# Visualising the Environment & the Politics of Representation



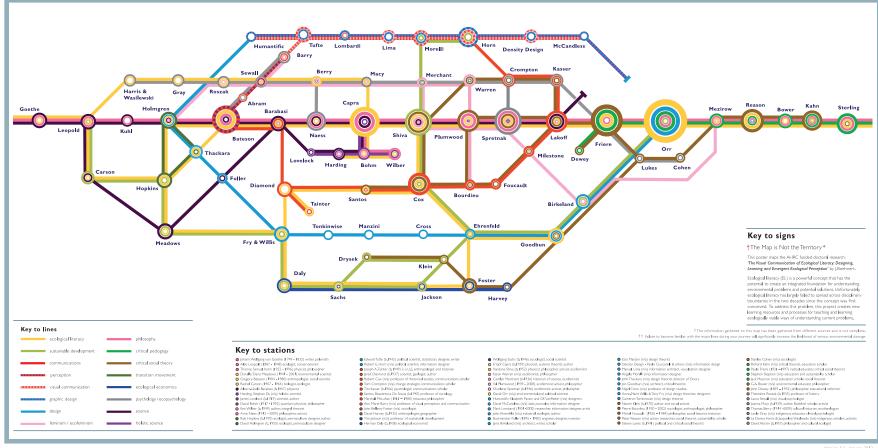
#### Dr. Joanna Boehnert

Center for Science & Technology Policy Research
Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences
University of Colorado, Boulder, USA



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#### Key to Lines: Summary of Disciplinary Lines

Econ-liceracy Ecological Iteracy (EL) describes a capacity to think in terms of whole systems. Ecological Iteracy recognises humanikinds embeddechess within the ecological systems and thereby organizes cultural political legal and economic systems to priorities the well-being of the ecological system.

Sustainable Developments Current models of development based on infrite quantitative economic growth within a finite ecological system are entirely unsustainable. Development must reflect growth in nature where physical growth occurs to maturity their levels off towards auditative prowth.

Communications mediate the human nature relationship and have a vital role to pay in responding to environmental problems. Communication is central a civilisation's capacity to avoid collapse. Environmental communication is considered to be a crisis discipline responding the crises in the earth sciences.

Design is uniquely positioned to engage in a process of moving from theory to practice and moving between sectors to facilitate transidisplinary actions and the design of new ways of thing; Design is a problem solving profession with a wide variety of tools and techniques to addresses complex problems.

Graphic Design aims to strategically change human understanding and behavior through the use of visual communication. Graphic design can communicate complex webs of interdependence and help audiences perceive relationships, context, causality and connections in dynamic systems.

Science Ecological literacy emerges out the movement away from science characterized by atomism, mechanism, objectivism, anthropocentrism, rational ism and dualism. Post-normal science reflects a shift in epistomological premises following Kuhris theory of paradigm shifts in science. Phil osophys! We have inherited a tradition based on a radical disconnection with the natural world resulting in epistemological error; a crisis of reason and ethical rootlessness. Ecological literacy describes a worldview that supports an ecologically embedded entrology epistemology rationality and ethic.

Critical Pedagogy is an educational movement that originated from Paulo Freire's educational practices focused on conscientization or critical consciousness. These teaching practices have been integral to the profound change witnessed in social movements globally including women's liberating should profound.

Social Theory offers powerful tools of analysis that describe how power functions in society, exposing how and why ecological literacy remains marginal. Symbolic violence describes forms of social control wherein environmental discourses reflect the interests of powerful economics/policial interests.

**Transition** is a social movement and community design practice based on local responses to climate change and peak oil i.e. depletion of fossil fuel reserves. Transition has its origins in permaculture which developed strategies for the design of systems for local resilience and energy descent.

Ecological Economics is economic theory that recognizes the economic system as embedded within the ecological system and having to function within the carrying capacity of the earth. It describes quantitative growth as no longer delivering prosperity in risk countries Instead we must aim for opalitative growth.

Ecopsychology address our psychological relationship with the natural work offering a radical re-visioning of ecological self. White denial is a natural defense mechanism, we can shatter denial using practices from addition therapy, Ecopsychology is strongly influenced by TEK (traditional ecological knowledge). Ecofeminist analysis asserts that historically both women and nature have been oppressed by a logic of domination. Ferninam is a fundamental building block for a social transformation of enlarge the community of concern to include the wider ecological community as it has emancipative strategies that proven to work.

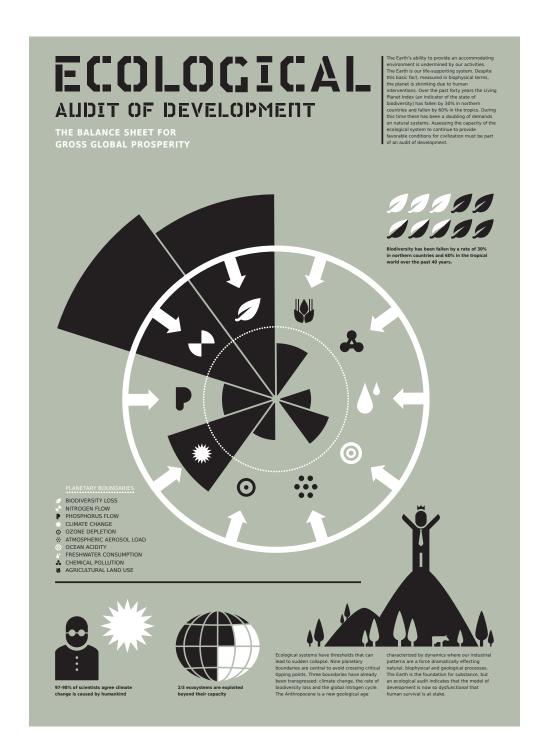
Holstic Science Holstic science dramatically challenges assumptions and methodological approaches of positivist science. Holstic science unites both quantities and qualities in a paradigm shift in science from physics to the life science. Holstic science understands the earth as composed of living assterns.

Visual Communication. Within the context of an increasingly visual culture, visual communications can facilitate ecological understanding through display of complexity, context, connections and causality. Whisis can neutrule qualitative whole systems thinking and even, potentially, an emergent ecological perception. version 3.2 - January 201

A map based on the AHRC funded PhD research The Visual Communication of Ecological Literacy: Designing, Learning and Emergene Ecological Percept by Jody Journal Benfirmer! School of Architecture and Design The University of Brighton Prison No.23.2 Version 3.2 Junuary 2012

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### EFIERGY

#### AUDIT OF DEVELOPMENT

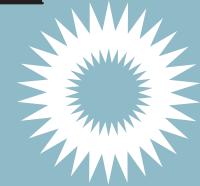
THE BALANCE SHEET FOR **GROSS GLOBAL PROSPERITY** 

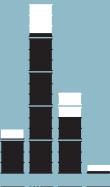
Cheap energy made industrial development possible. One barrel of crude oil contains, in possible. One barrel of roude oil contains, in energy terms, the equivalent to the heavy manual labour of 12 people working for one year. As easily accessible fossill flet supplies diminish, the era of cheap energy is ending. One way to understand the consequences of energy scarcity is by measuring EROL i.e. Energy Return On investment: In the 1900s EROL was between 100:1–50:1. Energy from renewables and unconventional fossil fuels have much lower EROLs; for example the far Sands have a EROL of development that includes energy issues indicates that the current model of development has created dangerous vulnerabilities in its relance on fossil fuel.





One barrel of crude oil, containing 159 litres, is equivalent to the heavy manual labour of 12 people for one year.















Energy use (kg of oil equivalent per capita) World = 1851 USA = 7069 EU = 3412

EU = 3412
Low Income countries = 363
Percentage of total energy consumption that is based on fossil fuels
World = 80%
USA = 83%

EU = 75% Low income countries = 29%



VS A A A 



Energy Return on Energy Investment

EROI in the 1900s = 100:1 - 50:1

EROI in the tarsands = 5:1 - 3:1

EROI estimated to be necessary for 'civilisation' to sustain itself = 5:1

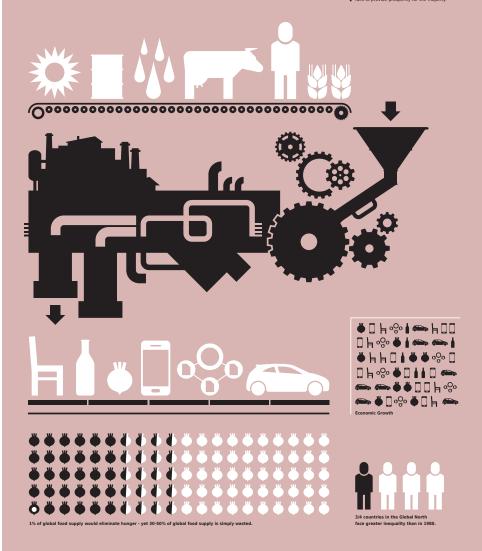


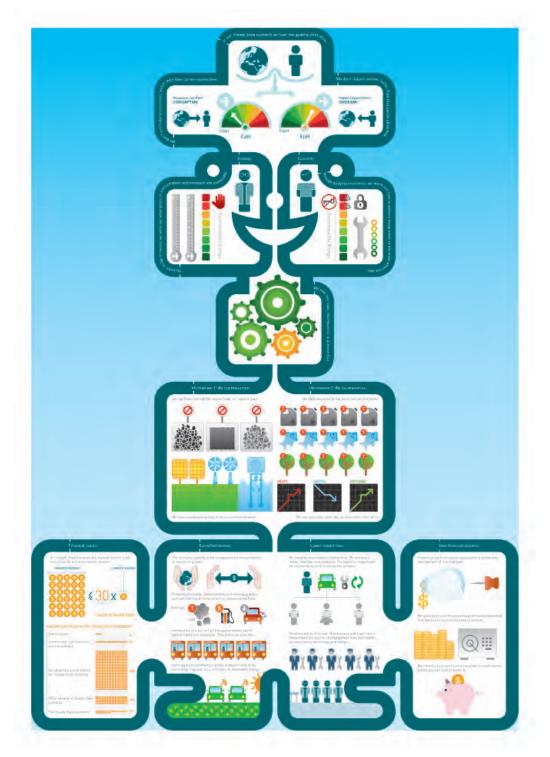
Global fossil fuels subsidies amounted to \$523 billion in 2011, up almost 30% on 2010 - this is six times more than subsidies to renev and up 30% from 2010.

# SOCIAL AUDIT OF DEVELOPMENT

THE BALANCE SHEET FOR GROSS GLOBAL PROSPERITY

This poster explores the social impact of the current model of development. Humans and the natural world provide essential resources for the purpose of creating products, profits and economic growth. Net economic growth before controlled to the controlled to the controlled to the controlled to the single state with the controlled to the single standards of living. Prospertly is increasingly concentrated and over the past 30 years inequally has risen in over 75% of the countries Global North (OECD countries). Although there is more than enough food to meet everyone's needs, 13% of the global population face hunger. Reamwhile, 30-50% of the food supply is simply wasted. It appears that the current model of development fails to provide prosperity for the majority.



