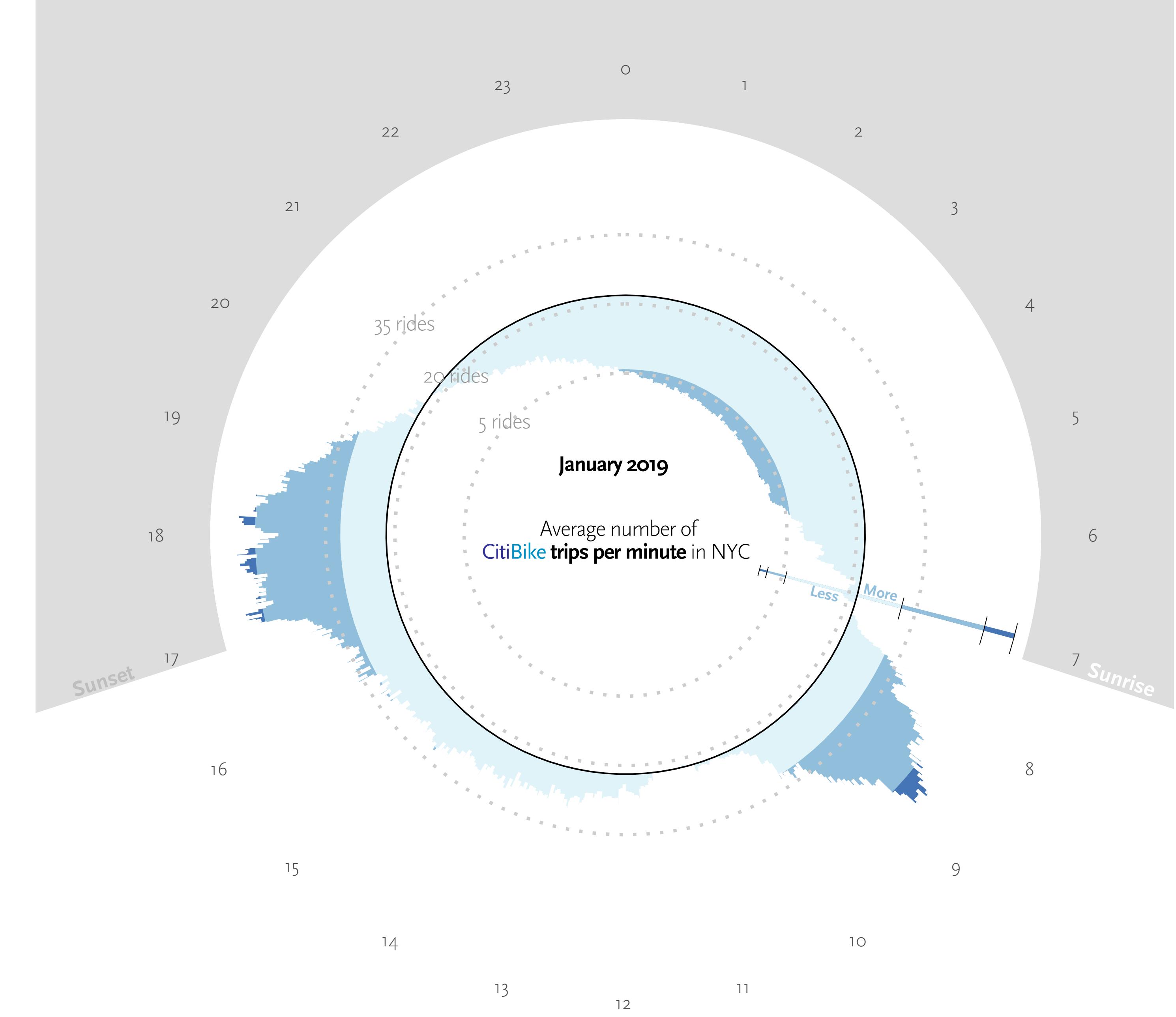
See you
next week!



