

Infographics and Personal PR

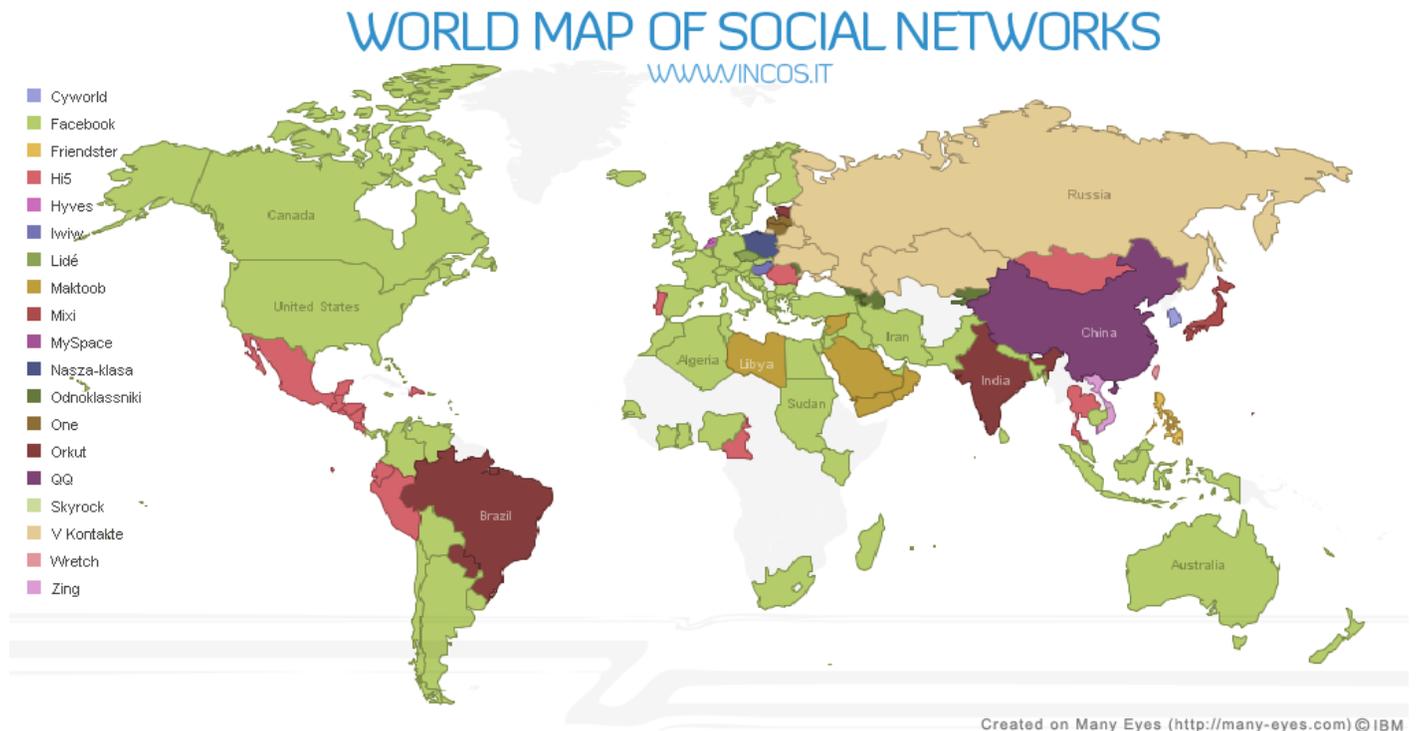
Infographics, or information graphics, are making a comeback across the Web. Have you thought about using an infographic for your resume? Linda explores this option in this article.

Infographics and Integrity

In a world filled with 140-character messages riddled with hashtags (Twitter), Facebook messages that are shortened by the “more” tag and blogs that cannot be more than 500 words long for fear of readerships' lack of attention, it makes sense that information graphics are making a comeback. Graphics are easy on the eye (for the most part) and can contain tons of information. But, do infographics indicate a 'dumbing down' of Internet readership, or does this resurgence of graphic information mean that writers and designers are becoming smarter?