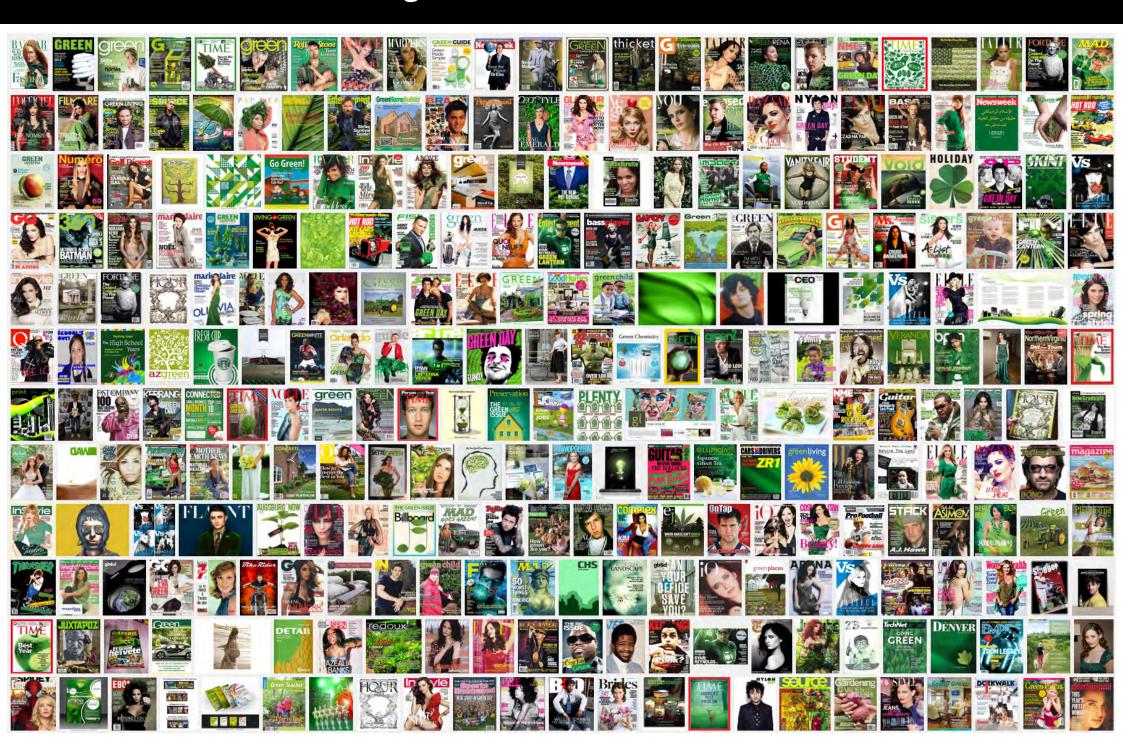


## Contents

- 1. Introduction: Visualizing the Environment
- 2. Images & Communication Theory
- 3. Revealing with Images
- 4. Concealing with Images
- 5. Conclusion A Role for Design



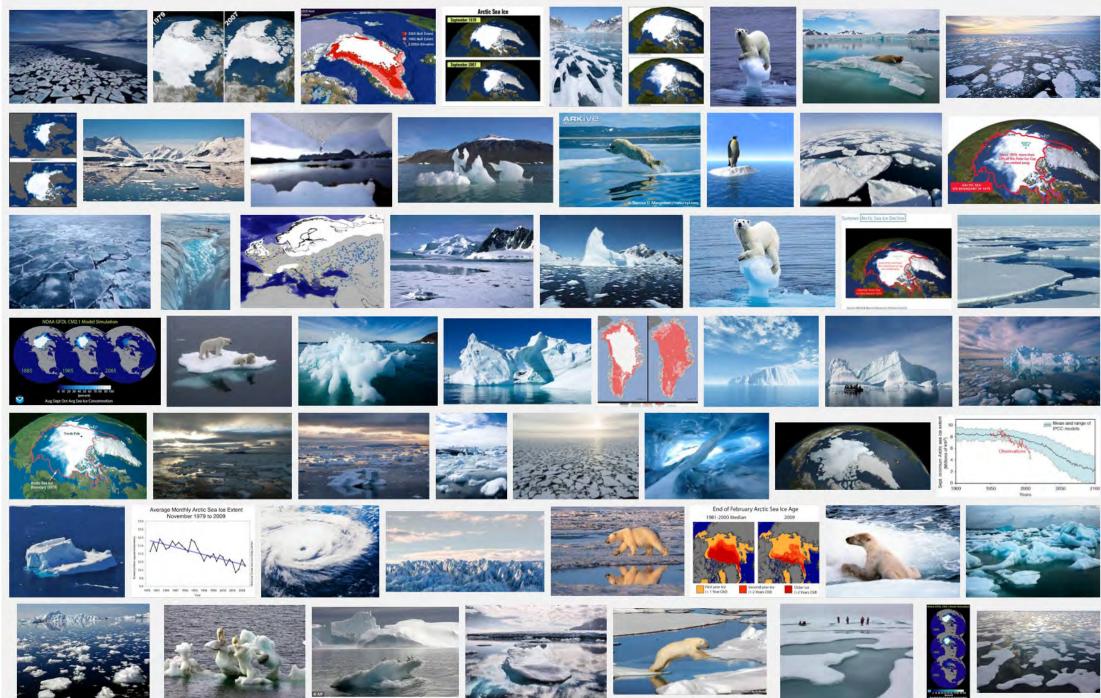








Navajo reservation adjacent to a Phoenix suburb. Photo by Edward Burtynsky.





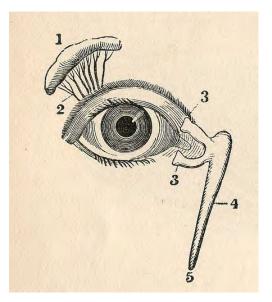




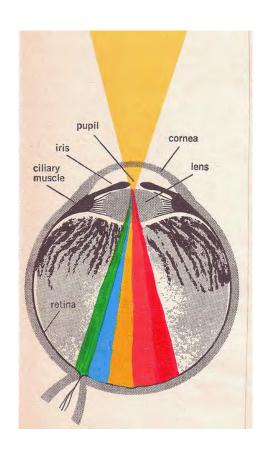




The more visual the input becomes, the more likely it is to be recognized and recalled. One research study found that adding a picture to text improves comprehension and memory by over 50%. Showing a picture before text increases comprehension by over 100% than supplying text alone.\*



<sup>\*</sup> Bransford and Johnson 1972 quoted in Chabris and Kosslyn 2005

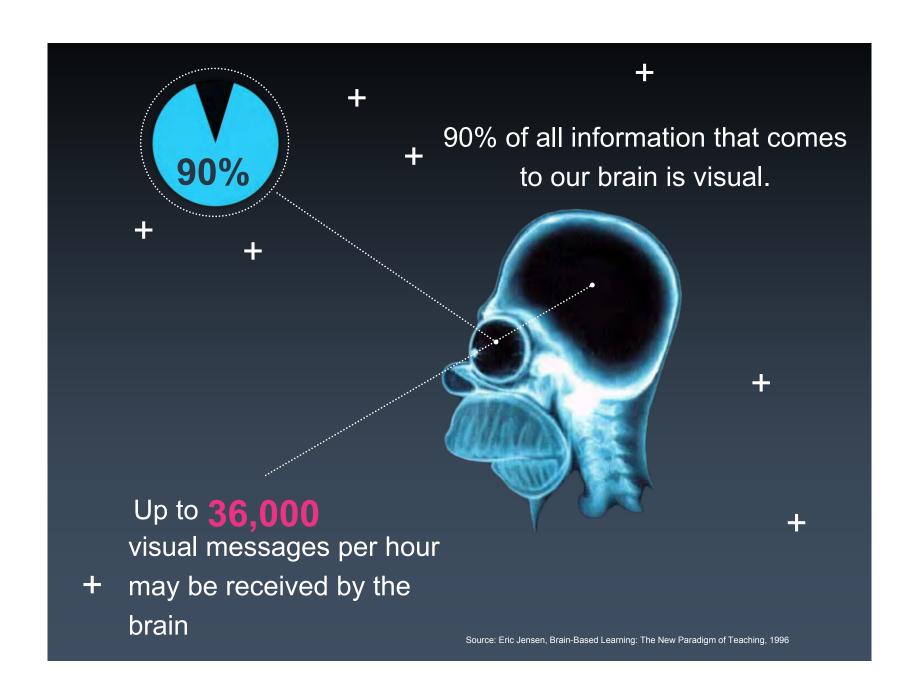


Another study suggests that we typically remember about 10% of the information from an oral presentation when tested 72 hours after exposure. This figure goes up to 65% when a picture is added.\*

"the pictorial superiority effect" \*\*

<sup>\*</sup> Medina, J. (2008) The Brain Rules. Pear Press. p.234.

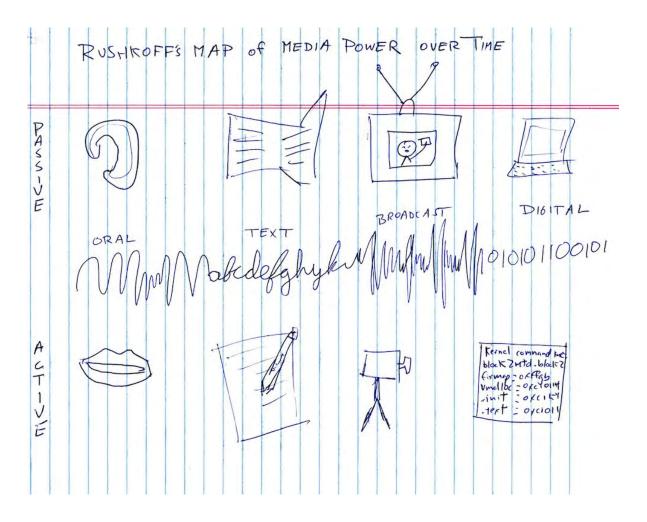
<sup>\*\*</sup>Stenberg, G (2006) Conceptual and pereptual factors in the picture superiority effect European Journal of Cog Psych 18(6): 813 - 847.





Pictures and text follow very different rules







"the effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance"

Marshall McLuhan 1967

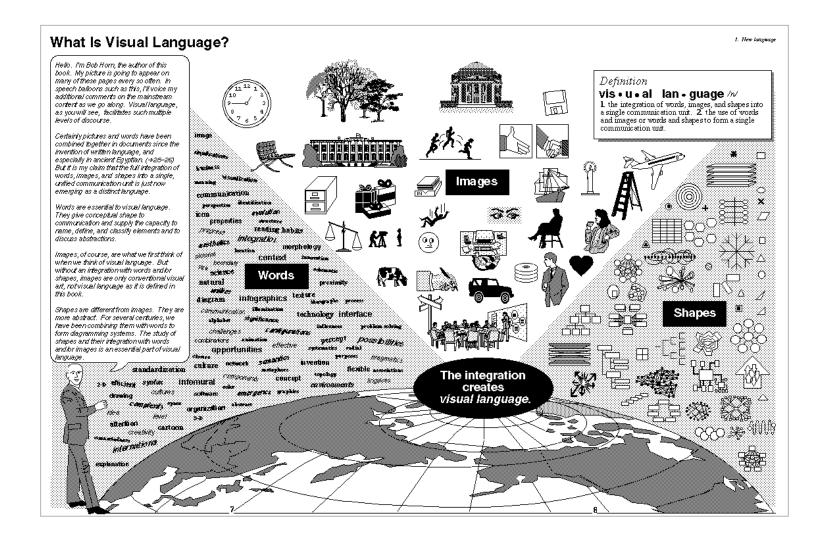
Visual culture: a pictorial turn

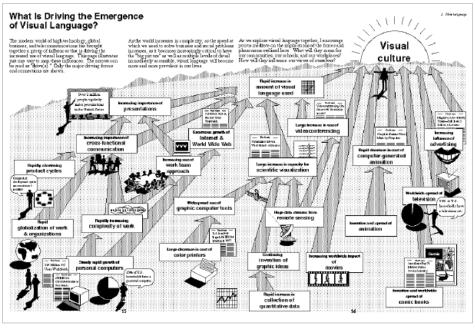
What are the cognitive implications of an increasingly visual culture?

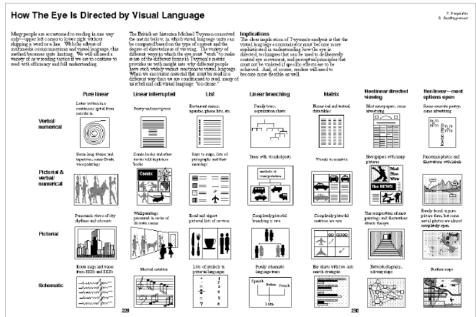
## Visual language

'...has the potential for increasing human "bandwidth" – the capacity to take in, comprehend, and more efficiently synthesize large amounts of new information'

Robert Horn 2001







"It has often been said that our environmental crisis is a crisis of perception. We do not readily see the patterns that would reveal our dependence on the natural world, nor are we commonly aware of the systems within which we are deeply embedded. Our attention, entrained on objects and focused on flat screens, is far removed from the dynamic and animated nonhuman world."

Laura Sewall, 2012

## Relational Perception

A shift in focus (and thinking) from **objects** (in isolation) to **processes & relationships**.

