Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 10/11/14**

# VISUALISATION: http://www.ecouterre.com/infographic-fast-fashion-is-disposable-but-damaging/

## WHAT HAPPENED?

On Bloglovin, a RSS feed website I use to bookmark my favourite blogs, I follow a few ‘eco fashion’ ones that in general aren’t very interesting on such a regular basis. This is one I clicked on as part of this exercise but probably wouldn’t have if not doing this diary.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

* Underwhelmed. The picture of the US outline within the first box was a waste of space and told me nothing in an interesting way and to be honest, I shut off immediately after that. I marked it down as not even style over substance, but colours over substance - and wouldn’t have gone any further if not for this diary.
* The breakdown of the garments per person felt it had good sequence but again the pictures show no scale or changed to represent anything. Unimagintaive and paint by numbers.
* Are the different colours in the circles meant to represent anything, cus they are exactly the same for 75% and 2%! Annoying.
* The amateur-ness and lack of thought into the design elements made me trust it less. The statements were vague and didn’t explain themselves fully let alone quote a source.

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

It was completely by accident that I realised below the big adverts was a larger version of that infographic, and that was the main one! I had skimmed the text and didn’t twig that it wasn’t referring to the top image.

The only part I was interested by in the larger version was the table of the Min wage, Living Wage etc in different countries, but that still didn’t actually tell me any facts about what wages were in use, or how many people were on which etc.

As this is my area of work I didn’t learn anything new, but did feel some of the lingo wasn’t really explained, so who were they talking to? More of a pretty affirmation of what everyone suspects than a useful tool or presenting surprising/engaging info.

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

This is a weird one – very attuned to my values and my day job, yet it annoyed me. It was a collection of blank statements, yet had a clear agenda, so went neither one way nor the other. Either properly explain why it all builds up to a terrible situation or don’t!

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 11/11/14**

# VISUALISATION: Rosetta Comet size : http://www.iflscience.com/space/graphic-shows-size-rosettas-comet

## WHAT HAPPENED?

A friend on facebook likes this page ‘I f\*\*king Love Science’ so their stuff pops up on my feed from time to time. I didn’t know anything about the Rosetta comet but clicked on this because the picture was pretty engaging.

I looked at the picture first for a good 30 seconds, taking in the picture they were painting, then suitably impressed I read the first couple of paragraphs of the article. It lost me with long Russian name (this is not my natural area of interest!)

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

I liked how it felt like a disaster film, with the comet poised a milisecond away from destroying LA. It was a cool demonstration of how lots of people (like me) engage with science – “it’s like something out a movie!” The text that went with the picture talked about something quite similar but in a really nice friendly way, lots of inclusive ‘we’s’ and ‘our’, that also recognised that describing something as 3 kilometers wide doesn’t capture the imagination. I absolutely trusted this source and as well there was something in the tone of the article that made me appreciate the motivation behind making the visualisation,that they wanted to share that ‘woah’ feeling.

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

Extremely understandable – good to have the name of the city the comet was over but even if you didn’t the sense of scale is powerful.

I really liked the layout of the picture – as I said like a freeze frame of a smidge of time before chaos.

It confirmed something I half knew – that comets were really big – but good to feel you really knew how big it was and could imagine the damage it could cause us.

I liked the ‘one hit wonder’ of it – I came, I saw, I thought ‘wow’ – I left pretty quickly after that!

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

Since looking at this I have had so much IFLS links appear on my facebook, bit annoying as none are as immediately as engaging.

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 15/11/14**

**VISUALISATION: YouGov Profiles: https://yougov.co.uk/profiler#/**

## WHAT HAPPENED?

I found this through a link on facebook to a vice article (<http://noisey.vice.com/en_uk/blog/yougovs-new-social-tool-is-creepy>) that made fun of the fans of a few cult bands. Clicking on this, I then went to the source of the info and was so excited to find this website – partly because it was such an awesome data visualisation and I thought you would all love it! And partly because it’s really cool, maybe it’s a bit of a hipster thing to think you can understand people better through the people and tv and brands they like, but I thought it was really interesting, and threw up things I didn’t expect. I first typed in Taylor Swift and as it went straight to a picture of a young guy I doubted the data…it’s such a stereotype that her fans are all teenage girls. After that I had to leave the house but later I showed my housemates and we spent a good half hour typing in different things – taylor swift, (again – we discussed how actually guys do really like her pop music and it’s pretty awesome to have government verification of that!), Kim Kardashian, Frida Khalo, Oxfam, Benedict Cumberbatch, J K Rowling, Twin Peaks…etc. They really loved it too, and we all found the different insights funny or interesting or surprising. We typed in some of our own personal favourite stuff, and then some ones to deliberately see what the data said – it seemed like Scotland was coming up a lot as ‘most liking place’, so we put in David Cameron just to see! (It went from Scotland to London…)

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

**I went to the link quite ‘warm’ as the article had led me into what I could find, and how that fitted my idea of fun!**

The opening layout was really simple, and inviting with the one type box. Once you’re in, the drawings are fun, and the option to play going through the categories as a film was a nice touch as it was a bit click-y, but I did end up pausing it pretty much every new screen to have a proper read of the detail on the screen before moving on.