Ok, that's a rhetorical question, with no answer expected. But, a revival of information graphics does mean that information contained in those graphics may or may not be relevant or correct – just the same as information contained in any blog, story or news report. And, the fact that this piece of information contains two sources of information – the facts and the graphic that represents those facts – means that any infographic producer needs to double down on the credibility of that piece of graphic news.

For example, take a look at this [information graphic](#) about worldwide usage of social networks:



Tell me, from the information you've gathered above, how you can rest assured that this information is correct? The only clue I have is that this graphic and its associated information was created by IBM through the site, [Many Eyes](#). While IBM often is seen as reputable, the lack of citation also shows that IBM feels that this graphic does not deserve citations. In other words, where did IBM retrieve the information required to complete this map?

That map provides one simplistic example of how easily people can trust the information contained within an infographic. Perhaps the authority provided by a pretty graphic can push this illusion, but no matter...what I'm about to discuss is how you can use this illusion and more to push your skills into the public through infographics, too.

PS – you, too, can use Many Eyes to create visuals from data sets provided at that site, or upload your own data sets to create infographics.

Getting on Board the Infographic Train

If you are mesmerized by infographics and you know little about the history behind this form of visual communication, then make a quick visit to [Wikipedia](#) to gain some insight. Then, head to the library to find any books penned by Edward Tufte, a statistician and sculptor who concentrates on the validity and – on the other hand – the fallacy of many infographics.

The reason you need to know more about information graphics before you head into this realm is because, if you want to create this graphic communication genre, you need to know that you can add this skill to your resume. It might help, too, if you learn a bit more about [statistics](#), as you cannot create an infographic without some knowledge in that field as well.

Don't freak out about the statistics part, especially if you already create databases. If you've "been there, done that," then you understand that collecting, analysing and interpreting data within those databases is, basically, a statistical practice. You are then, by all means of the definition, a mathematician as well as a designer.

You also can view some information graphics at sites that focus on those art forms. I'll list a few of those sites at the end of this article in the conclusion. In the meantime, I'm going to take you straight to one of those sites, [Cool Infographics](#), where Randy Krum has created an article about [infographic resumes](#).

Infographic resumes? Why didn't you think of that? What a great way for a designer to show off skills, mask weaknesses and create a graphic that also shows expertise? I'll walk you through a few of those resumes to explain what is great about these tools and what – if anything – could be added or detracted from this means of selling yourself to potential clients.

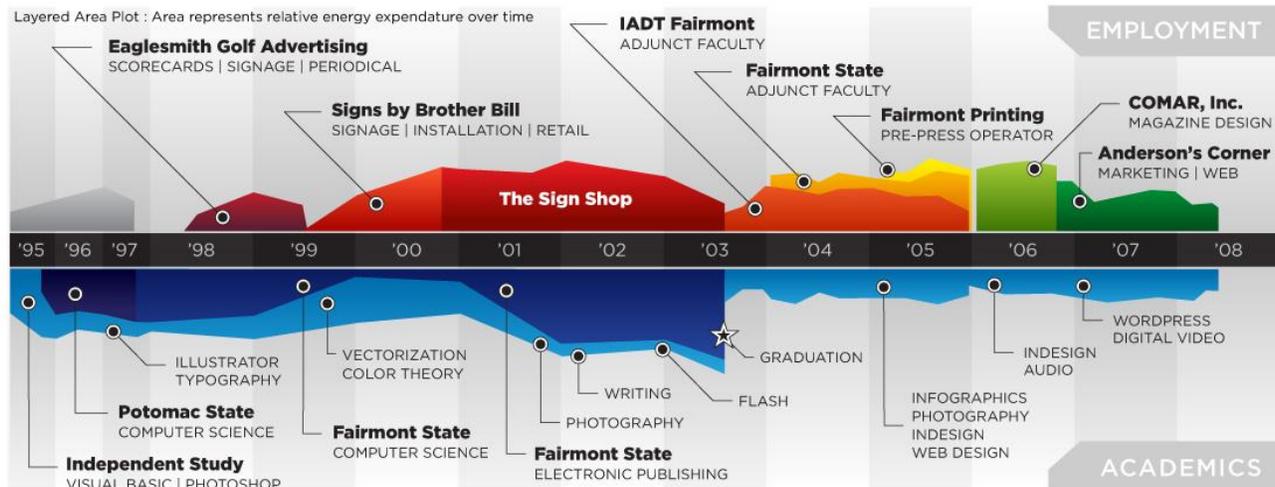
The Infographic Resume

No beating around the bush – let's get started with Michael Anderson's resume, the one shown at the top of that article about infographic resumes:

