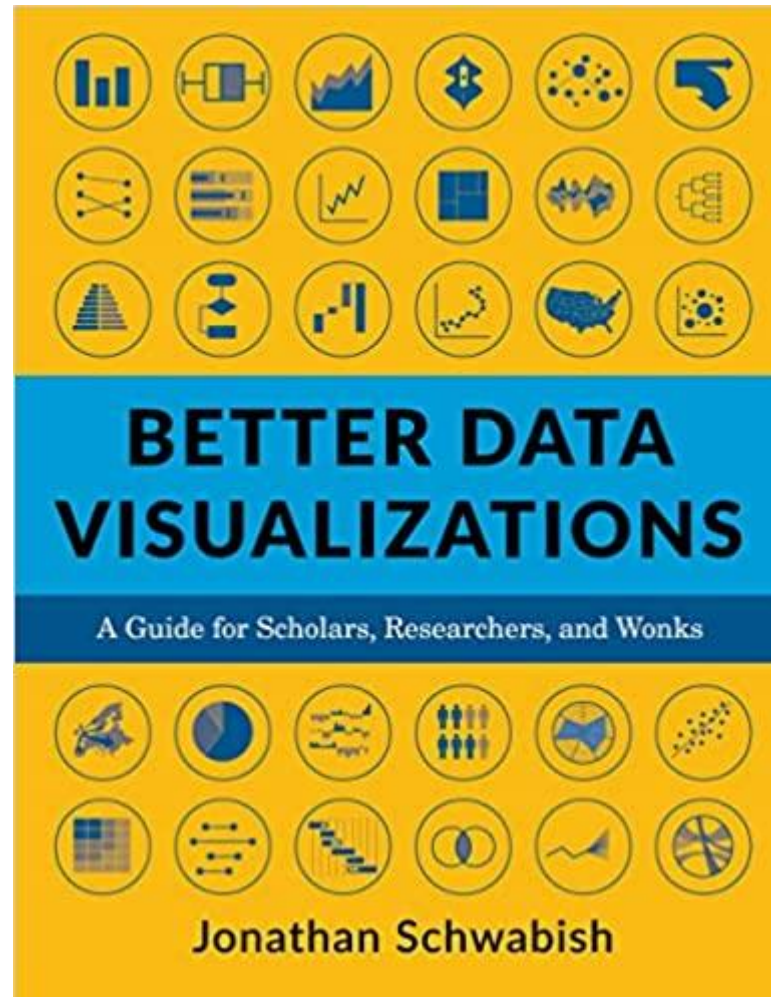




Telling Stories with Data

Sydney Shep, Wai-te-ata Press
Te Whare Tā O Wai-te-ata

Te Herenga Waka
Victoria University of Wellington



The Beginning

“Data does not just provide neutral and straightforward representations of the world, but is rather entangled with politics and culture, money and power.”

The Data Journalism Handbook 2: Towards a Critical Data Practice, 2019



Data encodes the stories of our lives, capturing not only our tastes and interests but also our hopes and fears. Data isn't an abstract idea or a set of numbers or qualitative responses. It can be and is, ultimately, human.

<https://acumenideas.com/whose-data-is-it-anyway-3f9ba60c8924>

A beginning, A middle, and An end

The most basic story structure is familiar to us all. It consists of a beginning, a middle and an end.

The beginning (context)

To allow readers of a report to grasp its full meaning and insights, they need to have a point of reference. That reference is the context in which reported events took place or the assumptions on which forecasts are based. The context could be actual performance vs plan, this period's performance vs prior ones, explaining what events led to the current situation or any other relevant background information.

The middle (discovery)

To make your message compelling, make the middle about discovery. Explain a conflict, the hurdles that had to be overcome and potentially the wrong turns that were taken in arriving at the real proposed solution and call to action.

©Miriam Gilbert Storytelling with Numbers

Simple storyline



Mixing graphical representation with narrative enables you to convey your message while still allowing your audience their own journey of discovery. This is particularly powerful in interactive settings but as our example shows, can be done with conventional reports, too.

The end (conclusion)

Many business reports leave the reader with the question "so what?". To achieve their full purpose, effective Data Storytelling must go beyond simple display of data but answer the so-what-question. This means including a conclusion, recommendation, forecast or next step suggestions. Yes, it means you have to have an opinion and a message – *and as we have seen earlier, those aspects differentiate you from a trained monkey.*