Once you’d done a few you could see the repetition, particularly in the personality section and I definitely leaned towards just looking at Demographics, Lifestyle and Brands section as we went through.

The Vice article talks about it’s limitations but I had skimmed over that to get to the pics as is my way with these facebook link type things. You think you know it all through the title alone. But I read back over and do agree that some of it seemed to be just too random to be true, and definitely left me wondering how they collected this data. I definitely trust it though and I guess it plugs a really wide spectrum of data into one person so won’t be totally in sync and seem 100% like the ‘the typical XX fan’ – and the stereotype defying element was part of the fun.

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

At first we thought we were seeing correlation between right leaning politics and higher disposable income but actually the more we did the more that was confounded. A lot of the ‘favourite brands’ were really bizarre – Shell Petrol right next to H&M, but that is really useful for commercial use. I’m going to forward this around my team at work on Monday, as you can type in Oxfam and get a breakdown of our target customer! That they are into Wetherspoons as well as John Lewis is a curve ball we wouldn’t have seen coming!

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

I’ve told three people about this so far today since finding it this morning. Really engaging and fun, maybe for people my age group who do kinda judge people by what they like…? I can’t imagine my mum getting as excited about it as my housemates and I did.

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 16/11/14**

# VISUALISATION: http://www.purdue.edu/impactearth/

## WHAT HAPPENED?

When I re-clicked on a link from a previous diary (**http://www.iflscience.com/space/graphic-shows-size-rosettas-comet** )when sending it in I realised the page took me to another one that had a lot more breadth on the same topic.

You type in different measurements and then click Impact! For a short video of a bird’s eye view of a crater crashing to earth then a page of tick boxes for the effects of that particular impact.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

* This left me really cold – it was almost exactly what the data graphic that led me to it was the antithesis of; weights and measures that mean so little out of context, especially to me. To be honest, it’s been open on my tab so I remember it for a week, and I’ve not looked at it once. The video was quite fun, and felt like the gimmick of the piece, but getting to it, past the different boxes you needed to fill in, wasn’t much a reward for me personally.
* Then the page with the ‘impact effects’ was quite jargon-y and not pleasingly laid out. It was hard to see which ones were ticked in yellow, and then to understand what that meant. The little video and the following page didn’t match in terms of understanding it visually. It wasn’t very slick, and almost felt quite 80’s in the style of it – which could be for the novelty aspect but if it was a pastiche it leaned closer to just looking a bit sad to me.

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

I thought my geologist friend might like it! Seems like one for enthusiasts, as the data, while it was new meant nothing to me and so didn’t sink in at all. I would have had more pictures but then my knowledge around this is so low that nothing would impress me or make much impact. Ii am not the target audience! Made me think the other visualisations with LA and the tone about context was a really awesome one, and I was the target audience for that!

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

This was the only data visualisation I saw this week, and that was because it was linked to an old one! In my (quite ‘young twenty something’ stereotypical) out of work lifestyle, I am watching boxsets and reading books, and looking at cooking blogs and listening to the radio in the morning – between all this, I did not come across data visualisations. I feel this may be on account of my limited interaction with news sites/programmes. I read the Guardian online every day or every second day, but it’s rare that the articles I gravitate to aren’t Comment is Free, or just pure written ones. Because of this, and feeling aware of not contributing to the study, I did type ‘data visualisations’ into the Guardian search box to direct myself a bit more and was really happy to find interesting links and articles. I also saw more through facebook, which was primarily the most natural way I came across data visualisations, either through friends posting something they are enthusiastic about, or a page someone has liked that then is advertised on my feed.

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 28/11/14**

# VISUALISATION: http://seasons-tweetings.co.uk/

## WHAT HAPPENED?

A friend on facebook posted this link, with the comment “A super infographic to measure festive cheer in the UK using live data from Twitter? All in a day's work (or several week's work) for the [Über](https://www.facebook.com/UberThinking) Digital team [Nic Jones](https://www.facebook.com/nicjones13) [http://seasons-tweetings.co.uk](http://seasons-tweetings.co.uk/" \t "_blank)” so I went to it knowing this had taken a lot of time and energy.