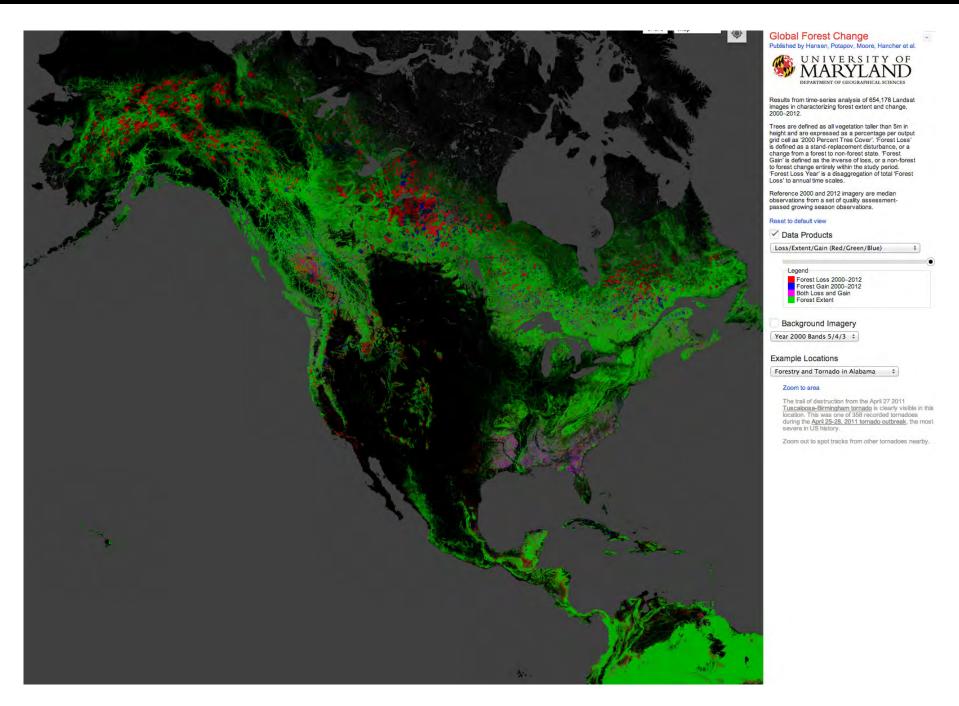
Visual communications can suppport relational perception by focusing attention on:

- context
- comparison
- connections
- causality
- complexity

- CONTEXT (where, what, when?)
- COMParison (how much and when?)
- CONNECTIONS (with what or with whom?)
- Causality (how, how much and when?)
- complexity (all of the above)

...& at various scales: micro, meso and macro.

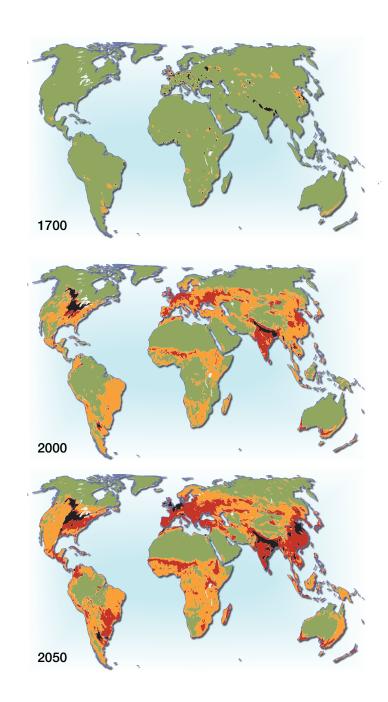
Global forest change

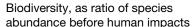


The British Isles



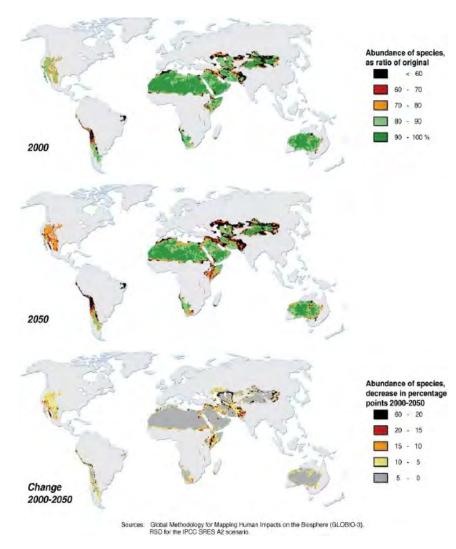
biodiversity loss, as a ratio of species abundance before human impacts





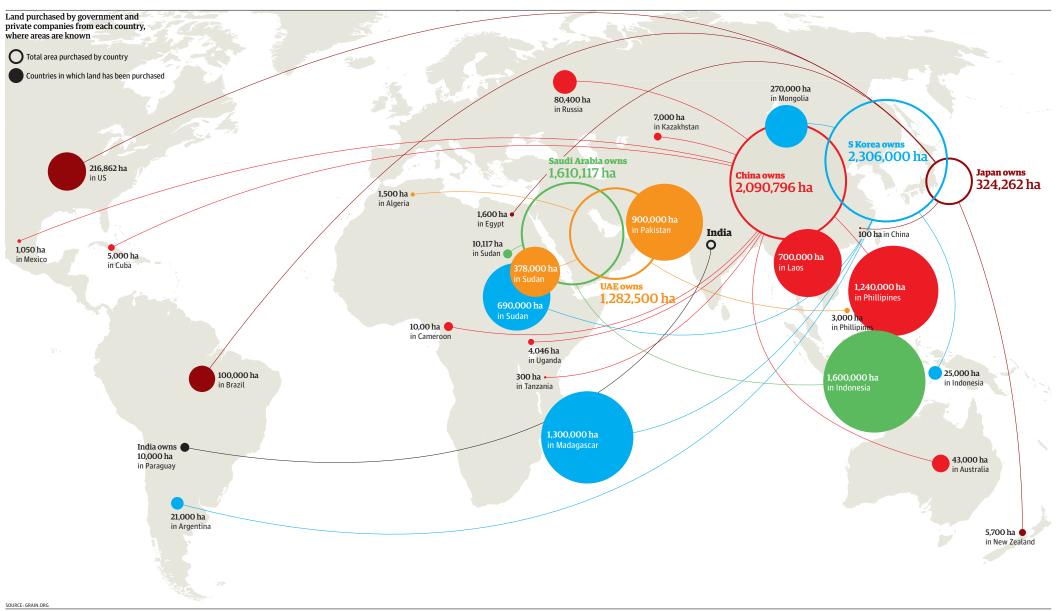
a di radi radi a di				
	High impacts	0	-	25
	High-medium impacts	25	-	50
	Medium-low impacts	50	-	75
	Low impacts	75	_	100 %

Mean species abundance (%)



World land grabs

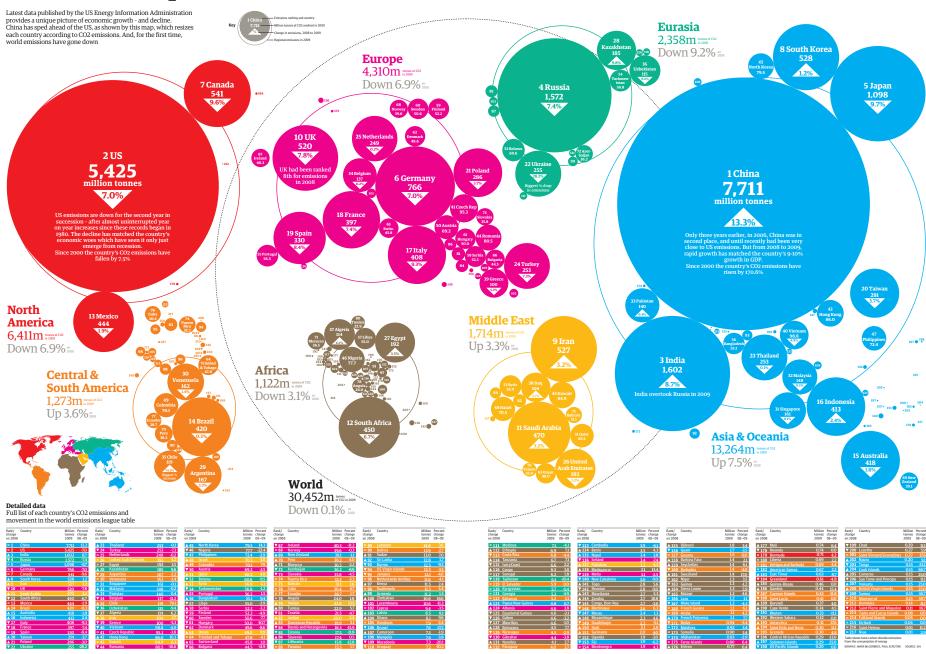




#### 3. Revealing with Images - COMPARISONS

carbon emissions per nation

#### An atlas of pollution: the world in carbon dioxide emissions

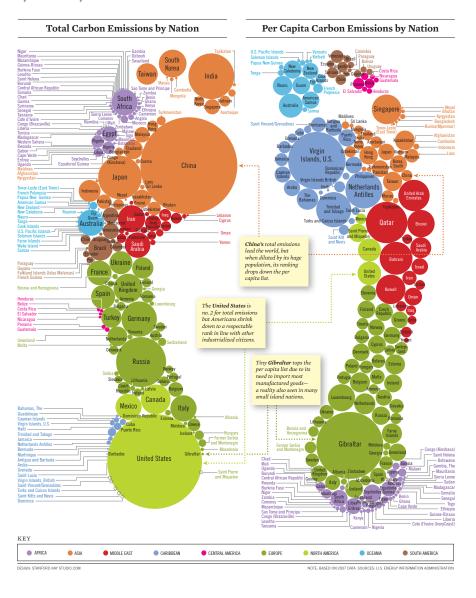


carbon emissions per nation

#### Miller-McCune

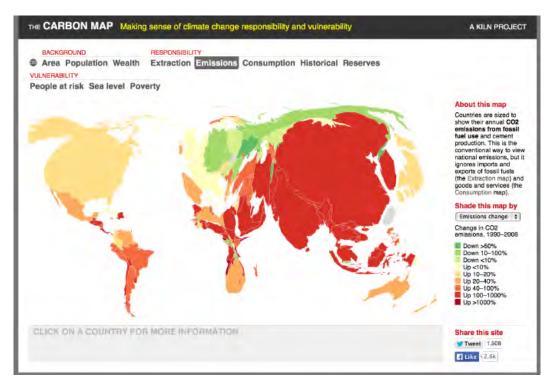
#### **Tracking Carbon Emissions**

A footprint comparison of total carbon dioxide emissions by nation and per capita shows there's plenty of room for smaller countries to reduce their carbon footprints. By Stanford Kay

