AMANDA COX AND THE UPSHOT

“I think data journalism is successful when you don’t need the adjective, when it’s indistinguishable from *journalism* journalism.”

AMANDA COX

- American Journalist and graphics editor of The New York Times data journalism section The Upshot
- Today, she also helps develop and teach data journalism courses at the New York University School of Journalism
- Earned her Bachelor's degree in Economics from St. Olaf College in 2001
- Earned her Master's degree in Statistics from the University of Michigan in 2005
- She started at The New York Times as a summer intern while in graduate school and was hired in 2005 as a graphics editor at the New York Times
- In 2014, The New York Times website launched its new data journalism section with Amanda Cox as its graphics editor

ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

- Cox received the National Design Award in 2009 along with her team
- In 2011, Cox's team was awarded a Malofiej award for their Features Graphics Portfolio.
- Cox was awarded the Excellence in Statistical Reporting Award by the American Statistical Association in 2012.
- Her team has won a Gerald Loeb Award four times: in 2013 for Economics Interactives in 2014 for Interactive Graphics, in 2016 for Making Data Visual and in 2017 for Business Visuals.

“You look all over the paper, in all kinds of different ways, and it’s clear that readers had a demand for this sort of journalism. This funny mix of really substantive on really big, complicated topics, but presented in a really approachable way,” David Leonhardt, The Upshot’s inaugural editor

The Upshot in 5 years
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/learning/learning-with-the-upshot-five-years-in.html
What’s going on in this Graph?
https://www.nytimes.com/column/whats-going-on-in-this-graph?module=inline

NEWSPAPER AUDIENCE VERSUS TECHNICAL AUDIENCE

- You can’t necessarily assume that the audience cares about the topic
- You have to get rid of the jargon or the technical terms, which may be useful for a technical audience but do not belong in a newspaper
- The graphics should be able to stand on their own- “You shouldn’t need to read any accompanying text to understand the basic point.”
- You need to pay more attention to things like typography and design, which, done properly, are really about hierarchy and clarity, and not just about making things cute.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DATA SCIENCE IN JOURNALISM

- In the world of Journalism and news, news value and interestingness of data are the most important criteria in deciding what topics to work on
- The availability of data also significantly affects the scope of many projects.
- The complexity of the data graphics can sometimes vary based on the availability of time for projects in journalism
- Annotation of data in news and journalism is extremely important- “words in a graphic should highlight the relevant pattern, or an expert’s interpretation, and not merely say “Here is some data.” The annotation layer is critical, even in a newspaper (where the data is not usually super complicated).”

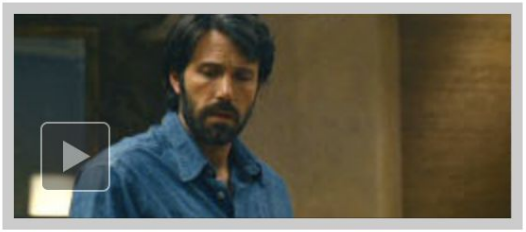
- Data Acquisition : Acquiring quality data may not always be easy but the most interesting graphics are created from data that doesn't show up on your first Google search. The process of data acquisition can also lead to interesting discoveries about the subject that is being explored.