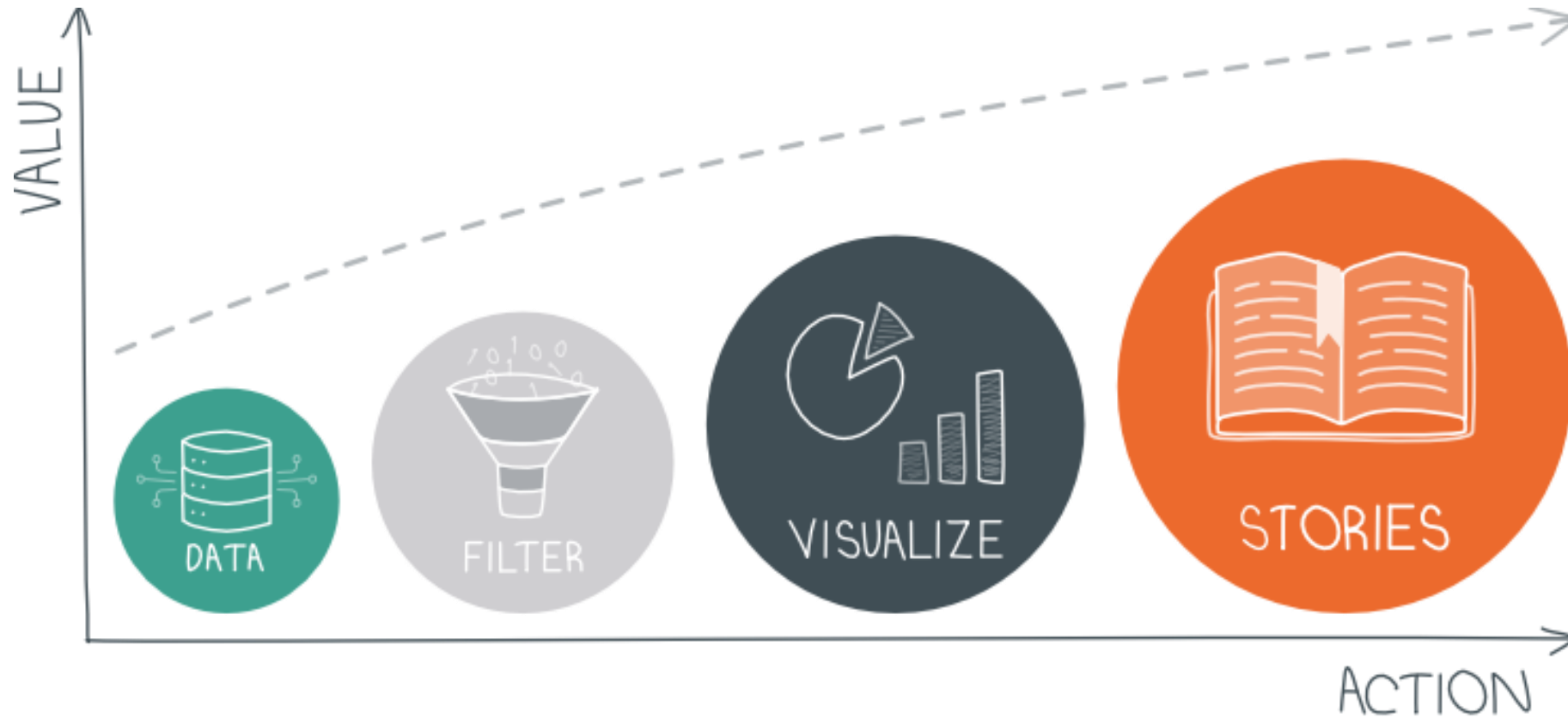


Kurt Vonnegut on the Shapes of Stories

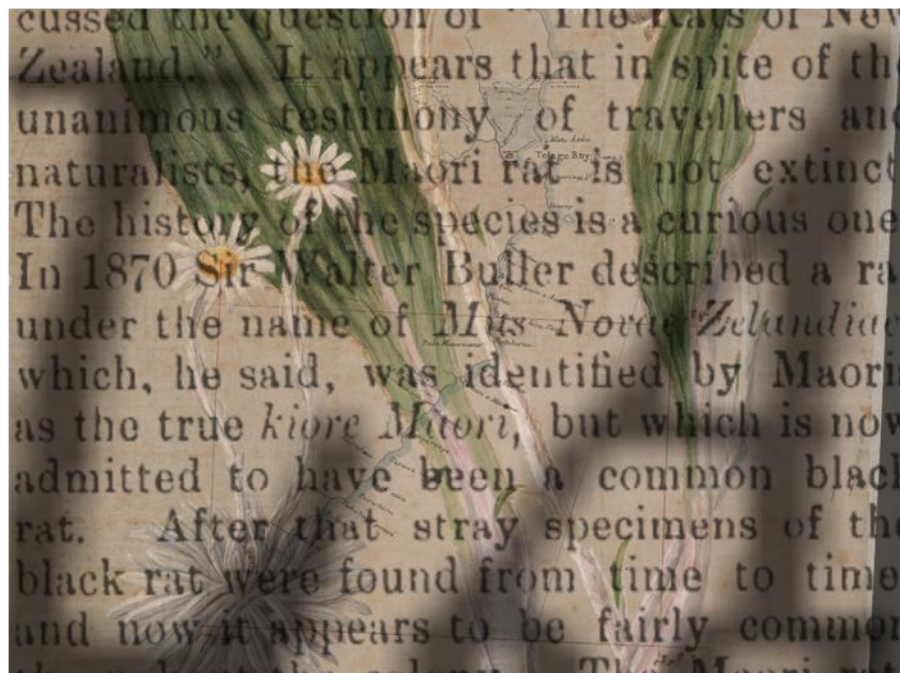
Short lecture by Kurt Vonnegut on the
'simple shapes of stories.'

www.youtube.com

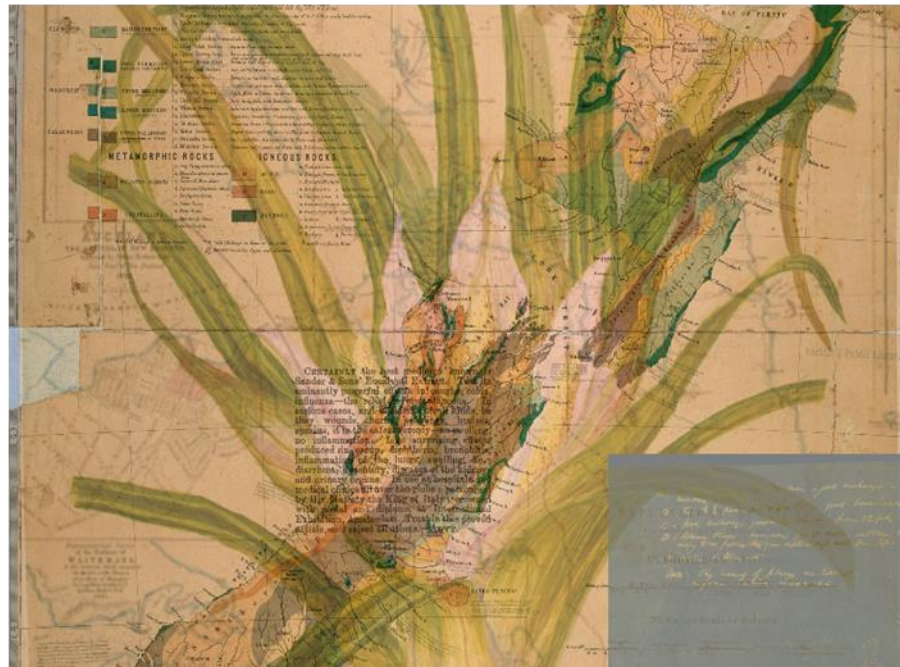
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP3c1h8v2ZQ>

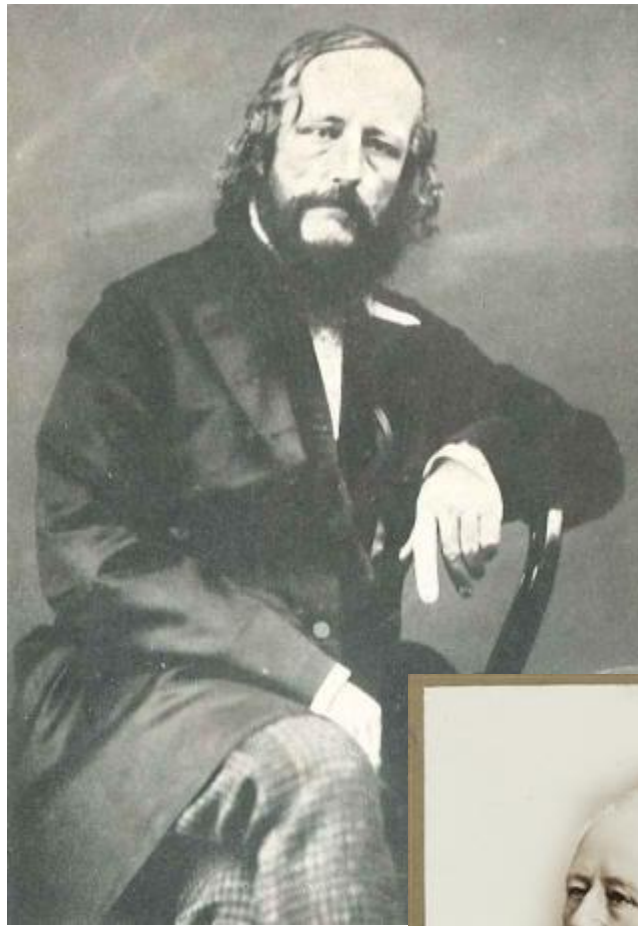


“data analysis is not just about visually appealing graphics and charts. It’s about **telling a good story**. The visualization is the means, **the story is the actual message**. And the more compelling it is, the more value you will eventually derive from your data.”

