

Storytelling for SCA Programs:

Using the power of story to build strong support for your program

Second Chance Month

April 21, 2022

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Presenters

- Lisa Bailey Vavonese, Center for Court Innovation
 - Lead, Sustainability Planning for the Evaluation and Sustainability Training and Technical Assistance (ES TTA) Project
- Melissa Stolfo, Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Michigan Works!
 - Project Manager, Second Chance Act Program



Let me start with a story ...



Pop Quiz!



Why Storytelling?

“People can’t face facts if they’re looking the wrong way. So, first, we tell them a story.”

—Andy Goodman, *Storytelling as Best Practice* (7th ed., 2015) and
Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes

Why Storytelling? (continued)



Agenda

Part One: Tell a compelling narrative

Part Two: Tell a story with your data





Part One: Tell a Compelling Narrative

Understand Your Audience

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- How?
- **Know your audience and get specific**

Meet Josh... a Second Chance Participant

2001 through 2008

- 7 felony convictions
- Incarcerated in the Berrien County Jail multiple times
- Currently on probation for 24 months
- Never landed in prison, so he qualified for services through the Second Chance Program



The Art of Storytelling: The Questions to Ask

- Who's the protagonist?
- What's the hook?
- What keeps it interesting?
- Where's the conflict?
- Have you included telling details?
- Where's the emotion?
- Is the meaning clear?

Andy Goodman, *free-range thinking*TM (monthly journal of communications and best practices)



How to Publicly Tell Your Story

Professional Tips for Public Speakers

- Be well-organized
- Start on time, end on time, stay on topic
- Set a specific goal for the audience
- Include an emotional component
- Present as knowledgeable, credible, and passionate
- Modulate your voice and use strong body language
- Practice, practice, practice—know your story

Pamela Wells, public speaking coach

Additional Advice

- Avoid too-much-too-soon
- Help the reader or listener see themselves in the story
- Don't accept "we"
- Look for moments of vulnerability
- Push for quotes and details
- If you are in the business of changing beliefs, ask two questions
 - What story is already in their heads?
 - Is your story strong enough to replace it?

ID and Employment

Now back to Josh!

Josh had no...

- state ID,
- birth certificate, or
- Social Security card

And no way to pay for any of them.



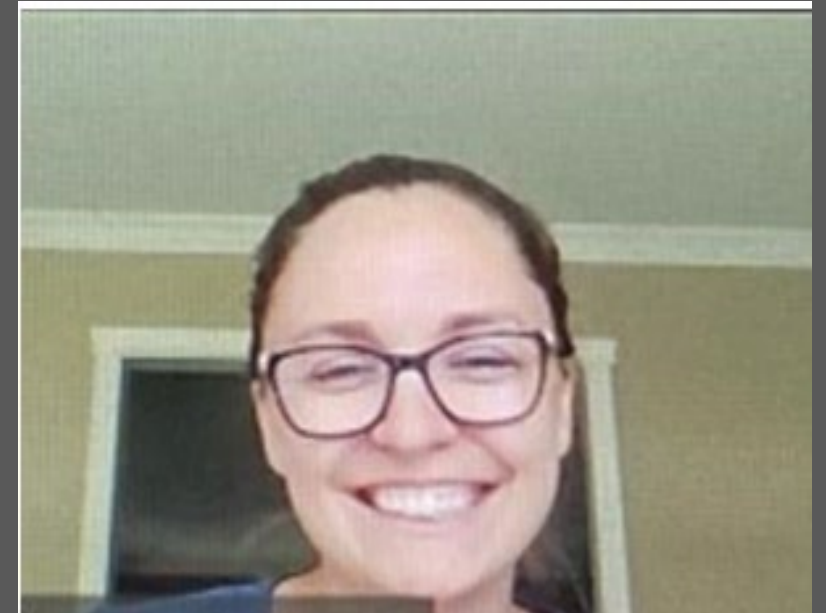
IDs and Employment

- Employment is a common term of probation
- As high as 80% of incarcerated individuals do not have the IDs required for employment
(2021 *Detroit Free Press* survey)
- A sense of urgency is needed to obtain IDs as quickly as possible
- Many need out-of-county or out-of-state birth certificates
- Many have license suspensions, fines, and fees in Michigan and other states