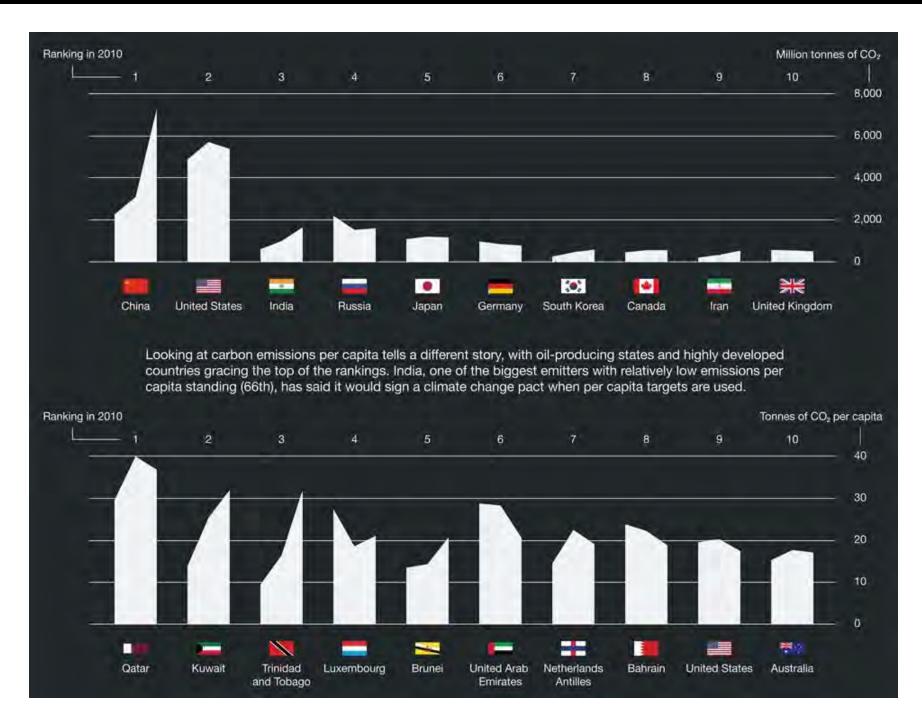


carbon emissions per nation - Co2 per person + emission change

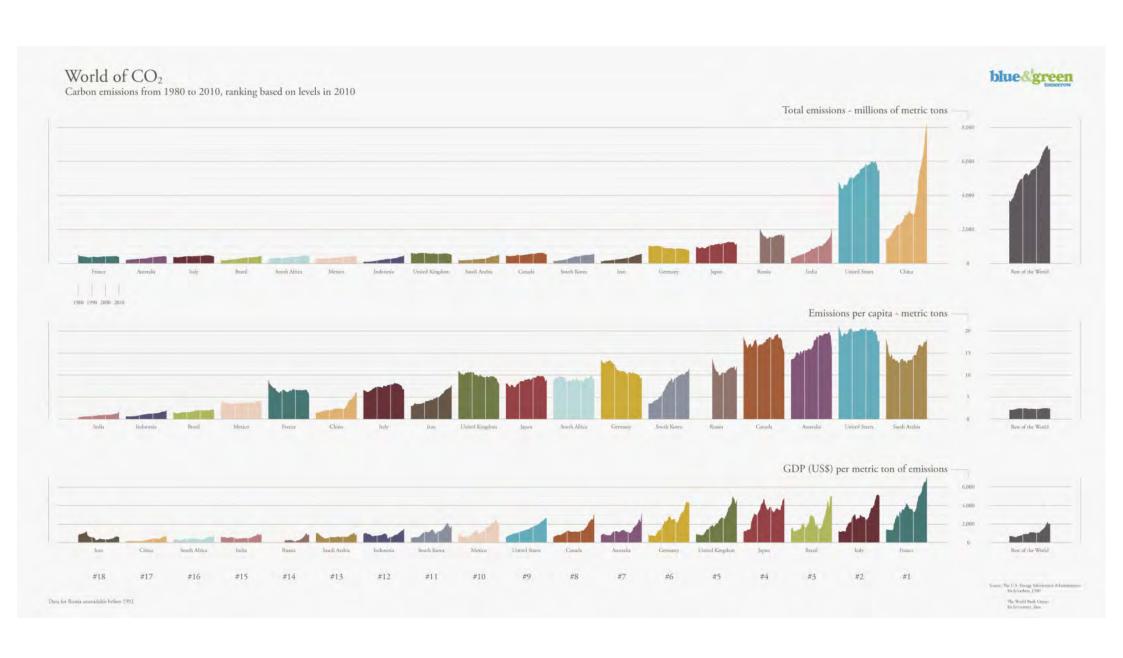




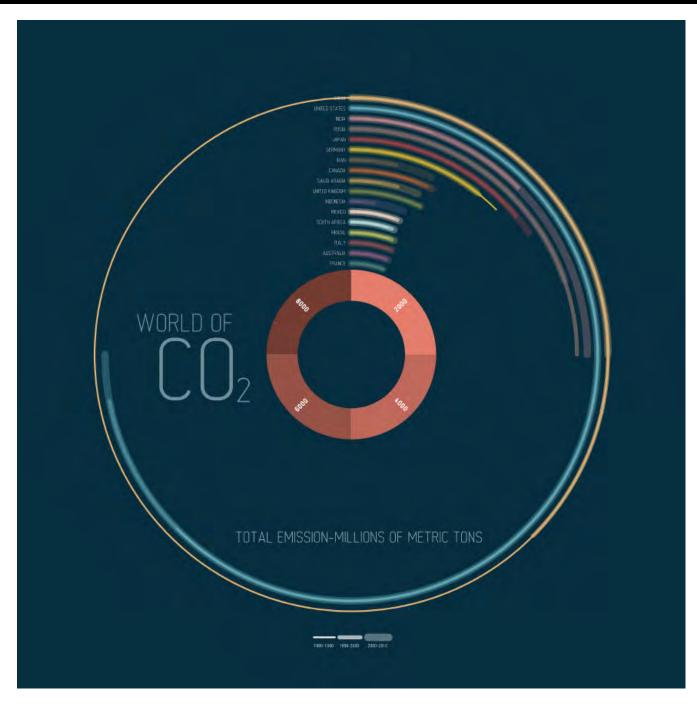
carbon emissions per nation



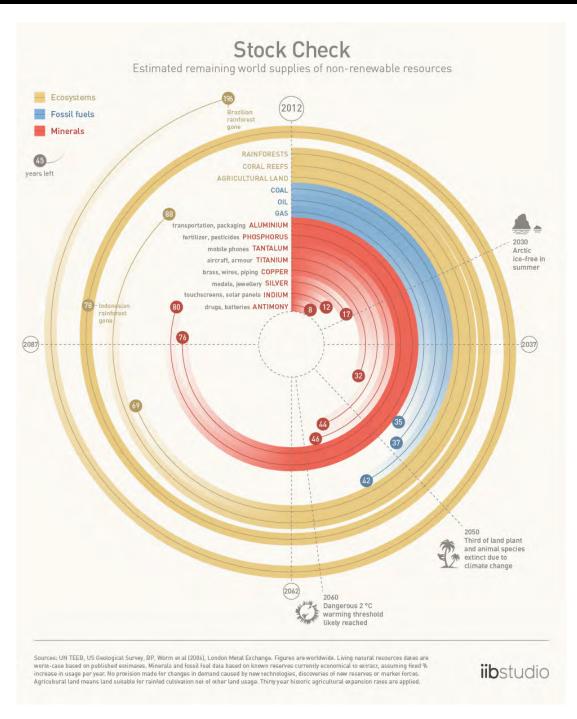
carbon emissions per nation



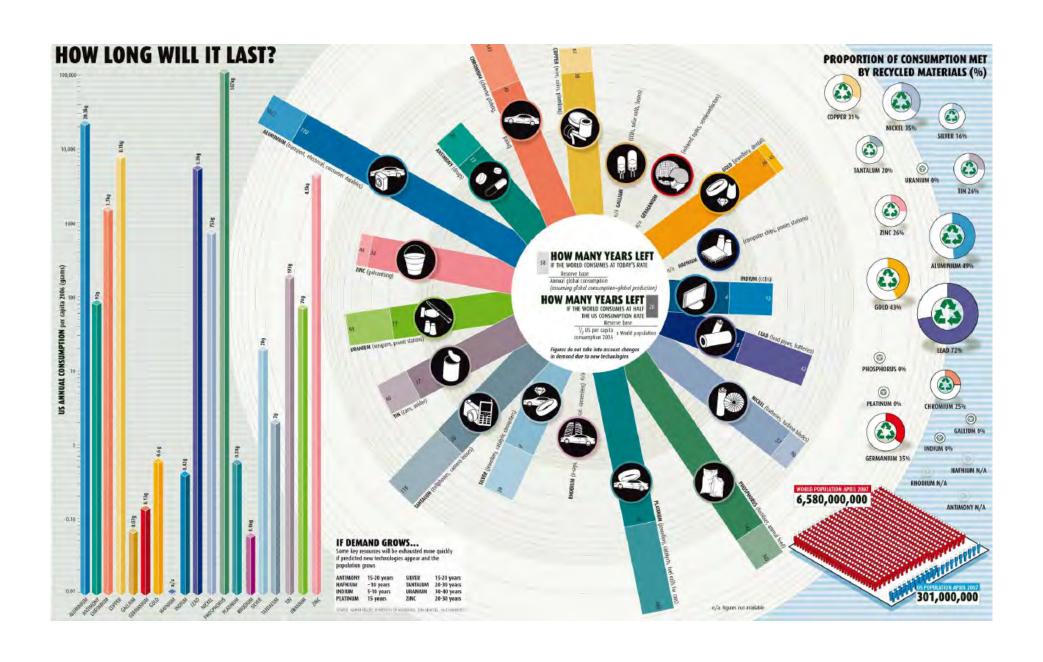
# 3. Revealing with Images - COMPARISONS carbon emissions per nation



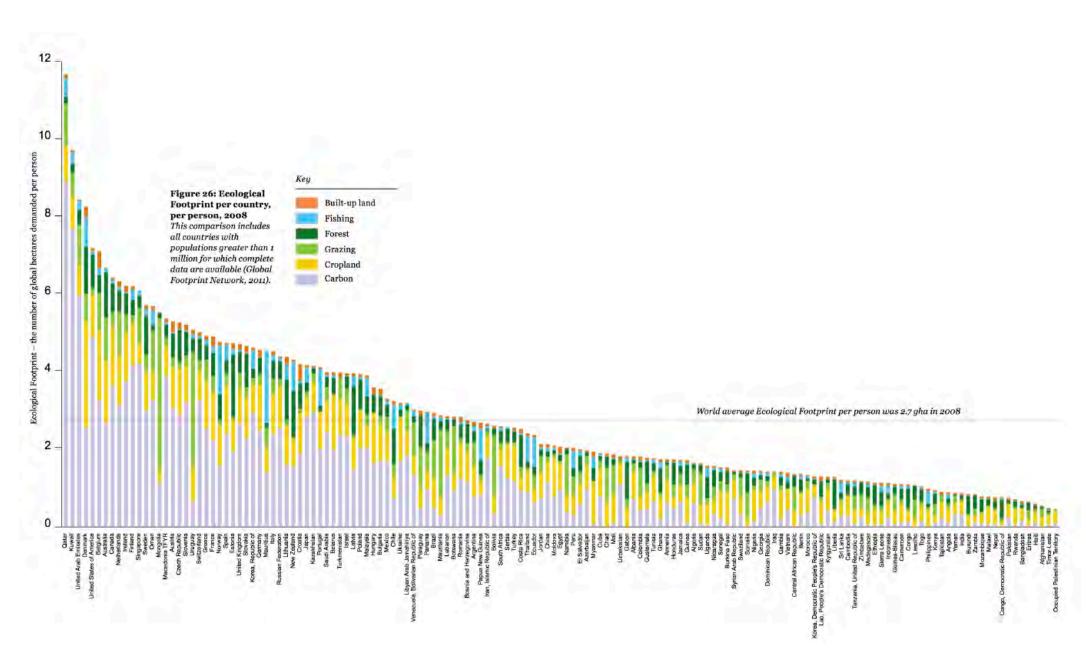
estimated remaining non-renewable resources



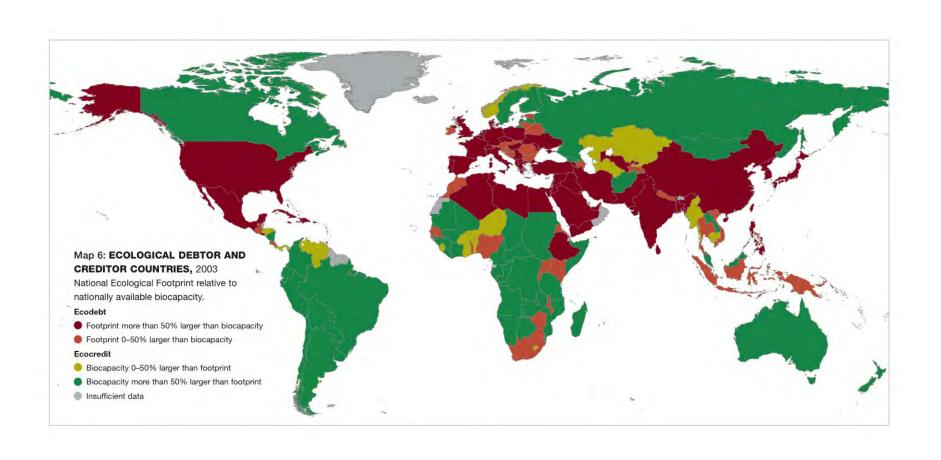
estimated remaining non-renewable resources