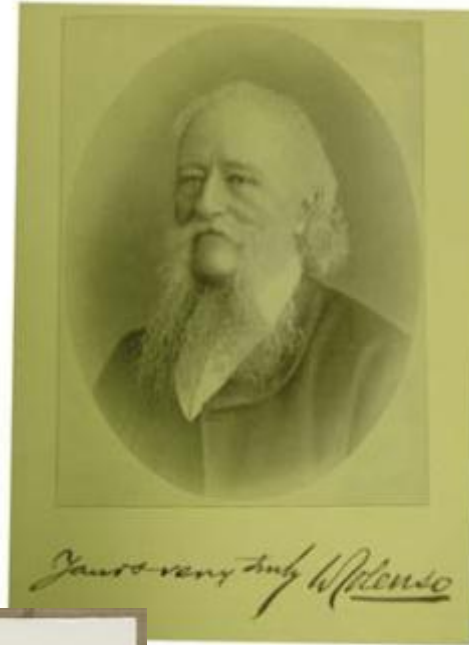


Algorithmic Storytelling





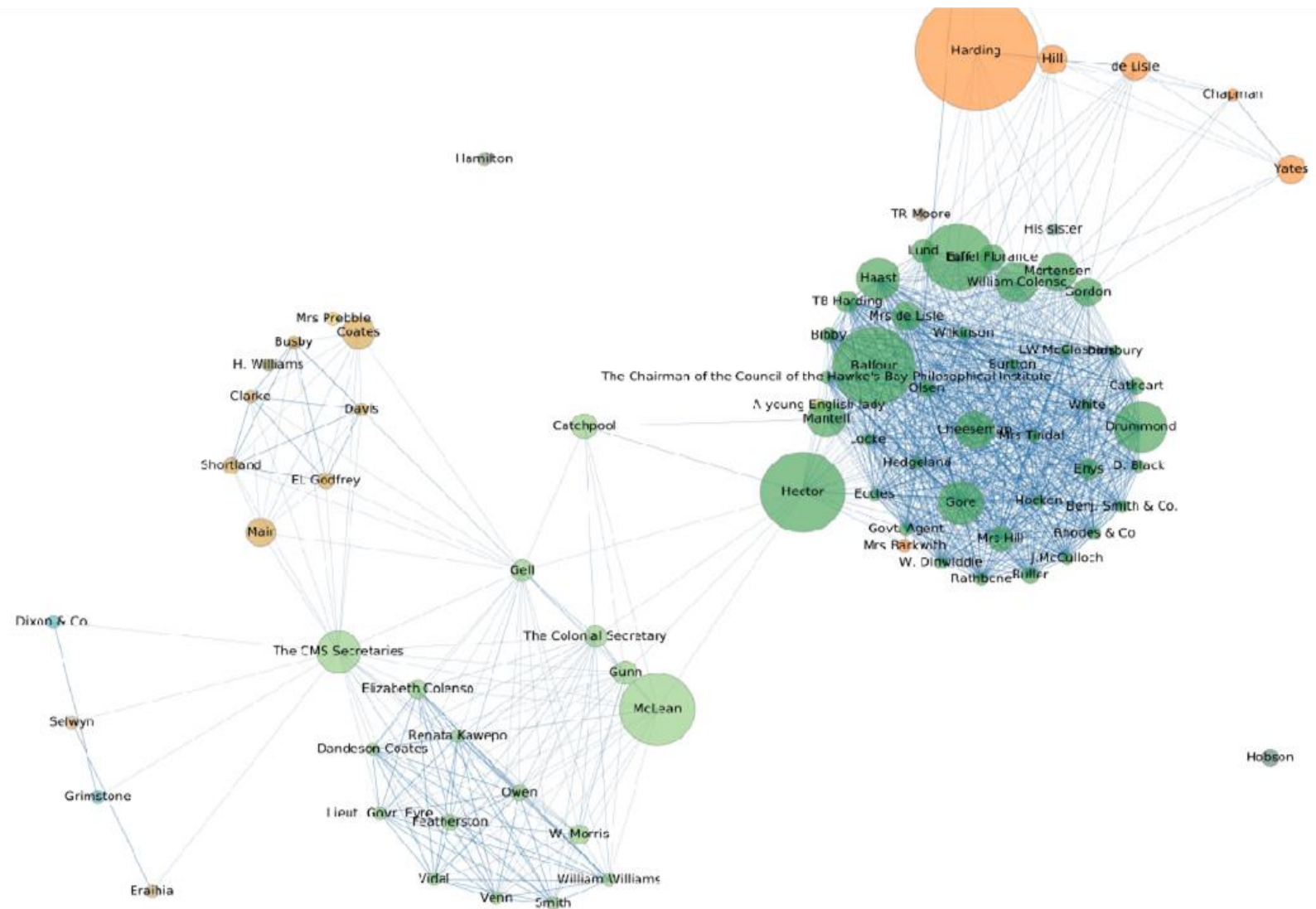
[William Colenso](#)
1811-1899



Bookplate designed for the late R. Coupland Harding by D. H. Souter.



161209_ATL_TG_Colenso_011



Colenso's correspondence networks modelled by [Dion O'Neale](#)

UNEXPECTED CONNECTIONS: A DIGITAL ARTWORK

Serendipity is an integral part of the researcher's toolkit. Stumbling across hitherto unknown sources, making unexpected connections, and telling new stories with old objects are experiences that have been characterised as 'the allure of the archive'. Historians are now turning to digital technologies to help extend and enhance that experience. Generative art provides one avenue for new modes of archival exploration and expression. This digital installation, based on Mitchell Whitelaw's interactive work *Succession: Digital Fossils for an Industrial Age*, and re-interpreted by Mariden technical lead Rhys Owen, explores the combination of serendipity and palimpsests. Using a randomised search algorithm to draw down assets related to Colenso from Digital NZ, the interface re-assembles the assets into a suite of transparent overlays that both evoke the geology – if not palaeontology – of the archival research enterprise and affords opportunities to turn chance encounters into unexpected connections. Explore the interface for yourself and be surprised!



161209_ATL_TG_Colenso_031



161209_ATL_TG_Colenso_001





EARLY HISTORY OF
NEW ZEALAND.
(Poverty Bay Herald, 16
October 1900) ()



H. tunbidgei,
Hunua, H.T. var. B,
Nelson, *H. unilaterale*,
Rangitoto, L.H.
minimum, Akaroa, *H.*
gupressiforme, Ruahine
and *H. subtilissimum*,
Hunua. From the album:
New Zealand ferns. 172
varieties, 1880,
Auckland, by Herbert
Dobbie. Te Papa
(O.043218) ()



Olearia semidentata; *O.*
ilicifolia, circa 1885, by
Sarah Featon.
Purchased 1919. Te
Papa (1992-0035-
2277/8) ()



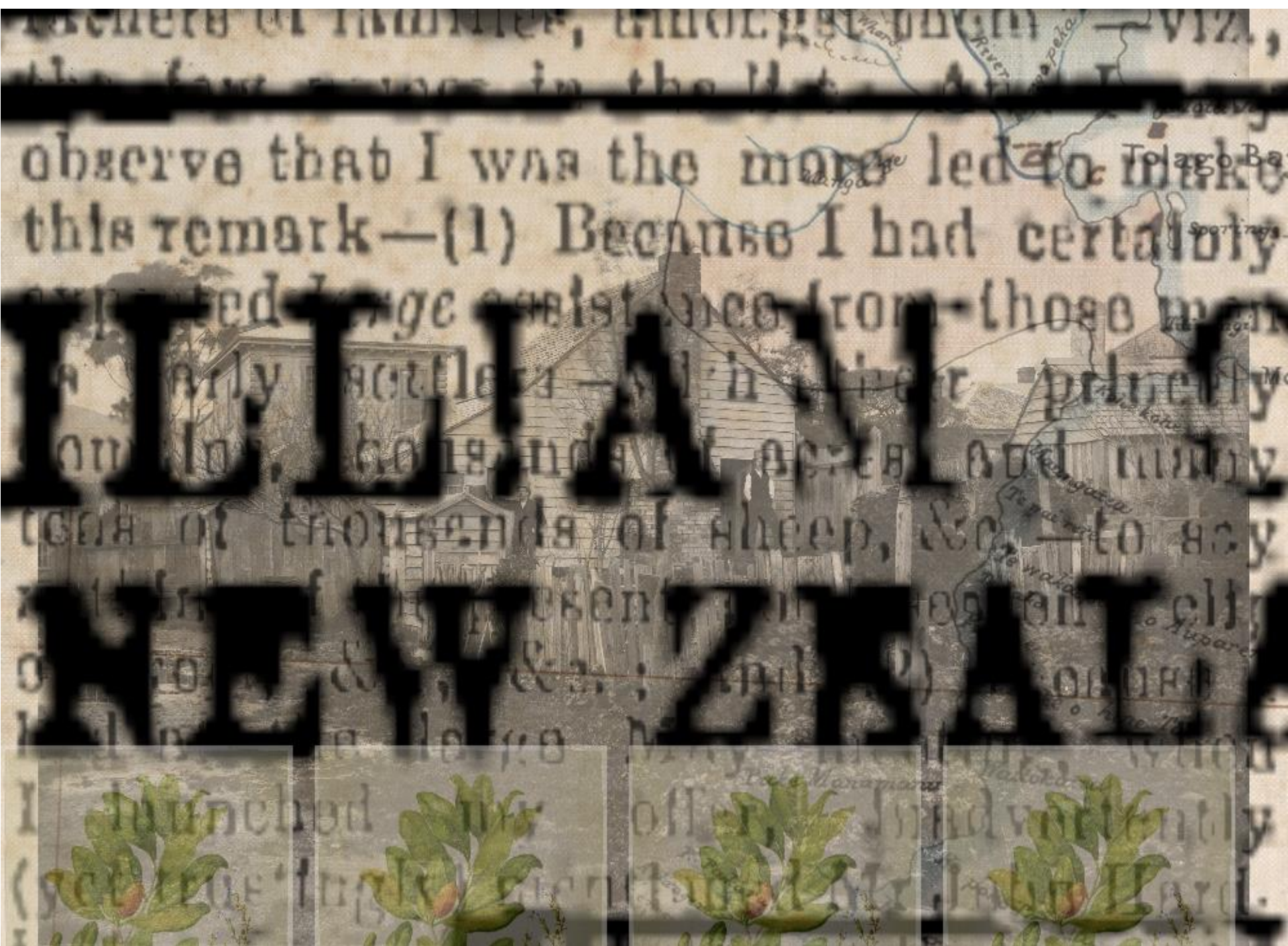
Where the Treaty of
Waitangi was signed,
1882, New Zealand, by
Alfred Sharpe.
Purchased 1972. Te
Papa (1972-0029-1) ()



