

Visualizing Health: Bridging the Gap Between Science and Society

Speaker: Catalina Perez, Senior Information Designer

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Important Links

Notes

Intro

- This is a talk about data and storytelling (without the word "storytelling").
- Catalina specializes in creating infographics in a wide variety of contexts.
- Will showcase work from GoodRx: one of the most visited consumer-oriented health site in the US – coupons, articles.
- Catalina is the information designer on the team: find complex data and scientific data and find ways to pass it along to a **wider audience**

What is a wider audience?

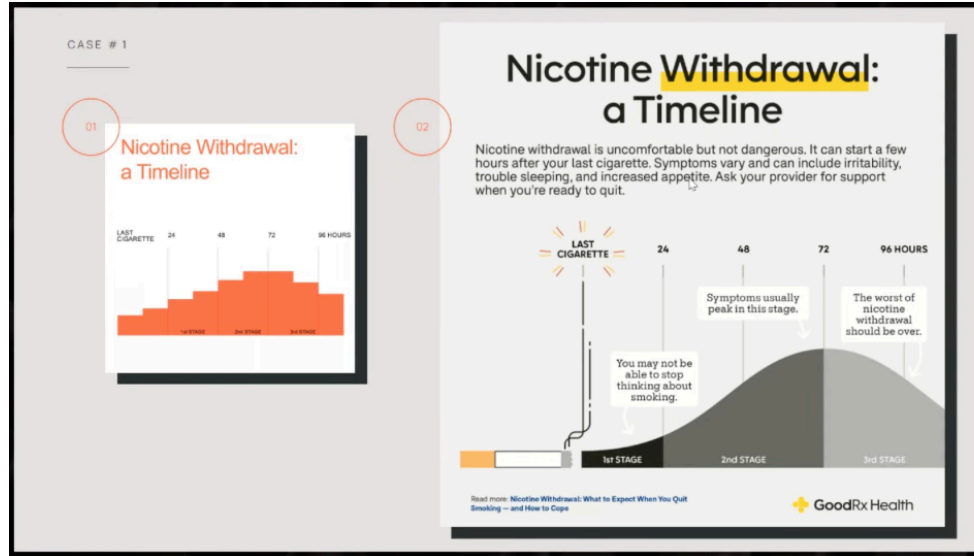
- Defined at a seventh grade level, 10-12 years old
- What does this imply?
 - This is the stage when you move from concrete to abstract thinking
 - This means that designs focus on simplicity, clarity.
 - Extensive use of **visual metaphors**

Visual metaphors

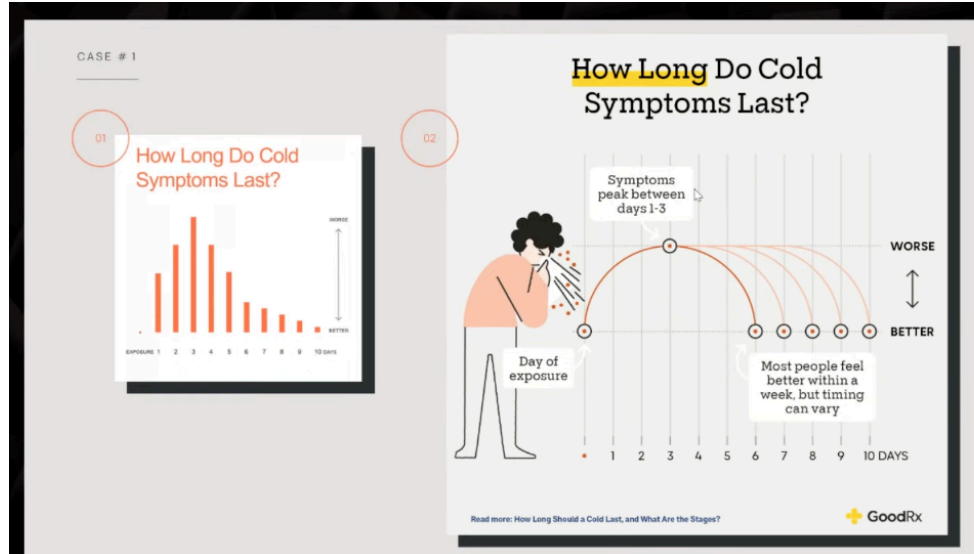
- Graphic elements that help you understand data more easily, without really "reading"

Types of visual metaphors in infographics...

