DATA DESIGN PROCESS

This is a cheat sheet of an organised data visualisation design process. We assume here that you either already have data to work with or will gather some on your own after step one.

STAGE	STEP	QUESTIONS TO ANSWER & TO-DO LIST
INVENTION *What should I do with this data?*	*profile the* **AUDIENCE**	- Who are they? What do they care about? - How familiar are they with the topic at hand? - How comfortable are they with charts and graphs?
	find the **FOCUS**	- Go through the 5Ws in your data—*What, Who, When, Where and Why*—on aggregate level first, then zoom in - Write a *headline* with the insights you uncover - Will it resonate with the specific project audience?
ARRANGEMENT & STYLE *What should the data story look like?*	*look for* **INSPIRATION**	- Browse through design websites (Pinterest, Behance, Dribbble) and visual journalism outlets (The Upshot, The Graphic Detail, FiveThirtyEight) - Create a *mood board* for the project with both charts and other visual elements (colour, pictures, typafaces) - Keep an *inspirations folder* for the future
	SKETCH	- Draw your design ideas on paper - Share this initial sketch with your team or client
	work in a **SOFTWARE**	- Create all elements you sketched out in black and white - Create a layout grid and place all charts on it - Add style when appropriate (colour, typefaces, icons) - When you think you are done, ask yourself: is there anything else I can remove?
DELIVERY *Time to show the data to others!*	*ask for* **FEEDBACK**	Collect at least one person's feedback on your work. Here are the questions you could ask them: - Where are your eyes drawn first? - What did you learn? What do you think is the message of this graphic? - What works well? Is anything unclear or misleading? - What features help you interpret what's going on? - Does the visual invite you to learn more?
	ITERATE	- Try out every idea that pops up in your head Do not delete the different variations you create; place them next to each other to compare and decide what works best - If you get stuck, look for more inspiration
	PUBLISH	Share your work and be proud!