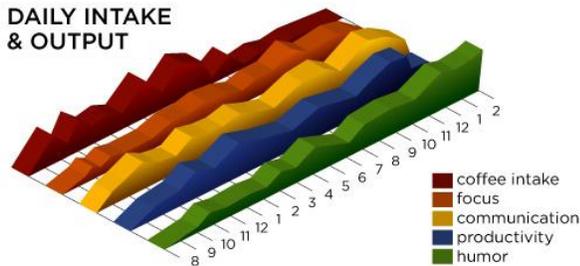
Michael Anderson

RÉSUMÉ / INFOGRAPHICS

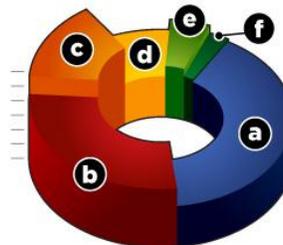
theportfolio.ofmichaelanderson.com
lunyboy@yahoo.com | 304-382-5145
HC 63 BOX 2340 | ROMNEY, WV 26757



DAILY INTAKE & OUTPUT



PRIMARY SKILL SETS



- a. Digital Photography, *Photoshop*
- b. Layout, *InDesign*, Typography
- c. *Illustrator*, Vectorization, Signs
- d. *Flash*, Animation, Scripting
- e. Web Design, Wordpress, CSS
- f. Copywriting, Editing, Research

*Pie slice = represents % personal time investment.
Height indicates approx. professional deployment.*

Pretend that you are a client who is viewing Anderson's resume for the first time. Instead of a bland paper resume typed out for scanning, you might sit back in your chair to take in all the pretty primary and secondary colours – much like a kid would do with a coloured picture book. That's the first plus to this resume – all the bold, attention-getting colours.

After the colours make their impact, you might begin to read the information contained in this graphic. I don't know about you, but my eye went to the lower right, where type was concentrated. This is where I learn, with a glance, what this person is capable of doing. But, I take more time than usual with this information, as I want to see how it correlates with the accompanying graphic. The more time I spend with this information, the more that information is ingrained in my brain...meaning that Anderson's skills will stay with me, when compared to other designers.

Finally, I begin to explore other information and accompanying graphics, and find myself laughing out loud at Anderson's "Daily Intake and Output" that includes coffee, humour and productivity. Despite the levity contained in this information, I find myself looking hard at the productivity and communication levels, which seem to be consistently strong (compared to the coffee intake) and improving.

This is exactly what a visual can do for your resume that simple type cannot do – provide comparisons that make your strong points seem stronger. Using simple elements and principles of design, you can make the

stronger points seem stronger when you align them with stats that contrast in strength. Note, also, that Anderson uses hot colours (red, orange and yellow) against cool colours (blue and green), a trick that can make that contrast seem even stronger.

I'm not sure how I feel about the graphic at top in Anderson's resume. Instead of looking at the information, I found myself wondering if the hot colours would have looked better at the bottom. Outside of this diversion, I thought the way he separated his academia and his work experience was brilliant. The typeface is easy to read, the use of greys to contrast with the brilliant colours was smart, and the inclusion of his personal information at the top right of the page was smart, too.

Would I hire this guy on the spot? No – I would treat him as I would any other applicant for a job. But, I may call him faster than I would other applicants to set up an interview. And, his information would stay with me for far longer, I think, than information contained in a simple typed resume.

