

The importance of using infographics in field of journalism

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Abstract

This research study came to clarify the importance of using infographics in the field of journalism, as it is one of the effective methods of communicating information to the recipient through graphics, pictures and colors, which simplifies complex ideas for him to facilitate understanding and absorption. This study seeks to highlight the role of the technical methods that help in the production of the news story, and each of them has its objectives and the means used in it. This study attempts to understand some of the important issues in the field of media. Therefore, among the results of the study are the following:

- ✓ Planning is important in the success of the infographic content
- ✓ The journalistic work of the infographic combines the arts of journalism, the rules of graphic design, and knowledge of audience studies.

Keywords : using, infographic, media, target audience, communication.

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I- Introduction :

News websites are currently one of the most widespread and demanded modern means of communication among audiences of different age groups, as it is a digital space that has helped to disseminate information in a timely manner by using image and sound in displaying information, and many readers today tend to prefer simple and concise information in receiving and sharing it easily. This is what prompted many traditional media outlets to think of new mechanisms to acquire a large segment of readers and keep pace with current digital developments, so we find that electronic journalism arose for this reason, despite its beginnings as an exact copy of the paper. Today's digital reader is no longer tempted to read a 500-word article or get sucked into the details of a story. Because of his many preoccupations that impede his browsing of information.

This study came to highlight the importance of employing graphics in the production of a journalistic story and presented the most important technical methods to assist in the design of the media material.

So we can ask the main question:

What is the importance of employing graphics in the field of journalism?

We can deduce some sub-questions, including:

What is meant by chart?

What are the ways to use infographics in the production of news articles?

Therefore, this research paper came by analyzing some elements, including:

The first element: Description of concepts.

The second element: the importance of fees in the field of media.

The third element: methods of using graphics in the production of the journalistic story.

I.1. Description of concepts:

1. Infographic:

Infographics have spread significantly in the recent period by many international and Arab news websites, and many researchers have presented a varied definition of infographics as a media material consisting of some information, knowledge, texts, and graphics that appear in the form of a simple and concise visual design that helps the reader to absorb ideas.

We can provide some definitions by a group of researchers:

- **Weber:** “Infographics are a mixture of written and visual elements that are combined together to provide the greatest amount of information in the least possible space.(Weber, 2013, P163)

- **Langer:** The infographic is the pictorial and visual presentation of information such as charts and tables that are included in the press release, which contributes to the news faster. (Langer, 2017, P04)
- **Hiram:** “Infographics are those visual designs that mix data and design to present complex information faster and more clearly to the recipient by relying on graphic graphics and mixing them with maps (Henriquez 2014, P52)
- **Cairo:** “Infographics are considered one of the communication elements that are presented with development, in order to provide information to the public in the form of graphs or tables, which helps in understanding the content and the news provided. (Cairo, 2012, P16)

However, infographics are an artistic method that helps simplify complex information and concepts by reconfiguring them into simple, easy-to-understand templates and visual representations for the recipient in a concise and clear manner.

2. Employment:

- **Guyot** has defined it as “developing a plan or program that clarifies the organization’s need for workers, with its classification of needs in terms of required skills and specializations, the number available from each type of specialization, and the time in which competencies must be available.” (Guyot, 1983, P15)
- **Al-Romaihi** believes that employment is the use of the means, energies and expertise available at the disposal of the individual or the organization that can be used to develop and improve performance. (Al-Ramahi, 2018, P20)

An employee is a person who is supervised within a business and is subject to its work rules; the employer deducts taxes from the employee's pay, matches them in some cases, and remits these taxes to the government. Payments made to an employee are reported on the Form W-2 following the end of each calendar year. An example of an employee is an accounting clerk. (W-2 contractor definition, 2022)

3. field of journalism:

A definition of media is the main means of mass communication using platforms such as broadcasting, publishing, and the internet. In its simplest form, media is a means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, that reach or influence people widely. (News and Media, 2022)

Media is the plural form of medium, describes any channel of communication. This can include anything from printed paper to digital data, and encompasses art, news, educational content and numerous other forms of information. Anything that can reach or influence people, including phones, television, and the Internet can be considered a form of media. (Stoltzfus, 2020)

Journalism helps the recipient to explain the events that relate in his daily life and is produced in some forms and methods. Each journalistic style adopts different techniques and writes for different purposes related to the audience.