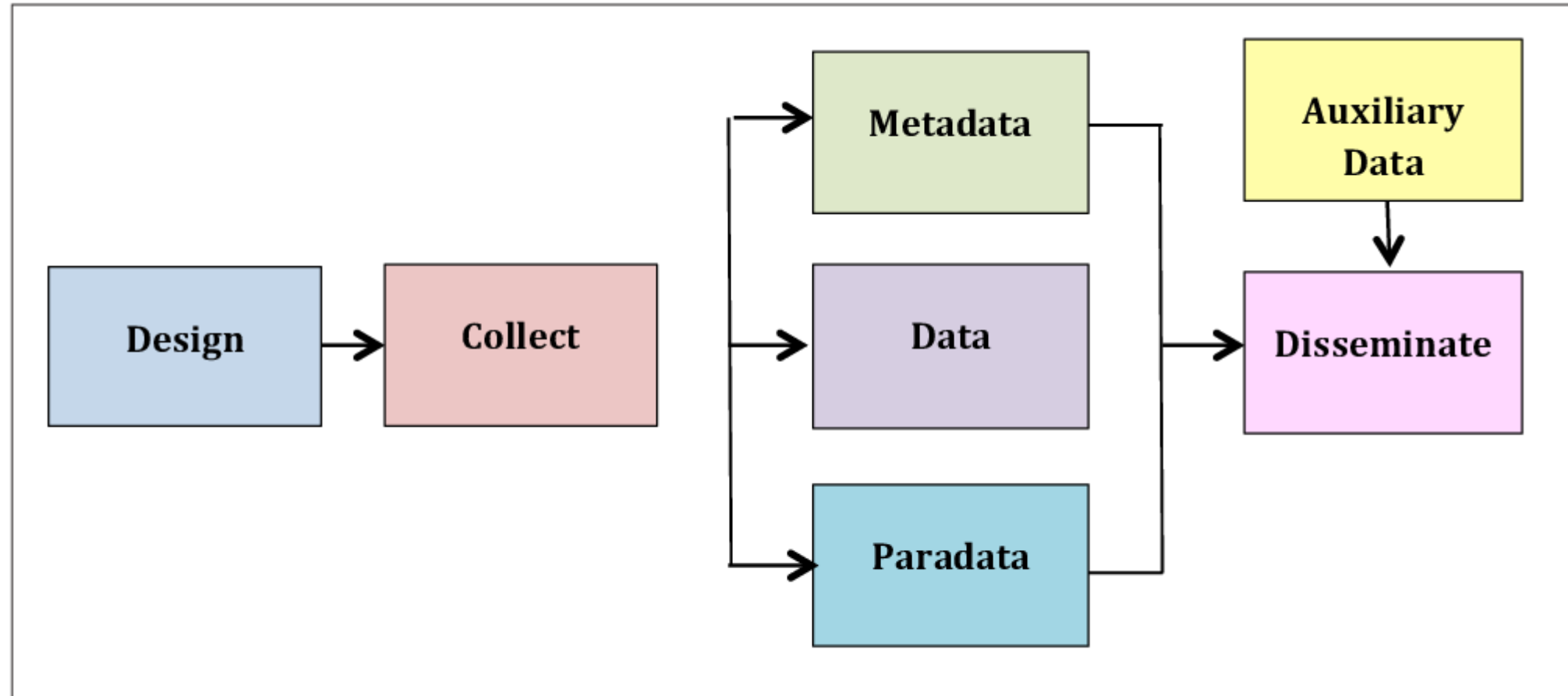
Samolus repens;
Pouteria costata, circa
1885, by Sarah Featon.
Purchased 1919. Te
Papa (1992-0035-
2277/3) ()



[Mitchell Whitelaw, Succession](#)









Chapter 2

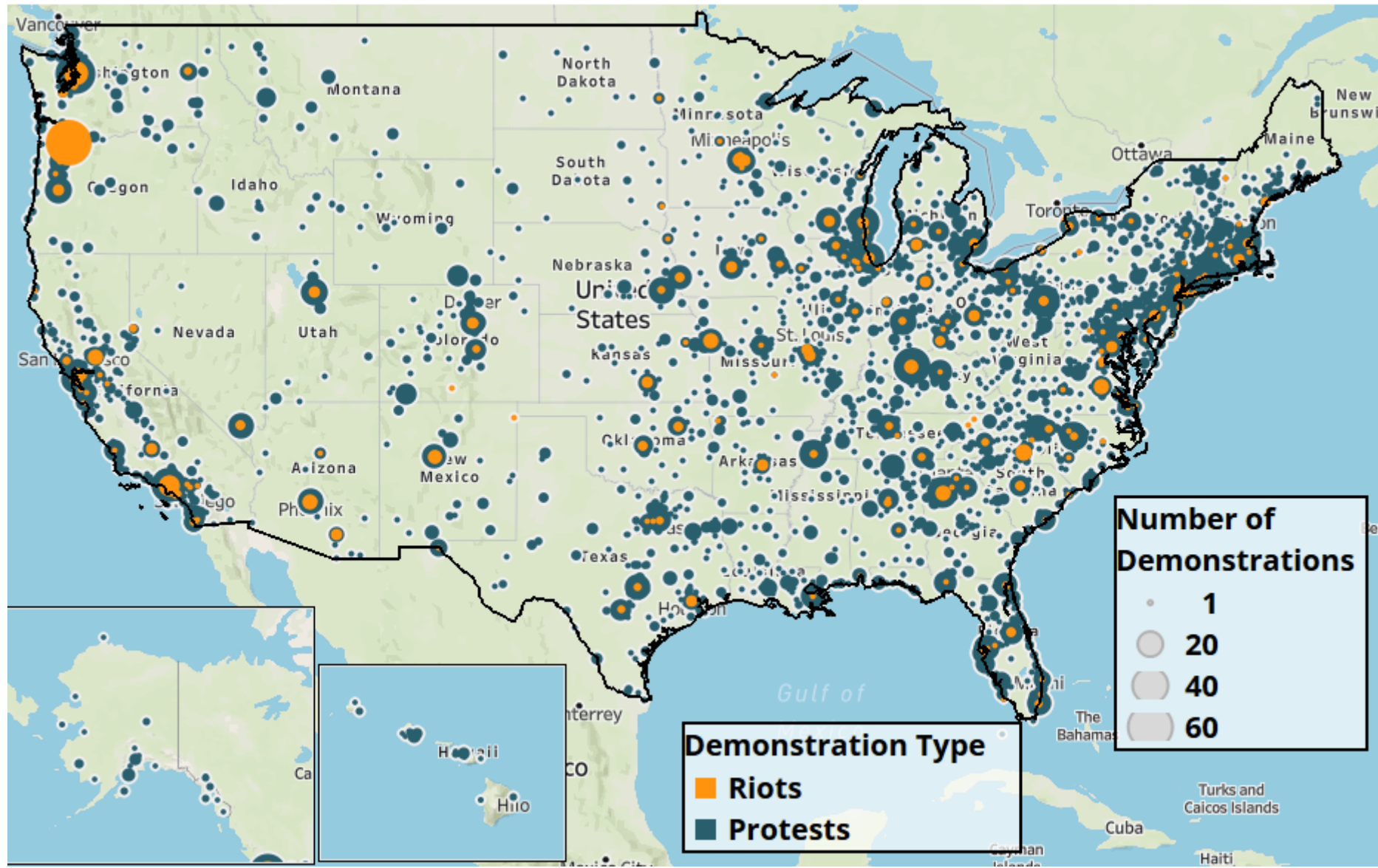
Whose Story?