The Next Resume

Moving on, scroll down the page to Jesse Burton's resume:

HELLO! I'M JESSE BURTON. I'm a designer, illustrator, director & musician. I want to work with the most talented people in interactive media, branding, & design. burtonfink@verizon.net • 201.615.9856 jesseburton.com • twitter.com/jesseburton

KEY WORK EXPERIENCE	SKILLS	HONORS	EDUCATION
<p>EGO ID, MORRISTOWN, NJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted from Jr. Designer to Associate Creative Director in 2 years Collaborated with ECD, vendors, & stakeholders to devise comprehensive brand strategies, generating significant bottom-line impact Expanded the agency's suite of services to include interactive & social media <p>FOUR LEGS, MIDLAND PARK, NJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided packaging, apparel, advertising & video production solutions for freelance clients Clients include: Warner Bros, Sony/BMG, Universal Music, EMI <p>ALPHAGRAPHICS, PARAMUS, NJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared customer files for press in a faced-paced production environment 	<p>I'M A THINKER & A LEADER</p> <p>Software skills are crucial, but a great creative also understands the competitive landscape, leads with aplomb, isn't afraid to speak his mind, and is always exploring new thinking in the field. I love design, 24/7.</p> <p>SOFTWARE</p> <p>Photoshop CS4, Illustrator CS4, InDesign CS4, Aftereffects CS4, Flash CS4, Final Cut Pro, Compressor, Reason 4.0, HTML/CSS, Powerpoint & Office</p> <p>DIFFERENTIATING SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands-on print production background Thorough understanding of video standards & formats Scoring/Music composition UX/UI expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apparel design for "Say Anything" featured in Rolling Stone magazine's "Best Of Rock" issue, 2008 "Paulson" music video (I directed & produced) selected as winner in MTV's Fall 07 "Freshman 5" competition Signed a music publishing contract with Warner-Chappell in 2007 Selected to design All Time Low's "So Wrong It's Right" album art; debuts in Top 40. Art is subsequently made into a cake on Food Network show "Ace Of Cakes" Capabilities brochure designed for Fifth Room Creative earned 2008 NJBMA Impact & GDUSA Awards 	<p>NEW YORK UNIVERSITY New York City, NY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BFA, Film & TV, Class of '02 Graduated with Honors Completed 4 year program in 3 years National Merit Scholar

Career Timeline (1999 - Present):

- 1999: FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL, FOUR LEGS
- 2000: ALPHAGRAPHICS PRO, DESIGNER
- 2001: DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION OFFICER, FIVE DOTS
- 2002: FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL, FOUR LESS VIDEOS
- 2003: RECORDING CONTRACT WITH DOGHOUSE/WING
- 2004: DIRECTOR/PRODUCE "ALL TIME LOW" VIDEO FOR HORLESS/WING
- 2005: DIRECTOR/PRODUCE "FAIR-LESS VIDEOS" FOR TOOTH & NAIL (EM)
- 2006: AFTEREFFECTS, FLASH
- 2007: SIGNED PUBLISHING DEAL WITH WARNER/CHAPPELL
- 2007: "PAULSON" MUSIC VIDEO WINS MTV "FRESHMAN 5"
- 2007: "ALL TIME LOW" CD DEBUTS BILLBOARD TOP 40
- 2007: SHIRT DESIGN, ROLLING STONE "BEST OF ROCK" ISSUE
- 2008: "ALL TIME LOW" CD DESIGN ON "ACE OF CAKES"
- 2008: STH ROOM BROCHURE WINS NJBMA, GDUSA AWARDS
- 2009: FEATURED SPEAKER, MSU "CAREER DAY"

A visualization of my career, 1999 - Present

The resume above caught my eye simply because it was striking in contrast ([see larger version](#)). But, I had trouble reading the white type on the black background (I'm into my fifth decade of living, and my eyes aren't what they used to be, even with corrective lenses). You might think about usability and accessibility when you create your graphic resume, too, as some employers are – like me – older than many applicants. What may seem cool to you and your peers may be detrimental when your audience changes.

Despite that white-type-black-background issue, I love the layout simplicity that Burton used on his resume. This is the classic "Z" layout, with a line across the top that leads the English-speaking and reading viewer from left to right, and the slanted copy and bottom line that takes the eye from top right to bottom left and back to the right again. This layout was used a lot in newspaper and magazine advertising, and it's used today in sparing amounts...which is too bad, as this layout is proven to work time and time again.

