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Basic Science: Understanding Numbers

Simon Kelly

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A guide to using infogr.am

Infographics are friendly looking images and graphs which convey important information. In the past an infographic was the result of a long and painful process between designers and statisticians involving numerous meetings, data management and testing of designs and colour schemes. Nowadays they are much simpler to create. In fact, the company infogr.am has created a website that simplifies this process so that anyone can do it.

The guidance below outlines a few simple instructions on how to use infogr.am to create the types of graphs discussed in this course. We will be using the data from the 'Rainfall data PDF'. You should download the PDF before you start.

Remember, you do not need to plot all the graph types or all the data. Simply pick two countries and compare their rainfall. This is a basic guide to Infogr.am; the site can do much more than what we describe below, so have a play and see what you find out!

1. Go to <https://infogr.am/>.
2. Select 'Sign up now' and create a username, enter your email address and choose a password (if you prefer, you can use your Facebook, Twitter or Google+ account to connect and log in). This will allow you to use the basic functions and plot simple infographics that are free to use and all you will need for this course.
3. On the Home screen, select 'Create'.
4. This will take you to a template design screen, where at the top you can switch between infographics and charts. For the purpose of this course, select 'Charts'.
5. You will see a screen with a whole range of graph types. The top four options are the graphs we have introduced in this course – bar and column graphs, pie charts and line graphs.
6. Try creating one of each of the types of graph above using the tools on the site. Choose the graph type from the left hand column, then select one of the graph display subcategories in the preview pane (e.g. for bar graphs these consist of regular, stacked, grouped or radial). Now select 'Add chart'
7. You will now be able to edit the graph and the data. Note that all of your changes will be automatically saved after each edit you make.

8. Double-click on the graph itself to access the data table. This will allow you to add your own data. Replace the default data with your own values and select 'Done' when you are finished. (Note, there is a 'Load data' option that will allow you to upload csv, xls, xlsx files or even connect to live data in another website – don't worry though, you do not need to do this for the purpose of this activity.)
9. If you want to change the graph display options, double click the graph and select the 'Settings' tab at the top of the page. There are a variety of options you can change for each graph type, such as graph height, X axis range, colours, etc. Again, when you've finished, select 'Done' to return to the graph editor.
10. To edit any of the other graph values, such as the title, description text or copyright notice, simply double-click on these fields and make your amends.
11. Once you have finished amending your graph, click 'Share' at the top of the screen. You will need to give your graph a title and you can choose whether to add a description if you wish.
12. When finished, click on 'Publish'. You will be given the option to share via Facebook, Twitter or Pinterest, or view the graph via the web. There is also code supplied if you wish to embed and share your graph via another website or service. If you need to make any additional changes, you can select the 'Unpublish' option at the bottom right hand corner and go back to the editor.

We suggest you view the graph by selecting 'View on web', which will then open the published graph in a new tab/window. Copy the URL from the address bar and paste this into the discussion field on the OpenLearn platform to share your graph and discuss the results with your fellow learners.
13. That's it, you're done. Please return to Section 4.5 'Create and share your own graph' in the course on OpenLearn.