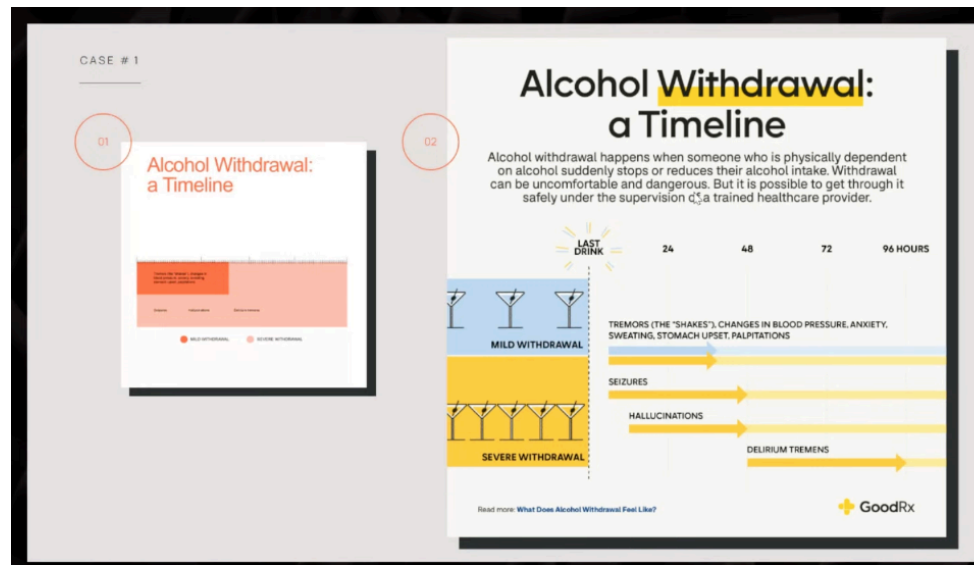
1. Infographics incorporate the graphic as an **integral part of the narrative**.
 - Case: visual metaphor is the cigarette



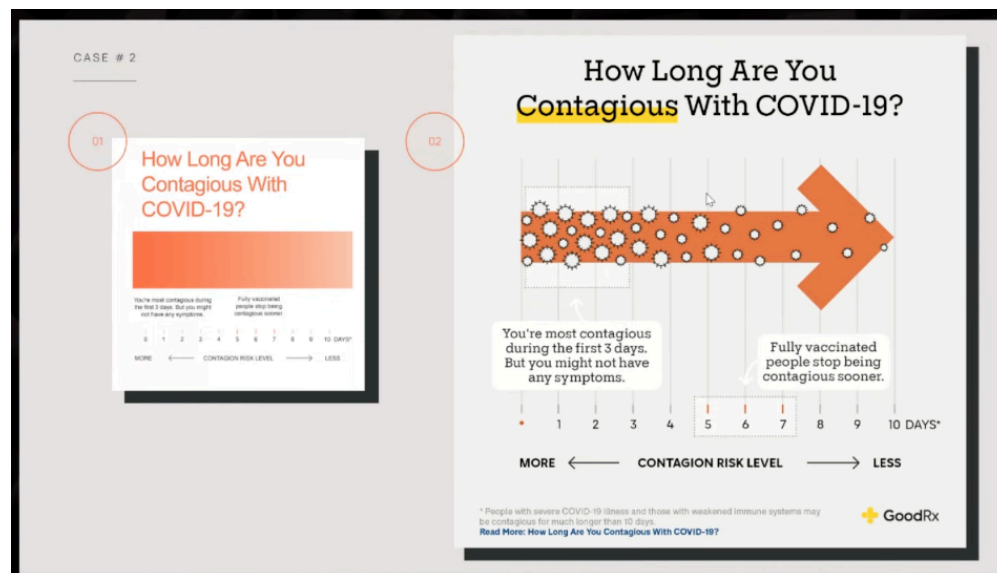
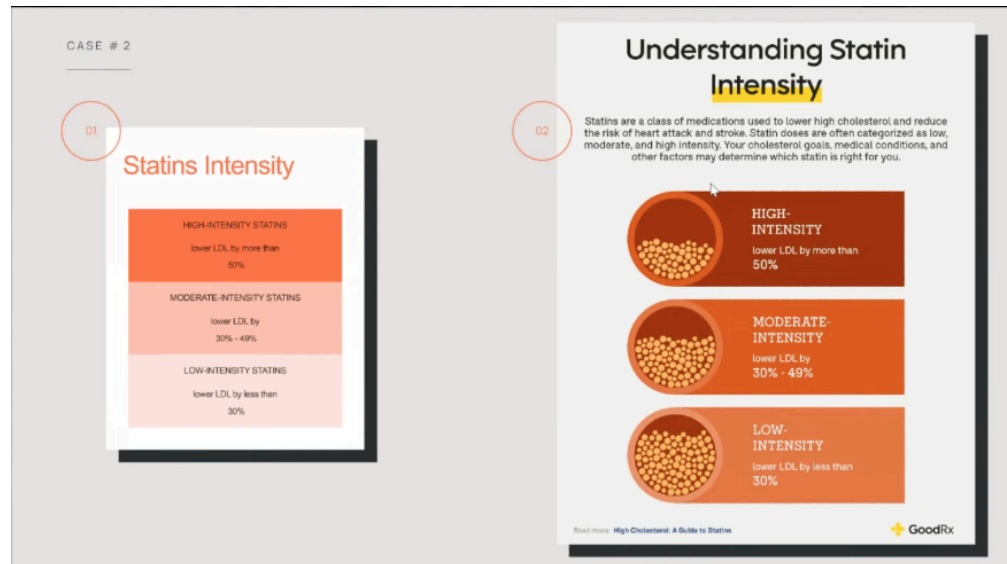
- Case: simplification of the message allows the introduction of the visual metaphor



