

Infographics

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

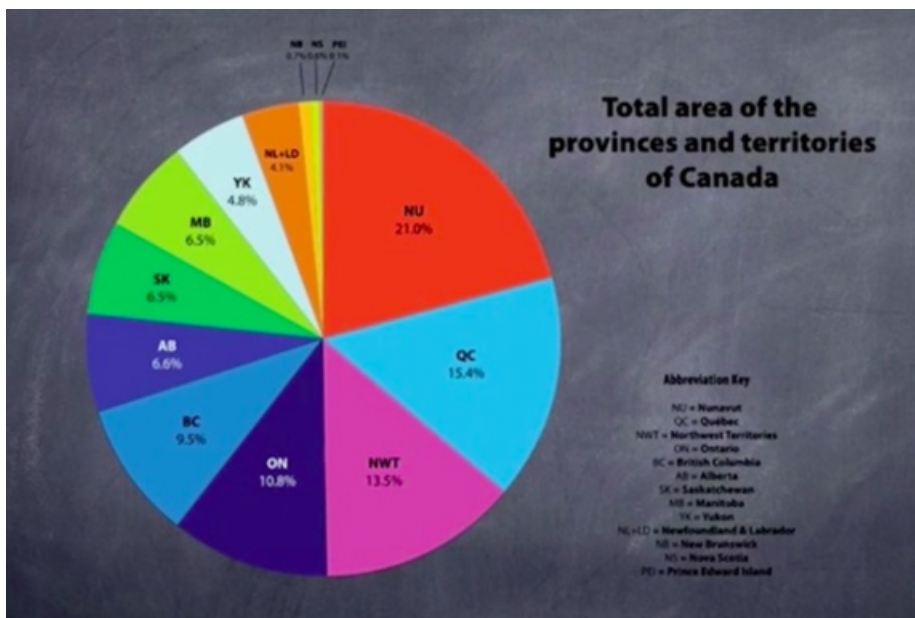
In this lesson, you'll learn about information graphics. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Infographics Overview

An **infographic**, or information graphic, is a design practice that presents data visually. This may consist of anything from a simple ratio pie chart to large amounts of complex data condensed into visually digestible formats.

In order to have successful infographics, a designer must utilize design elements and principles to convey information in a clear and direct format.

Below is an example of a basic pie chart with statistics.



You can see just how clearly the information is being presented. As data gets more complex, the ability to harness and communicate that information becomes increasingly difficult.



TERM TO KNOW

Infographics

A design practice that presents data visually; may consist of anything from a simple ratio pie chart to large amounts of complex data condensed into visually digestible formats.

2. Edward Tufte

An important figure in this area of design is **Edward Tufte**, a Yale professor who pioneered the field of infographics.

Tufte has spoken about the use of complex infographics, once saying, "There's no such thing as information overload, just bad design. If something is cluttered and/or confusing, fix your design."

This is a great quotation because it really challenges designers to adapt their designs to the nature of the visual information they are trying to present.



TERM TO KNOW

Edward Tufte

Yale professor who pioneered the field of infographics.

3. Thematic Graphics

A **thematic graphic** is a specific type of infographic. A thematic graphic is when the actual graphic presenting the data is labeled by color, shape, form, line, or dot.

This type of graphic helps identify information with visual elements and is thus very common in maps like the one below.



You can see that there's a lot of information being represented visually through all these elements. This map is in French, but good design transcends the language barrier so that the information being conveyed remains quite clear.

In addition to labeling things by color, shape, etc., maps will use **acallout**, or a small bit of text attached to a line or graphic that points to its referral.

You can see this in the U.S. map below, where all the smaller East Coast states are shown with callouts.



Callouts can be used in many other ways as well. In fact, if you have a smartphone, you might see these when you're using the map application to get around.

TERMS TO KNOW

Thematic Graphic

The actual graphic presenting the data labeled by color, shape, form, line, or dot.

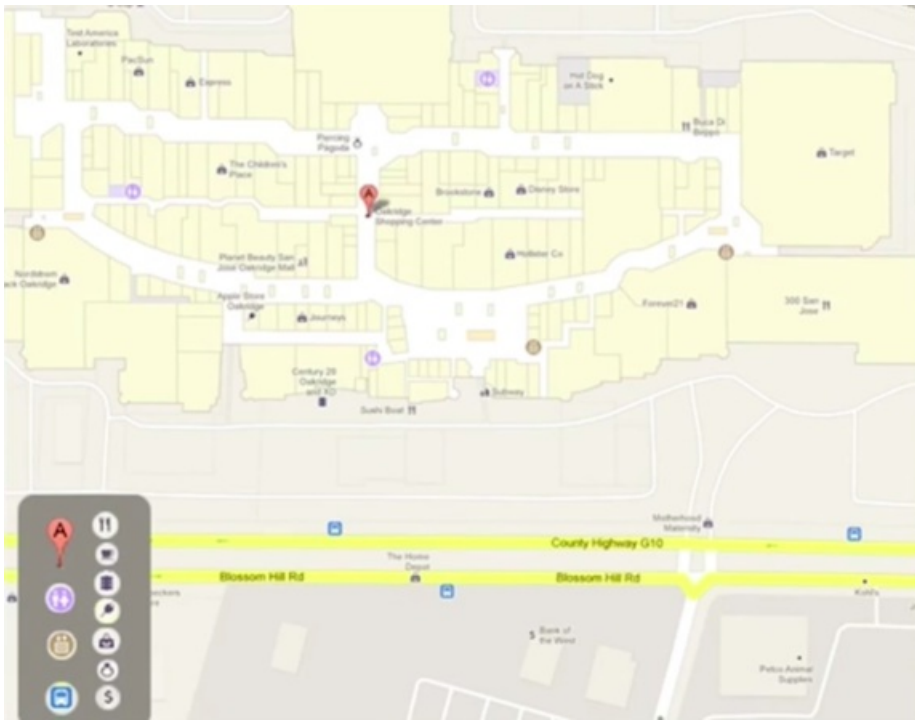
Callout

A small bit of text attached to a line or graphic pointing to its referral.

4. Referent Graphics

Another type of infographic is a **referent graphic**. A referent graphic is an icon that refers to an element within the infographic, allowing the reader to easily surmise information by looking for a specific part of the data.

In the familiar example of Google Maps below, you can see that even without the legend showing you the referent graphics, you're still able to find different elements on the map.



You can easily identify the information that you're looking for. For instance, it's pretty obvious that "A" is where you are, the purple referent graphics are bathrooms, and the blue graphics are bus stops. This continues with cafes, restaurants, shopping areas, etc.



TERM TO KNOW

Referent Graphic

An icon that refers to an element within the infographic; allows the reader to easily surmise information by looking for a specific part of the data.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you received an **overview of infographics**, and learned about **Edward Tufte**, an important figure in the field. Finally, you looked at two different types of infographics: **thematic graphics** and **referent graphics**.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR MARIO E. HERNANDEZ



TERMS TO KNOW

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