A few recent examples from http://coolinfographics.blogspot.com

Who has the oil?

www.civicactions.com

Mapping out social networks

http://doi.ieeecomputersociety.org/10.1109/TVCG.2007.70582
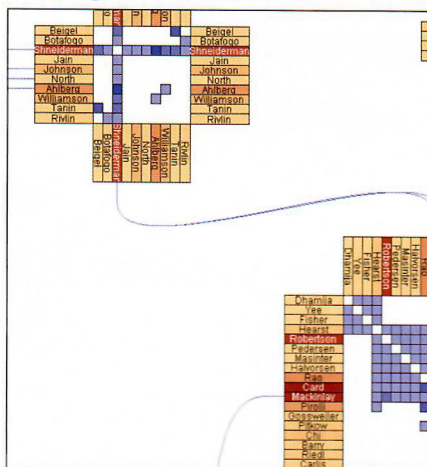
How to bake cookies
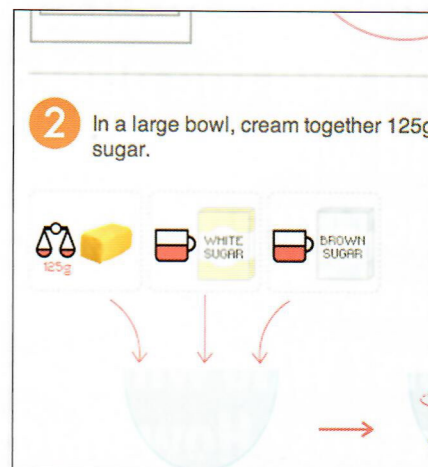
www.coo.kz/

Keeping an eye out for cool infographics

By Jonathon Berlin

There's no doubt that the media industry is in a deep and profound period of change. Many of those effects are discussed in these pages. While the disruption in our corner of the world can't be downplayed, it is only part of a larger technological and cultural shift.

The bottom line: Technological advances are changing how people interact with information.

This includes the news, obviously, but it also includes every other business with information as part of its stock-in-trade. These new tools are changing the way everyone does business. With that in mind, Design Journal caught up with Randy Krum, a Dallas-based vice president of marketing for The Bramton Company, a manufacturer of pet products, who publishes the blog http://coolinfographics.blogspot.com. Randy has found some really great infographics, and only a small part of them are from the media. Here's what Randy had to say:

Your Blogger profile says you're in marketing, based in Dallas. How does someone in marketing from Dallas become fascinated with infographics?

I work for a consumer products company, so I use visual information all the time for things like packaging, advertising, store shelf layout, market analysis, consumer research, patent activity, and others. I had been keeping a file of great ways to visualize information as a source of ideas, and had a number of them hanging in my office. The problem I had was that all of the graphics I created were based on confidential information so I couldn't share the new ways I was using the different visual styles. Instead, I started the blog based on the visuals I had found as inspiration, thinking maybe they would also be inspiration for others.

How do you find the material you post about?

I don't know that there is any magic to how I find the graphics I post. Most come from Internet searches, but there are enough people following the blog that I

have started to get a couple submissions from readers, as well. The actual information is very diverse because for me it's about finding new visual methods that I might be able to use. So it doesn't matter if it's about flight patterns, social networks or the federal budget.

Do you keep track of who follows your blog? Have you met interesting folks that way?

I do have Google Analytics tracking the geographic locations of people reading the blog, and the audience is certainly international. I have met a number of professionals that create infographics for a living, and I do get a few e-mails and comments on the posts. These are definitely people I would have never met through my day job, yourself included.

Do you think the Web has changed the way people display and use information graphics?

I do think the Web has changed infographics in a number of profound ways. First, the Web development tools them-

Biological causes of aging

http://legendarypharma.com

Top 10 Sources of Cool Infographics:
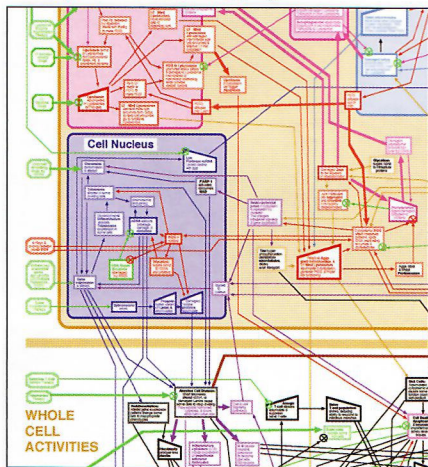
selves have created a whole new set of visual methods, and whole Web sites have been created to visualize real-time data (wefeelfine.com, manyeyes.com, swivel. com, Digg.com Tools, WikiMindMap.org, searchCrystal.com). Second, because the Web is so graphic in nature, news stories and blog posts almost have to have some type of visual to get a reader's attention. Unlike a printed newspaper or magazine, on the Web every story can have many photos or graphics.

If you were a professor teaching college students about the art and science of infographics, what are some of the things you would teach?

Two things come to mind that I have learned from starting the blog. First, make the visual meaningful. I do find a number of pretty graphics that still don't effectively communicate the information. Make sure you understand what message you are trying to convey before you start figuring out how to visualize it. Second, infographics can be easily misinterpreted. You can visually lead the reader to a conclusion that isn't actually supported by the data. Be very clear about the source of the data and what assumptions were made.

1. Google image search.

2. Google alerts using key words like "infographics" and "visualization."

3. Digg.com, usually in the Design topic section.

4. Visual information blogs like infosthetics.com, visualcomplexity.com and simplecomplexity.net. I have about 15 blogs that I follow the RSS feeds from.

5. Flickr. A number of people use Flickr to post images and graphics. It's more common to find some there because there are usually comments or keywords connected to an image.

6. searchCrystal.com is good because it will search multiple image sites at the same time.

7. del.icio.us tags have a ton of links saved to good visuals. Check out del.icio.us/tag/visualization.

8. There are a couple of good visualization conferences like InfoVis and VizThink. Not only are the conferences good, but they have a bunch of links and blog posts on the conference Web sites.

9. Real life. I have a number of photos from real-life examples of communicating data visually that can be more powerful than a graphic images, such as the Shanghai Urban Planning Center that had the entire city physically modeled to scale.

10. Reader submissions by e-mail.

Who clicks on Cool Infographics, you might ask? What better way to show it than visually? Here's a map generated from Google Analytics.