I. 2. the importance of fees in the field of media:

In recent years, infographics have gained great interest in many fields, including economic ones, for marketing products, commercial services, and others, as an effective means of providing information without using a lot of text. Therefore, infographics are a great way to grab the attention of the audience.

This was confirmed by researcher **Jason Falls**, that written texts require a lot of time to read and absorb their concept. If there are 800 words, it takes 10 minutes to read them, but the infographic can display those words in simplified pictures and graphics that are presented attractively, and can be understood and shared in less than 20 seconds. (Smiciklas, 2011)

Researcher **Nielsen** is considered one of the researchers interested in the field of infographics, and he confirmed that it plays an important role in increasing the reader's understanding of the published data and information.

Interactive infographics have provided an important tool for the reader in dealing with the complex information and data published by electronic newspapers, because it performs five functions for the reader, Represented in: (Nielsen, 2012)

- **Learnability:** How easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks the first time they encounter the design?
- **Efficiency:** Once users have learned the design, how quickly can they perform tasks?
- **Memorability:** When users return to the design after a period of not using it, how easily can they reestablish proficiency?
- **Errors:** How many errors do users make, how severe are these errors, and how easily can they recover from the errors?
- **Satisfaction:** How pleasant is it to use the design?

There are many other important quality attributes. A key one is **utility**, which refers to the design's functionality: **Does it do what users need?**

The main objective of the infographic design is to provide detailed information as much as possible while providing spaces as well as improving the perception of the recipient by taking advantage of the meanings it provides through its constituent structural elements, in order to communicate information more clearly and effectively.

Accordingly, infographics play a pivotal role in facilitating the assimilation and understanding of the recipient, and we may notice that most of the news websites today include special paragraphs to display infographics on their official page, and a

specialized press crew consisting of journalists, data analysts, and designers work on producing the media material in the form of an infographic.

American researcher **Jonathan Gray and his colleagues** assert that the use of infographics is the backbone of data journalism, as it helps to identify topics and gaps in reports, and it also makes it possible to get rid of unnecessary technical information in the text. So it helps news sites how to deal with the heavy flow of data, re-polarize the reader, create the scoop on the way to see the hidden things, and ensure a new vision of journalistic storytelling while saving journalistic time and effort.

The importance of infographics is demonstrated in the book Data Journalism by Jonathan Gray and colleagues by: (Jonathan Gray and others, 2015, P29)

1. Filtering the flow of data: Journalists used to devote their efforts to searching for information, which wastes a lot of time and effort. Today, as a result of the huge flow of information provided by the digital environment, it is the responsibility of editors to process and filter news by:

- Analysis to extract content that has constructive significance and has a specific form to limit the massive flow of data.
- The presentation is to communicate everything of importance to the recipient, in the same scientific manner that the sender of the message aims.

2. New methods of news narration: The infographic has added the employment of multiple approaches and methods in news narration by collecting information and data by relying on search engines and advanced means, up to relying on visual design applications.

It can be said that the production of media material produced using the infographic method in the field of digital journalism is very important due to the increasing interaction with the use of new media. Also, the infographic is superior to the traditional method of media material through some points:

❖ **Summarizing:**

The infographic helps to reduce the huge number of pages related to a topic in only one design in a coordinated and simple manner. It also provides a process of displaying rich information that contains many details according to the method of one frame after another, so the infographic focuses on displaying the most important information in a

simplified phrase and some of them. Illustrated to facilitate the recipient's understanding of the subject.