IDs

- Keep sense of urgency in the forefront
- At Josh's first meeting he was assisted in filling out the required applications
- Second Chance worked with Josh to identify what documents he would need
- A check request was submitted to our financial department for each one
- Second Chance mailed the applications and the checks



IDs (continued)

- During the pandemic, Secretary of State appointments were almost impossible to get
- Rachel understood the sense of urgency needed to obtain the IDs
- Rachel developed a partnership with the Secretary of State
- Within days, Josh had his state picture ID



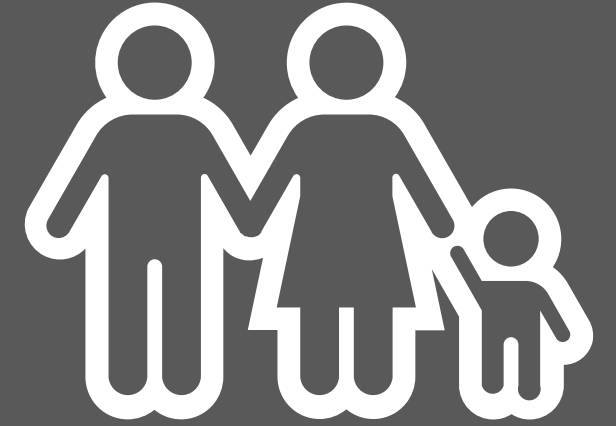
Temporary Housing

Josh had a safe and secure place to live once released!

But he is one of the lucky ones: People who have been incarcerated are 10X more likely to be homeless than the general public
(Prison Policy Initiative, 2018)



Child Support Issues



- Josh had children and child support issues
- He was afraid to get a job because of child support bench warrants
- His monthly payments were over 80% of his projected income
- His driver's license was suspended due to his delinquent child support payments

Child Support Issues (continued)

Steve called our partners at Berrien County Friend of Court, where all child support payments, fines, and warrants are processed

- Josh's bench warrants were lifted
- The suspension of his license was lifted
- A reasonable payment system was worked out



Employment

Now that Josh wasn't afraid of being arrested, he was ready for employment

The team...

- Created a resume
- Worked with Josh on application completion and interview skills
- Talked to our Business Services Manager and learned about South County's felon-friendly employers
- Created a job search plan
- Targeted Josh's top pick of employer



Employment (continued)

- Josh got a job!
- And not just any job – but THE job!
- He targeted the employer based on information received from the Business Services Team
- Second Chance supportive service funds were used to purchase steel-toed boots and work clothes
- He began employment on June 1, 2020!



Driver's License

With a job and no more suspensions

- Josh got his driver's license for the first time in years



Success

So, where is Josh now?



Success (continued)

- He says he feels great
- He is sober and productive
- His child support payments are under control
- He is driving legally for the first time in years
- He isn't worried about being picked up on a bench warrant
- He just celebrated 226 days of employment!



So you may ask...

- “Why has Josh done so much better this time than in the past?”



Success (continued)

- Because he is in Second Chance – of course!



The Art of Storytelling: The Questions to Ask

- Who's the **protagonist**?
Josh, with 7 felony convictions
- What's the **hook**?
He wants to **move forward**
- What **keeps it interesting**?
He has **many barriers**
- Where's the **conflict**?
He must **overcome** the barriers
- Have you included **telling details**?
Second Chance efforts and **partners** assist him
- Where's the **emotion**?
He **overcomes** the barriers
- Is the **meaning clear**?
Success with assistance from Second Chance and partners

Questions?