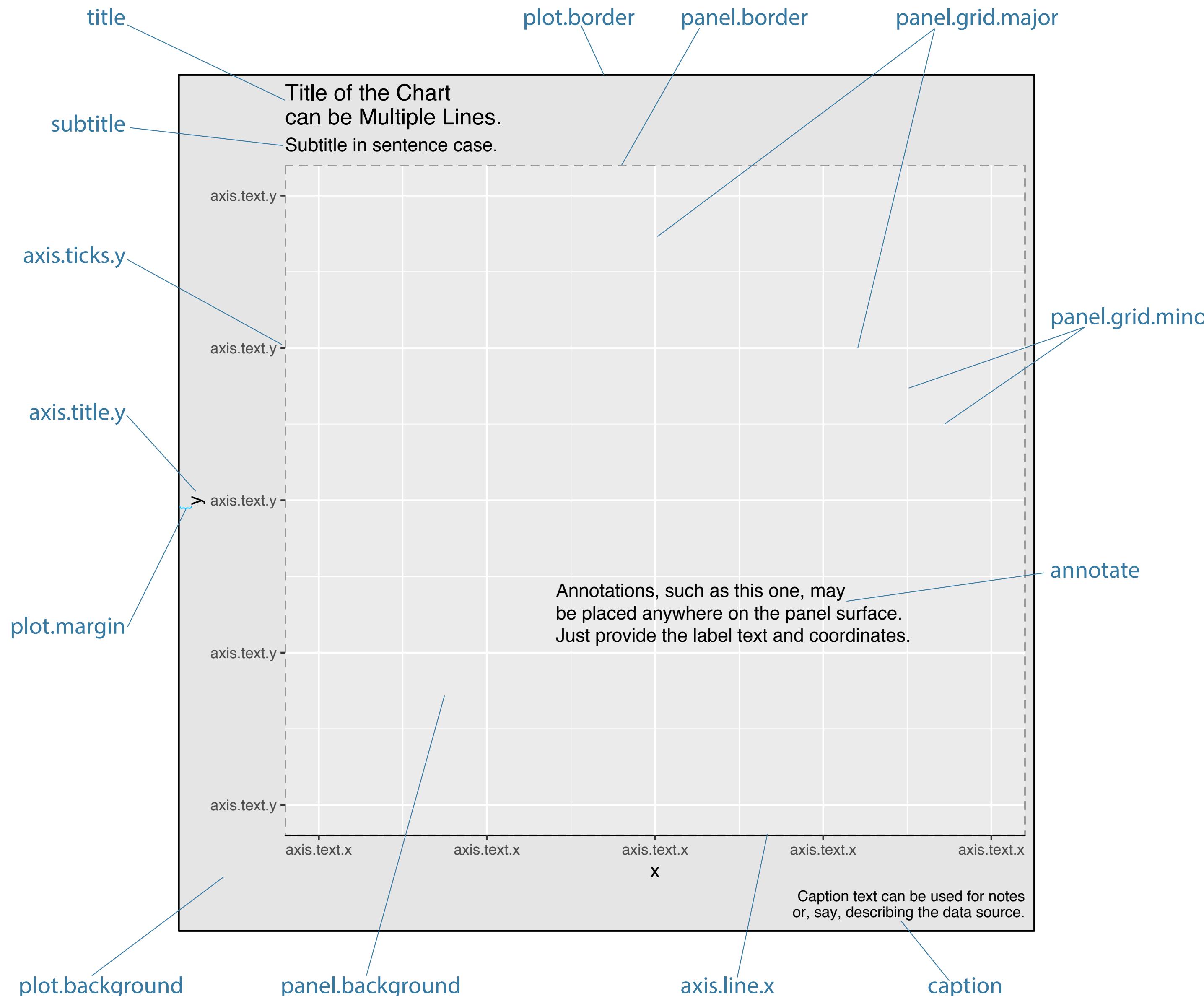
Creating graphics, a short, partial intro

Todo: Maybe delete this
section for now, is bonus
material if have time.
Otherwise it goes in lecture
with graphics.