I'm also experiencing a bit of trouble reading the white type on the coloured bands at bottom left. Be sure to make your type read easily with contrast...black type would have worked here, and I would not have a problem seeing black type on the green or yellow compared to the white type on the purple. No problem at all. Other items I really like about this graphic include the "Hello!" at top left (very open, friendly and casual) and the resemblance of the colours against the black that remind me of black lights (re: sixties), a retrograde design that works for me.

As you can tell from the above paragraph, the problem (or solution) created by a graphic resume is that you really are putting yourself on the line. By choosing a specific graphic style, you show me who you are more so than if you used a simple typed page for your resume. With that in mind, I think it might be a wise idea to have several designs on hand to fit the potential client's likes and dislikes (some things that are good to know before you ship off a resume – you may learn that you don't want to work for a specific person any more than that person would want you to work for him or her). Plus, it is handy for employers to have a print resume as well, to file with your personal information if you are hired or if they want to keep your information in a 'tickle' file for future work.

The Third Resume

Greg Dizzia's [resume](#) is a great example of how to use keys to display information:

CURRICULUM VITAE

key

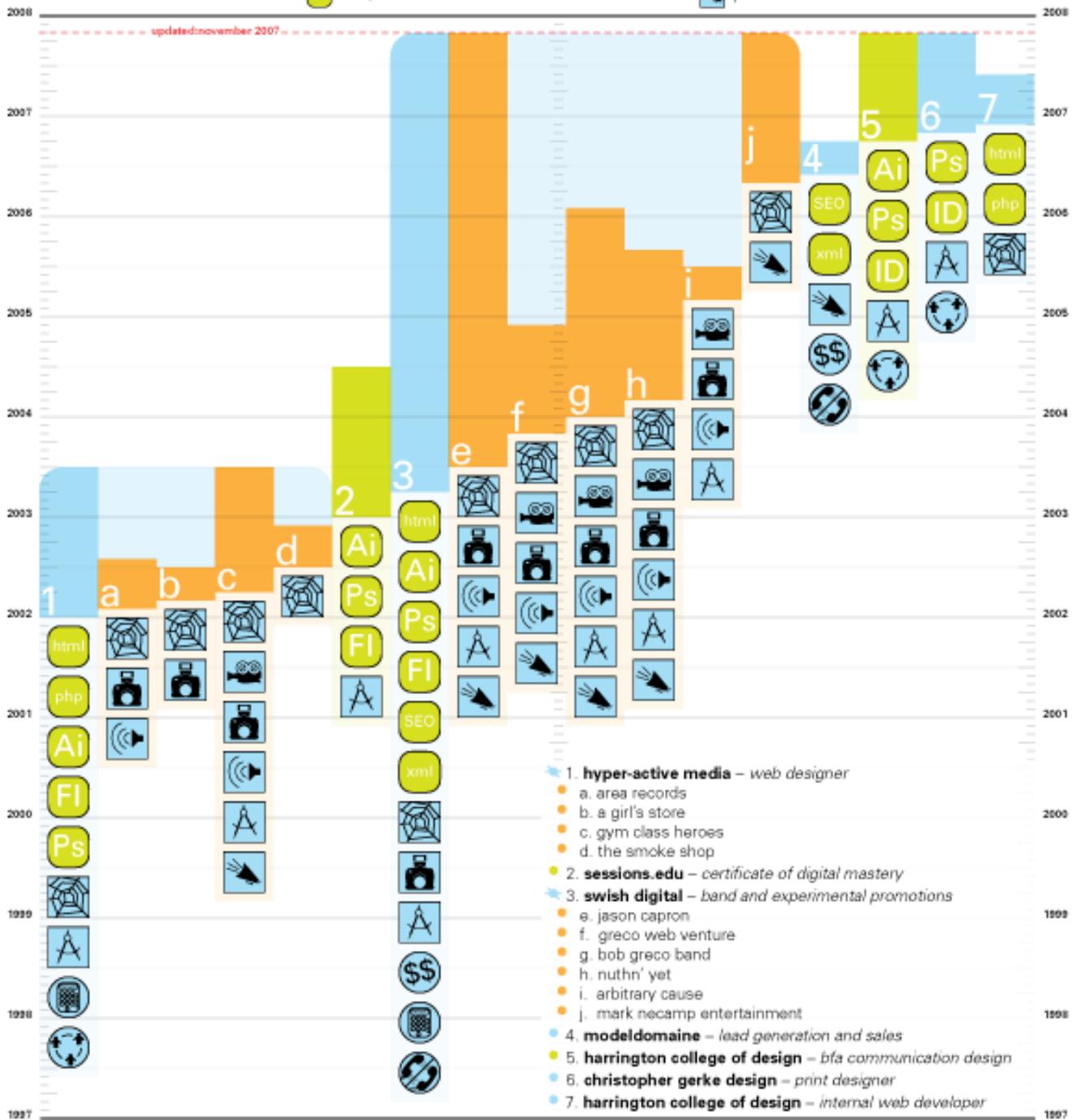
- clients
- employers
- education

skill improvement and utilization

- Ps photoshop
- seo search engine optimization
- Fl flash
- xml/rss
- Ai illustrator
- ID indesign
- php / mysql
- html / css

work performance and experience

- website
- sales
- filming
- accounting
- photography
- collaboration
- audio
- customer relations
- design
- promotions



greg dizzia - gregdizzia@gmail.com - dizzia.deviantart.com

← denotes truncated list

Playing with keys is like playing with game pieces, and Dizzia handles those pieces with skill – instead of scattering them all over the board, he places them in sequence, making this resume easy to “read.” He uses hot and cool colours for contrast, but they’re in pastel shades, which make them easy on the eyes. Once again, however, I wonder about using white type on that light green. It would not have bothered me in the least that the type on the green was black for high contrast.

The nice thing about Dizzia's keys is that they resemble signs that might be used in an airport or along a roadside. And, he mixes those symbols up with what appears to be element signs on the green. The resume is clean, neat, clear and useful; however, in returning to look at it again, I wish he had put his name at the top, rather than using the “Curriculum Vitae.” That way, with one glance, I could tell who I was dealing with rather than have to search for his name at the bottom left.