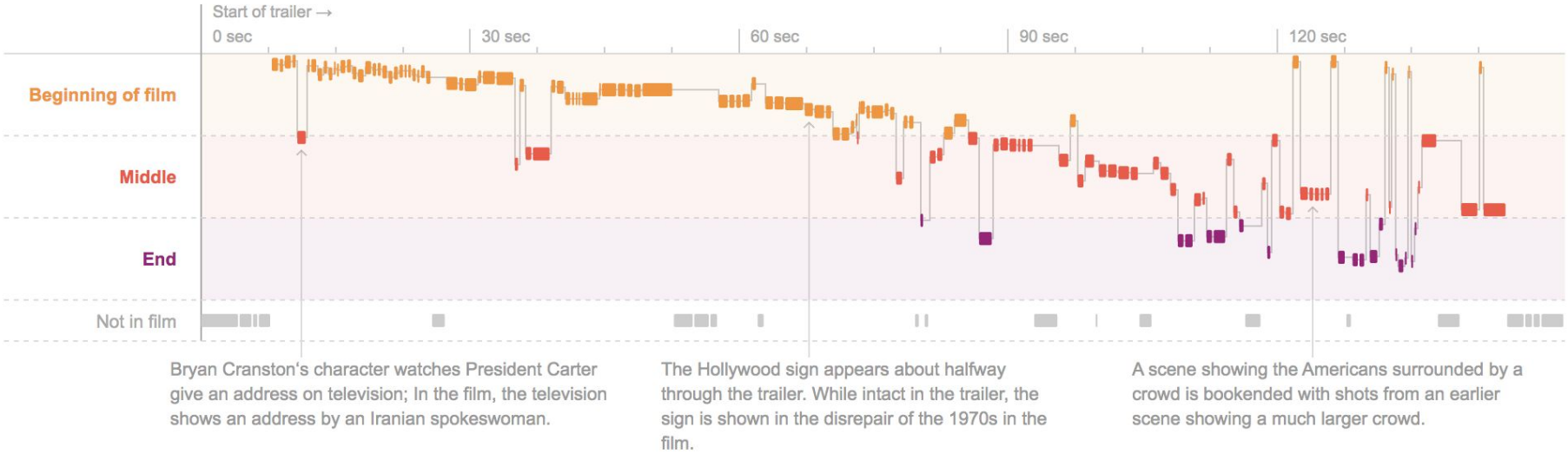
  Dissecting a Trailer: The parts of the Film that make the Cut

  In this project, the data was collected using a code that was developed to analyze stills from trailers of movies and whether they matched stills from the movie itself. The process of data collection led to interesting discoveries regarding methods that the film industry uses to create trailers.

