

Why Do We Tell Stories?



Everyone loves a good story. We love listening to stories and we love telling stories. A good story can capture our attention at the start of the story and hold it all the way to the end. It shoves us to the edges of our seats, hanging onto every word of the storyteller. That is why we tell stories – we have something to share, we have an audience with which we wish to share it, and we want our story to be heard. Of course, it helps if we have a good story, and we can tell the story well.

In the business that we are in here at CNSI, we tell stories to our clients, we tell stories for our clients, and we provide our clients with the tools they need to tell their own compelling stories. We tell these stories with data (usually healthcare data-we'll talk more about that in upcoming blog posts). Since we use data to tell our stories, sometimes the story is neither written nor spoken, but visual. In these visuals we must convey all the elements of a good story while still being compelling. After all, the very best visual stories are quickly (and easily) understood and not soon forgotten.

One example of this is [Minard's graphic](#) of Napoleon's Russian Campaign of 1812.

You can take one look and immediately see the devastation that was laid on Napoleon's army by the end of that campaign. And then the graphic sucks you into the story. It compels you to look a while longer. It makes you want to understand the story it is telling. It is all at once compelling, dramatic, and enlightening. It is anything but boring.

Data has the power to tell some of the most engaging stories.

What are some examples that have stuck out for you? Let us know by tweeting [@CNSICorp](#)!

This blog entry was written by Jim Harbour, CNSI's big data expert. He will be writing about the relevant aspects of using data to tell meaningful stories. This includes writing about why we tell (and listen to) stories, what makes a good story, data analytics, big data, data visualization, data science, and anything else that applies to being able to take data and weave a story from it that has meaning and value. Jim has worked in a variety of architecture, analysis, design, development, and operations roles at CNSI and throughout his career. He believes in sharing knowledge and mentoring at all levels, including these blog posts. Follow him on Twitter [@JSilasHarbour](#).