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Data journalism is a way of enhancing reporting and news writing with the use and examination of statistics in order to provide a deeper insight into a news story and to highlight relevant data. One trend in the digital era of journalism has been to disseminate information to the public via interactive online content through data visualization tools such as tables, graphs, maps, infographics, microsites, and visual worlds. The in-depth examination of such data sets can lead to more concrete results and observations regarding timely topics of interest. In addition, data journalism may reveal hidden issues that seemingly were not a priority in the news coverage. Finally, the correlations between the many variables of the examined data sets may turn a local issue into a global issue with social implications. This entry discusses the use of data visualization for presenting data, reviews the evolution and process of contemporary data journalism, and presents three 21st-century cases to demonstrate the ongoing significance of data in journalism.

Data Visualization

An essential part of the notion of data journalism is data visualization. This kind of presentation of data is becoming more prominent due to new technologies, but it is not new. During ancient times, for example, diagrams, maps, and complex sketches were used to depict events. Maps were compiled to assist with exploration, navigation, and the identification of the positions of the stars in the sky. In ancient Egypt, mapping of

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stars were used to find the appropriate location to construct towns—a system that was in use until the 14th century. One of the first depictions of quantitative information is believed to be a table created by an unknown 10th-century astronomer to illustrate planetary movements. Four centuries later, the first bar graphs for representing a theoretical function were sketched.

From that time until the end of the 18th century, significant changes in the area of visualization resulted in fundamental principles with regard to creating graphics. For example, new techniques were developed for presenting data in fields such as cartography. With these techniques, cartographers stopped paying attention only to geographical location and developed thematic maps based on medical, geological, or economic data and cases, for example. From the 19th century onward, graphs began to take the shape of present-day graphs, mostly due to the advancement of statistics: During the 19th century, pie charts, various plots, bar, histograms, and line graphs were invented. At the same time, cartography evolved, making it possible to depict natural phenomena. This type of illustration began to be seen in scientific publication to help the general public understand and interpret texts. Even official entities started to understand the value of visualization for projects such as the construction of roads. During this period of time, complex graphical depictions utilized various shapes and numerous colors. Thus, the mid- to late-19th century became known as the *golden age of statistical representations*.

The end of the golden age ushered in a period in which there were few pioneering ideas regarding data visualization although graphical representations became a dominant means of explaining data to the public. Graphics could be found in textbooks and governmental reports. In addition, they played a significant role in discovering and promoting scientific findings in several fields (e.g., biology, humanities, astronomy). At the end of the 20th century, due to the invention of new technologies, such as relevant software programs, data visualization once again became a trend for disseminating information.