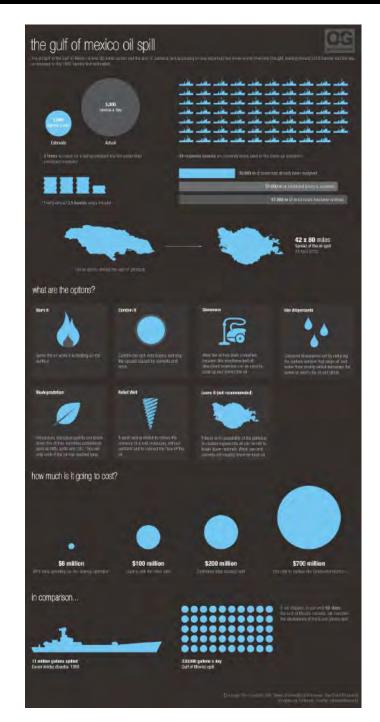
ecological footprint per nation

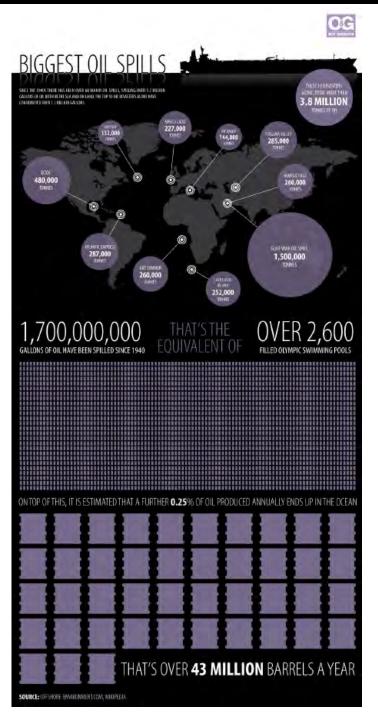


ecological footprint relative to biocapacity

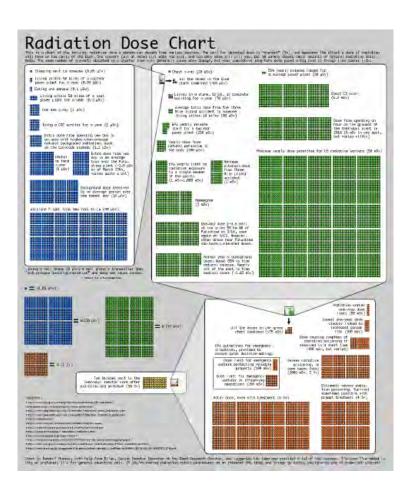


scale - large (oil spills)

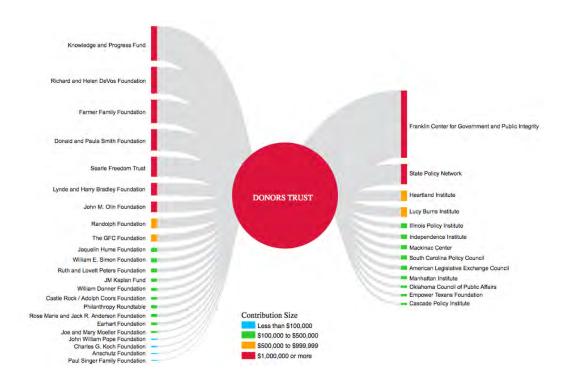


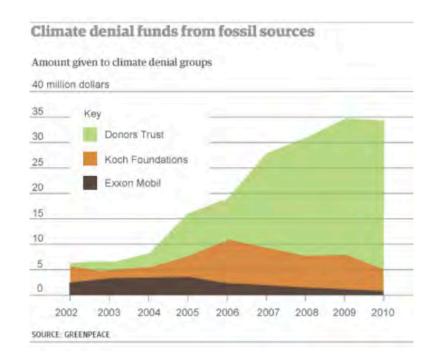


scale - small (radiation doses)



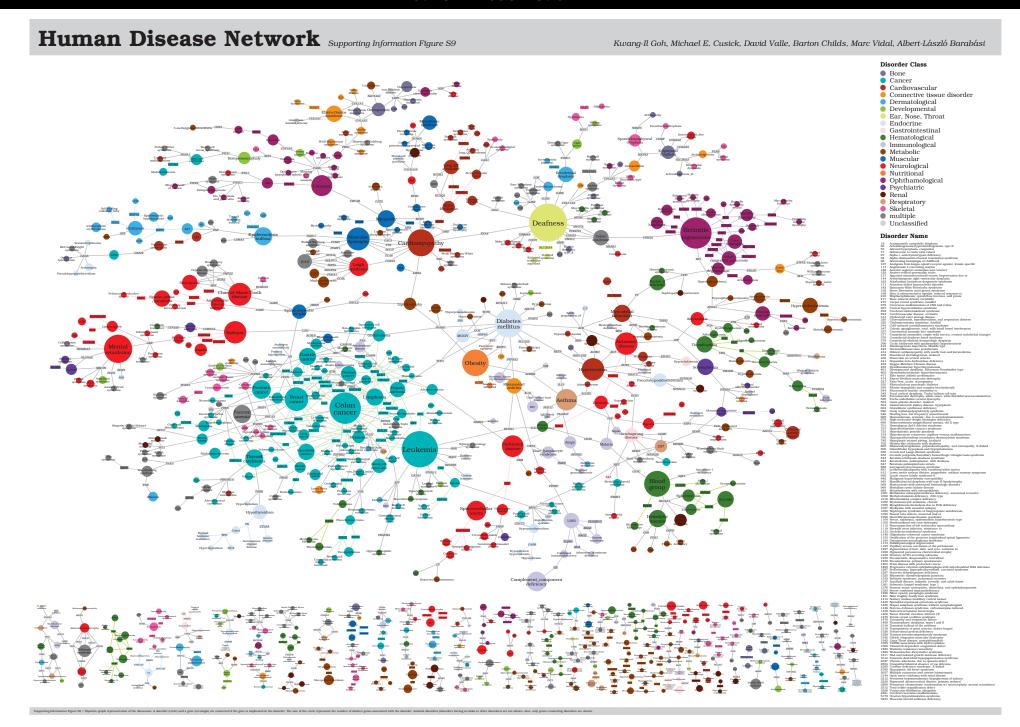
networks in the climate denial industry



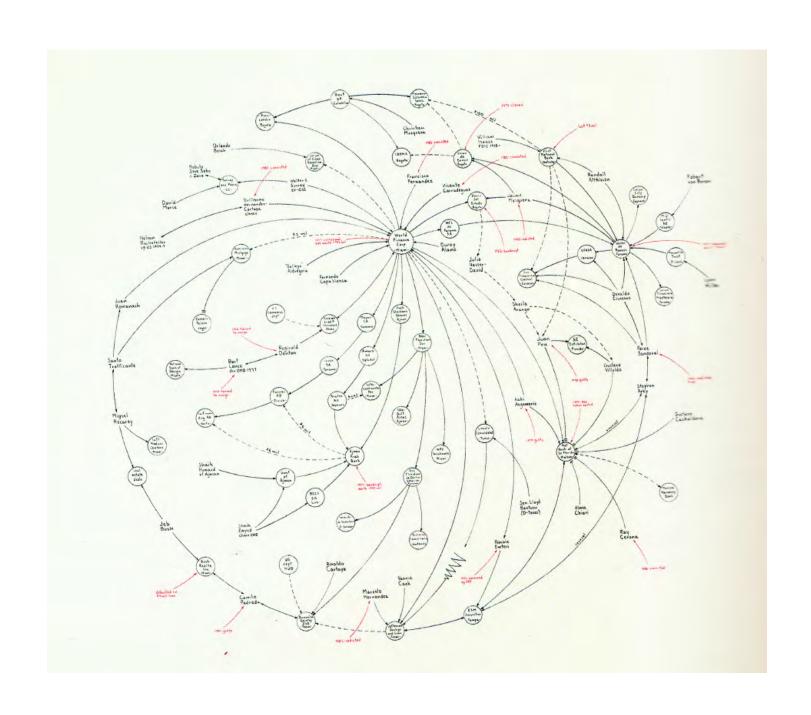


The Center for Public Integrity. Following the Donors Trust money trail. 2013.

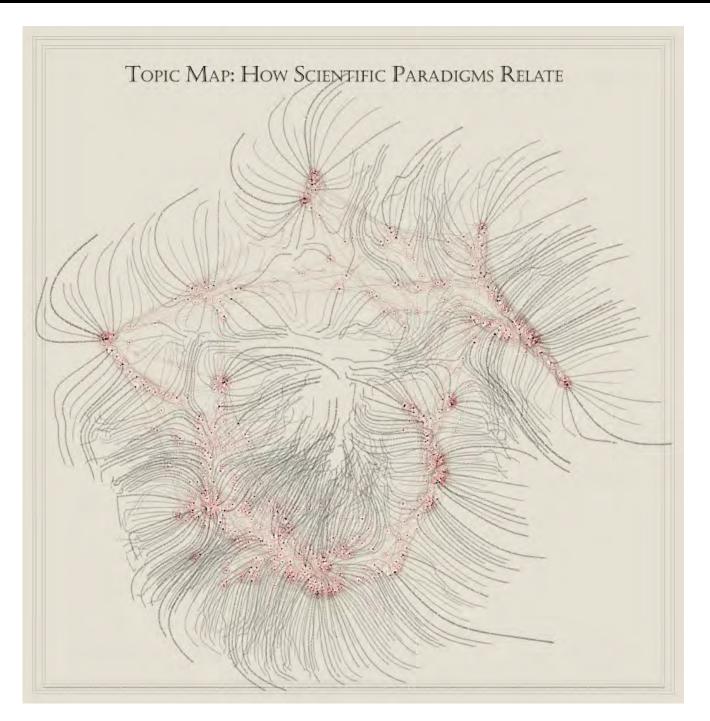
network visualization



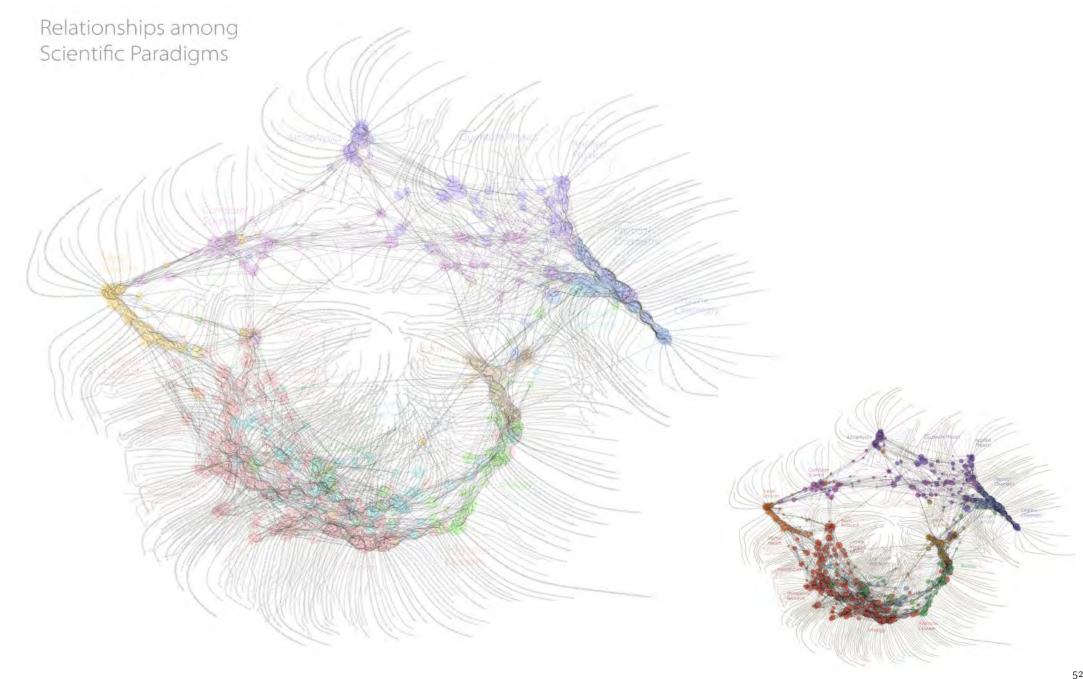
# 3. Revealing with Images - CONNECTIONS early network visualization - Mark Lombardi



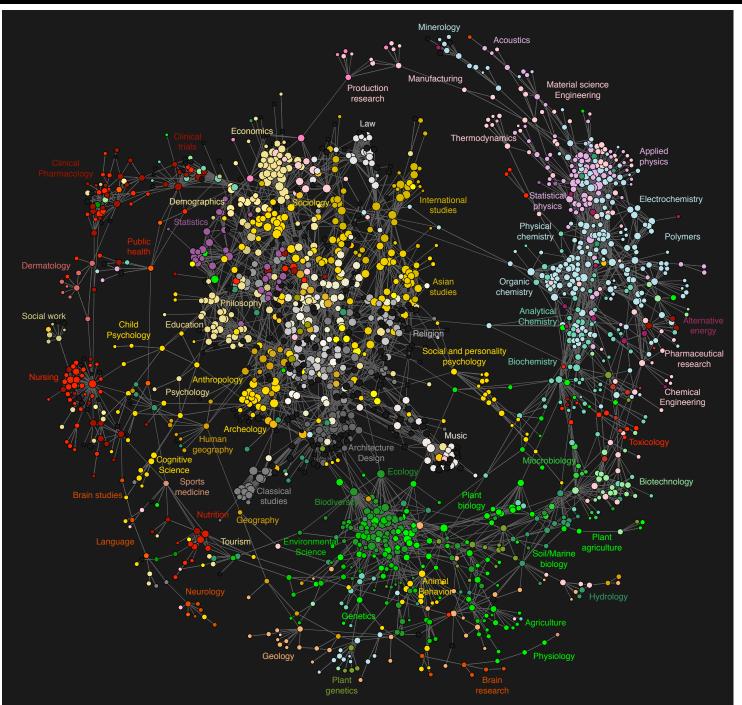
# 3. Revealing with Images - CONNECTIONS Map of Science



