HOW I CREATE
AN INFOGRAPHIC
- PART 2

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In the first part of "How I create an infographic" I focused on some details that you should know when creating an infographic. This whitepaper is part 2 and gives even more tips.

"Which online tools do you recommend?"

Here and there I receive emails from design students who ask me which online tools I would recommend to create professional infographics. My honest answer: none. I cannot recommend any online tools because I as a designer don't use any online tools. I design infographics from scratch with Adobe Illustrator.

The problem with such online tools: They might be handy if you need to create a free or cheap infographic very quickly. But most of these infographics simply look the same or very similar.

Also, it tempts non-designers to "design" an infographic. That means that people who have no design expertise think such an online tool could substitute the lacking design expertise – however, this is not the case. Since there are more and more online tools out there, I keep seeing more and more poorly done infographics, more than good ones. This is the dilemma. You cannot create a great infographic without design expertise about colours, shapes, typography and so on. This is mostly the point where infographic projects fail. So my honest opinion: Don't use online tools, either you simply don't create an infographic or you hire a pro.

DATA - STRUCTURE - EXECUTION

The order of steps that need to be taken in the course of an infographic creation, play an important role that should not be underestimated. Because: The readability of an infographic has a lot to do with the structure of the infographic. Don't just use a template from the internet and chuck your data into it.

1. DATA

First you need the data.

2. STRUCTURE

Then you build a structure based on this data, a rough grid that adds logic to the infographic.

3. EXECUTION

Then you should create the infographic, not before.

VISUAL ANCHOR POINTS

Especially infographics that are quite long and tell a complex story, need visual anchor points.
The entire information is visually split into small groups and you don't lose your orientation.

For example, you can use colourful bars for headers, like the light-blue bars in the example on the next page.
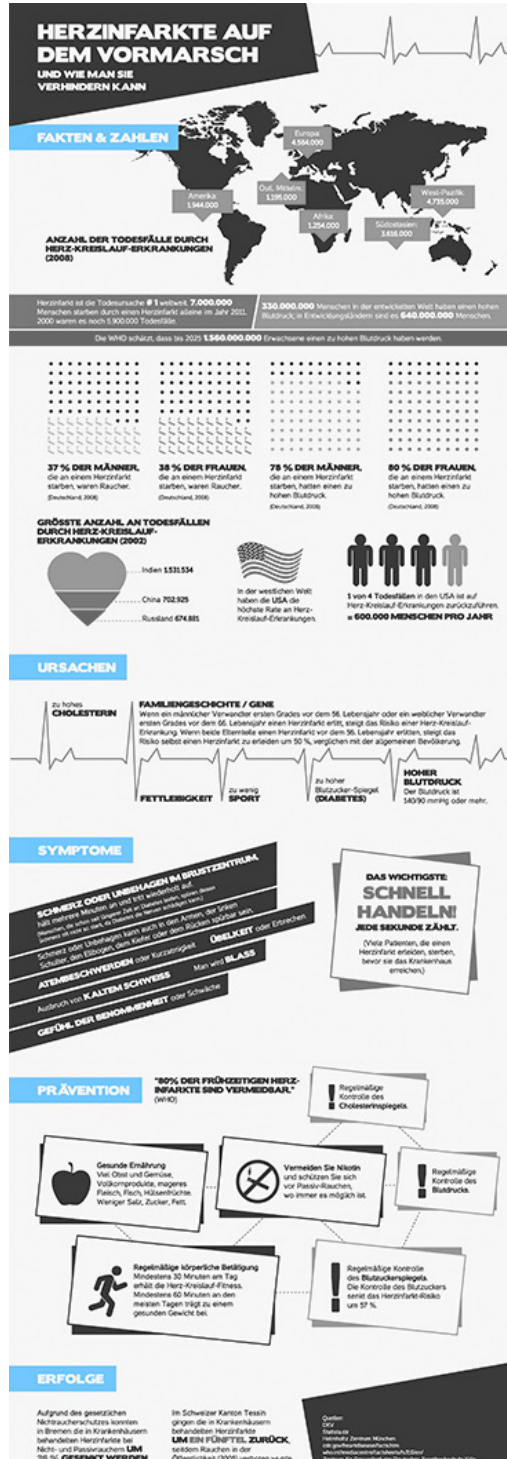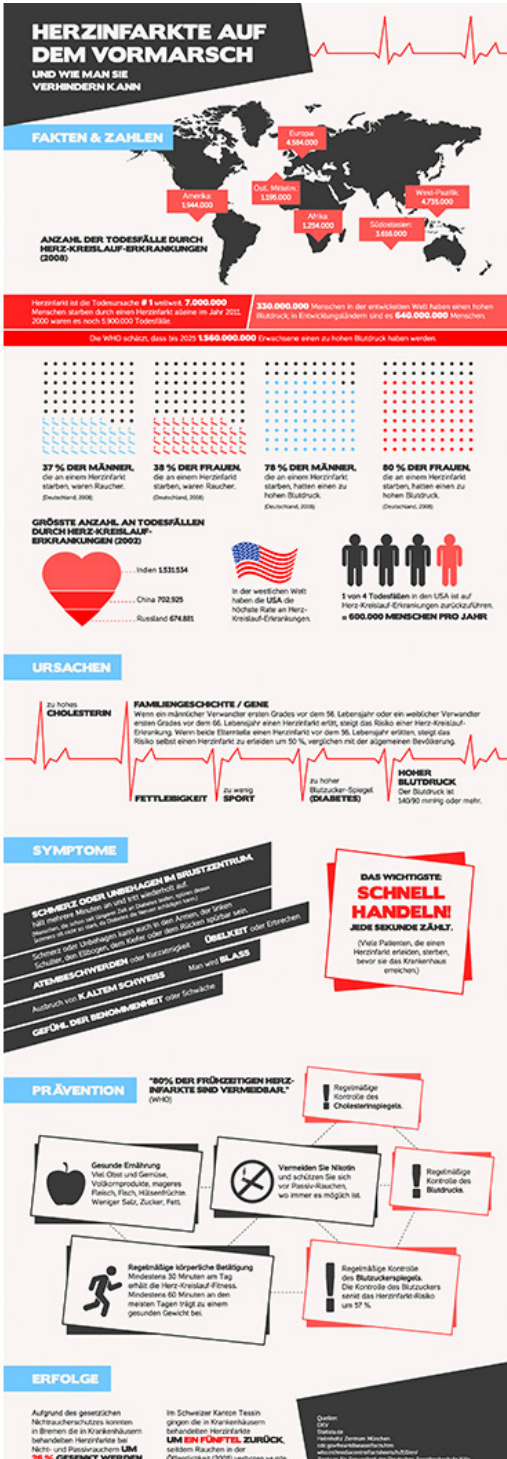
GRAPHICS VS. TEXT

