



Visual storytelling

Branding e Infographic

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IR0000032 – ITINERIS, Italian Integrated Environmental Research Infrastructures System
(D.D. n. 130/2022 - CUP B53C22002150006) Funded by EU - Next Generation EU PNRR-
Mission 4 “Education and Research” - Component 2: “From research to business” - Investment
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Buongiorno a tutte e tutti!

My name is David, I'm a visual designer and street artist. Today, I'm excited to guide you on this journey through graphic design and infographics.

Let's start with a simple, yet important question:

What is graphic design, in your opinion?

Is it a drawing? A decoration? A trend?

The answer is:

Graphic design is a language — it's communication.

It's how we transform ideas, data, and concepts into images that speak for themselves.

And infographics are one of the most powerful tools to do this, especially when we need to explain complex things in a simple way.

Principles of Visual Communication

What is visual design and why is it important

- The difference between decorative graphics and functional graphics
- Common use cases: social communication, reports, presentations, dissemination

The role of graphic design beyond aesthetics

Visual communication isn't (just) about making things look good. It's about communication — guiding the eye, giving meaning to a message, even without words.

Today, we're surrounded by images — flyers, websites, billboards, social media. But knowing how to *see* and especially how to *design* these visuals is a valuable, versatile skill — and one that's increasingly in demand. Even in social, cultural, and educational fields.

Decorative Graphics vs Functional Graphics: What's the Difference?

Decorative graphic design is primarily meant to beautify content. It's designed to catch the eye or evoke an aesthetic emotion.

It can be powerful, but if not supported by a clear message, it may confuse or distract.

Functional graphic design, on the other hand, is created with the goal of conveying information in a clear, organized, and effective way.

It prioritizes readability, comprehension, and visual hierarchy.

This is the foundation of interface design, signage, infographics, and educational materials.

The two dimensions are not mutually exclusive:

a design can be both beautiful and functional.

The key is **not to sacrifice clarity for the sake of aesthetics.**

The Implicit Rules of Visual Communication:

Contrast – to create emphasis and make elements stand out

Alignment – to create order and visual connection between elements

Proximity – to show relationships by grouping related items together

Repetition – to reinforce consistency and visual identity

Introduction to Visual Semiotics:

Symbols – culturally learned signs that represent concepts (e.g. a heart for love)

Icons – simplified representations that resemble what they depict (e.g. a printer icon)

Signals – visual cues that guide behavior or trigger reactions (e.g. stop signs, warning symbols)

Mind maps – diagrams that visually organize information around a central idea, helping to connect and interpret concepts

Introduction to Visual Semiotics

Visual semiotics is the study of how images and visual elements communicate meaning. It helps us understand the hidden language behind what we see.

- **Symbols** – Signs that represent concepts through cultural convention (e.g. a dove = peace)
- **Icons** – Images that resemble what they represent (e.g. a camera icon = photo)
- **Signals** – Visual elements that prompt action or behavior (e.g. arrows, stop signs)
- **Mental maps** – Visual tools that organize and connect ideas in the mind

