

Lunch and Learn – The Importance of Design in Research Communication

Notes on session and useful links

This series is organised by the LSE KEI Integrated Service, a coordinated internal infrastructure to communicate, support and assess knowledge exchange and public engagement activities, as well as other pathways to impact, within the School. We aim to encourage LSE researchers to think about opportunities for knowledge exchange and public engagement throughout their research projects; to communicate the value of engaging non-academic audiences in research to LSE researchers and the wider LSE community; to showcase “effective” engagement activities; and to equip LSE researchers and research support staff with the skills needed to carry these out.

Find more information at lse.ac.uk/kei

[Link to handouts and PowerPoints from this session](#) (via Google Drive).

Irene, BBC Visual Journalism Team ([@inari_ta](#))

How design can help communicate research to non-academic audiences (see slides)

Links to BBC project examples:

[Renting Affordability in the UK](#)

[NHS cancer, A&E, ops and mental health targets comparison tool](#)

Designed to inform and empower the choices of the public. Importance of comparison so that information is put into context.

MIT examples:

[MIT Sensible City Lab](#)

[Minimum Fleet](#) (improving efficiency of taxi service in New York)

Communicating complex research to the public, to journalists, but also to those who work in relevant fields.

Key things to consider:

Who is your audience?

What is your project about?

Who is going to be influenced by your research?

Peter Griffiths, Managing Editor, LSE Cities ([@petergriffiths_](#))

Urban Age – visualising data (see slides)

The Urban Age project explores how cities compare against each other and how they are changing over time. You need a shared language in order to have a useful discussion.

The project is designed as a communications project aimed at practitioners, policy makers, academics and activists with events around the world (including conferences and exhibitions), as well as publications (including conference newspapers and a coffee table book).

One of the key visualisation techniques is to show density of urban environments.

A comparative technique allows a project to grow – you can use it again and again.

Photography is also very important – showing how cities feel for the people who live in them, providing context as to how cities function. Avoids completely abstracting the information.

E.g. slide 21 – New York after Hurricane Sandy hits, in darkness.

Visualisations don't work entirely in isolation – stacking them against each other gives a richer story. Make the graphics flexible, so that you can stack them in different ways around different themes.

Take a similar style of representation and repackage for different audiences.

How to plan a visualisation, ask yourself – what are you trying to say? How do you best show that?

Jonathan Ing, Design Unit, LSE Communications (J.G.Ing@lse.ac.uk)

How the design unit can help you.... (see slides)

- Reports
- Interactive pdfs
- Posters
- Magazines
- Infographics (static)
- Advice on simplifying information
- Exhibition design
- Newsletter design
- Photography – including finding abstract concepts to illustrate research
- Brand templates

Get in touch – the Design team are happy to help.

Crafty Visualisation exercise – a challenge to visualise a key point in research in order to interest a non-academic audience

(See handout)

Useful links:

<https://datavizcatalogue.com/>

<https://www.amycesal.com/day-doh-viz-all/>

<https://www.ft.com/chart-doctor>

<https://venngage.com/>