“Stories are Data with Soul”

- **S**uspicion of master narratives of knowledge
- **T**ools of knowledge gathering and dissemination
- **O**bjection to objectivity
- **R**eflexivity of the positioning of researchers
- **Y**earning for and working for transformation and change

Sarojini Nadar, “‘Stories are data with Soul’ – lessons from black feminist epistemology,” 2014

Demonstrations associated with the killing of George Floyd (May 24 – August 22, 2020)





Sections

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

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Minneapolis

Protests in
Floyd's death

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George Floyd Memorial
38th & Chicago

Google Earth

<https://flowingdata.com/2020/10/09/reconstructing-protests-in-minneapolis-using-hundreds-of-livestreams/>

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Marzues Scott

Killed by police at 35 years old

so i colored his portrait for
35 minutes

(shown here in 35 seconds)

>>>>

STOLE
STOL N
STO EN
ST LEN
S OLEN
TOLEN

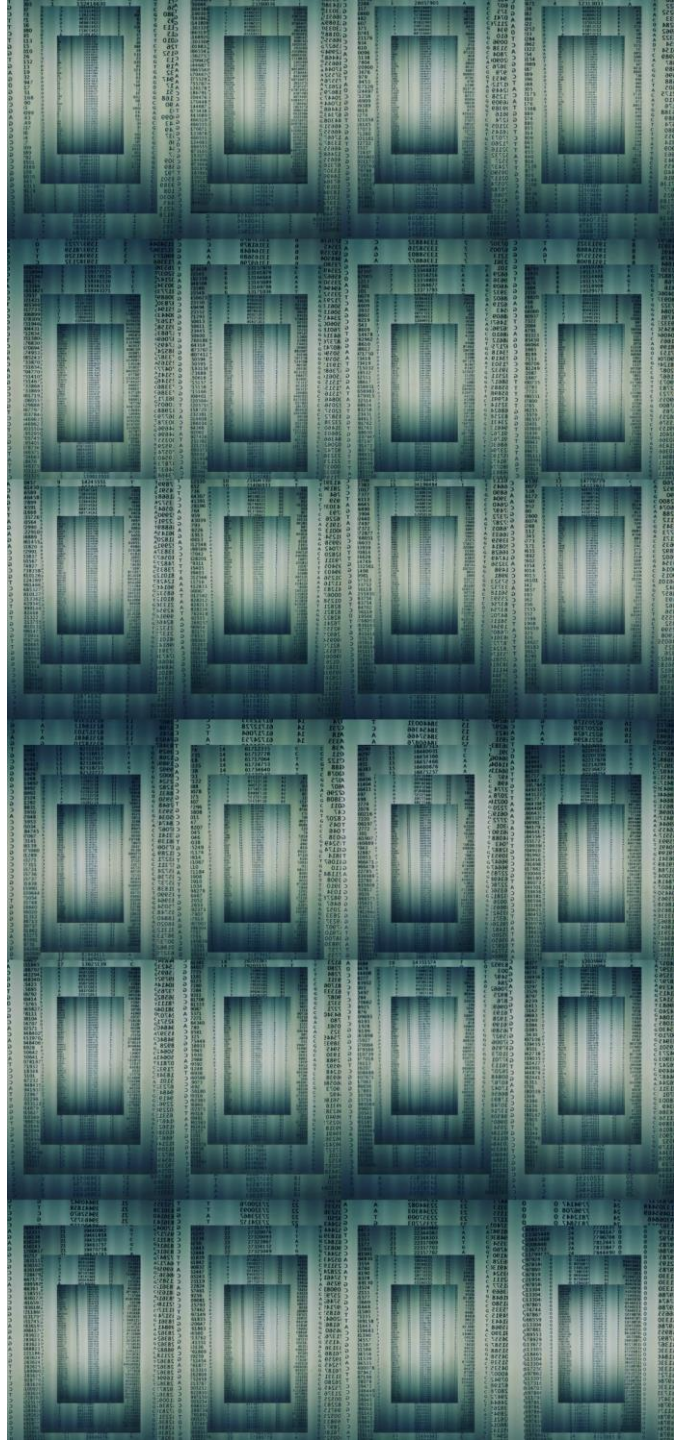
stolen

This series is dedicated to the many black people that were robbed of their lives at the hands of the police. In addition to using markers and pencil, **I use time as a medium to define how long each portrait is**



Chapter 3

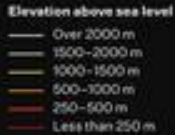
The Geography of Self



Abi Hart (2019),
Self Portrait, or, USER_SCOPED_TEMP_DATA_MSGR_PHOTO_FOR_UPLOAD_1556421407865.jpg

These maps depict the physical shape of Te Wāipounamu. Each map is composed of millions of elevation contour lines. Where the terrain changes quickly in hill and mountain country, the lines blend into bright bands of colour. In flatlands, the lines are spaced out and the background bleeds through. Valleys extend dark tendrils into bright hill country.

The right page shows Central Otago and Southland in greater detail.

