

CONDENSING THE NEWS

INTRODUCTION All communication is a challenge in condensing information. We are constrained by an I/O bandwidth... the speed at which we can send and receive information. In every exchange we must decide how much compression is required to compress the ideas, facts or stories we wish to express into the available space, time or page.

All communication is a tradeoff between these constraints. At one end of this spectrum is a novel like *The Mezzanine* which “deals with a man’s lunch-time trip up an escalator in the mezzanine of the office building where he is employed” and follows the protagonist’s “contemplations of a variety of everyday objects and occurrences, including how paper milk cartons replaced glass milk bottles, the miracle of perforation, and the nature of plastic straws to float, vending machines, paper towel dispensers, and popcorn poppers.” Here detail is maximized at the expense of time. Conversely a book like *Guns, Germs and Steel* takes the opposite approach to describe millenia of human civilization.

The New York Times Sunday edition is a specific solution to numerous constraints. The capacity of their writers, the physical dimensions of the paper, the type size and the amount of time available to their readership all define a particular format and explain why the Sunday Times is supersized.

In this workshop we imagine the paper under different constraints. For our purposes, no section of the New York Times can be longer than a single page. The newspaper plays with this idea on the front page. Here they provide an overview of some of the paper’s contents but with the benefit of additional pages to complete those threads. Unlike a magazine cover or the front page, we aim to provide complete thoughts that succinctly express as much as possible of the section’s content on a single surface.

QUESTION How do you condense a section of the the Sunday New York Times into a single page?

GOAL To condense the information from a section of the New York Times onto a single surface (or a single frame).

DELIVERABLE Each team will deliver 1 to 4 single page aggregations of their chosen section. The dimensions of each page should match the dimensions of the section. Final files should be placed in the workshop’s Google Drive folder: <http://bit.ly/1i7GX3v>

AGENDA **Monday, October 26**
Lecture 1:10–2:10
Introduce Assignment 2:10–3:00
Reconvene at 5:00

Tuesday, October 27
Office hours in Lucy’s Office 11:00–5:00

Wednesday, October 28
Review Assignment 11:20–4:20

DATASET One section of the Sunday New York Times from October 25, 2015.

SECTIONS Front Section, Real Estate, Metropolitan, Sunday Review, Sunday Styles, Sunday Business, Arts & Leisure, The New York Times Magazine, Travel, Book Review, T Style Magazine, Sports Sunday

FRONT SECTION The articles in this section are available as text files here: <http://bit.ly/1WcMtPN>

Front Page:

1. The Disproportionate Risks of Driving While Black
2. Mexico Spared Major Damage by Giant Storm
3. Amid Splits, Catholic Bishops Crack Open Door on Divorce
4. Obama Administration Calls for Limits on Testing in Schools (White House Moves to Limit School Testing)
5. Charlie Hebdo's Recovery From Attacks Opens New Wounds for Staff
6. Bush at 91: Irritated and Invigorated by '16 Race
7. Cardiff University Rejects Bid to Bar Germaine Greer (British University Denies Student Petition to Bar Author)

International:

1. Norway Has a New Passion: Ghost Hunting (For Many Norwegians, Ghosts Fill a Void)
2. One Village Mourns Dozens After Bus Accident in France
3. Election Will End Kirchner's Presidency, Not Her Hold on Argentina
4. General to Investigate U.S. Airstrike on Doctors Without Borders Hospital
5. Israel and Jordan Agree on Steps to Ease Jerusalem Tensions, Kerry Says (Kerry Signals an Agreement to Ease Jerusalem Tensions)
6. South Korean Plastic Surgeons Help Northern Defectors Erase Their Scars (Erasing Physical Signs of North Korea's Scars)
7. ISIS Claims Responsibility for Attack in Bangladesh (Bombs Target Shiites in Bangladesh on Holy Day)
8. Mexico Spared Major Damage by Giant Storm (Mexico Exhales After Surviving a Giant Storm)
9. Lessons of Past Disasters Helped Mexico Sidestep the Brunt of a Hurricane
10. Amid Splits, Catholic Bishops Crack Open Door on Divorce
11. Voice Is Sought at the Vatican on Remarriage (An Overture to the Divorced and Remarried)

National:

1. Court by Court, Lawyers Fight Policies That Fall Heavily on the Poor (Fighting Court by Court to End Judicial Policies That Fall Heavily on Poor)
2. Mayor Faces 'Rite of Passage': A Campaign Seeking His Exit (Mill Town on the Upswing Is Roiled by an Old Habit: A Mayoral Recall Campaign)
3. Paul Ryan as Speaker: A Preview of the Fights He Will Face, in Plain English (The Fights That Ryan Will Face as Speaker, In Plain English)
4. Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders Attack in Iowa, but Targets Diverge (Clinton and Saunders Attack, but Targets Diverge)
5. Paul Ryan and Joe Biden: Unlikely Alliance of Working (Ryan and Biden Spread the Idea That Families Are Fathers' Work Too)
6. Auto Union Gives G.M. Sunday Deadline
7. Clock Returned to Boy Who Was Arrested
8. Oklahoma State University Parade Turns Deadly as Car Crash Kills 4 (Car Plows into Crowd At Oklahoma State, Leaving Four Dead)

Weather Report

Obituaries:

1. Richard Cardamone, Judge, Dies at 90; Doomed Westway Project in Manhattan (Richard Cardamone, Judge Who Doomed Westway Project in Manhattan, Dies at 90)
2. Maureen O'Hara, Irish-Born Actress Known as Queen of Technicolor, Dies at 95 (Maureen O'Hara, 95, Dies; Played Strong-Willed Beauties in Movies)
3. Dr. Beny Primm, Pioneer in AIDS Prevention, Dies at 87 (Dr. Beny Primm, 87, Pioneer in Combating AIDS Epidemic)

PROCESS Thoughts, tips, suggestions and resources for the workshop.

