

Infographic and Flowchart Tutorial

This tutorial is about understanding and creating infographics and flowcharts.

Intro

Public health deals with the health of a population as a whole. Part of that is reaching as many members of that population as you can, which can and should be done in many ways in order to get your message across. Social media is a great way to reach large groups of people, but one challenge is relaying as much accurate information as you can as quickly and concisely as possible, in a way that is digestible and visually appealing. Infographics have been around for years, but they have been shown time and time again to excel at turning complex information into an easy to understand visual. They are eye-catching, easy to share, and can be very effective in regards to knowledge retention.

ASTHO. (2012). *What is State Public Health?* Retrieved from:

https://astho.org/uploadedImages/Research/Profile_of_State_Public_Health/Infographics/ASTHO-Infographic-5-What-is-State-Public-Health-Web.jpg

Best Practices

Some best practices to think about when developing an idea for an infographic include: Stick to just one main point. Part of being effective is being efficient and conveying one solid idea should be your goal, so don't risk losing the message by touching on many topics. The most important thing you can do is keep it simple and keep it focused. Make the visuals the focal point. The only thing worse than a PowerPoint which is just a wall of text is an infographic which is covered in text. Let the visuals speak and explain, then use curated text to drive home the main points. The visuals can be decorative or data-driven like charts and graphs, but as infographics are visual by nature, make sure to put careful consideration in this part. One other thing to remember when developing an infographic is that creating a call to action can make all the difference. This last point makes infographics very alluring to public health as public health professionals are constantly trying to educate and make a difference. The call to action could be promoting a personal change, advocating for an issue which needs help from the reader, or leading the reader to additional resources for their own self-education. The goal is to create an emotionally compelling visual which then guides the reader to resources which then can help in making a difference.

WHO. (2021). *Occupational health - Infographics*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.who.int/phe/infographics/occupational-health/en/>

Technical Issues

Those were the development issues you must consider, but there are also technical issues such as white space, color schemes, fonts, flow, and overall design. Luckily, there are tools available with templates to help quick start your infographic development. The main platform I'll cover today is Canva because it has become a huge player in graphic design and the free resources available are quite comprehensive.

WHO. (2021). *PHE Infographics: Air pollution*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.who.int/phe/infographics/air-pollution/en/>

Canva

After creating a free account, go to design and infographics. From here, there are countless templates within many categories such as education and timeline. Select a template and it will take you to the design page where you can customize every element of the infographic. One of the benefits of Canva is the modularity, which you can see in the defined blocks. You can see how easy the editor is in changing text, font, color, or even adding imagery using the built-in shapes and stock photos or illustrations. While it can be best to create and customize your own charts and graphs, sometimes this isn't possible with complex data. In this case, it would be suggested to insert charts from public domain resources like the CDC. When it comes to imagery, consider the demographics of your audience, keep diversity in mind, and be sure to cite the source if using outside images.

Google Drawings

The easiest way to begin your infographic journey is to use one of the available templates. There is also an option to create an infographic from scratch. This is more difficult, but it obviously gives you much more control over your creative vision. If you'll be starting with a blank canvas and don't wish to use Canva, another free option is creating a Google Drawing in Drive. You lose the modularity by going this route, but you have total control over the final product now. An often overlooked feature in Google Drive are the special characters which can help liven up a document. Since there is no stock photo archive, you must source your own also. For a variety of free, customizable icons, I recommend [Iconmonstr](#) or [Flaticon](#). Both have a vast library of illustrations which can help you visualize your message. There are numerous stock photo websites like [Unsplash](#) and [Pixabay](#) for real-world photos too.

Flowcharts

While I've focused on infographics, the same techniques can carry over into flowcharts and timelines. Flowcharts are a searchable style in Canva and timelines are actually a subset of infographics. Again, there are numerous templates to help you get started. Creating a flowchart by scratch is actually easier than a whole infographic as flowcharts are generally points plotted along a line or tree. Both infographics and flowcharts have the goal of presenting information in a quick and easily digestible visual format. While there are great templates available, one of the best things you can do for motivation and ideas is to look around online for infographics which you like and catch your attention. Just by studying successful examples, you learn a lot of the technical design and you'll get inspiration through imitation.

Wrap Up

Whatever program and design you use, remember to have peers or colleagues review the final product and provide input before dissemination, if possible, to make sure it meets your campaign/communication goals.