

## **From storytelling to scrollytelling – modern digital publications that strengthen and develop the data literacy of our users**

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### ***Abstract***

Digital publications have become more and more important in the dissemination program of statistical institutions in recent years and continue to replace classic publications. When we speak of «digital publications», we mean «real» digital publications that are designed for reading on screen and can be edited interactively by the reader – in contrast to PDF publications, which can be displayed on digital devices, but are primarily intended for lean-back consumption as in the old days of printing.

The rise of digital publications in the last decade has been accompanied and shaped by the (re)increased use of storytelling approaches. Storytelling is as old as mankind – and as old as public statistics. It presents knowledge, didactically prepared and in the form of publications full of diagrams, maps and infographics and was already widely used in the early statistical reports, such as the statistical yearbooks of the time, which in the 19th century were aimed at a broad, information-hungry bourgeois audience. A new quality in the «revived» storytelling era of the 20th century is certainly that consumers not only listen or read, but are now actively involved as prosumers in the story of a digital publication.

In recent years, however, the mere combination of storytelling and digital publishing – although well-intentioned – has often led to the opposite: to digital but complex publications that require long reading times and, with their nested chapter structures and footnotes, often resemble the old scientific statistics publications of the 20th century. Just as a jerky 200-page publication used to be, modern web publications can be tedious and over-whelm the user with too much information, a multitude of complex, built-in interactions, where the inexperienced reader doesn't quickly find what they are actually looking for: answers. Psychologically, users always have to fear that they overlook something while reading.

Scrollytelling (Scrollytelling = storytelling + scrolling.), a recent technology can overcome this mismatch. Here, visual storytelling changes and adds to the content while scrolling up or down a page. By using the simple and familiar gesture of scrolling as the only tool, it offers users a sense of complete control over the narrative and an easy, quick consumption. Of course, in return, the volume and complexity of the content has to be scaled down.

In the last two years, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office has published several «scrollypubs» and revised the content and visualizations compared to earlier digital publications. These have been very well received by the public and are to be further developed, e.g. by making the interactive graphics and individual figures in the publications scrollable as well.

The presentation will briefly outline the nature and development of scrollypubs and give an insight into the production and our experiences of the last two years. It also wants to assess other current trends and their future viability, e.g. user engagement, individual content, AI and automatically generated content or SEO optimization, which can help to generate even more data literacy and knowledge among our customers through state-of-the-art publications.