- 1. QUESTION** What are you interested in discovering?
A critique of the paper? *What are the balance of sexes in the paper?*
An aesthetic investigation? *What does type size or color usage signify?*
A translation? *What would the sports section look like as a map?*
A good question generates more questions... a visualization is an answer.

- 2. GET THE DATA** Copy, tag, scan, google, cut... whatever you need to do to get data into a format where you can start to play with it. Think about all the points of connection within the newspaper... people, products, places, dates, events. Once you consider the content of your section in this way you can start to make comparisons. Thinking about the structure of the paper may help you find these connections.

Sunday NYT

Sunday NYT › Section

Sunday NYT › Section › Page

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Title

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Page Number

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Date

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Word Count

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Typeface

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Type size

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Author

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Location

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Content

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Content › Topic

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Content › Sentiment

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Content › People

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Text › Content › Location

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Photo / Illustration

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Color / B&W

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Dimensions

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Author

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Content

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Content › Location

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Content › People

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Article › Image › Content › Objects

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Ad

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Ad › Text

Sunday NYT › Section › Page › Ad › Photo

- 3. IMPROVE THE DATA** The process of exploring, cleaning, and extending data is cyclical. Exploring will show you the good and the bad of your data. These tools will help you discover issues and improve the quality of your data allowing you to explore further.

Document process, data transformations and queries so work can be reproduced.

Tools to Clean:

Text Edit (never underestimate find & replace)

Numbers, Excel, Google Docs

Trifacta Wrangler (trifacta.com)

Open Refine (openrefine.org)

Data Wrangler (vis.stanford.edu/wrangler/app/)

3. IMPROVE THE DATA

Tools to Extend:

Text & image topic extraction (imagga.com)

Geocode: Google Maps (control click on map and select "What's here?")

Geocode: Google API (developers.google.com/maps/documentation/geocoding/intro)

Place categorization (developer.foursquare.com)

Changes to articles (newsdiffs.org)

Tools to Explore:

Word count (writewords.org.uk/word_count.asp)

Numbers, Excel, Google Docs (use formulas and graphs)

Database (MySQL)

Mapping (CartoDB)

Data Hero (datahero.com)

Chartlr (chartlr.com)

Tableau (tableau.com)

4. LAYOUT

Defining the organizational structure of the document or graphic.

Consider the narrative flow from element to element.

Demonstrate the depth & breadth of a data set by working at S/M/L granularities.

Show all the data, categories of data as well as individual pieces of data.

Sketch and wireframe the entire layout before committing to one portion.

Using both a horizontal and vertical grid will provide flexibility.

Tools for Layout:

Illustrator

InDesign

5. TYPOGRAPHY

Select typefaces for impact, legibility, texture and appropriateness.

All typographic best practices apply... letterspacing, line spacing, line lengths, ragging.

Use correct characters (apostrophes vs. tic marks and en dashes vs. hyphens)

Special attention to numerical typography (old style, tabular), percent glyph, fractions.

Describing a number with more than 4 digits starts to leave human scale and should probably be modified.

Resources:

Hoefler (typography.com)

Commercial (commercialtype.com)

Kris Sowersby (klim.co.nz)

YouWorkForThem (youworkforthem.com)

Fontstand (fontstand.com)

6. COLOR

Use color, tint, transparency and pattern to create associations.

Selecting palettes of colors that are distinct by varying hue, saturation, brightness.

Create opportunities for high and low contrast.

Consider colorblind accessibility.

Apply colors to balance biases in palette (eg, using less of most saturated colors)






















Avoiding keys and legends... this is just offloading work to your audience.

Resources:

Color Brewer (colorbrewer2.org)

Tilemill tips (mapbox.com/tilemill/docs/guides/tips-for-color/)

7. VISUALIZATIONS Taxonomy of different forms by Frederik Ruys (@fruis)

who/which Is involved?	where Is it?	when did it happened?	what Is it about?	how/why does it work?	how much Is it?	
 PROFILE	 LOCATION	 FAMILY TREE	 ORGANOGRAM	 NETWORK DIAGRAM	 VALUE	who
	 POSITION	 TRACK	 PLACES	 CONNECTION	 CHOROPLETH	where
		 TIMELINE	 PERIOD	 EVOLUTION	 CHARTS	when
			 EXPLODED VIEW	 COMIC STRIP	 COMPARISON	what
			 PROCESS	 RELATIONS		how/why
				 DIAGRAMS		how much

Quantitative Displays with Type

Typographic lists, tag clouds and applying scale, position and repetition to encode information.

Quantitative Displays with Points and Lines

Coordinate systems, scatter plots, line graphs, and bar charts.

Quantitative Displays with Area

Area of triangles, circles, squares and other shapes, pie charts, bubble charts and tree maps.

Quantitative Displays with Maps

Map projections, the lat lon coordinate system

Maintain a coherent graphic vocabulary.

Don't ruin all your hard work with an arbitrary or distracting labeling system.

Tools:

Processing (processing.org)

D3 (d3js.org)

Illustrator

Resources:

Sample Processing sketches (github.com/feltron)

My favorite visualizations (feltron.tumblr.com)

Sha Hwang (pinterest.com/shashashasha/)

Makers:

Francesco Franchi (francescofranchi.com)

Jer Thorp (blprnt.com)

Moritz Stefaner (truth-and-beauty.net)

Ben Fry - Fathom (fathom.info)

Catalog Tree (catalogtree.net)

Pitch Interactive (pitchinteractive.com)

Carl Detorres (cdgd.com)

Stefanie Posavec (stefanieposavec.co.uk)

Kelli Anderson (kellianderson.com)