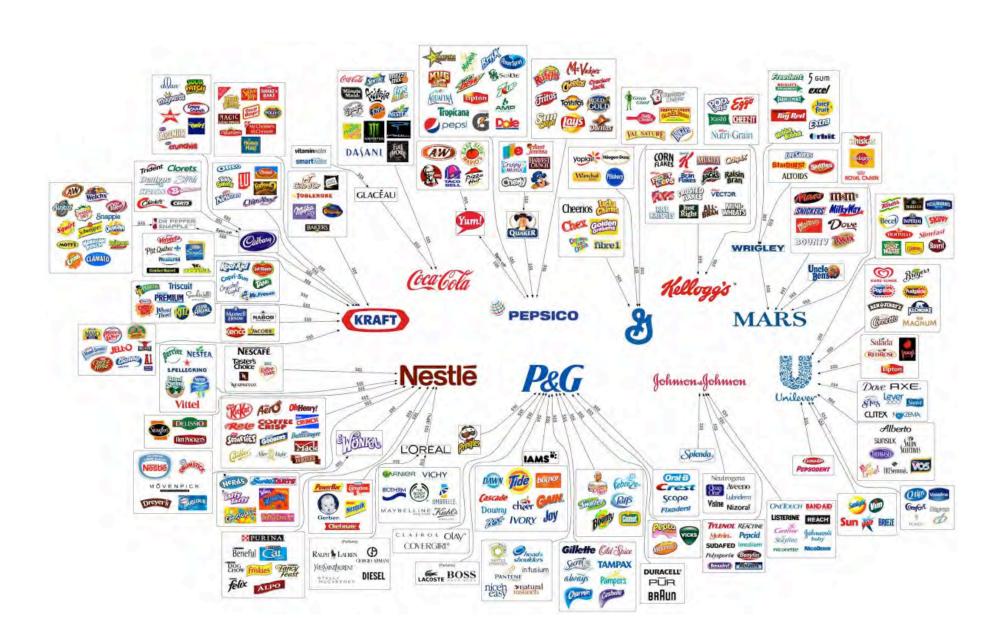
# 3. Revealing with Images - CONNECTIONS Map of Science



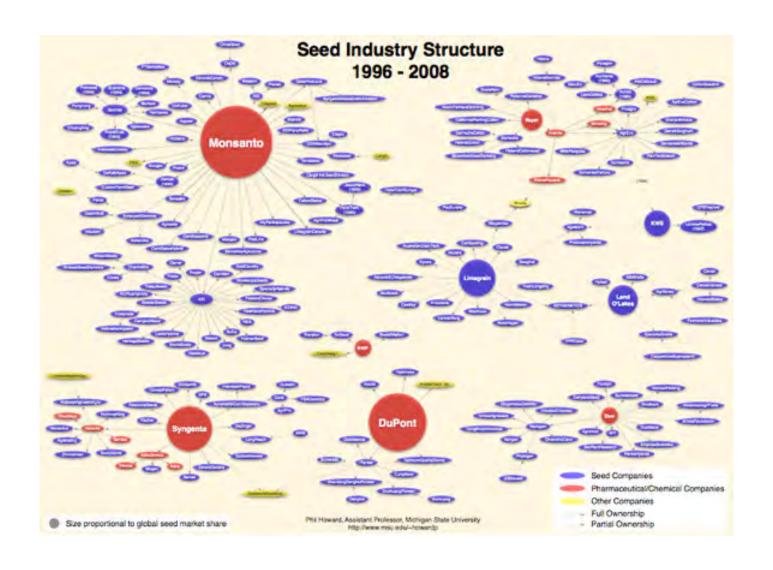
Map of Science



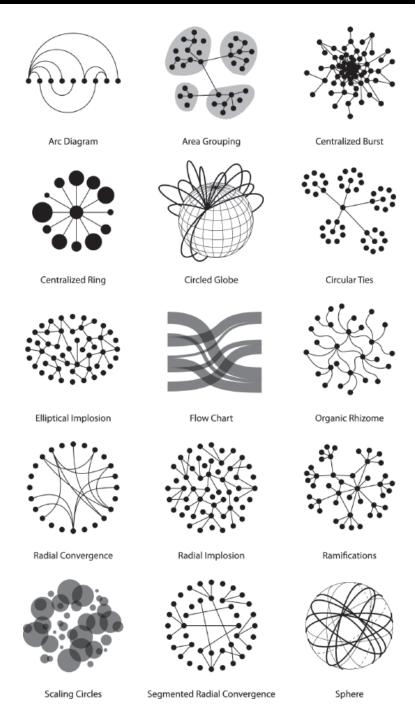
networks in the food system



networks in the seed system



network typology - Manual Lima



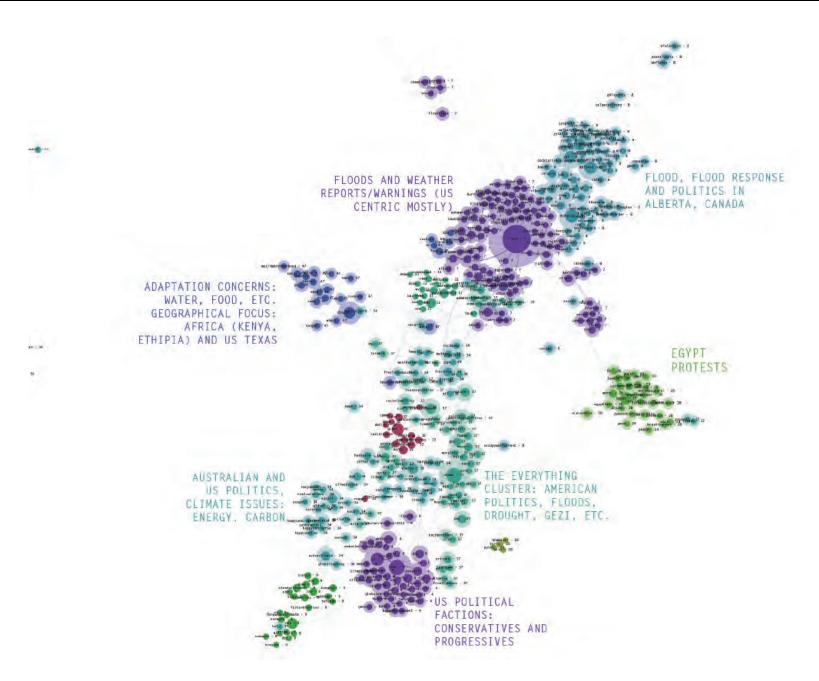
#### network typology - Pew Research Center

NETWORK TYPE GROUPS **EXAMPLES** POLARIZED CROWDS This type illus-Politics or divisive Divided trates different groups of Twitter users topics that display who discuss polarizing topics. They separate "echo often rely on different sources of chamber\* information and commonly do not structures interact with groups that disagree with them. TIGHT CROWDS This type captures 2-6 medium Hobbies, profes-Unified close communities, such as confersional topics, ences, professional topics and hobby conferences. No groups, where participants strongly outsiders, all connect to one another for informaparticipants are tion, ideas and opinions. members Fragmented BRAND CLUSTERS This type is Many small Brands, public formed around products and events, popular celebrities. These popular topics subjects attract large fragmented Twitter populations, generating mass interest, but little connectivity. COMMUNITY CLUSTERS These groups Many small and Global news Clustered are created around global news events medium events and popular topics. Communities form around multiple news sources. These community clusters are mostly disconnected from one another. In-Hub & Spoke BROADCAST NETWORK This type is 1 large, some News pundits and often triggered by news media outlets secondary media outlets. 5 and pundits who have loyal followers famous individuals who retweet them. These communities are often star-shaped, as little interaction exists among members of the audience. Out-Hub & Spoke SUPPORT NETWORK This type is 1 large, some Companies and created when companies, government secondary services with agencies or organizations respond to customer support complaints and customer requests. The company, or hub, account replies

to many disconnected users, creating

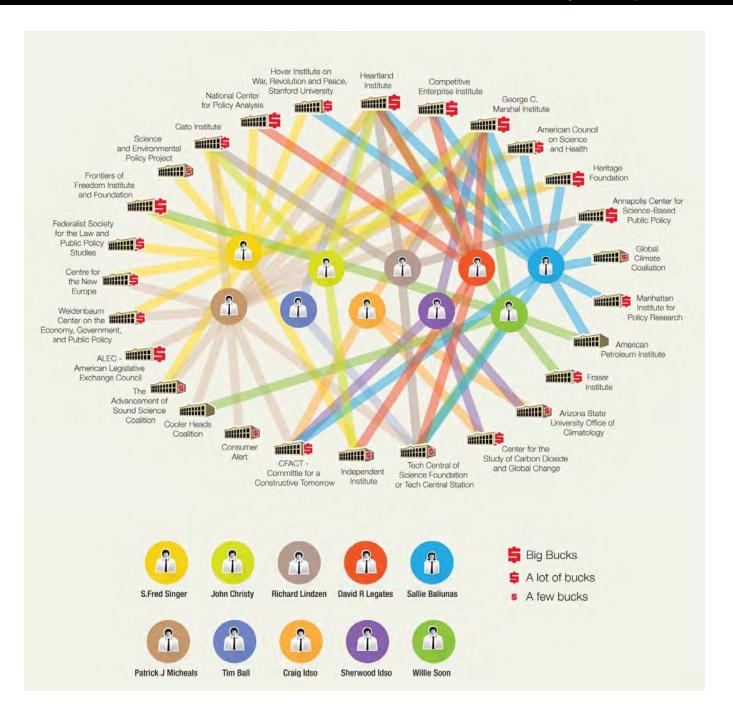
outward spokes.

climate discourse visualization using Twitter hashtags

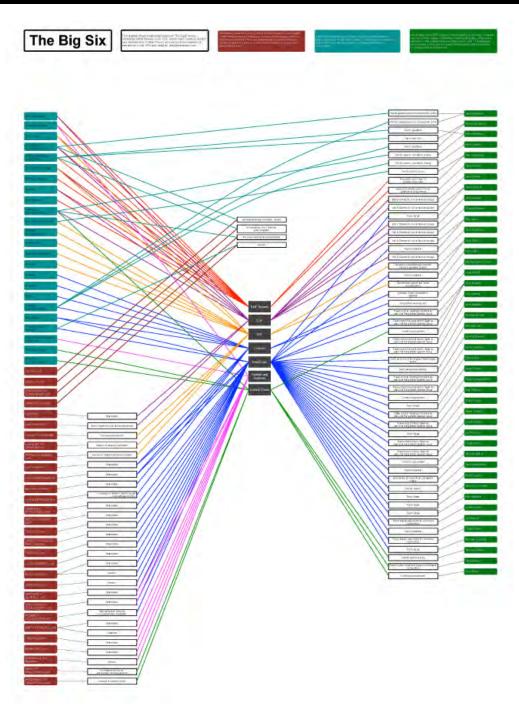


EMAPS (Electronic Maps to Assist Public Science). Created as part of the 7th annual DMI Summer School 24th June to 5th July 2013. Twitter hashtag clusters around the hashtag global warming/climate change. Depicted as network graph. DMI Twitter Capture and Analysis Tool (TCAT).