❖ **Visual Contact:**

Infographics are superior to texts and articles in maintaining the attention of the recipient through visual communication with the content of the message and the ability to absorb the information contained, according to what researchers Merieb, Holehn, Smikto, and others see, and all of this is consistent with the visual communication theory, which represents a kind of implied communication. It has a special visual language that carries graphics, icons, and symbols on a specific topic, which the recipient automatically recognizes through the formal perceptions that he watches. This theory has proven that a person depends on the sense of vision by 70% compared to any other sense, as the eye can capture the image in less than 1/10 from the second.

❖ **Enhancement Ability**

Infographic has the advantage of adding links and external sources accompanying the design, which enables the recipient to acquire additional information and enrich his culture towards the topic by reviewing studies and research related to the subject of the infographic.

❖ **Attractive design**

The infographic style is superior to the traditional style because it has its tremendous ability to attract the recipient and address all segments of society with the diversity of their cultures and ages through the diversity between the use of colors, pictures, drawings, arrows, and lines accompanying the written text and expressing the content of the media message, and since the graphic designs affect the perception of the recipient through his senses different.

❖ **Ability for Sharing**

The chart has many advantages, including the ability to share it across different social media platforms and websites. There are also many websites dedicated to graphic designs, including easel.ly, Flickr, and Visual.ly, which contain dozens of designs that allow the exchange of skills and experiences between designers, and these easy-to-download designs enable the viewer to easily share them with his friends.

I. 3. methods of using graphics in the production of the journalistic story:

Technology has contributed to the development of journalistic work by relying on modern technical means to access information and view events from the spot without getting tired of going to the field. The methods of producing media material have varied and formed into artistic templates that facilitated its absorption by a large group of the target audience.

Accordingly, we may find a set of artistic methods used in infographic designs that contributed to clarifying the journalistic story through the use of images, charts, and symbols to make the content understandable and integrated with all aspects.

However, before choosing the methods that help in building the journalistic story, the press staff must choose a specific type of infographic that differs in the way it is produced from other types, and there are: (Al-Batal, 2019, P138)

- **Fixed infographic:** It is a design that explains certain information in a fixed way that does not contain any moving elements or features, and without the need for any interaction with the reader, and it is the format commonly used in printed and electronic newspapers.
- **Animated Infographic:** It is an animation in the form of a video in which the elements and data are in a state of continuous movement that attracts the attention of users through pictures, drawings, arrows, colors, and main and subtexts.
- **Interactive infographic:** It is a design for data, clarifications, and information in an animated form in the form of video clips, allowing the viewer to interact with the content by selecting some paragraphs that are commensurate with his orientations, which referred him to choosing icons for other, more detailed paragraphs. This genre generally requires a lot of creativity and choice of expressive movements. Which helps highlight it in a fun and interesting way.

It should be noted that the choice of one of these art forms is related to the sections of the news story and the digital space in which it is published. For example, if a news site focuses on publishing articles and written texts, it is best to accompany it with static graphics. But if a TV channel has a website, it's worth using it. Animated or interactive infographics, also about social networking sites, we find that static infographics reap great interaction from users. On the other hand, the issue is related to the professionalism of the work team and the extent of its ability to produce the press story and simplify it for the recipient.

Speaking of the objectives of the media organization, we may find that each of them has its ideological policy in journalism work, which differs from other media organizations, and since many of them make the digital environment a suitable space for practicing journalistic work in line with the digital developments that occur to satisfy the desires of the digital audience.

We may find a variety of artistic methods used to shape the journalistic story in an infographic style, the most important of which are:

- **News infographic:**

This type relies on presenting brief information about current events and facts at the national and international levels in a brief form without going into listing the details of the subject. In general, the infographic is the most suitable for describing the event accurately with images and sound. Therefore, the production of news infographics must be timely and up-to-date to achieve the desired audience engagement.

News infographics focus on brevity and Simplicity of information with tabulation of data, presentation of statistics, and journalistic facts.