Part Two: Tell a Story With Your Data

Why Tell a Story With Your Data?

“The true power of data comes from conveying the ‘so what’ behind the numbers.”

– Jake Porway, Three Things Great Data Storytellers Do Differently

June 8, 2016

Stanford Social Innovation Review

Data Visualization v. Data Storytelling

- Data **visualization** is any visual representation of data, including charts, graphs, and pictures. It is communicating the substance of your metrics in a visual way.
- Data **storytelling** is a compelling narrative crafted around and anchored by compelling data. It provides meaning and value.
- Data visualization + data storytelling = **success**

Key Concepts

- Know your audience
- Direct your audience
- Use words

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflict, *Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals* (2015)

Decluttering Your Data

- Contrast
- Color (hue and intensity)
- Position
- Added marks

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflict, Do you see it? The importance of contrast when communicating with data, <https://www.storytellingwithdata.com/>



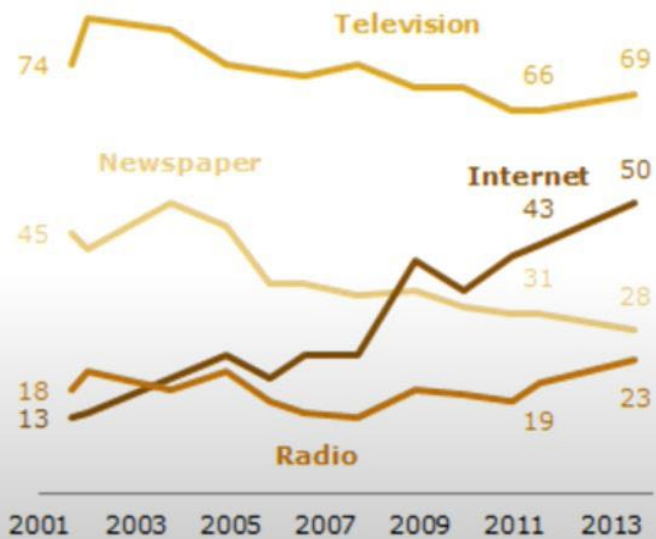




Decluttering Data – Before

1. More Americans get news online... 50% of the public now cites the internet as a main source for national and international news 🐦, still below television, but far above newspapers and radio. ([Report](#))

Main Source for News



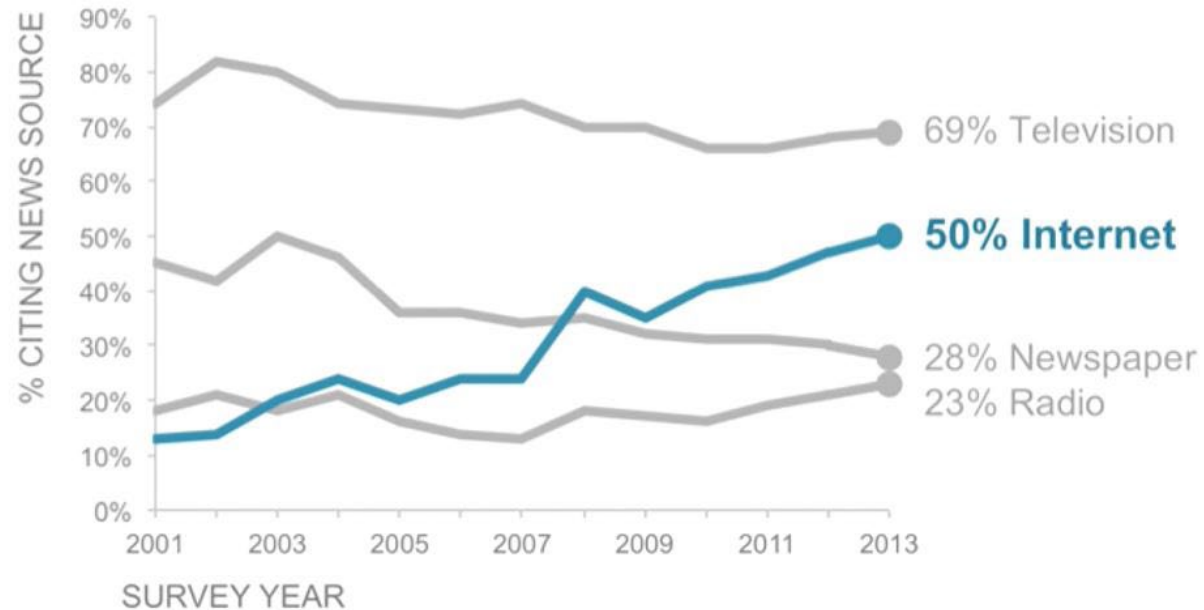
PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 17-21, 2013. Q46.
Respondents were allowed to name up to two sources.