**Think about
graphics as layers:
here, a white
layer partly masks
the band of blues**



First, think visually in describing the graphic. Then create the layers.



```
# load grammar of graphics  
library(ggplot2)
```

```
p <-
```

```
# functions for data ink
```

```
ggplot(data = <data>,  
       mapping = aes(<aesthetic> = <variable>,  
                     <aesthetic> = <variable>,  
                     <...> = <...>) +  
       geom_<type>(<...>) +  
       scale_<mapping>_<type>(<...>) +  
       coord_<type>(<...>) +  
       facet_<type>(<...>) +  
       <...> +
```

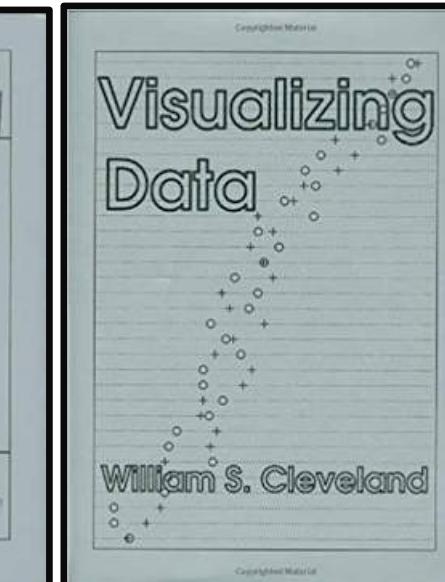
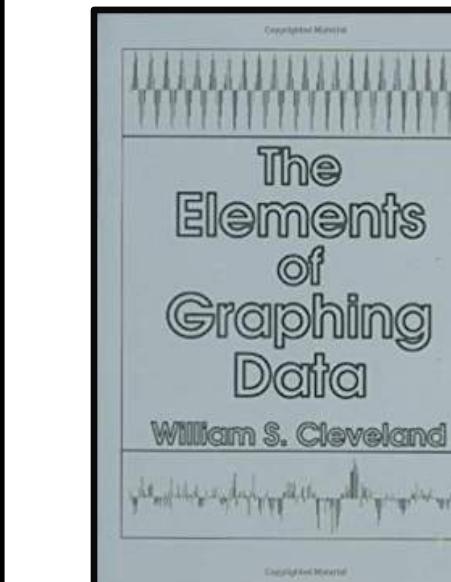
```
# functions for non-data ink
```

```
labs(<...>) +  
theme(<...> = <...>) +  
annotate(<...>) +  
<...>
```

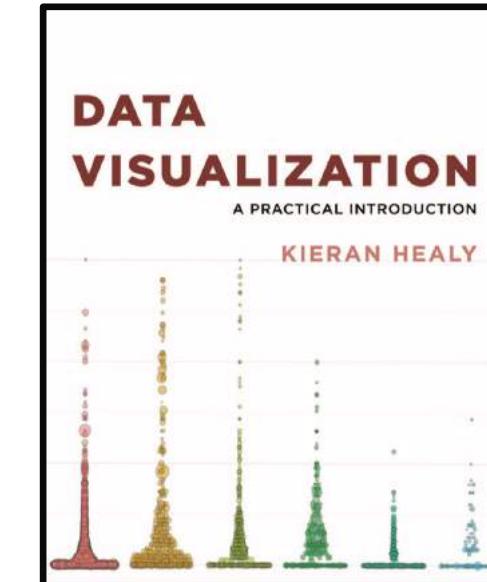
```
element_blank()  
element_line(<...> = <...>)  
element_rect(<...> = <...>)  
element_text(<...> = <...>)
```

Learning & References

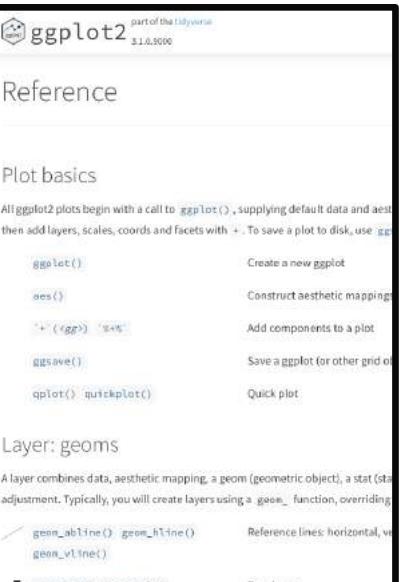
---- visual relationships in data ----



Implementation in R



ggplot reference



socviz.co

ggplot2.tidyverse.org