Argo

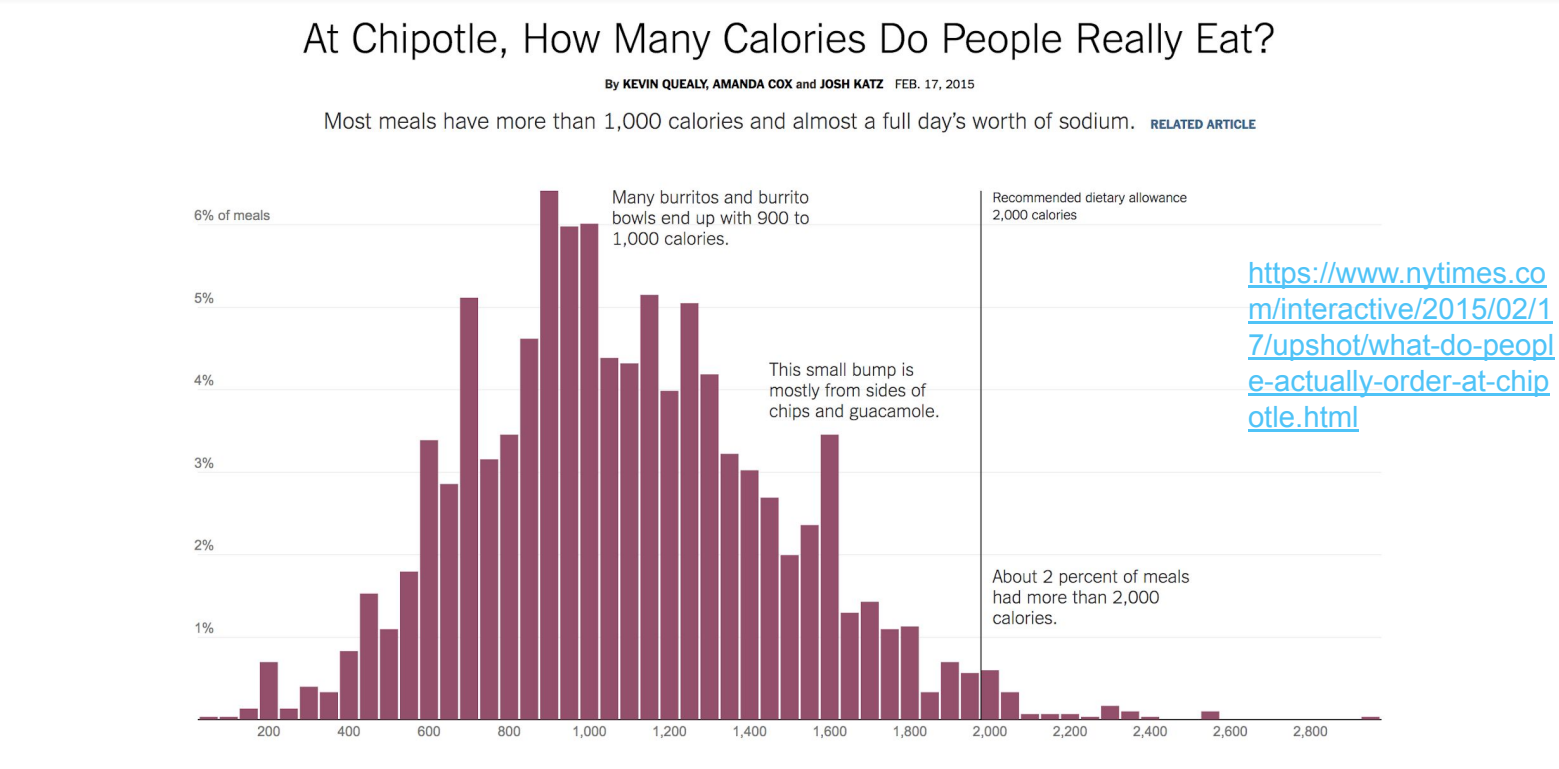
The trailer for “Argo” balances two different tones, according to Mr. Garrett: thriller and Hollywood satire. “Thrillers have a very fast cutting style,” he said. “It’s a way of ratcheting up attention.” Shots are longer, on average, when the trailer turns to satire.





https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/02/19/movies/awardsseason/oscar-trailers.html

AT CHIPOTLE, HOW MANY CALORIES DO PEOPLE REALLY EAT?



https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/17/upshot/what-do-people-actually-order-at-chipotle.html

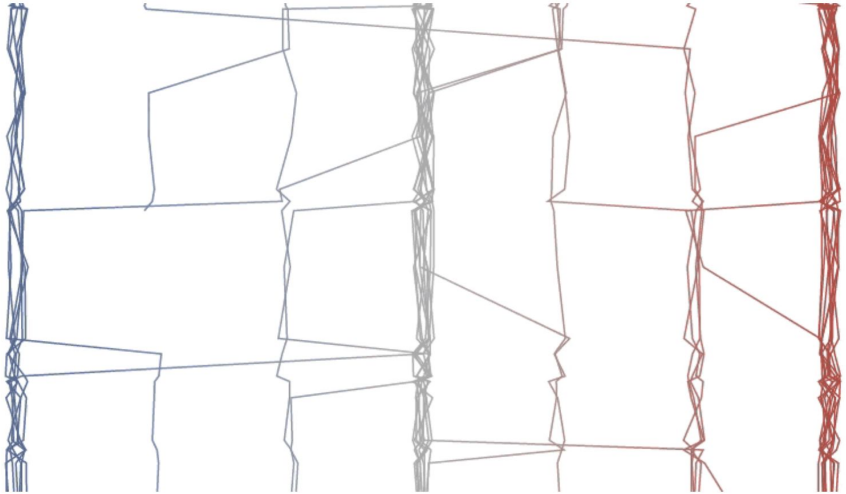
USING ‘R’ AT THE NEW YORK TIMES

- R is a programming language used widely by statisticians in statistical computing and graphics
- Amanda Cox emphasizes the importance of sketching and experimenting data graphs in R- drawing lines, points and text to test different ways of representing data in the most efficient manner
- She describes sketching hundreds of graphs and ideas of representing data (most of which may not work) as her most important skill
- Sometimes, brushing up an R output in Illustrator may also be a useful technique in the process