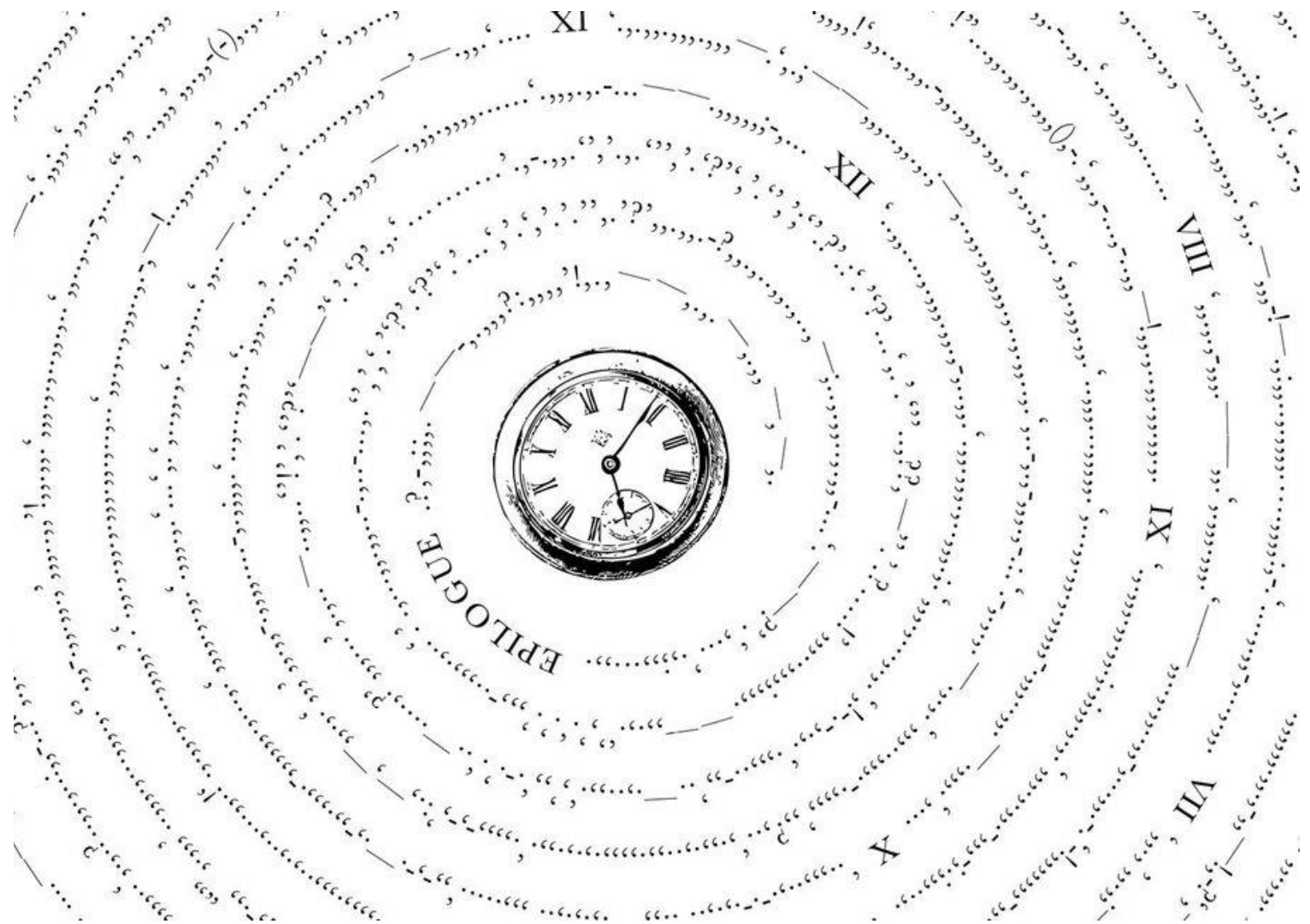


This is a detailed topographic map of the Sierra Nevada region in California. The map shows the rugged mountain ranges, including the Sierra Nevada, Carson Range, Inyo Range, and Owens Range. Major towns and cities are labeled, such as Reno, Gardnerville, Carson City, and Lake Tahoe. The map uses a color gradient to represent elevation, with green for lower elevations and brown/white for higher elevations. The Sierra Nevada range is prominent in the center, with the Carson Range to the west and the Inyo Range to the east. The Owens Range is visible in the upper right. The map also shows the Great Basin and the Sierra Nevada National Monument. The map is oriented with North at the top.



THE PUNCTUATION OF
THE TIME MACHINE
by H. G. Wells

By Herbert Spencer



← *back*

Maps of Home

This is Janesville, Wisconsin



The Pudding

Story + Code by Ilia Blinderman

Design by Jan Diehm

Whoa, it's dark in here!
Better turn the light on.

Scroll down to turn the light on





Take Poetry to a new level. Experience Wellington's literary landscape with LitAtlas.

AUTHORS

FOUND POEMS

DOWNLOAD



EXPLORE AUGMENT CREATE

The Literary Atlas of Wellington is an immersive experience that transforms words on the page into words in space using the latest in kinetic typography and augmented reality technologies. Join us and create new writing as you interact with the iconic Wellington Writers Walk. New Zealand at its literary best.



Literary Atlas - VUW



Watch later

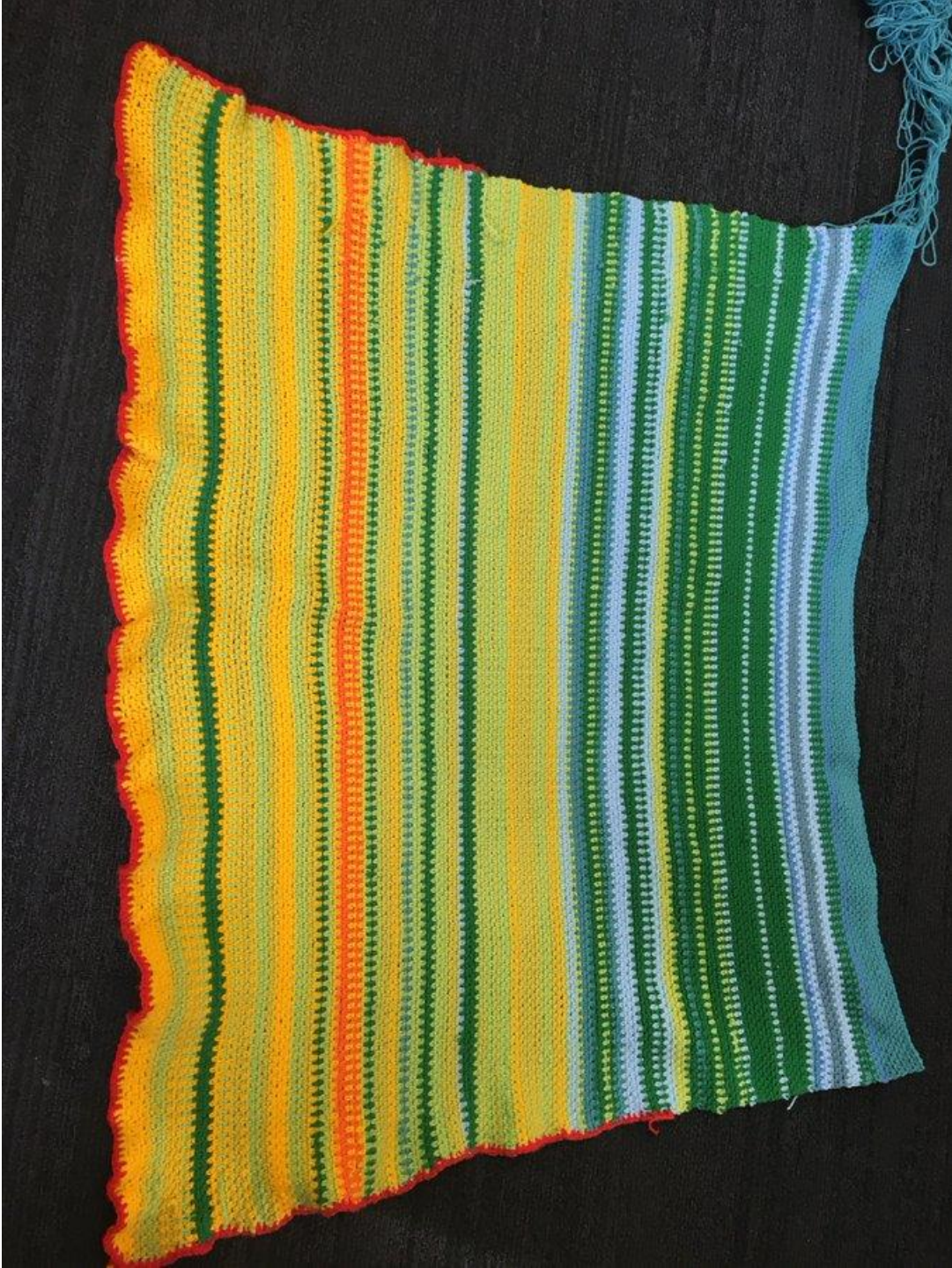


Share



Chapter 4

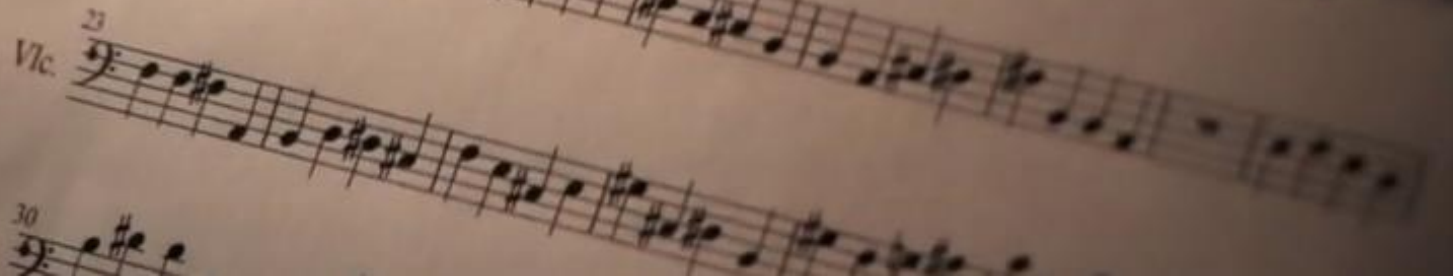
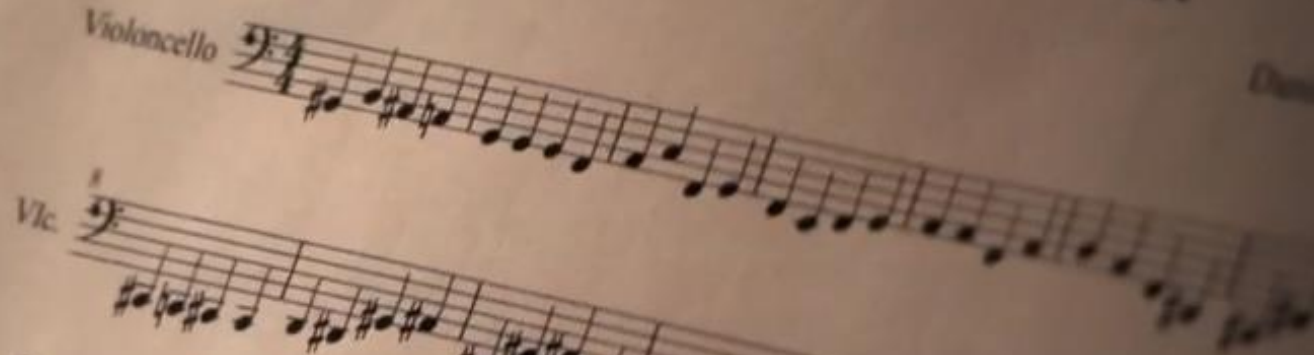
Too hot to handle?