I find graphics should be more prominent than text. It is called an infographic, not an infotext, right? It's important that the text in infographics is no long, elaborating PR text, but short and to the point. The text shall support the graphic, not upside down.

ICONS FROM THE INTERNET

Infographics are all about showing relations between different things. This means you have to visualise these relations with a graphic or an icon. Of course this can only work when you design everything yourself. A few examples of relations can be seen on the next page.

Inflation rates in different countries: Countries with a high inflation rate are shown big, countries with a small inflation rate are shown small.

Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck: You see the relation between male and female athletes.

1976 Olympische Winterspiele

// FACTS //

Der Eistanz wurde eine olympische Disziplin.

Die Spiele sollten eigentlich in Denver/Colorado stattfinden. Allerdings entschied sich die Bevölkerung im Rahmen einer Volksabstimmung gegen die Austragung der Spiele - aus Liebe zur Umwelt. Im Februar 1973 entschied das IOC, dass Innsbruck die Spiele austragen werde.

Mit dem Eintrittskartenverkauf wurden 82,7 Mio. Schilling umgesetzt.

1.231 Athleten
1.013 Herren
218 Damen

1984 Winter-Paralympics

// FACTS //

Die Winter-Paralympics 1984 wurden in Innsbruck ausgetragen, da es Sarajevo nicht möglich war, die Spiele für behinderte Sportler auszurichten. Jedoch fand der Riesenslalom für körperbehinderte Sportler als Demonstrationssportart in Sarajevo statt.

419 Athleten
325 Herren
94 Damen

HINWEIS ZUR KLASSE B1:

Skifahrer in der Sportklasse B1 sind entweder blind oder haben eine sehr niedrige Sehschärfe. Die Stärke der Sehschärfe