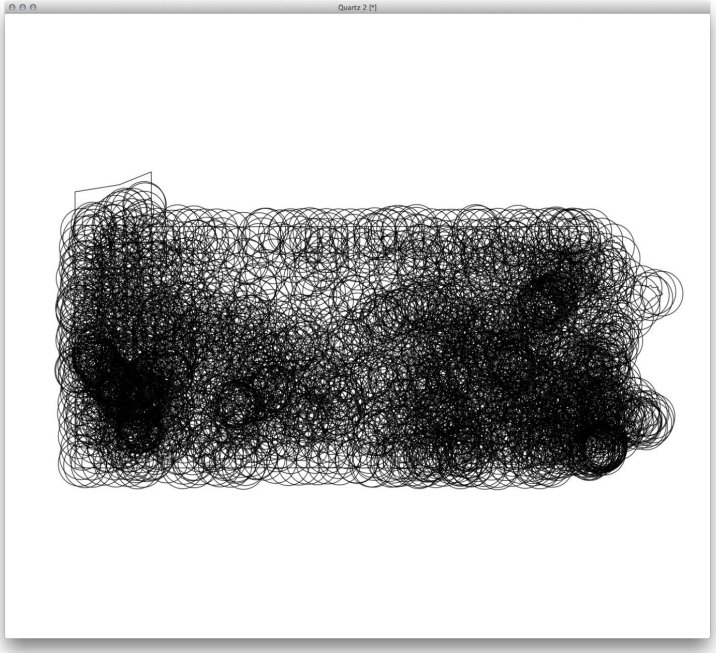
chartsnthings

SUBSCRIBE

Not close.



Dots.



https://chartsnthings-blog.tumblr.com

https://chartsnthings-blog.tumblr.com/post/62679766588/19-sketches-of-quarterback-timelines

(19 charts)

NOTABLE WORKS

1) Simple JOBS REPORT DATA made interesting

   https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/10/05/business/economy/one-report-diverging-perspectives.html?module=inline

2) Live Presidential Forecast

   https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/forecast/president?module=inline

3) The 9/11 Tally

   https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/09/08/us/sept-11-reckoning/cost-graphic.html

4) Voting Habits of Americans like you

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/10/upshot/voting-habits-turnout-partisanship.html

5) You Draw it: How Family Income Predicts Children's College Chances

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/28/upshot/you-draw-it-how-family-income-affects-childrens-college-chances.html

https://datastori.es/ds-56-amanda-cox-nyt/#t=33:45.398 (33:45)

6) Money, Race and Success: How your School District Compares

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/04/29/upshot/money-race-and-success-how-your-school-district-compares.html