It says it’s pulled together the nations tweets to can a sense of the mood ahead of Christmas. Within a few scrolls I was questioning whether it was worth several weeks’ worth.

I looked at it for maybe a minute, scrolling down to the bottom, and mainly felt I was looking for a question that I didn’t already know the answer to, or some surprises or something interesting. My thoughts were this would be done if there was something exciting about the response but it seemed so bog standard and predictable. You presume that of someone’s gone to the length of doing this graphic design there must a pay off at the end, a show stopper fact, right? The only question I hovered over my scroll button for was the When Do You Put Up Your Christmas Tree, though as it was the end of November, that felt like skewed data. I wonder if they’ll update it, or if that’s it. Update: have just checked again and it has updated and got more specific about dates in December! It’s good that it has that function.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

The site has some overlay problems and so is slightly harder to read certain bits (some text is completely covered) but overall is very bright and colourful and has a pleasing full page experience, all encompassing, I like that the page has nothing else to go on to from it – almost like it really is free public information we all should know! The boxes for the different questions are fun and clear and add personality, some have a game show vibe, some are more ‘chalkboard’ teacher at school effect, very easy to read.

Whether I trust the visualisation isn’t something that occurs to me, as the questions feel so unimportant and the answers unsurprising!

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

It was very understandable and apart from the odd bits of text over spilling their carefully designated boxes, the design was engaging. If I were to do anything different I’d ask slightly more controversial questions! They played it safe to the point of being not worth the effort they put into the design.

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

My thinking on this may be skewed that I went into it thinking about the people who had made it (as referenced in the link to it on facebook) so I absorbed it considering them probably more so than myself, but I was surprisied by the strength of my reaction to this, how quickly I thought “what a waste of time!” The ‘just for fun’ logo at the bottom of the website rings hollow when you know it’s taken a few weeks to make.

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 28/11/14**

# VISUALISATION: https://fullfact.org/economy/calculating\_tax\_summary-36103

## WHAT HAPPENED?

A friend I really respect posted a link to this on facebook. It’s a breakdown of the new classifications for ‘welfare’ as stated on recent voting mass mailouts by the government. This definition of welfare includes money never before included under the title, and so is being touted as political propaganda.

I’d heard about this through another link on facebook (please don’t judge me that this is often how I hear the news – as it’s filtered through friends with similar views as me but are more on it with daily engagement I do get a good overview!) that had explained the overview issue, and I’d really angry about it, and I thought I would investigate further with this link. I felt I had a good grasp of the issue and would back my righteous outrage with some numbers.

(do pie charts count as data visualisation? I thought they would do!)

I read up to the first pie chart (which was on the pic in the link so I knew it was there) and then spent a while trying to figure out what the message they were trying to tell me was. I wanted to understand.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

* I felt confused and a bit stupid for not being able to stay the course with this article. It’s too math based for me. Too many numbers and pie charts, I get lost in it.
* I re read it a couple of times and it was only when I read “A letter using official figures sent to 24 million people which fails to meet these criteria is something about which the UK Statistics Authority should be concerned, and we invited it to take a view.” right at the end that I felt Ii understood what was going on. That was like a key into the chilled out tone of the piece, and I could re-read the rest again with that in my mind. I still didn’t understand it but I felt their purpose and felt ‘on team’. I trusted this, I just couldn’t get a handle onto it – I absorb maths and statistics etc by wanting it to prove something or disprove it, going into a numbers fresh leaves me overwhelmed and inclined to give up.
* I really liked the website lay out, I trusted that they were knowledgable yet had opinions, something about the orange sidebar said quirky yet confident. It felt calm and measured in tone, which I am potentially not used to!

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

I learnt that there were other slightly more techy maths reasons this data fudging was bad to add to the ones I already knew when clicking on the article, but Ii could not tell you what they were! It didn’t have the wow factor, but I would not put that against the site, or especially the pie charts which were clear and easy to read.

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 25/11/14**

# VISUALISATION: http://movies.benschmidt.org/

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Through a Guardian article on their film section. I hadn’t seen it before, and looked at it for about ten minutes until my inspiration for different combinations and engagement ran out.