<https://twitter.com/opendatanz/status/1145870642710867968>

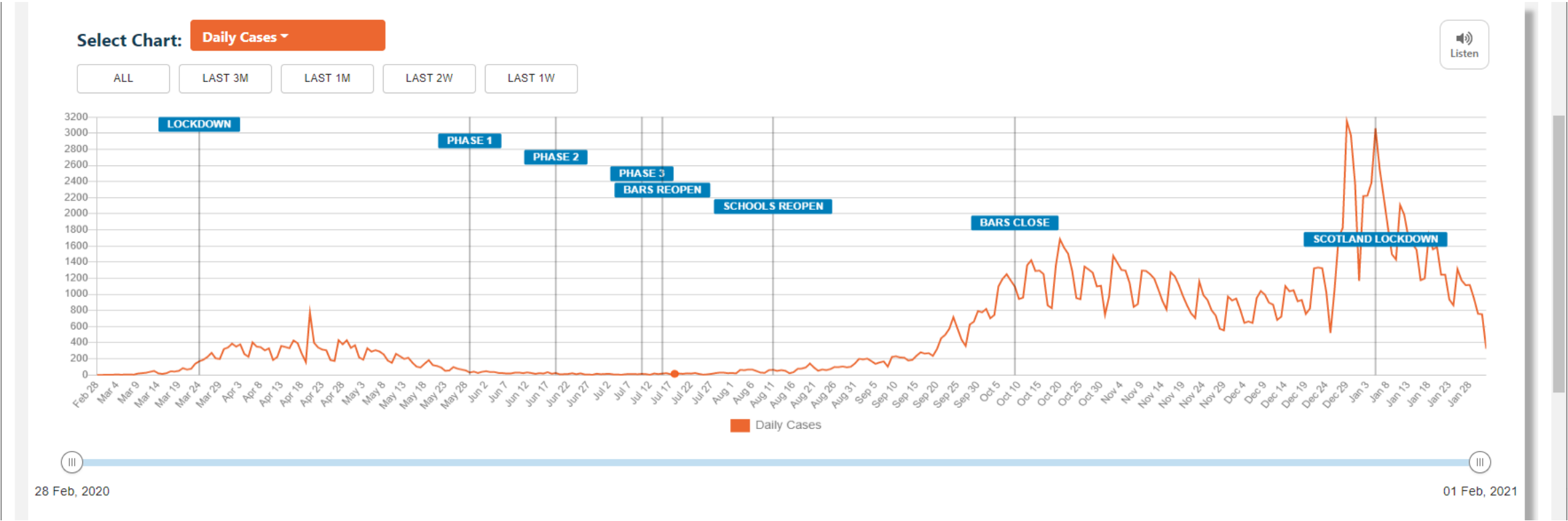
A Song of our Warming Planet

Violoncello





<https://vimeo.com/401314240>



<https://covid19.scottishtecharmy.org/>

Waiting game

Covid-19, when will widespread vaccination coverage be achieved?