Decluttering Data – After

More Americans get news online

50% of the public cite the **internet** as a main source for national & international news. This remains below television, but is far above newspapers and radio.

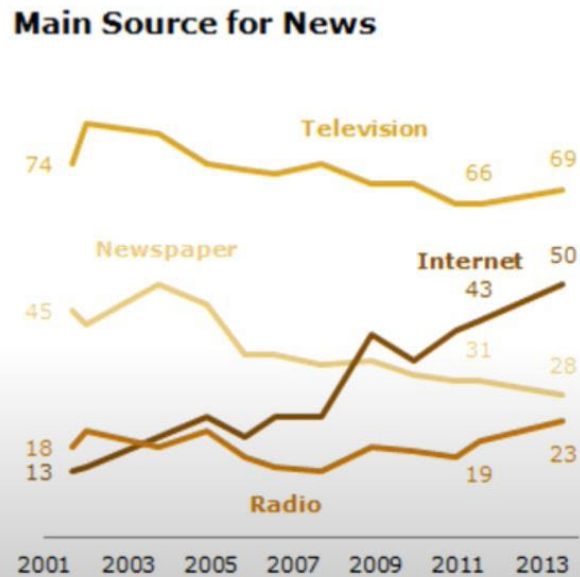
Main source for news



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Decluttering Data – Before and After

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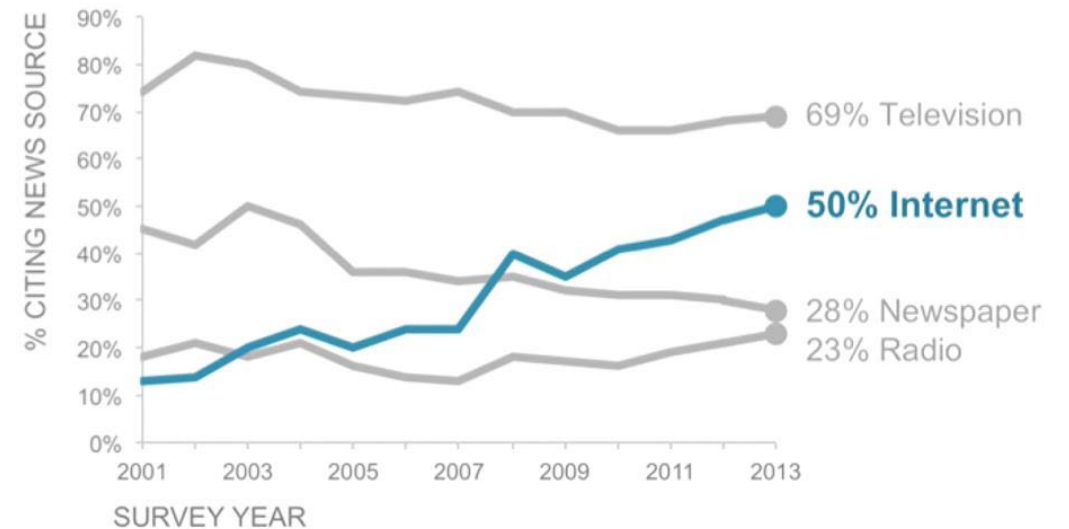