- Case:

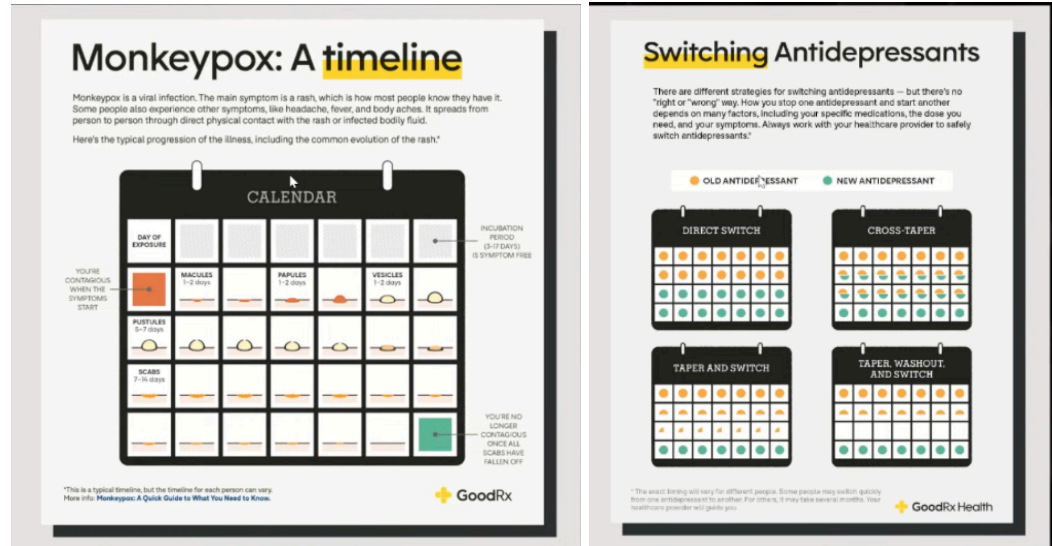


2. Infographic shows proportion



3. Infographics use skeuomorphism

- Especially handy when talking about time:
- Case: calendar comic strip



- Brand guidelines – colour palette can hinder or help use of colours in dataviz
- Collaboration between content (strategy, relevancy), subject-matter experts and editors (accuracy, fact checking, tone, copy), and information design (approachability and comprehension)
- Infographics and original content can cut through the noise online
- Know your audience: ground the main message with approachable and relatable metaphors
- Ex. Patients often are seeking information, from a place of anguish, worry. This informs their approach from empathy, clarity, easiness. To create a clear, narrative line... visual storytelling.

Q&A

Work on pharmacy deserts:

<https://www.goodrx.com/hcp-articles/providers/pharmacy-deserts>

1. Q What testing do you do to see if your audience will respond to what you present?

A Think about how it might be interpreted, but I always try to test it. Usually use an internal sounding board. When things have a bit more friction or tension among the team of experts she is working with on a particular project., I send it to various places to see if it's working.

2. **Q: A couple of the example visualizations used data with uncertainty baked in, such as the number of days that people are contagious with a cold or COVID-19. Where do you reference uncertainty within a visualization?**

A: Find a way to have pieces that have a level of certainty. When you have uncertainty, I use variations of colours, fading, etc. Sometimes we can't visualize everything. Sometimes it's impossible, or it would be a little bit irresponsible to visualize. "It's important to sometimes say 'no.'"

3. **Q. If your audience is more specific, say a scientific or academic audience, do you have different approaches?**

4. A: Yes, one example is with type size. You can use really tiny type with a scientific audience. When working with scientists as authors, they always want to add more informationsuch as disclaimers. She doesn't worry much about those extra layers with a scientific audience because she knows they will read it and not be deterred. Another example is designing for situations when she knows her work will be printed rather than on-screen only. She tries to avoid colorful approaches in those cases because she does not have enough control of the printing quality.

About the Talk

This talk explores translating complex healthcare data into accessible infographics, balancing scientific accuracy with audience comprehension. It covers crafting visuals, adapting corporate branding, and infusing relatable metaphors for empathy and emotional appeal.

About the Speaker

Catalina Perez (also known as Catalina Plé) is a lead information designer, translating complex data into relatable infographics for health, environment, education, & news. Advocate for user-centric design and data humanism, Catalina's work can be found online (with GoodRx, Stamen, Wire, Dropbox) and in print media (RBA, Editorial Planeta).