AMU 401: Narrative Storytelling in the Digital Age

Matching Content to Media

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Reviewing the Benefits of Multimedia Story Treatments

Diversifying A Story's Elements Can Increase Its Reach and Staying Power

1. Encourage Engagement

- A single story has divergent hooks which will attract different segments of the population
- When correctly formatted, multimedia stories are attractive to a mobile audience

2. Convert Breadth to Depth

- Creator of content can lean on different media to deliver more nuanced messages
- Each medium's unique attributes appeal to different senses, yet combine to create a cohesive package

3. Maintain Interest

- New experiences and changing engagement can "trick" audiences into spending more time with content because it stays fresh
- Continuing to mix up tactics means the viewer is less likely to skim over the entire piece

4. Increase Long-Term Impact

- Multiple dimensions allow content creators to differentiate their narrative's structure in ways that text alone won't
- Individual media elements can be made embeddable; these standalones can be used by other organizations for broader reach

Source: Images from Noun Project, Interview with Multimedia Content Developer, Council on Foreign Relations, National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.

Finding a (Flexible) Formula That Works

Templates Ideally Allow for Streamlined Assembly Without Forcing Format to Come First
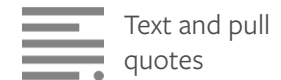
From Initial Vision...

"From the start we build and view stories like this as existing in a multimedia format, and work forward with this in mind."

...To the Execution...

Sample of a typical visual hook used across CFR's interactives

...Using Appropriate Media

Text and pull quotes

Video and still images

Infographics, interactive maps and timelines

(Individual elements detailed on the following pages)

Case in Brief

COUNCIL *on* **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

Profiled Story: China's Maritime Disputes, by Council on Foreign Relations
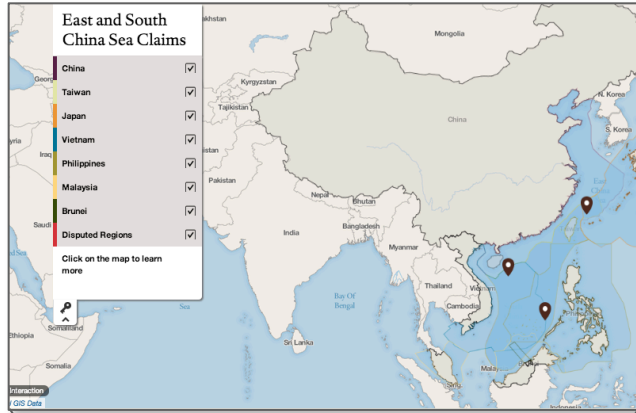**Organization Type:** Think Tank
Format: Web-based interactive

- Each interactive InfoGuide takes approximately 3-4 months for a team of 5-6 staff members to produce
- Treatments feature a mobile responsive, scrolling design that "unpacks" stories into component parts
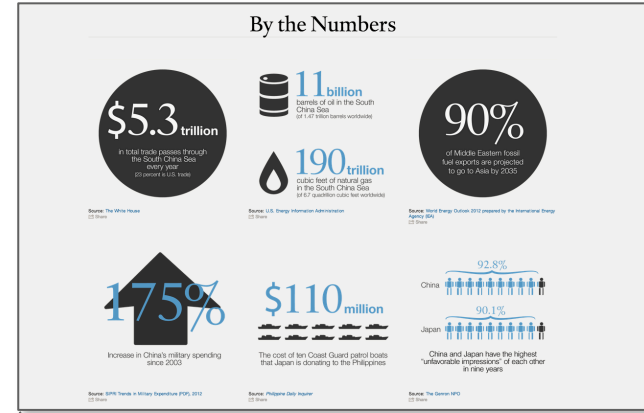

When It's Better to Show Than Tell

Maps and Infographics Add Quantitative Depth (And Shareability) to a Narrative

Interactive Map

✓ Provides context to story and sense of geographical setting
✓ Offers political and geographic toggles not available in standard maps
✓ Allows user to build a customized comparative analysis of topic using spatial tools

Both Formats

✓ Can be embedded on other sites, increasing the likelihood content will go viral
✓ Attract individuals who do not have the time to read or view the larger narrative

Infographic

✓ Makes strong visual comparisons with minimal text
✓ Creates talking points viewers will remember, and use offline
✓ Translates more academic material to the general population in a reader-friendly format

Source: Interview with Multimedia Content Developer, National Journal Communications Council research and analysis.