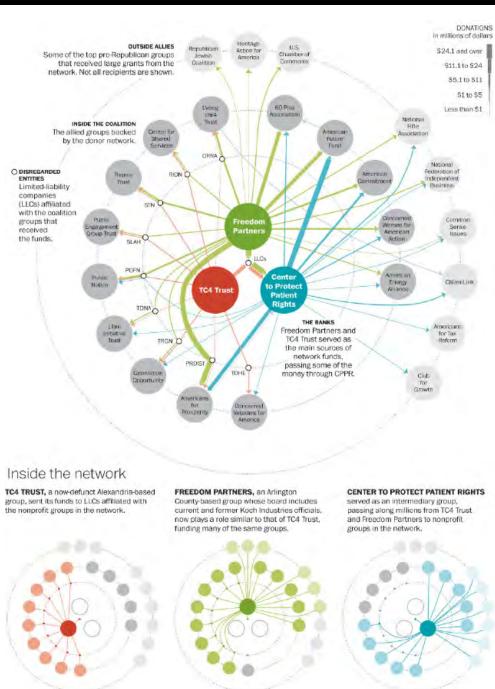
Exxon Secrets network visualization - by Greenpeace

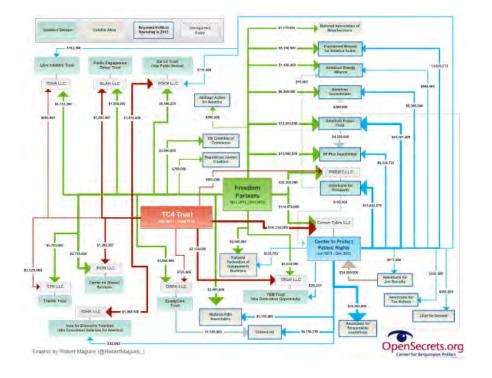


The Big Six - UK Energy companies, lobbyists and MPs



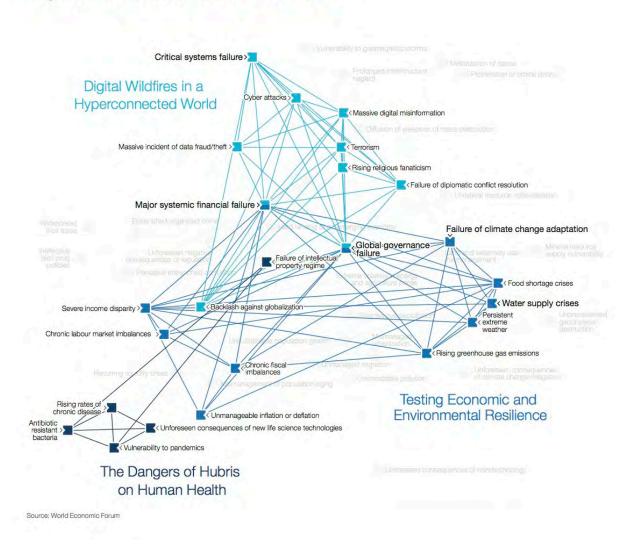
Koch network visualization + flow diagram- by OpenSecrets.org, Center for Responsive Politics



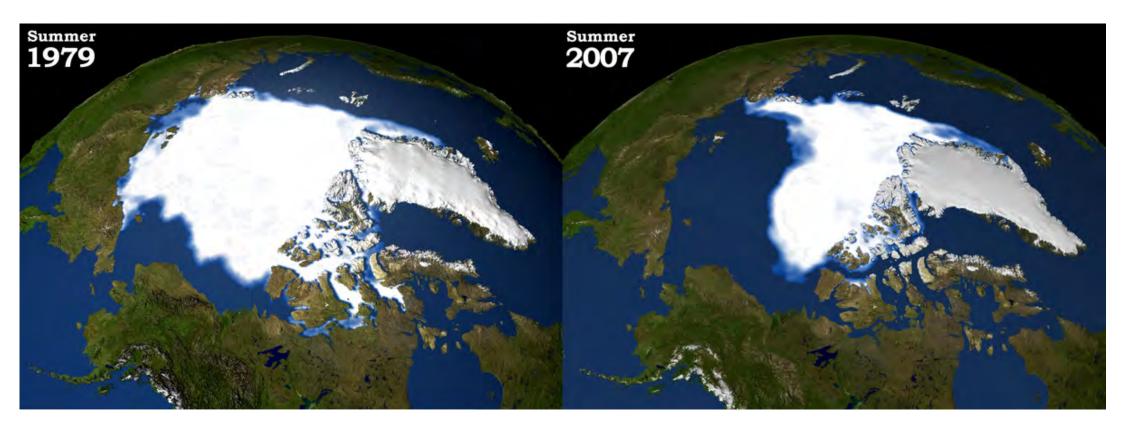


Global risksm, WEF

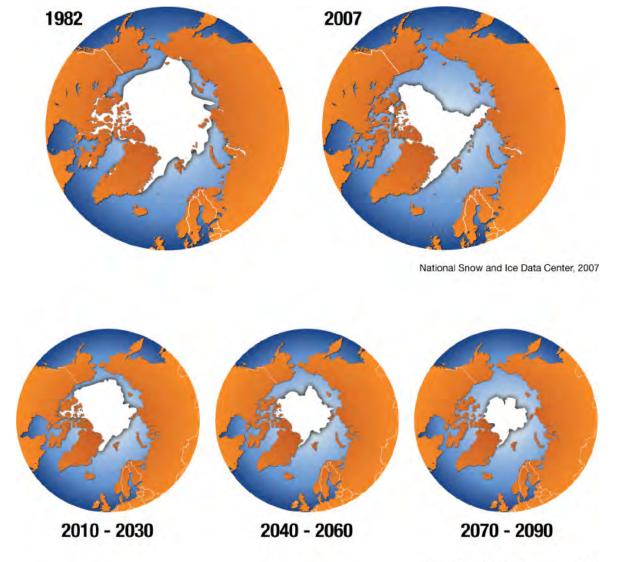
Figure 3: Global Risks Map 2013



# 3. Revealing with Images - CAUSALITY Artic ice caps

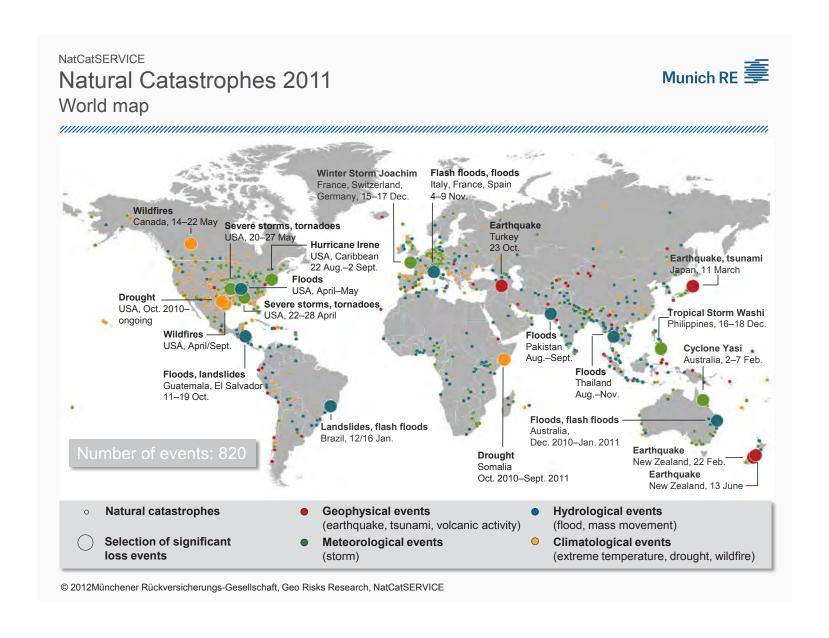


Artic ice cops

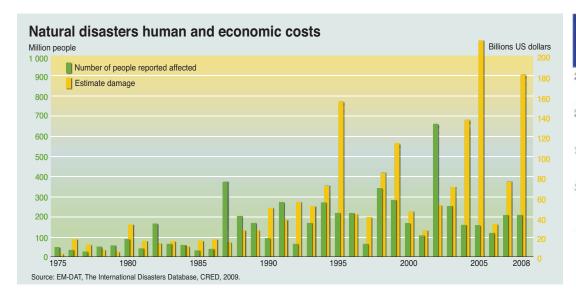


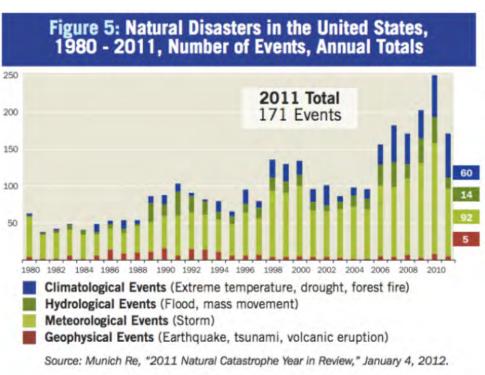
Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, 2004

Natural catastrophes 2011

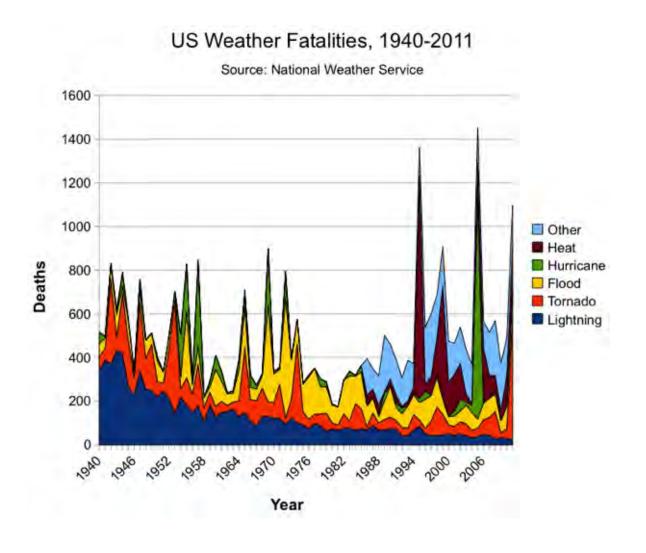


human and economic cost of disasters + natural disasters in the USA



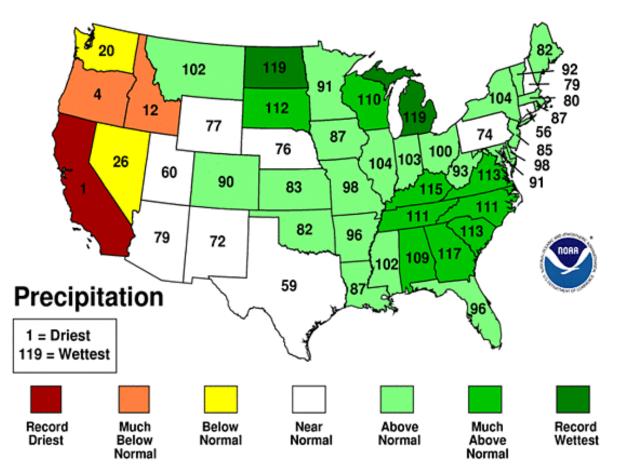


US weather fatalities, National Weather Service

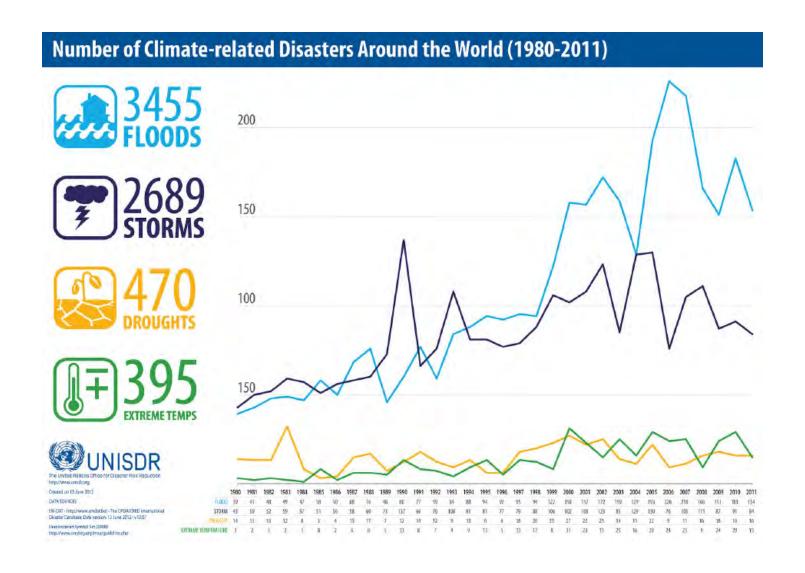


#### January-December 2013 Statewide Ranks

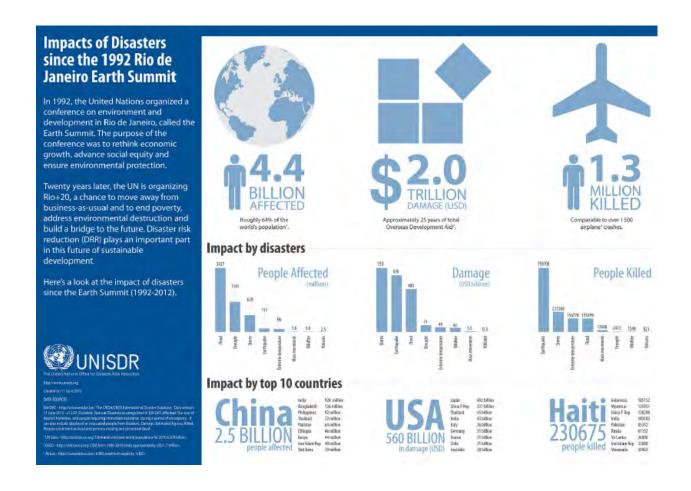
National Climatic Data Center/NESDIS/NOAA



