

Visual storytelling on a budget

Beth Renneisen

Presented at the Renaissance Journalism Center, "Seizing the Moment"

August 28, 2009

INTRO: See Info graphics.mov on history of graphics (attached)

Petroglyphs (slide 2) are images incised in rock, usually by prehistoric, especially Neolithic, peoples. They were an important form of pre-writing symbols, used in communication from approximately 10,000 B.C.E. to modern times, depending on culture and location. Some researchers have noticed the resemblance of different styles of petroglyphs across different continents; while it is expected that all people would be inspired by their surroundings, it is harder to explain the common styles. This could be mere coincidence, an indication that certain groups of people migrated widely from some initial common area, or indication of a common origin. Other, more controversial, explanations are mostly grounded in Jungian psychology and the views of Mircea Eliade. According to these theories it is possible that the similarity of petroglyphs (and other atavistic or archetypal symbols) from different cultures and continents is a result of the genetically inherited structure of the human brain.

Slide 3: Probably the best statistical graphic ever drawn, this map by Charles Joseph Minard portrays the losses suffered by **Napoleon's army in the Russian campaign of 1812**. Beginning at the Polish-Russian border, the thick band shows the size of the army at each position. The path of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in the bitterly cold winter is depicted by the dark lower band, which is tied to temperature and time scales at bottom.

Slide 4: USAToday ventures into color graphics

Remaining slides illustrate types of informational graphic presentations.

TIPS and Talking points

Extreme example of presenting numerical information:

<http://labs.digg.com>

Example Web sites using visuals well, with major and minor resources:

<http://www.latimes.com/> (New design makes multimedia hard to find, sorry)

<http://missionlocal.org/> (Look at photography and multimedia tabs)

For PHOTOS, clip art, etc.

Logo and graphics generator: (Can be corny, but useful with good taste!)

<http://cooltext.com>

<http://missionlocal.org/> (for simple clip art example of icons)

Microsoft clip art:

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=free+clip+art&FORM=MFEIMG&PUBL=Google&CREA=userid17438a18f318c7f8943e9ea08dc75a486ad3>

Good places for royalty-free photos: (narrow your search as much as possible)

<http://www.dreamstime.com/>

EXAMPLE OF COST:

Designers? 1. Register for free and access the **lowest prices** for **Royalty-Free stock photography**. 2. Buy credits for downloading stock photos; **high-resolution stock images** can reach as low as **\$0.20** each. 3. Immediately download from our huge collection of **royalty free images**. Thousands of **stock photos** added weekly!

iStockphoto.com (especially good for objects on white backgrounds, scenes)

<http://www.istockphoto.com/index.php>

What are these credit things anyway?

Credits are iStock's very own currency. Purchase credits and spend them whenever you download a file. The credit cost of any file depends on its size or complexity. Pay-as-you-go credits expire one year from the date you buy them.

\$.24 to \$.95 per credit, depending on your status. Xsmall to large = 1-8 credits

Corbis royalty free (The best, but very expensive \$75 minimum)

<http://pro.corbis.com/Search/SearchResults.aspx?q=turtles>

Fotosearch (good for people)

<http://www.fotosearch.com>

MAPPING

My simple Google map: (Note colored lines can be drawn and map points added)

with Edit feature)

<http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&tab=wl> (go to My Maps, and Fairfax location)

How to do a screenshot: Caps lock, CMD, Shift, 4. Drag target to surround image. Image will appear on desktop as "Picture 1." Open in PS, save to correct proportions and file type.

Google map mashups (Can also be done via Google, this is easier)

Zee maps tutorial:

<http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/zeemaps/>

Zee map example:

kdmc-zeemaps.pdf (look for this doc here)

Other maps:

PDF map example (Mission St. map, could be used in print, also, could be made from any page layout program)

<http://missionlocal.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/mission-mappdf062909.pdf>

Google maps traffic example LA Times:

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/technology/2009/08/la-socal-street-traffic-now-visible-on-google-maps.html>

Other helpful Google info:

Google fair use statement:

<http://www.google.com/permissions/geoguidelines.html>

Google outreach for non-profits:

<http://earth.google.com/outreach/index.html>

VIDEO

Ken Burns effect, simulated motion, ambient sound -- LA Times

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/photography/la-p2p-venice-video,0,4370677.htmlstory>

Selection of good professional videos:

<http://kobreguide.com/>

Interesting format: (Combines magazine feel with multimedia)

<http://www.flypmedia.com/>

REFERENCES

Alternative weeklies design award winner:

<http://www.aan.org/alternative/Aan/ViewArticle?oid=157133>

Good basic news design guide, useful for print and Web basics

The Newspaper Designer's Handbook, 6th Edition. Tim Harrower

Best tutorials on any program online (Paid, about \$25 per month)

<http://www.lynda.com>

Good sources of color trends and palletes:

<http://www.colourlovers.com/>

Color: A course in mastering the art of mixing colors, Betty Edwards, 2004

Good overview of type use:

Thinking with Type, Ellen Lupton, 2004.

Organizations with helpful information:

Society for News Design: <http://www.snd.org/>

Visual editors classroom: <http://visualeditors.ning.com/>

Poynter Institute: <http://www.poynter.org/>