



Using infographics to drive traffic to your journal articles

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Think about the articles you like to read. Are those with boxed text pieces, tables, and images “easier reads” for you? Do color graphics catch your eye and pull you deeper into the content? Now think about your online reading. As you scroll through social media feeds or read online journals, how much more likely are you to engage with something that has a visual component?

As authors, our goals are to reach our audience and share our content, with the hopes that we will educate, inform, and spread our messages. Shouldn't we take advantage of all opportunities and formats to meet these goals? An infographic, sometimes referred to as a data graphic or content visualization, is a way to showcase your article content, appeal to your current readers, and reach new audiences.

Why should I spend time creating an infographic?

Infographics are a visual version of content and are often used to tell a story. Rather than requiring a reader to go through pages and pages of content, an infographic can engage the audience with the highlights, important data, and send them right to your article to learn more. The majority of people, about 65%, are visual learners, and to retain the loyalty of your current audience and engage new readers, infographics can help.¹

Most how-to articles focus on infographics as marketing tools, which they certainly are, but as authors and content experts, it's up to us to visually present our content accurately and appropriately. Research reports can be difficult to digest for some. It is essential that we employ strategies to convey the important research we are doing or reporting, and reach the widest audience possible. After three days, readers are likely to remember up to 6.5 times more through learning from an infographic than by reading text alone.²

When it comes to reach, infographics are liked and shared on social media three times more than any other type of content.³ Getting your important information to an audience that may not be familiar with your journal or content is an important strategy for branding and marketing. An infographic is a tickler to spark interest, convey concise information, and lead the audience to a next step or further information seeking.¹ They can also be used as decision-aids and to make complex topics more easily understood.²

Infographics have one key goal: to provide an audience with short, sharp information in a way that is memorable.⁴ They are easily posted online on blogs, websites, and social media, and can send referral traffic right back to your article online. They serve as conversion paths due to their shareability and informative nature.⁵

Getting Started

Often the hardest step is coming up with the topic. Good news—you've already done that! You've gotten your data and organized it already, now it's time to present it in a visually appealing way. Use your article or pieces of your article to illustrate a complex issue or a hot topic.

For best results, your infographic should include:

- A solution to a problem
- A great design
- Educational and entertaining facts
- Statistics
- Sources.⁶

You should also make sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end; obey design principles related to color, font, balance, and consistency of shapes; use copyright-free images; and lead the audience to additional information.¹

Creating an infographic can be overwhelming, especially to those of us without a background in design! It doesn't have to be stressful, though, as there are many tools and templates available to help. Canva (www.canva.com) offers templates (free and paid versions), tools and advice, layout and image suggestions, and other features and functionality that make it easy for anyone to create an infographic. Piktochart (www.piktochart.com), Easel.ly (<https://www.easel.ly/>), and Venngage (www.venngage.com) are additional easy-to-use infographic makers with libraries of professionally designed templates. HubSpot (www.hubspot.com/infographic-templates) offers free infographic templates for use with PowerPoint and Illustrator. There are also companies, such as Visual.ly (<https://visual.ly/>), that will work with you to develop your infographic. (See *5 Tips When Creating Infographics*.)*

5 TIPS WHEN CREATING INFOGRAPHICS



CONTENT

Cover a hot topic or solve a problem.



ORGANIZE

Keep it simple and easily digestible for viewers.



MAKE IT VISUALLY APPEALING

Use graphs, diagrams, and color.



PROOFREAD

Ensure the accuracy of facts and data, and check spelling and grammar.



BRANDING

Include your URL or logo.

Sharing and promoting your infographic

After you've created your infographic, it's important to seek out every opportunity to share it. (See *Go viral! Ways to promote your infographic*.) Definitely showcase your infographic on your own blog or website (if applicable). Share it via your social media channels. Also, allow others to use your infographic in their articles and posts, but ask that they include a link back to your website.

GO VIRAL!
Ways to promote your infographic

Here are a few ways you can promote your infographic to expose it to a larger audience and extend its reach.

SOCIAL MEDIA Infographics are more likely to be liked or shared on social media.	BLOG A blog post can provide more in-depth content while also serving as a landing page .
EMAIL Email your list with the landing page link where they can find your infographic.	INFLUENCERS Reach out to influencers and bloggers who might find the content in your infographic useful.
EMBED LINK Provide an embed code so that users can easily share on their own sites.	KEYWORDS Use keywords in your infographic to aid in search engine optimization
LINK TO IT FROM PRINT Create a "vanity" URL that readers can easily input in their browsers to take them to the infographic online.	