Anatomy of a Good Infographic

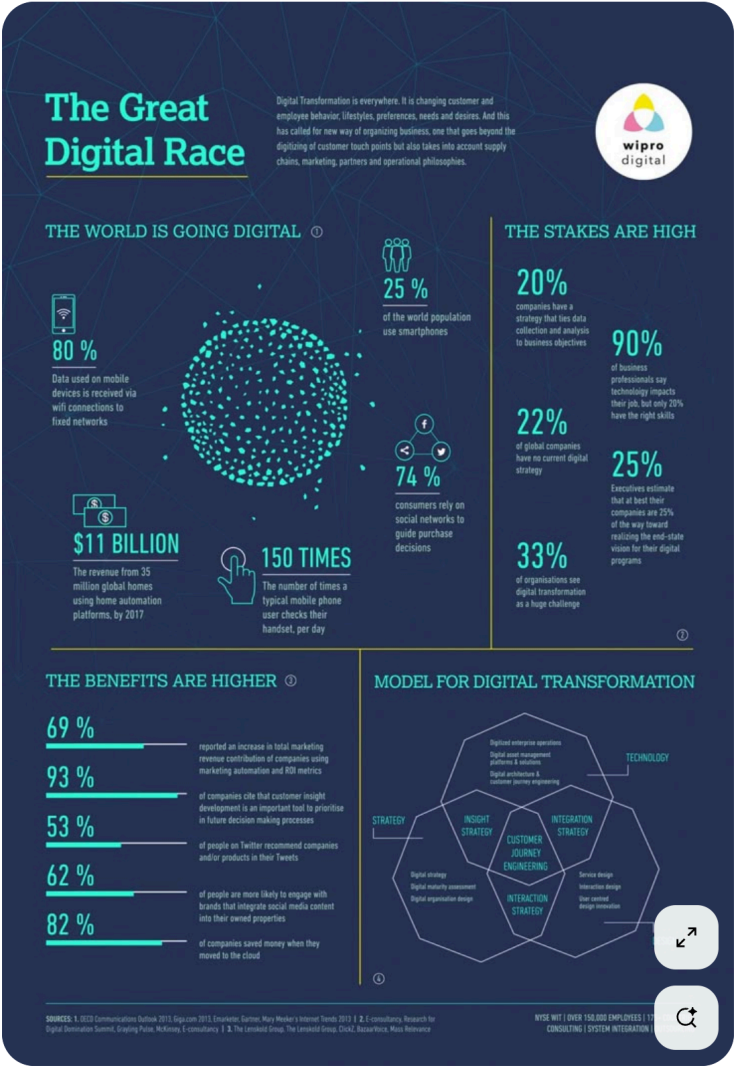
A well-designed infographic isn't just beautiful — it's effective.

It combines **clarity**, **structure**, and **visual appeal** to make complex information easy to understand.

Key elements:

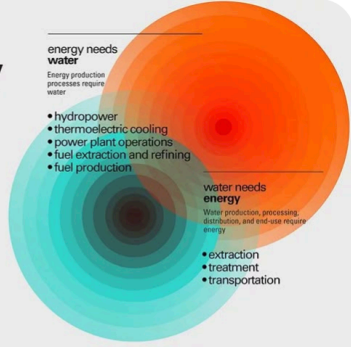
- **A clear message** – One main idea, easy to grasp at a glance
- **Logical structure** – Organized flow from start to finish
- **Visual hierarchy** – Fonts, colors, and sizes guide the eye
- **Effective use of icons and illustrations** – Support understanding, not decoration
- **Data integrity** – Accurate and honest representation of information
- **Consistent style** – Unified typography, colors, and layout

Diagrammi e dati



thirsty energy

energy and water's interdependence



the global challenge

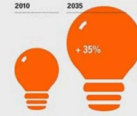
Legend
1 person icon = 100 Million

of the 7 Billion people on Earth today,

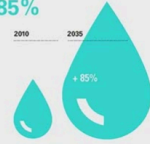
2.5 Billion have unreliable or no access to electricity
2.8 Billion live in areas of high water stress



By 2035, energy consumption will increase by **35%**



which will increase water consumption by **85%**



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increasing pressure on finite water resources

Layout: The Essential Elements:

Message – What is the core idea you're communicating?

Structure – How is the information organized?

Visual Hierarchy – What should the viewer see first, second, third?

Typography – Are fonts readable and consistent?

Color Palette – Do the colors support the message and create contrast?

Icons & Illustrations – Do they clarify or distract?

Data – Is it accurate, relevant, and easy to interpret?

Whitespace – Is there enough breathing room for the content?

Font Pairing: Typographic Harmony

Choosing the right combination of fonts creates balance, contrast, and personality. Good font pairing enhances readability and reinforces the tone of your message.

Tips:

- Pair a **serif** with a **sans-serif** for contrast
- Use **one typeface** in different weights for cohesion
- Match the **mood** of the fonts to the content (e.g. playful vs formal)
- Limit yourself to **2 or 3 fonts** to avoid clutter

Font paring:

Serif vs Sanserif

Aa

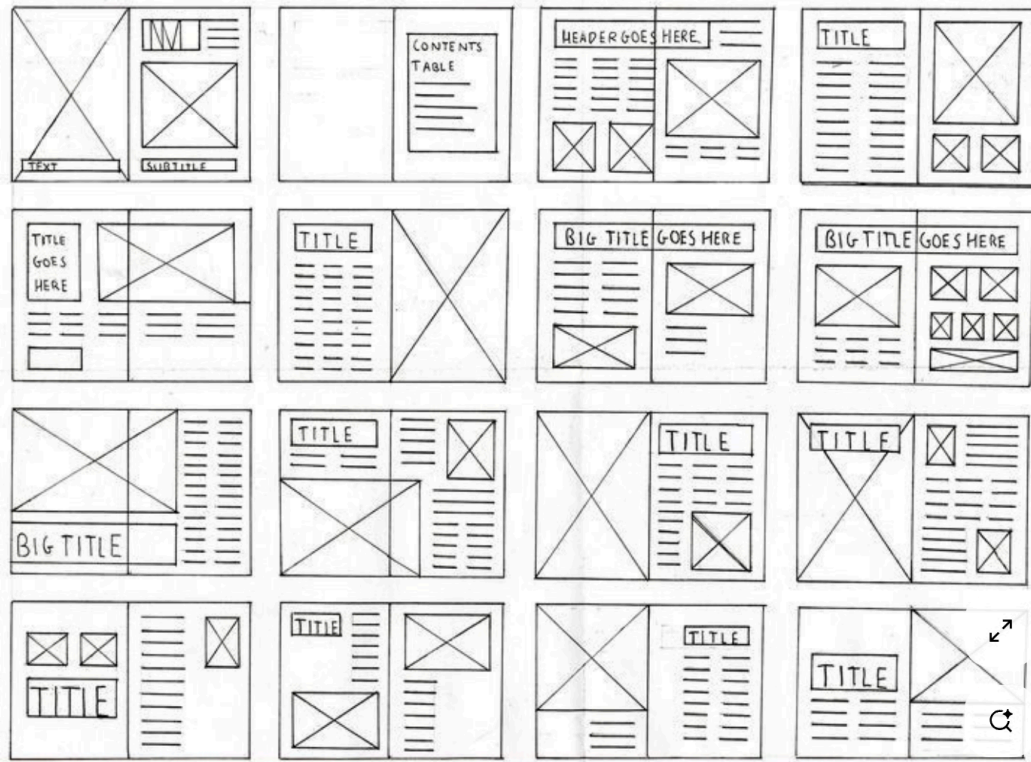
Aa

Aa

Sitografia

- <https://fontpair.co> – Accoppiamenti pronti all'uso
- <https://fonts.google.com> – Libreria Google Fonts con anteprima live
- <https://www.typography.com> – Articoli e consigli professionali (in inglese)
- <https://www.canva.com/font-combinations> – Font pairing per progetti grafici
- <https://fontjoy.com> – Generatore casuale di accoppiamenti coerenti

layout



Infographic Layout Cheat Sheet

by SeeMei Chow

Useful Bait
Works well with most of the data
Easy to read and good usability

Versus/ Comparison
Works well with a lot of informations
Design(visual) is very important
Informations have to be very interesting

Heavy Data (numbers porn)
Works well with marketing strategy
Timeline for project
Can extend to a flowchart

Road Map
Good for storyline/journey
Can be used as a timeline too

Timeline
Can be a comparison
Good for timeline or journey too
From simple to complex
(depends on your data)

Visualized Article
Needs strong title
Works well with heavy content
Easy to read and understand

Tool & ispirazioni

Breve overview su strumenti: Canva, Illustrator,
Fonti di ispirazione: Chance, Pinterenst, Visual Capitalist
Risorse Gratuite. Icon pack, Color Palette, font paring

Sitografia

Sitografia generale del corso

Infografica e comunicazione visiva:

- <https://informationisbeautiful.net> – Infografiche d'autore e ispirazioni
- <https://visme.co> – Tool per infografiche e presentazioni
- <https://venngage.com> – Editor online per infografiche

Tipografia e font pairing:

- <https://fontpair.co>
- <https://fonts.google.com>
- <https://www.typography.com>
- <https://www.canva.com/font-combinations>
- <https://fontjoy.com>

Colori e palette cromatiche:

- <https://colors.co>
- <https://colorhunt.co>
- <https://paletton.com>
- <https://www.color-hex.com>
- <https://www.canva.com/colors>

Icone, immagini e risorse visive:

- <https://thenounproject.com> – Icone professionali
- <https://undraw.co> – Illustrazioni open source
- <https://www.flaticon.com> – Icone scaricabili in vari formati
- <https://www.pexels.com> – Foto gratuite per uso didattico

Strumenti di prototipazione e design accessibili:

- <https://www.canva.com> – Editor online intuitivo
- <https://www.figma.com> – Design collaborativo e wireframe
- <https://www.lunacy.dev> – Editor offline gratuito compatibile con file Sketch



THANKS!

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