Commonly used is the informational design style of simple form,

As shown in the figure below:

Fig.1. Breaking news

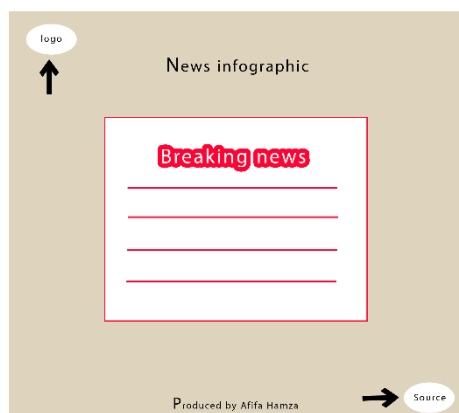
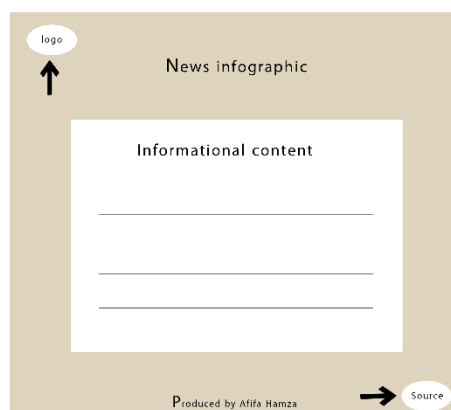


Fig.2. News infographic



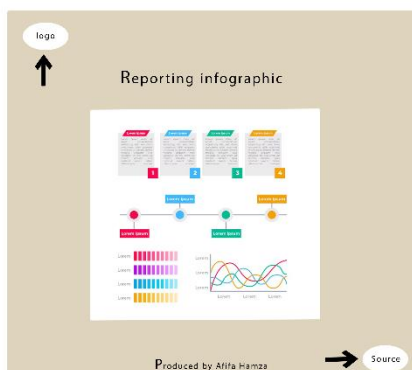
Source: by the researcher,2023

Source:by the researcher, 2023

Reporting infographic:

This type is considered more in-depth than the news infographic, although both of them explain and present the information, the reporting infographic goes deeper into explaining the content in a detailed way through which it clarifies the relationships, characteristics, and everything related to the content, and it is similar to the goals that the report seeks as a type of journalist that provides details and information More than the news.

The formal design of the infographic report material can be based on a set of illustrative forms that help in shaping the journalistic story, including the narration or narration infographic by including the most important points of interest in the subject and arranging from general to specific. It is also possible for the infographic of statistics or flow charts to express the event Detailed and accurately. As shown in the figure below :

Fig.3. Reporting infographic

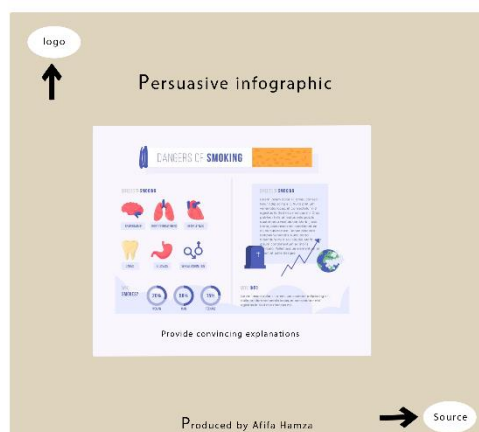
Source: by the researcher,2023

- **Persuasive infographic:**

This type aims to convince the reader of the content presented to him, skips from the news stage to influencing trends and ideas, and moves from giving a general idea of the subject to presenting and explaining different ideas in a simplified and understandable way to convince the recipient of the press story.

The official design of the compelling infographic relies on a set of illustrations that help shape the journalistic story, most notably the infographic comparisons. It is used to compare two or more things, and indirectly aims to make the recipient choose or accept a particular idea over the other. On the other hand, proportional pie charts or statistical graphics can be used to convince the recipient of the story.