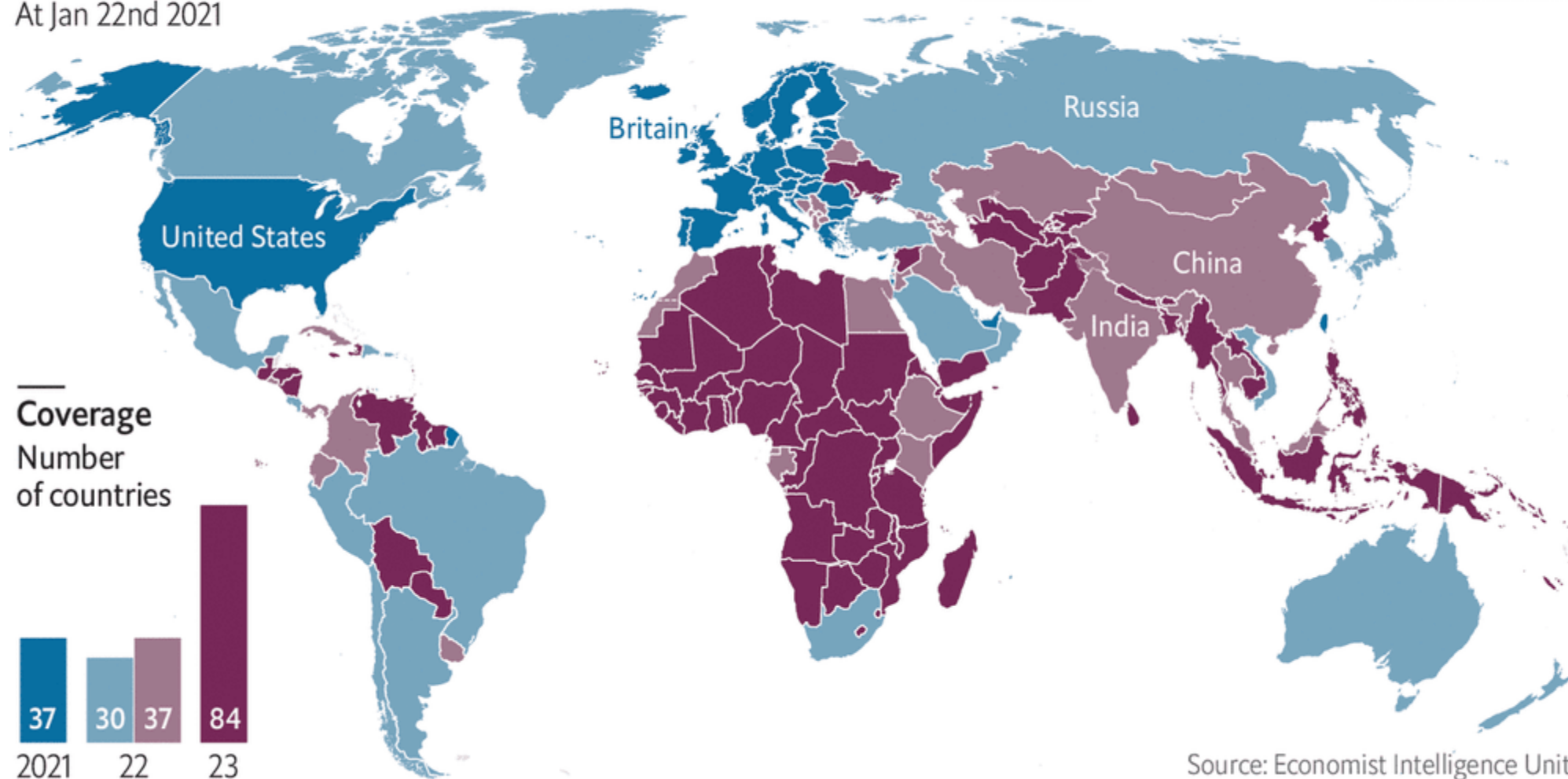
Late 2021

Mid 2022

Late 2022

from early 2023

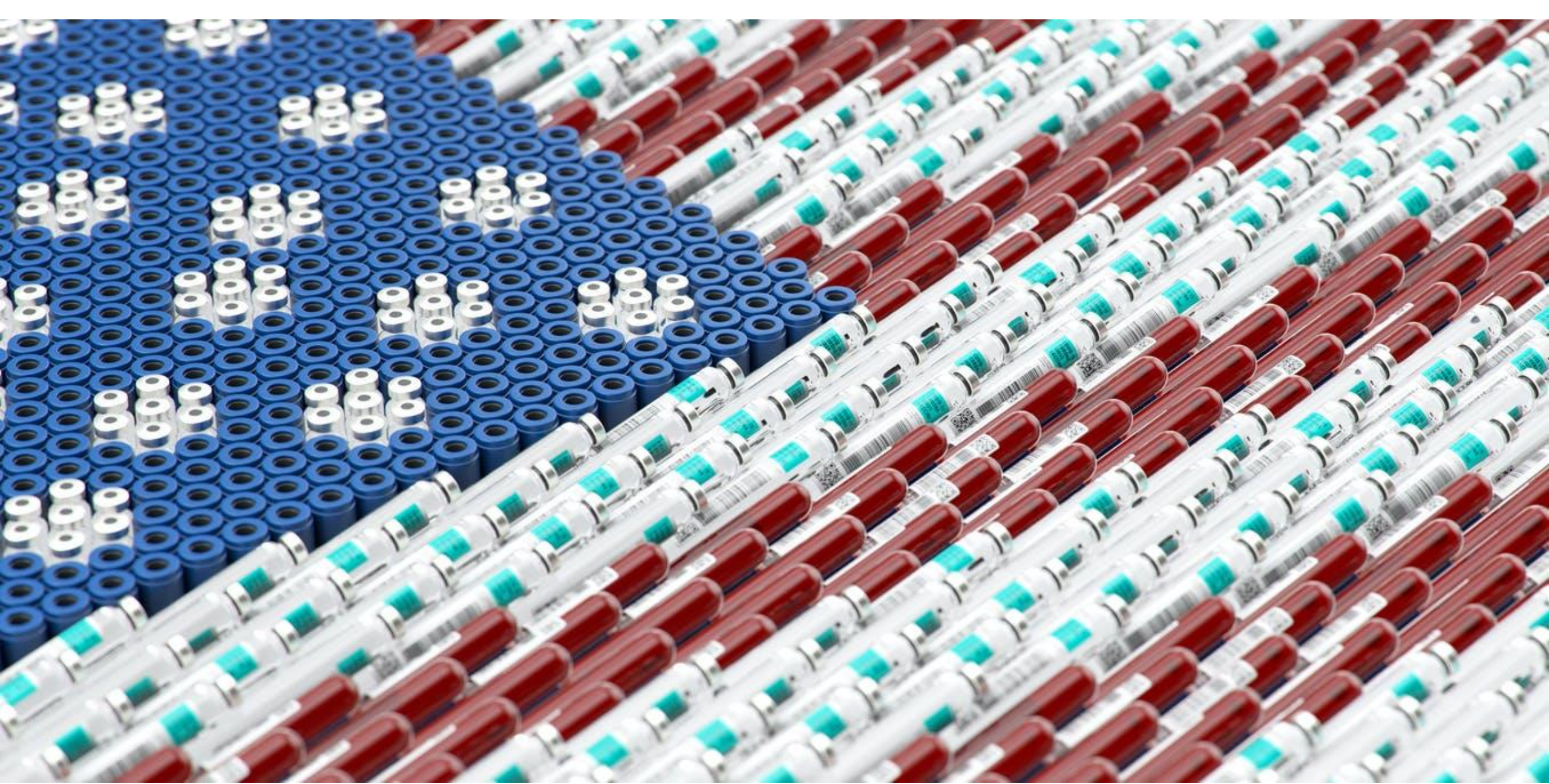
At Jan 22nd 2021



Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

The Economist

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/01/28/vaccine-nationalism-means-that-poor-countries-will-be-left-behind>

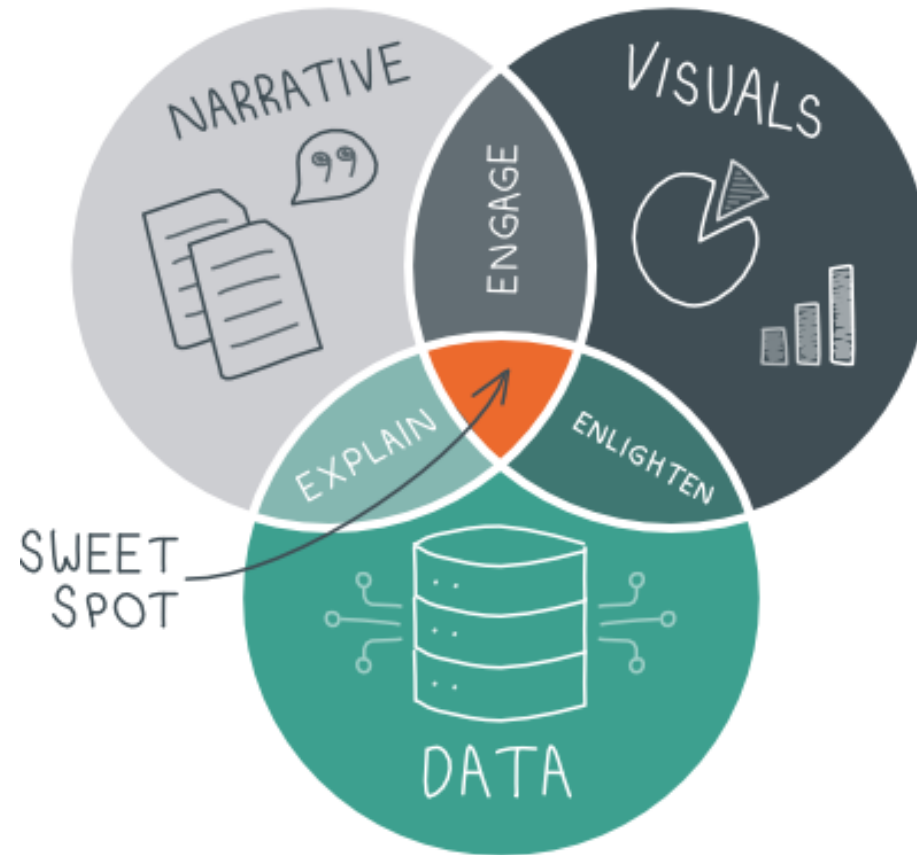




<https://liberal-international.org/news-articles/vaccine-nationalism-is-the-latest-threat-to-global-cooperation/>



<https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-africa-pan-african-2020-11-vaccine-nationalism-a-threat-to-african-mobility/>

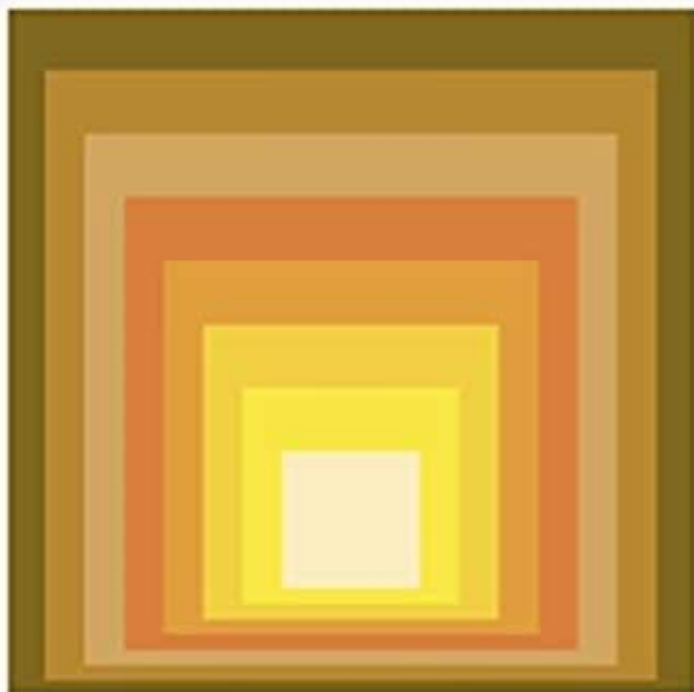


“Crunching data is not enough – you need to be telling stories.”

<https://blog.adverity.com/crunching-data-need-tell-stories>

Finding the Sweet Spot

- Who's your audience?
- What's your message?
- Why is your story important?
- How are you going to connect?
- Narrative hook
- Impact through medium



Title — LIVING IN DATA

Author — JER THORP

A
Citizen's
Guide
to a
Better
Information
Future





The End