7) A 3D chart on the Future of the Economy

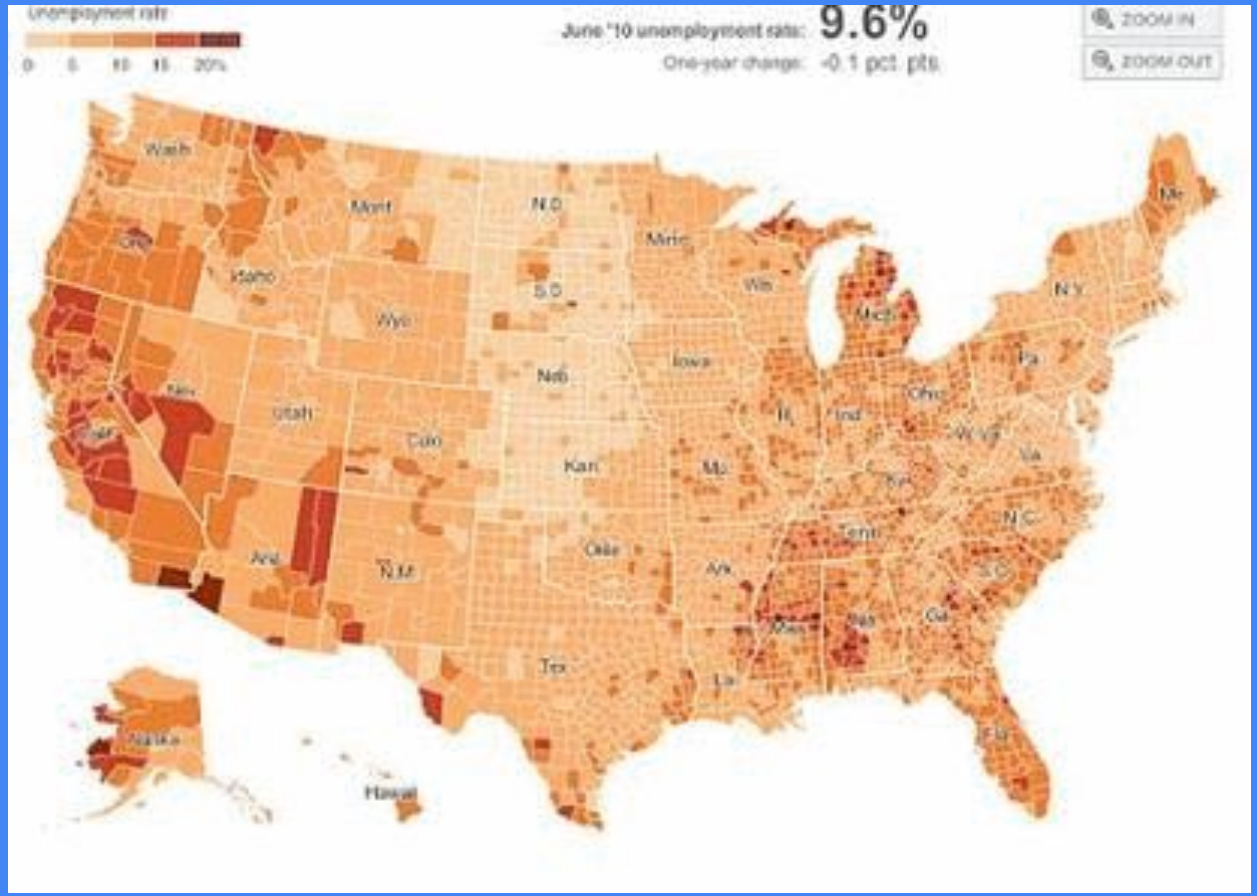
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/19/upshot/3d-yield-curve-economic-growth.html

DEPARTMENT MOTTO

- Creating “clear and compelling” data
- In journalism, sometimes it isn’t enough to just present the right data because it is not interesting for newspaper readers to see things they already know
- Informing people is the real goal but it is important to consider the following questions:
  “Can I introduce you to new things?”
  “Can I cause you to think about old things in a different way?”
  “Can I give you a sense of scale about something?”
- Problems with data vis today: One of the greatest issues with this field is that answering the What, When and Where questions is much easier and convenient than answering the How and Why questions?

What are you trying to do?

- Reveal Patterns
- Provide context
- Compare scales
- Describe Geography
- Let people look up stuff


Unemployment rate
0
5
10
15
20%
June '10 unemployment rate: 9.6%
One-year change: -0.1 pct. pts.
ZOOM IN
ZOOM OUT
Wash.
Ore.
Mont.
Idaho
Wyo.
N.D.
S.D.
Minn.
Wis.
Mich.
N.Y.
Nev.
Utah
Colo.
Neb.
Iowa
Ill.
Ind.
Ohio
Pa.
W. Va.
Va.
Md.
Del.
N.J.
Kan.
Mo.
Ky.
N.C.
Tenn.
S.C.
Ariz.
N.M.
Okla.
Ark.
Miss.
Ala.
Ga.
Fla.
Tex.
La.
Alaska
Hawaii

THANK YOU