The use of this type is related to the subject and functions that the media organization seeks to achieve, especially the guidance and awareness function. We may find this by using a statistical graph that shows people's bad habits towards unhealthy foods, and thus it may succeed in telling them the risks they are exposed to with real data about those foods and persuading them to modify their behaviors. As shown in the figure below:

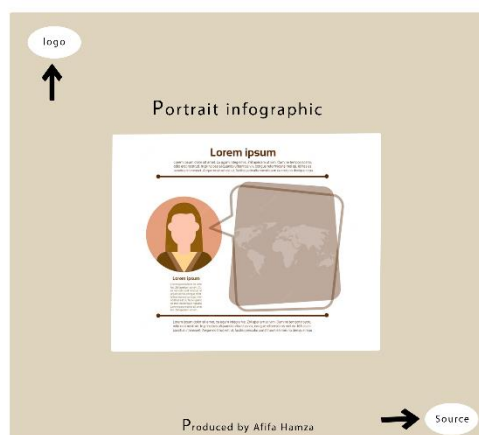
Fig.4. Persuasive infographic

Source: by the researcher,2023

- **Portrait infographic:**

The personal infographic is considered one of the most famous types of infographics and the most widespread through international and local television channels, especially through social media, and news websites use this type, especially in presenting the biography of a world-famous personality by listing her most important achievement and artistic career.

We may find that the infographics based on pictures and illustrations are suitable for presenting portraits infographics .As shown in the figure below :

Fig.5. Portrait infographic

Source: by the researcher,2023

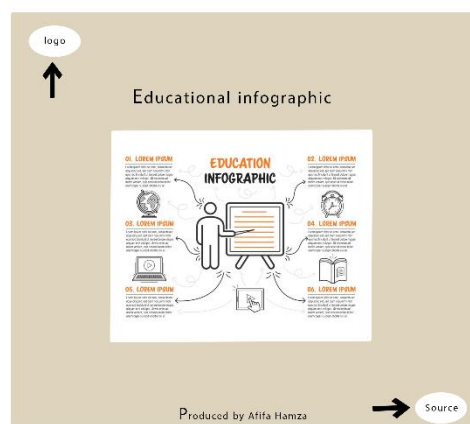
- **Educational infographic:**

The educational infographic aims to acquire cultural and educational knowledge related to the social life of the recipient, by summarizing large and complex information and converting it into a set of visual images, symbols, and texts, whether animated or static, for the purpose of simplification. This information and work on it to make it faster to understand and keep in memory and beloved by the learner.

The use of this type has spread in the educational field through the teacher's simplification of the lecture through mental maps that help students in understanding and remember information faster.

Due to the benefits of this genre, it moved to the field of digital media, and many news sites began to use it to simplify the understanding of the journalistic story and display the largest number of useful information in a limited design space. As shown in the figure below:

Fig.6. Educational infographic



Source: by the researcher,2023

II- Conclusion:

In conclusion, the infographic is one of the most prominent artistic methods that help in producing a journalistic story, and it has become the focus of attention of many news websites today, because of its advantages and benefits in terms of ease of presentation of information and its abbreviation in the most important points that facilitate understanding and absorption by the recipient.

It should be noted that the use of this type requires teamwork with concerted efforts between the journalist and the graphic designer, and the use of the above-mentioned artistic methods is related to the subject and the method used, the scope of freedom provided by the press organization to the media staff for creativity and professionalism in the production of the journalistic story in the infographic style.

When you produce an integrated journalistic story using the infographic method, the most important things must be known:

- Planning is important in the success of the content of the infographic because it helps in developing a preliminary conception of the visual design of the media content.
- The journalistic employment of infographics combine the arts of journalism, the rules of graphic design, and knowledge of audience studies.
- Infographic production needs to conduct research studies that determine the appropriate message type, medium, and the nature of the audience or target groups.

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