| 1 | Visualise | 2 | Package | 3 | Communicate present and follow up |

The Basics

TOOL: Basic Data Visualisation and Communication terms

Data visualisations

[What Is Data Visualisation? Definition, Examples, And Learning Resources](#)

Data visualisation is not only essential for exposing patterns in large datasets but is also very key for communicating findings. Along with data visualisation is data storytelling (the art of communicating ideas through stories). [Research](#) has shown that data storytelling allows visualisations to effectively reveal information.

Data Visualisation

A data visualisation is a visual display of measured quantities by means of the combined use of a coordination system, points, lines, shapes, digits, letters quantified by visual attributes.

Infographic (information graphic)

An infographic is a visual representation of information, data (statistical, text, geospatial, etc) or knowledge in a way that can support, strengthen, present or explain complex information in a way that can quickly lead to insight and better understanding. [More about infographics and examples.](#)

See here an insightful [discussion](#) about data visualisation and information graphics.

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TOOL: Checklist – Key points to consider

Reflections Before Picking a Data Visualization or Communication Tool

Putting critical thought into how you intend to unveil/present information is key to deriving impact from it: This is especially true when dealing with decision/policymakers who do not have a lot of time to digest lengthy and complicated (especially health-related findings) documents. There is a vital need to think about how to communicate research project findings in ways that make it easy for the users to relate with.

The following things are **key before choosing data visualisation tools and techniques for communicating your findings:**

1. Define the **goal and purpose** for incorporating data visualisation and communication techniques.
2. Assess the **audience** in relation to the kind of content you are providing and tweak data accordingly because one size does not fit all. Start thinking of your Calls to Action (CTA) at this point.
3. Map the **team capabilities, time and technology resources** needed: to achieve the goal
4. Identify **actionable data** in your findings: key findings that need to be highlighted and establish ways to make it summarisable (e.g. categorize things, find correlations, etc) and other aspects that can be visualised.
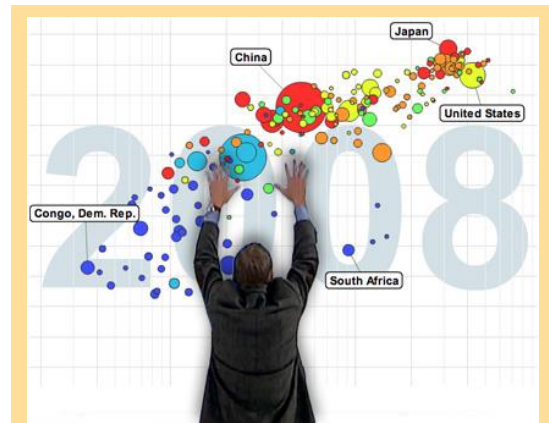
Hans Rosling, Gapminder Presentation. Source: [*gapminder.org*](gapminder.org)

💡 Knowing your data is vital for effectively communicating it, be it through text, presentations, or data visualisations. The quality of data visualisation is contingent on the strength of the data and the analysis underlying it. Hans Rosling's presentation on Gapminder is a good example of how important it is to know your data.
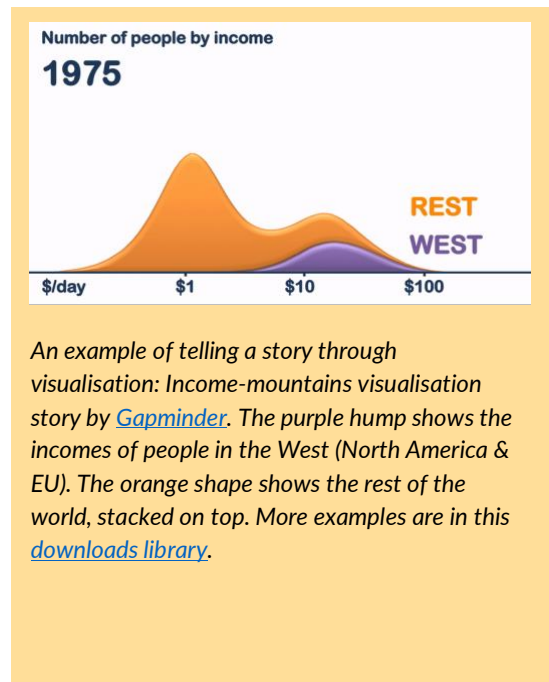
💡 If designing for a broad audience, it is best to identify the most important viewers within this group and design for them. [Data visualisation in review](#) by Jacqueline Strecker.

TOOL: Tips: How to include DV in the research project life cycle?

How to make room for data visualisation and other information design practices during your research project cycle?

1. Include creating data visualisations in your development workflow.

2. Look out for sections that can potentially be visualized. For example statistics, geo-located information points, categories of things, lists/bullet points, hierarchical information points, etc.

3. Look at other work (good examples for inspiration).

4. Tell a story: A visualisation is a powerful tool, but to tell a story, there is a need for the DV to be augmented with other means of communication: written text, audio, video, links to more information, etc. Storytelling features often include providing different views of the same data features to make them easier to understand, guiding the user through the story, highlighting, arrows, and other features.

5. At this point, it is also important to think of the communication products you want to produce as these will inform your visuals choice. Options include factsheets, interactive dashboards, presentations, videos or animations.

Number of people by income
1975
REST
WEST
$/day $1 $10 $100

An example of telling a story through visualisation: Income-mountains visualisation story by Gapminder. The purple hump shows the incomes of people in the West (North America & EU). The orange shape shows the rest of the world, stacked on top. More examples are in this downloads library.

TOOL: References: Packaging options to intuitively share findings

Other resources for intuitively sharing findings are Visualising Health: a scientifically vetted style guide to communicating health data. More about the project here.

Gapminder: an interactive alternative way to disseminate correct information (helping users realize the wrong information at their fingertips).

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