

Infogr.am

<https://infogr.am>

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Data visualization is a 'hot topic' in libraries these days, and certainly any type of library can benefit from using infographics in order to communicate important messages to their stakeholders. As such, it is a boon to discover tools which provide librarians with the ability to create these visualizations easily and for free. Infogr.am is such a tool. A basic account is available for free, or you can upgrade to a 'pro' (\$18 USD/month) or 'white label' (\$50 USD/month) account for more options and customizations; there are also paid 'team' and 'business' plans. This review speaks only to the free features of this product.

The site has a clean, attractive design, but compared to similar products the interface isn't particularly intuitive or user-friendly. Initially, one can choose from 8 templates which are all laid out almost identically, with slightly varied backgrounds and colours. In fact you can do much more layout-wise, but someone not naturally creative may assume this is the look you are stuck with – inspiration can be found by viewing 'featured' infographics made by other users.

The infographics created with infogr.am are essentially chart- or map-based. Only the US map appears to be available with the free account. To create/edit a chart, a little spreadsheet pops up in which to enter the data, and from that data numerous types of charts or graphs can be created. However, it is not apparent how to easily change an existing graph to a different style

– say, from a scatter chart to a bubble graph; in order to do this, it seems one has to create a new chart. It's possible to copy and paste the data from one spreadsheet to the next, but it would be much simpler to experiment with various chart types if one could simply click on another style to view. There are 30 chart types available; you can also insert text, videos, and images. Chart types go far beyond bar graphs and pie charts; word clouds, pictorials and pyramids are also options, so it is possible to present your data in very creative and interesting ways.

You can add as many new visuals as you like; the page just keeps getting longer. The free account does not let you download or print the file; you can, however, share your graphic via social media, embed it into your own web page, or email it. If the data you want to visualize is quantitative and lends itself well to a chart or graph, and you don't intend to use it in a printed form but only need it virtually, it is likely that infogr.am will work well for you.

In short: Infogr.am is a nice site with which to create simple infographics for the novice user who doesn't require many features. There are other free sites out there which may serve this purpose as well or better, but infogr.am is certainly one place to start.

Recommended.