Don't be shy – shout out your name so it's heard! “Shouting” your name with bold type also makes it easier for viewers to remember your name.

Conclusion

If you look at the three resumes above as well as others on the Cool Graphics site, look at how much information is included on those graphic pages. Do you think you could fit any one of those graphics into one typed sheet? That's what many employers look for – one sheet of information for a resume so the second sheet doesn't get lost and so the resume can be read easily at a glance.

By using graphics for a resume, you are declaring yourself as a designer, you can fit more information about your skills and education on one sheet, and you've grabbed the employer's attention – all GOOD things. The scary part is getting it “right.” The only way you can get to that point is to know your craft and the skills involved with infographics.

Back to the original thought that opened this article – credibility. When you create an infographic for your resume, how can you make that information seem credible? Only one answer to that question – by including references. But, this inclusion brings up another interesting question – how do you feel, or how would your references feel, about putting this information on a graphic display? You may want to include this information on the back of the piece or include it in a regular typed resume that you include with the graphic. Use your imagination, but be sure to include it...most employers may not hire a person without credible references, any more than they would want you to marry a daughter through elopement.

Here are a few more sites that may help you gain some insight and knowledge about how to use infographics. Be critical when you look at the images on these sites – apply the elements and principles of design. Did the designer use them? Or did the image look slapped together? Did the designer cite his or her information, or are you left in doubt about the credibility of that information? Was the layout easy on the eyes, or was it confusing? Take notes – repeat what works for you and discard the rest.

- [Cool Infographics](#) – This is Randy Krum's site as mentioned previously.
- [Francesco Mugnai](#) – this article contains 50 “great examples of infographics.”
- [Six Revisions](#) – this article contains “40 Useful and Creative Infographics.”
- [Flowing Data](#) – this entire Web site deals with information architecture.
- [The Infographic Showcase](#) – ditto.
- [Infographics](#) – ditto.
- [Flickr Info Graphics Pool](#) – this is the Flickr group for many designers who have pooled together examples of infographics. My only problem with this site is that many of the examples don't have links and aren't easy to read at a small size.
- [Good](#) – this site contains a lot of different visual information ‘packets,’ including infographics.
- [Nixlog](#) – a running collection of links to infographics found on the Web.