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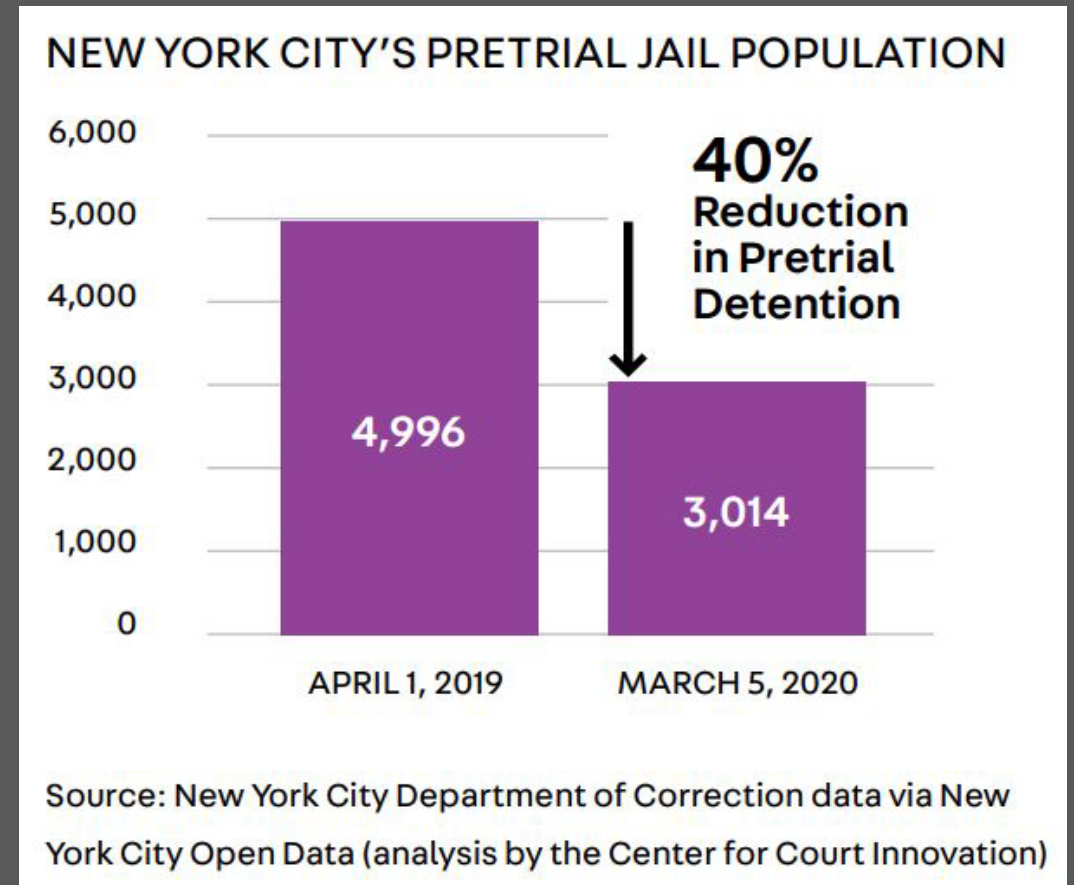
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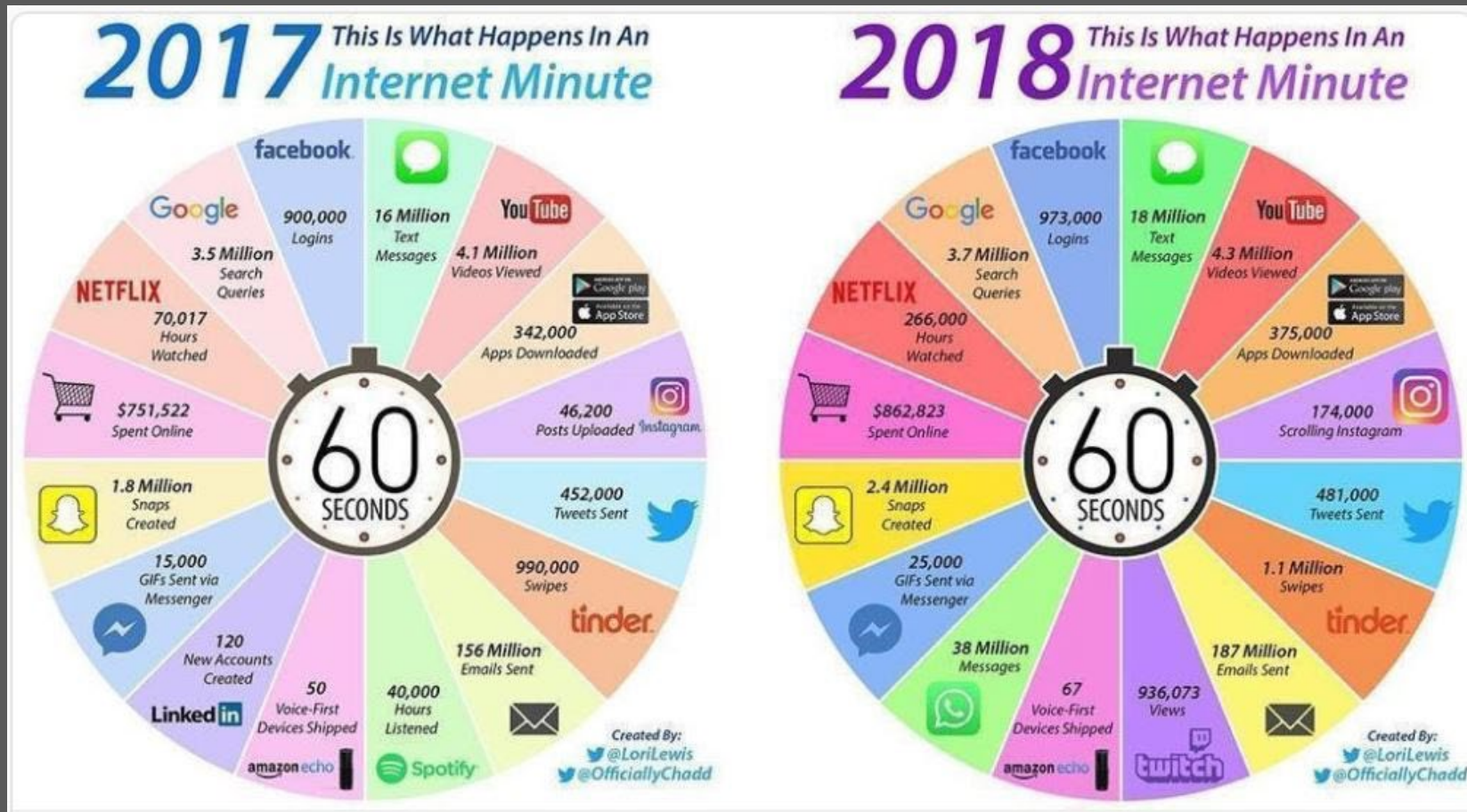
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A Good Example

- A paramount goal of New York State's bail reform was to reduce the number of people held awaiting trial, before any finding of *guilt or innocence*. The evidence is compelling that this goal was accomplished. Our analysis of data from New York City shows that, in the year following the April 2019 passage of the law, it contributed to a *40% decline* in the city's pretrial jail population, with slightly greater reductions in the rest of the state.



Example: Confusing Data Visual



Pop Quiz!





Questions?

Thank you!

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