Another example is this infographic about water usage in Germany. I show that only 8 % accounts for private households, in the black drop on the left you see how little that actually is compared to the overall water consumption in Germany. And on the right you see how these 8 % are used in private households.
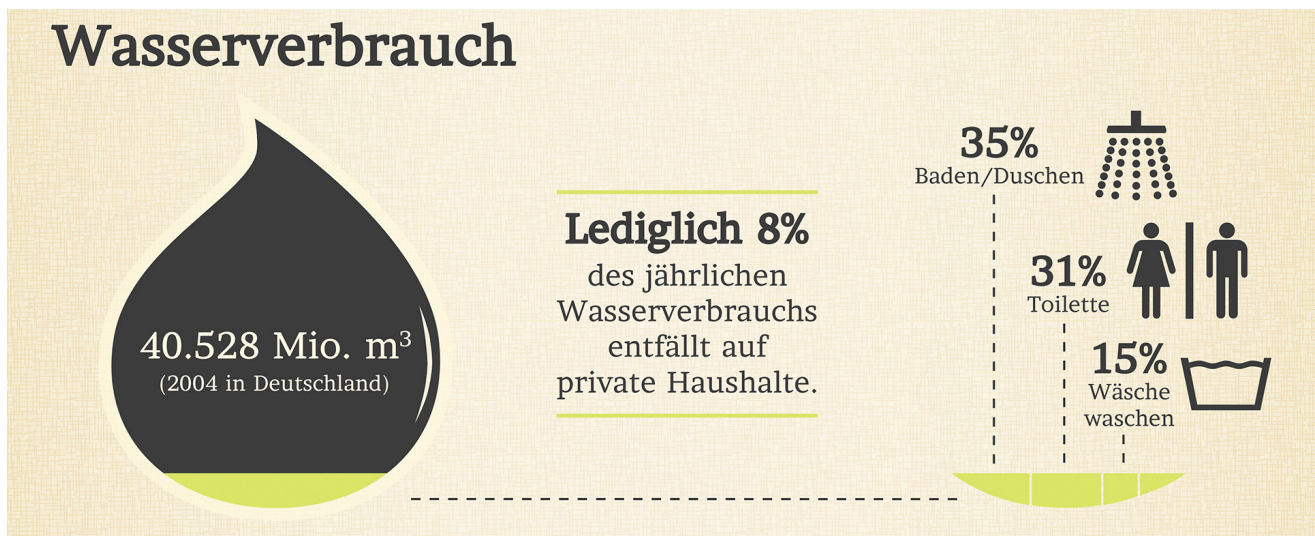
This way of visualising relations you of course cannot download from the internet, you have to draw this yourself.

If you do download icons from the internet, like the man and woman at 31 % toilette in this example, you should definitely amend the symbols to make them match the look of the rest of the infographic. I recommend SVG files here because you can open them in any version of Adobe Illustrator without problems (no matter if with or without cloud) and then you can adapt the symbols without quality loss.

But careful: Using symbols from the internet from various sources and wildly mixing them will definitely make your infographic look cluttered and unprofessional. So be careful with that.

CALCULATIONS FOR GRAPHICS

Graphics have to be displayed correctly of course. Wrong graphics and diagrams make an infographic non-credible. A good knowledge in maths is definitely required here and there.

You see an example on the following page. A half-round circle equals 100 %, the coloured parts represent the actual data. As you can see, the yellow Exceptional with 3.5 % is only a small part of the entire half-round circle. The red Unacceptable accounts for 94 % and almost the whole half-circle is red. This example was a bit tricky because I had to find a way to calculate round shapes correctly. A whole circle is 360°, hence a half-circle is 180°. And if 180° equals 100 %, how many ° do equal 3.5 %? There were three or four steps involved in order to visualise this correctly in Adobe Illustrator.