number of disasters, UNISDR

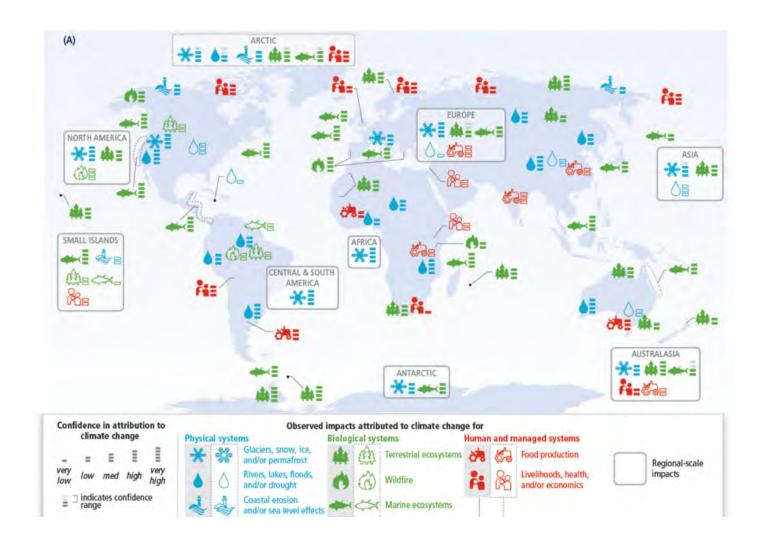


impact of disasters, UNISDR



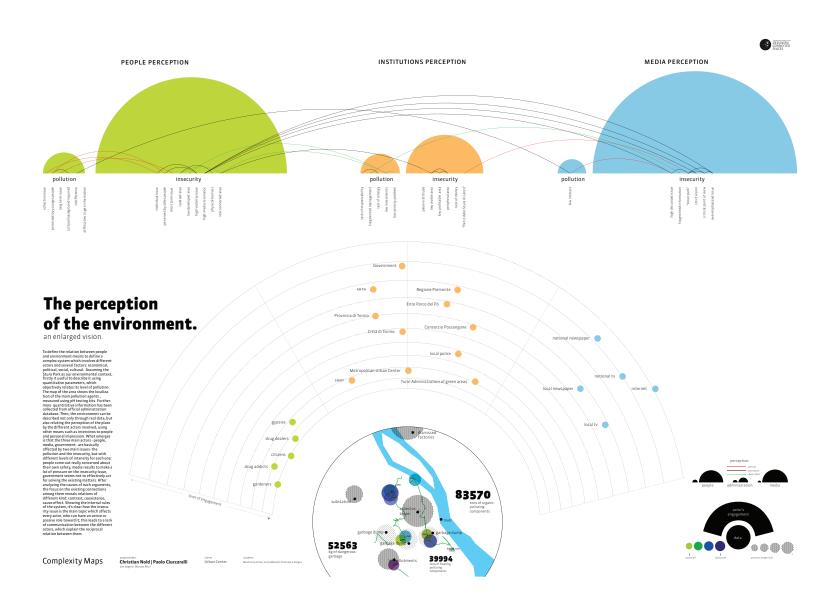
#### 3. Revealing with Images - COMPLEXITY

Mapping impacts, IPCC 2014



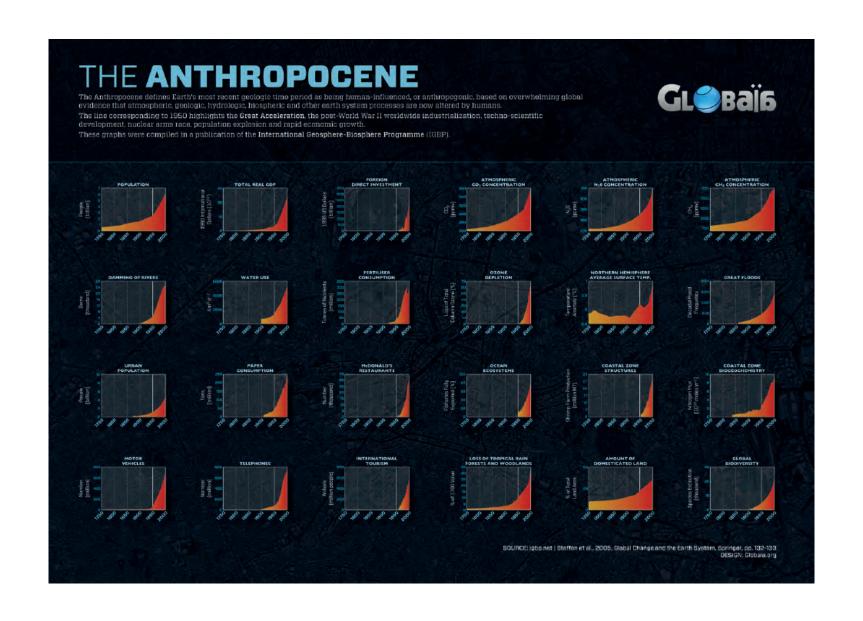
#### 3. Revealing with Images - COMPLEXITY

The perception of the Environment by Christian Nold and Paolo Ciuccarelli



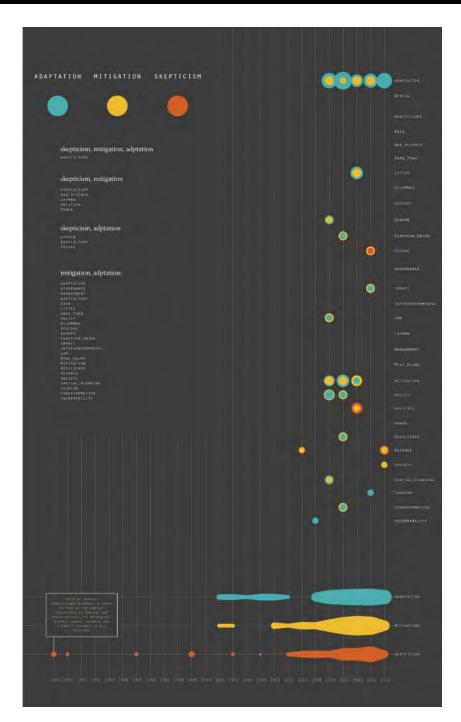
### 3. Revealing with Images - COMPLEXITY

the "great acceleration" - post-ww2 industrialization



### 3. Revealing with Images - COMPLEXITY

Climate change discourses - Bubble matrix visualization using keywords from book titles



Emaps Group. Climate change formats and keyword uptake. Depicted as bubble matrix. The visualization includes on the right side the keywords captured from book titles, and below the year that corresponds to each of the books from which the keywords were captured. Queries performed on 30 June 2013

#### 4. Concealing with Images - Fox News

#### Another Misleading Fox News Graphic: Temperature Edition

BLOG >>> March 25, 2013 5:33 PM EDT >>> JILL FITZSIMMONS



Fox News is suggesting that scientists were "wrong" about global warming by using misleading graphics to obscure the long-term global temperature rise.

On his Fox News show, Neil Cavuto suggested that the recent cold weather invalidates concerns about global warming, asking weather forecaster and climate misinformer Joe Bastardi, "How did we get this so wrong?" Cavuto aired a graphic which at first glance appears to show that temperatures are dramatically cooler now than they were last March. But the graphic compares apples to oranges: the map on the left shows whether temperatures were above or below average for the month of March, while the map on the right shows absolute minimum temperatures for last Wednesday, March 20.



If the temperature scale for the map on the right were applied to the map on the left, it would mean that temperatures were over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the upper Midwest in March 2012.

A more honest comparison would look at the same day in March 2012, showing a far less stark contrast:





### 4. Concealing with Images - Climate denial



# 4. Concealing with Images - Environmental crisis as spectacle Vogue Italia response to Deepwater Horizon





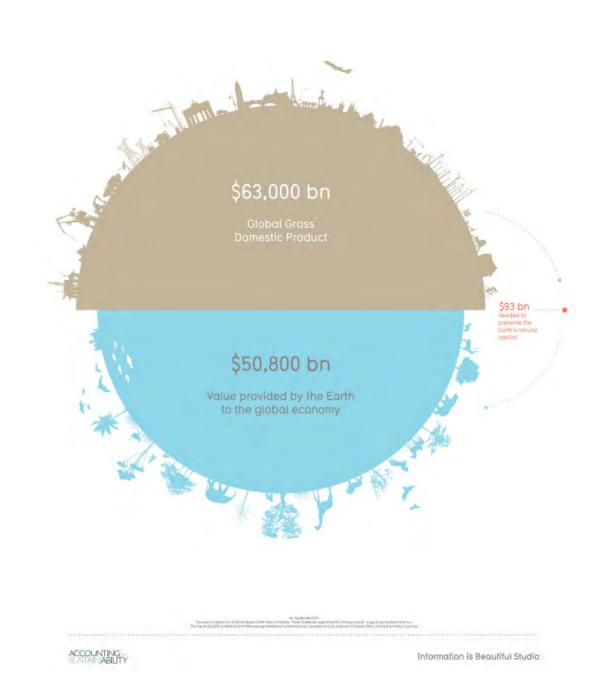


## 4. Concealing with Images - The Green Economy World Forum on Natural Capital





# 4. Concealing with Images - The Green Economy Costing the Earth [Information is Beautiful Studio] (2011)

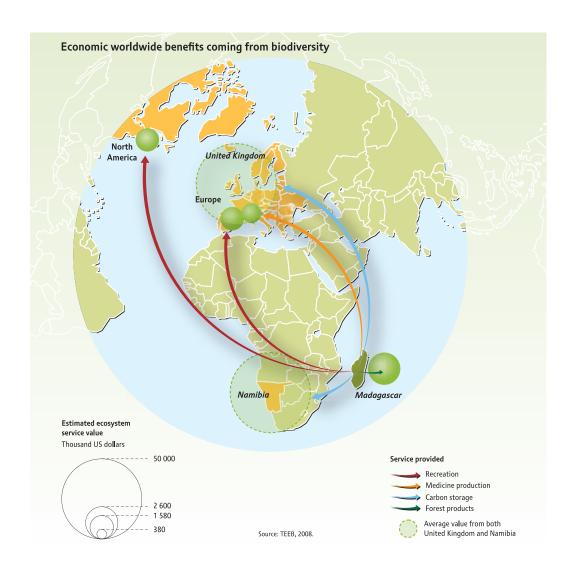


### 4. Concealing with Images - The Green Economy

Costing the Earth Revised (2013)



### 4. Concealing with Images - The Green Economy



### 4. Concealing with Images - The Green Economy

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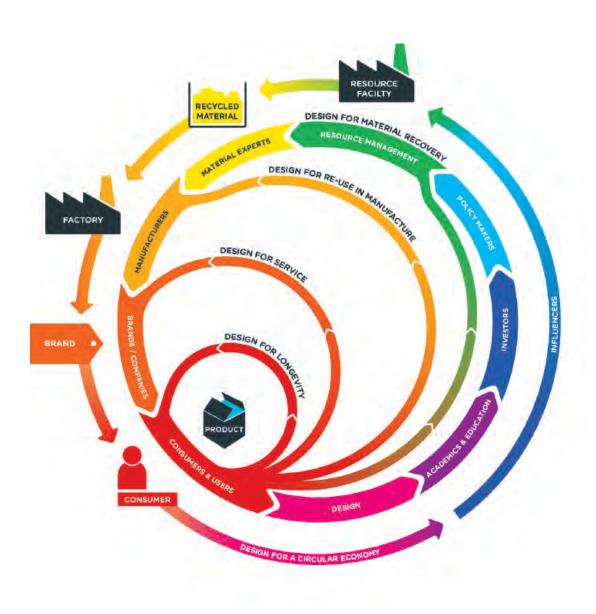


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### 5. Conclusion: A Role for Design

Mapping the design for a circular economy, The Four Design Models - by The Great Recovery at the RSA



### Dr. Joanna Boehnert

Joanna.Boehnert@colorado.edu





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