I made sense of the general message first, then looked for ways to specify it.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

* I trusted it, though it did feel a bit dull. The graph style was really easy to understand but was a bit meh compared to the styling’s of some of the others we’ve seen (particularly the migration data from the focus group evening)
* But mainly it was the accompanying text that was the biggest turn off. “Bookworm is like a lot of other word frequency sites. But unlike most, it directly incorporates links to every text searched, so you can actually see what drives changes; and it lets you customize the corpus”. Maybe this was meant to be a fun ’pop culture’ way of showing a different kind of big data but the wording was for his own crowd that did know other word frequency sites. It placed itself deliberately above my head and that took the fun out of it.

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

* It had some limitations on the TV shows you could pick, understandably, but that lost impact (one of the fun things about the You Gov Profiler I wrote about was that it’s reach felt ginormous). It had to be driven by my creativity in knowing what I wanted to compare, and what I felt might throw up something that would ‘comment on society’ – the examples in the blog post were interesting but longwinded and still quite niche, like who knew a swear word would have a peak in the 50’s? You needed to start with an idea of some TV/film trivia, rather than be able to easily learn some (if that makes sense). I typed in a few stereotypes about the shows and films I like which it easily confirmed, but I’m sure there are ways it would have been more useful/show insight into our culture but I didn’t have the awareness or insight to know how to get to that by myself and have any kind of epiphany moment with it. I don’t know how else you would present that other than his blog, so maybe this just wasn’t for me at the time – am I being ruined for all original thought by being fed Buzzfeed articles left right and centre? Maybe.

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 24/11/2014**

# VISUALISATION: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/nov/24/scotland-equal-gender-cabinet-compare-uk-nicola-sturgeon

## WHAT HAPPENED?

I clicked on this article as it was recommended at the bottom when I finished reading a Hadley Freeman article, after which ‘feminist’ articles of the day normally pop up. I looked at it a couple of times over about ten minutes as I got easily distracted! I didn’t go in with this with too much of a question, I more wandered in and once I saw there was data visualisations (!) tried to stick with it.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

Bored to start with. The Guardian colours are sophisticated and nice running through it, and I certainly trust it, but I couldn’t focus on what they were trying to tell me – I had to shake my head and re-focus on it a few times to get anywhere with it. It could be that this is no more than the topic not actually engaging me that much. The language was maybe a little tedious, and didn’t have a gimmick that is normally needed to get me to try and analyse graphs and charts! I do prefer full articles of prose with facts sprinkled in the written word rather than the classic history text book “sources” that you can ignore quite happily.

It does seem strange though that the graphs, from the tone of the text are meant to be the star of the show, and yet you have to scroll through them, and can’t see the full thing at once. It definitely loses impact. Once I scroll up and down a bit for each one and got to grips with it, I could see what they were trying to show me and engaged more.

One graph I really liked was the male female in Scotland line graph where they meet perfectly in the middle – not often you see a graph so visually pleasing! It should have been bigger!

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

I learnt that Nicola Sturgeon had positively discriminated towards women in her new cabinet and nothing had changed in the UK or Holyrood in general.

I just would have given the graph spaces their due, so that the eye would go there quicker, and you wouldn’t get stuck reading the drier text. It’s written like they wanted the graphs to do the talking but without the space to showcase them its felt feeling tedious.

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

The opening picture wasn’t a great one, as there were clearly more men than women! At least get a full shot so you can see the 50% of women – I got distracted counting them...

Visualisation Diary

**NAME: Harriet**

**DATE: 22/11/2014**

# VISUALISATION: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/nov/26/how-women-represented-uk-independent-film-industry

## WHAT HAPPENED?

I searched for data visualisations within the guardian and this was one that stood out as really interesting to me. I stayed on it for about five minutes, looking at the options, as the article wasn’t as long as I had expected, and then I clicked through onto other links that were scattered through the text.

From the title I had a firm grip on what I was going to be looking at, so my eye flitted quite happily from the graphs to the text, it didn’t take too much concentration so I was quite relaxed in exploring the information. It was pleasant.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

I clicked through all of the options and enjoyed seeing the changes happen so smoothly, and that as I hovered over the different charts the part I was over was emboldened or showed extra info. That seems to follow your thought process really nicely.

Nothing really surprised me, but I had a pleasant time clicking away. Even the big fact that had inspired the article when it was visualised on a graph really wasn’t the impressive. When you’re looking at quite small percentages of change – even when that is a big deal – it doesn’t always come across that way on a graph. It would be better to show how the number had almost doubled, though I guess that is putting a v positive spin on it – but the graph however officially objective, felt quite negative and underwhelming, and that’s a choice as much as any other format.

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OR LEARN?

It was very understandable. The Guardian webpage is a format I’m v familiar with, and do really trust.

I learnt new names, but someone in the comments also mentioned that some follow up about ‘why’ would be good and I agree.

## ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?