I guess you get a feeling for the maths level you have to get to in order to draw correct infographic elements here. Maths plays a big role in infographics, don't underestimate that.
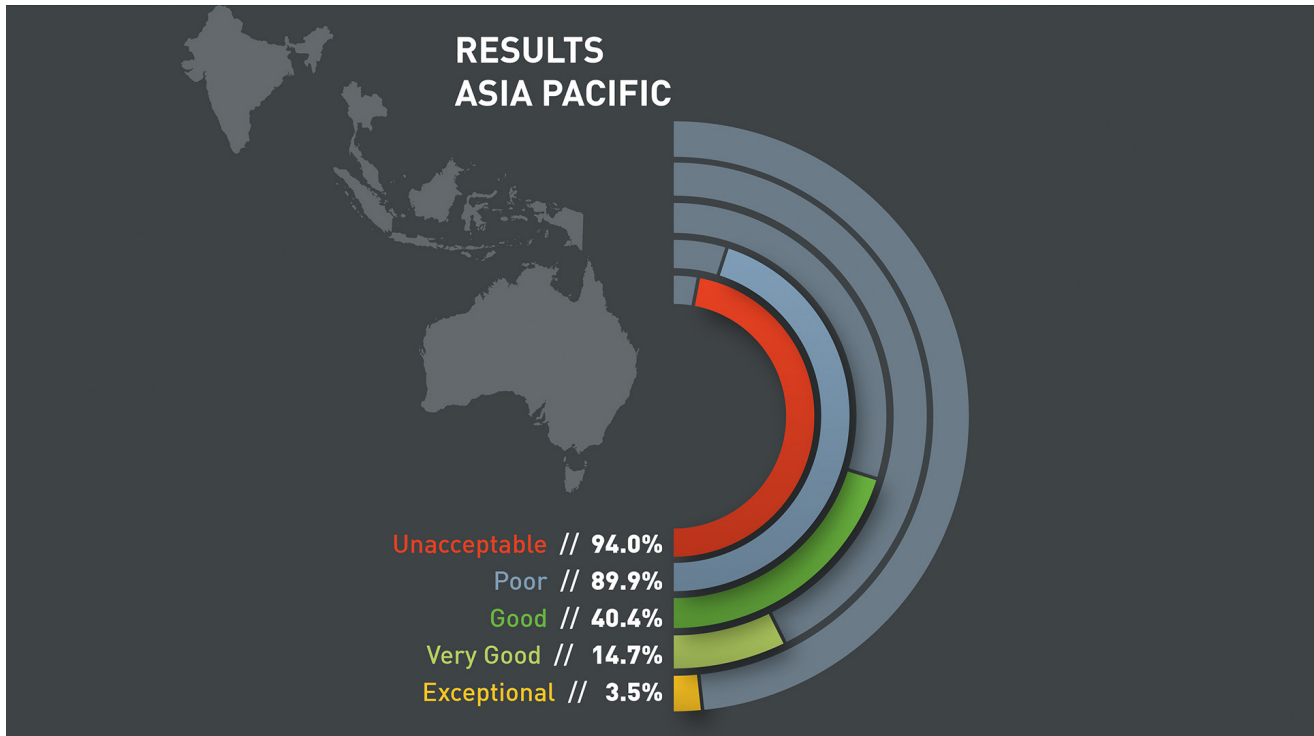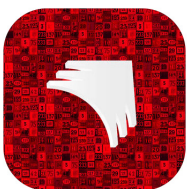
ANIMATED WEB INFOGRAPHICS

Apart from static infographics for print and digital, you can of course also create an animated web-infographic. You can see an example by clicking here. This animated web-infographic was created with HTML5. All design elements were drawn in Adobe Illustrator.

ANIMATED GIFOGRAPHICS

If you like to animate an infographic that can be used as a picture file to embed in your website or on social media, a gifographic is perfect in this situation. This is a gif file which shows the animation as auto-play frames. However, the infographic still has to be created in a vector program upfront!

INSPIRATION

As an inspiration, I created a free app for iPads a few years ago. In that app you can see static as well as animated infographics. I really recommend to take a look at it, simply click here when using your iPad or search for "Infographics by HCG corporate designs" in the Apple App Store.

If you don't have an iPad, you can watch this video where I present the app.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hello, my name is Helene Clara Gamper. I'm a graphic designer that
believes in a common thread – as illustrated in my logo. I help
businesses build a visual identity, translate data into graphic
landscapes and help publishers make their magazines look great.

I grew up in a publisher family. About ten years ago I started
working in the creative field what in 2010 made me start
my own business called HCG corproate designs.

Since then, I've designed for companies of many sizes from the German speaking area but also from
other countries such as the USA or the United Kingdom. I created corporate design concepts for
business start-ups, established editorial designs for publishers, designed and implemented rich media
magazines for tablets and smart phones and visualized complex data for some great infographics.

When creating designs, I always try to get to the very essence of the character and the
philosophy behind my clients' businesses and their products. This essence I include in a holistic
design approach, that follows me through the entire creative process. Collaborating with my clients
and exploring what makes their businesses and their products unique and stand out, I believe
is an important part of my job as a designer. This is how I can develop unique visual concepts
with a common thread running through them, which is something I'm really passionate about.
It puts a smile on my face when I see people respond and interact with my design creations
– and when my clients tell me about that.

Some of my clients say they appreciate my flexibility and transparency. I believe
that being open and straight with my clients is a matter of fairness and respect
and contributes to a positive and successful collaboration.

When I'm not designing you can find me doing sports, exploring nature or travelling. I get a lot of
inspiration from seeing different places, doing new things or trying out new recipes with exotic
spices I bought from different corners of the globe. In 2014, I fulfilled one of my biggest dreams:
travelling through Peru and Ecuador and visiting the giant tortoises of the Galapagos Islands.

I live in the wonderful city of Innsbruck, Austria, the so-called "Capital of the Alps".
The lovely scenery here inspires me every day.

Want to get get in touch?
I'd love to hear from you.

DESIGNS FOR DIGITAL AND PRINT