Your dissemination strategy should begin early, even before publication of your article, if possible. A structured plan can help ensure that time and resources are invested strategically and efficiently.⁷ To ensure that the right people see your infographic, think about how best to embed it on the journal website and/or blog, reach out via social media, and share it directly with other influencers. You may consider guest blogging or submitting your infographic for inclusion on other sites.

While you want to ensure that your infographic gets shared and viewed by as many people as possible, you also want to make sure that you are credited with the content, and drive traffic back to your article or blog. Create a vanity URL for easy sharing and be sure to include your logo or reference right on the infographic. Ask that anyone who uses or shares your infographic include the vanity URL back to your site. You can include an embed code with your infographic, which then automatically creates a backlink to your site when the infographic is shared on another blog or web page.

Successful infographics should be shared and reshared repeatedly on social media, building campaign impact and increasing audience reach.² Consider these statistics reported by HubSpot:

- Facebook has 1.13 billion daily active users.
- 74% of people say they use Facebook for professional purposes.
- Facebook posts with images see 2.3 times more engagement than those without images.
- Visual content is 40 times more likely to get shared on social media than other types of content.
- Infographics are liked and shared on social media three times more than any other type of content.

A prime example: The Subtle Signs of Sepsis infographic

On Lippincott NursingCenter.com, we've been using infographics on our site and blog for a few years now. We have found infographics to be valuable tools for sharing our content and driving traffic to our site. We've used both free tools and templates, and employed the assistance of our search engine optimization (SEO) vendor in creating infographics.

One of the most popular infographics on Lippincott NursingCenter.com is "The Subtle Signs of Sepsis." (See www.nursingcenter.com/sepsis). From the moment this infographic went live, it has proved itself a valued asset. Not only does it cover a hot topic in health care, but it also breaks down the complex issues associated with sepsis into easy to understand categories consisting of definitions, assessment, presentation, and management.

The timing was right!

In 2016, The Third International Consensus Definitions for Sepsis and Septic Shock (Sepsis 3) was released, and then in 2017, the Surviving Sepsis Campaign: International Guidelines for Management of Sepsis and Septic Shock were published. During that same time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared sepsis a medical emergency. This infographic takes into account the new definitions and guidelines, as well as the important need for nurses, who spend the most time with the patients, to recognize the subtle signs and symptoms of this serious disorder.

Talk about viral!

The immediate numbers we saw on social media were outstanding! The following is a breakdown of results from only the very first post of the infographic on the various social media sites:

- Facebook: a reach of 8,912 and 13,292 impressions with an engagement number of 1,217 (views, likes, shares, and clicks)
- Twitter: a reach of 97,269 with an engagement number of 233 (retweets, likes, and clicks)
- LinkedIn: a reach of 13,328 with an engagement number of 84 (likes and clicks)
- Google+: a reach of 585
- Pinterest: a total engagement number of 19,805 (close-ups, clicks and saves).

While our dissemination strategy was ongoing, another push for sharing this content came in September of 2017, for Sepsis Awareness Month. We continued to develop content and included the infographic on a landing page with links to our other infographics, blogs, videos, and journal articles. This increased its exposure and made it more likely to be liked and shared, as well as found via search engine activity. In fact, the infographic was picked up and shared on two popular media sites, further extending its reach. From September of 2017 to January of 2018, the landing page for the infographic had about 34,000 page views, with an average time on the page being 2 minutes and 14 seconds. This infographic continues to be prevalent within social media circles and to offer increased traffic to our site. Furthermore, it has extended our reach promoting content on Lippincott NursingCenter.

Infographics appeal to the modern attention span. In this day and age, time is of the essence and infographics solve that problem. We are competing with, and constantly being inundated, with a variety of media. We need to capture readers' attention while also providing them with quality content. An infographic should complement a complex article or blog. With an infographic, the reader will be able to better retain the information, and hopefully be inspired to read more.

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**These designs were made on Canva, using a selection of their free templates. Always be careful to make these templates your own; the free designs tend to permeate social media and can be overdone, and therefore may interfere with your message or intent.*