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Bridging the Gap: Collaborative Teaching of an Emerging Genre to Empower Students with Information Literacy Skills

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Bridging the Gap: Collaborative Teaching of an Emerging Genre to Empower Students with Information Literacy Skills

Hazel McClure
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Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy
Savannah, GA
August 23, 2013
Overview

- What do infographics look like? Where are they used?
- What are infographics?
- Why are they effective?
- How are infographics related to information literacy?
- What information literacy challenges and opportunities do infographics present?
- How did we collaborate and use infographics to teach information literacy concepts?
What do infographics look like?

Google+ officially claims 170m users. Commentators say it's a ghost town. Who's right?

Official stats from each channel:

- **facebook**: 901,000,000 Users
- **Google+**: 170,000,000 Users
- **LinkedIn**: 161,000,000 Users
- **Twitter**: 140,000,000 Users

We've analysed the total number of social shares from 100 online news stories across four networks: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ and averaged them according to each network's official active users.

*Data analysed before Facebook's 26 July 2012 update to 955m users

The figures show, for every 100m users, the average number likely to share a story:

- **1ST**: 197.3
- **2ND**: 41.8
- **3RD**: 15.2
- **4TH**: 6.0

How much more active each channel is compared to Google+:

- **facebook**: 2.5x
- **LinkedIn**: 7x
- **Twitter**: 33x

Total % Shares:

We've also broken these stats down into different news sectors to show how each social media platform is performing. Business stories have the highest percentage of Google+ shares, but even this is well behind the other platforms.
What do infographics look like?
Where are infographics used?

Journals

Public Relations

Social Media & Networking Sites

Marketing Campaigns

Annual Reports

Newspapers

Personal Communication

Company Websites

Newsletters
What are infographics?

- Attempt to educate an audience about a topic or issue
- Often communicate complex quantitative and/or qualitative information quickly
- Are easily navigable
- Combine data displays, lists, graphics, and other visual elements
What are infographics? (cont.)

- Use persuasive techniques to advance a point of view
- Are static
- Are stand-alone
- Present illusion of trustworthiness
Why are infographics effective?

- Quickly comprehend visual (Arnheim 1997/1969)
- Improved comprehension of information, ideas, and concepts (Smiciklas 2012)
- Retention and recall of information (Smiciklas 2012)
- Information overload (Locker & Kienzler 2012)
- “Sharability” (Smiciklas 2012)
Why teach infographics?

- Connects to previous units in the semester
  - Visual rhetoric
  - Quantitative display of information
  - Document design
  - Ethics

- Develops analysis and synthesis skills

- Prepares students for the workforce
So...what do infographics have to do with information literacy?
Traditionally...
What doesn’t change...

An Information Literate person can and does...

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally
How is “publication” is changing?

- Less formal
- Fewer costs
- Fewer gatekeepers
- More open/participatory
What does a changing information landscape mean for information literacy?

- Information life cycle has been dramatically accelerated
- Creation of it has been devalued
- Plagiarism and “borrowing” of material
- Emphasis of IL educators can no longer be solely discovery
Challenges Presented by Infographics and IL

How do we prepare our students to be information literate in an information-saturated world?

When so many infographics are constantly being generated, posted, reposted, tweeted, and retweeted, how do we encourage students to slow down and engage with the facets of information literacy?

How do educators guide students to interact with their source texts, analyze them, synthesize them, and then communicate them in their own meaningful contributions to the field?

How do we teach students to contribute to the information lifecycle in meaningful, accurate, ethical, information literate ways?
A Moment of Opportunity to Collaborate Across Disciplines
Infographic Assignment Part I

Objectives for students

- Understand the genre
- Comprehend informative and persuasive techniques
- Recognize the traits of effective document design
- Understand the rhetorical situations of infographics
- Think critically about the genre and how it functions
Infographic Assignment Part II

Objectives for students

- Understand the possibilities of the genre
- Comprehend design challenges associated with visual persuasion
- Conduct and summarize research
- Repurpose/re-present information
- Deal with inherent ethical concerns
Activity Time
Questions for Activity

- What draws your attention?
- What is cited on the infographics?
- What is not cited on the infographics?
- Who are the creators of the infographics?
- What, if any, stake do the creators have in the infographics?
- What is the purpose?
Infographics for Discussion

- How to Woo a Designer  [http://gvsu.edu/s/qu](http://gvsu.edu/s/qu)
- Cardiac Arrest  [http://gvsu.edu/s/qv](http://gvsu.edu/s/qv)
- Strong Moms  [http://gvsu.edu/s/qE](http://gvsu.edu/s/qE)
- Methods to Sell My House in the UK  [http://gvsu.edu/s/qD](http://gvsu.edu/s/qD)
- Education Before Medication, Please  [http://gvsu.edu/s/qC](http://gvsu.edu/s/qC)
The 99designs designer survey was conducted in September and October 2012 and received 2,379 responses. Survey sources include graphic designers active in 99designs’ community and graphic designers not affiliated with 99designs.

99designs is the number one online marketplace for graphic design work, with 1,400 new contests each week and $1.5 million paid out to designers each month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOST INTERESTING PLACE DESIGNERS HAVE SOURCED A CLIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community group meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant/café</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Sources: 99designs.com/customer-blog/how-to-woo-a-designer
All Rights Reserved | 99designs 2005 - 2012]
Take the StrongMoms Empowerment Pledge

It’s not easy being a mom in today’s world.

Moms face tremendous pressure to make the “perfect” parenting decisions, only to be judged or criticized by other moms. From going back to work and feeding your baby to education, discipline and bed times, everyone has an opinion.

I pledge to create a more supportive and less judgmental environment by empowering moms to feel good about the decisions they make for their children and their families.

I took the pledge to support moms

StrongMoms
EMPOWER

strongmomsempower.com

brought to you by Similac

Your First Name...

Your Email Address

Count Me In!

Your name and email will be used only to acknowledge your pledge with a confirmation email. Your information will not be stored or added to any mailing list.
Information Lifecycle of Infographics

- Consumption
- Distribution
- Redistribution
- Production
Consumption

- Implied linearity is flipped because of discovery model
- Discovery isn’t necessarily deliberate – instead, it’s serendipitous, ostensibly “easy”
- Information via infographic is seductive
- Challenges:
  - Sourcing
  - Reliability
Questions information literate citizens ask of any source:

- Who are the authors?
- What is the purpose?
- Why does this infographic exist?
- How does the creator of this information support claims?
- What interests might the creator be representing or promoting?
- Who funded this, and who has something to gain from the distribution of this information?
Production

- Current students = future employees
- Software makes production relatively easy
- Shift from consumption to production forces students to consider rhetorical dimensions, including:
  - Audience
  - Contexts
  - Purpose
- Authorship heightens responsibility to ethically use sources
Distribution

- Dissemination has changed:
  - easier
  - faster
  - fewer “gatekeepers” – the producer is often the distributor

- Double-edged sword

- Compounds ethical obligation of producer
Redistribution

- Increases potential audience exponentially through social media
- Decontextualizes information/sources/creators
- Shifts role of consumer into distributor without ever engaging as producer
Lack of Information-fluent Consumption

Poor Production

Quick Distribution

Effortless Redistribution

Worst Case Scenario

Mass Communication of Bad Information
Thank you! Questions?

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