DATA STORYTELLING

A NEW HOPE FOR YOUR DATA

Katharina Covadonga Clören

Data Community Day Austria, 23.01.2026

KATHARINA COVADONGA CLÖREN



- Data Analytics Consultant @ORAYLIS GmbH since 2023

- **My focus topics:**
  - MS Power BI
  - MS Fabric
  - Data Storytelling

- **My favourite topics outside of work:**
  - Movement & health
  - Baking & food
  - Travelling


TATOOINE

NABOO















AGENDA



TOPIC 01

Why Storytelling?

The science behind the force

TOPIC 02

Anatomy of a data story

Understanding the ingredients

TOPIC 03

From Analyst to Data Storyteller

Moving from analysis to meaning

TOPIC 04

From dashboards to journeys

Applying storytelling principles in Power BI

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AFTER NOURISHMENT, SHELTER AND COMPANIONSHIP,

STORIES ARE THE THING WE NEED THE MOST IN THE WORLD.

Philip Pullman

"WHERE SHOULD WE HAVE LUNCH?"



Parking

Food choices

Prices

Service

RESULT

Emotions don’t oppose reason — they enable it.

They help our brain navigate options and reach decisions.

STORYTELLING

CORTISOL
OXYTOCIN



SYSTEM 1

Fast
Emotional
Automatic
Intuitive

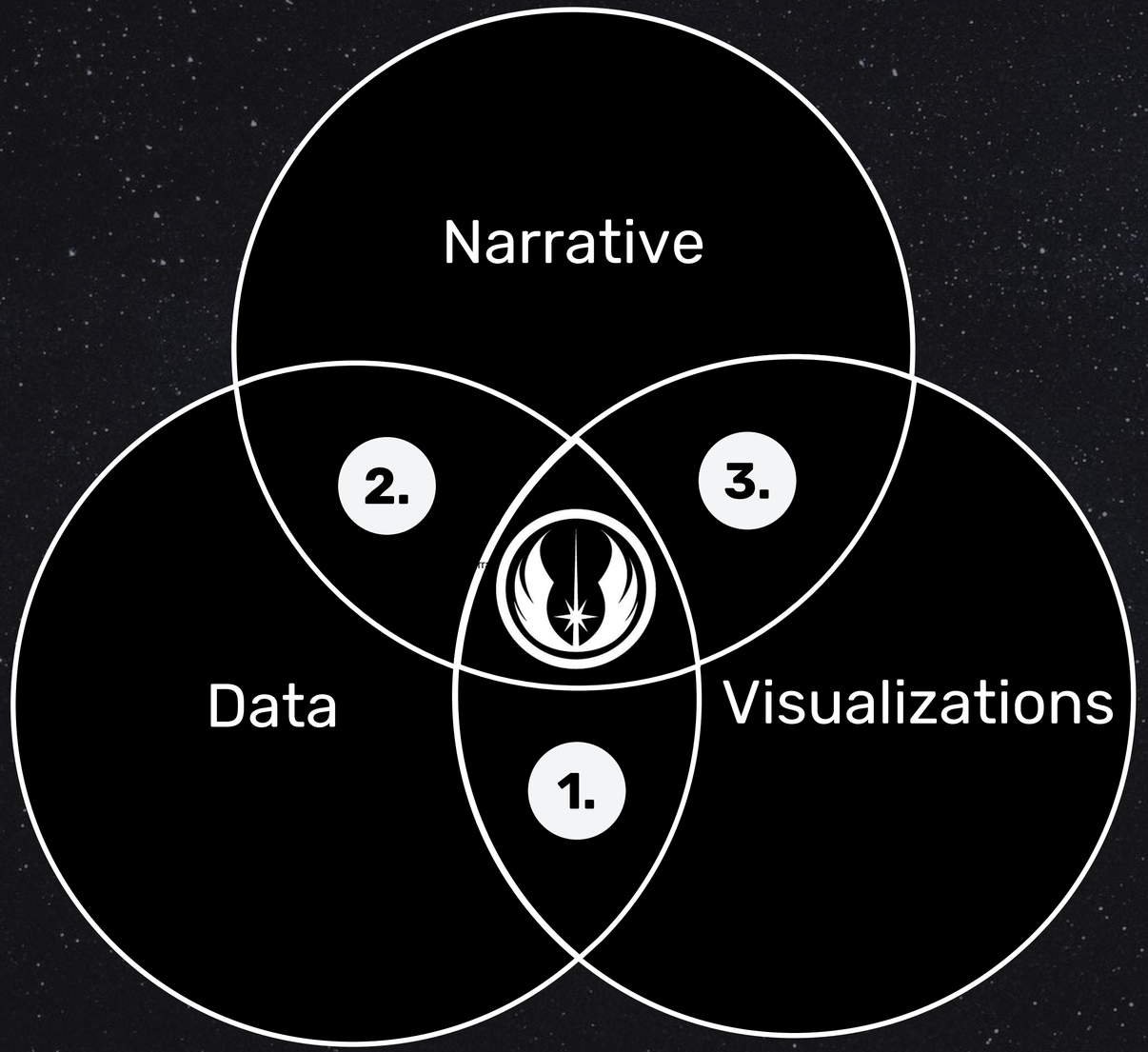




SYSTEM 2

Slow
Logical
Controlled
Conscious

WHAT IS DATA STORYTELLING?



Overlaps:

1. **Explanation:** enables understanding and insights
2. **Interpretation**: provides context
3. **Engangement**: increases attention

Benefits backed by studies:

- Data becomes easier to understand and remember
- Increases trust in data

WHAT IS DATA STORYTELLING?



Raw data



Modelled data



Analysed data



Visualised data



Data told with a story



Dykes, Brent, LinkedIn, 10th of December 2025

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ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

DATA

DATA

- Completely built on data
- Insights are traceable back to the data
- Built on trustworthy, high-quality and relevant sources

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

DATA	CLEAR CENTRAL INSIGHT

CLEAR CENTRAL INSIGHT

- One clear main point
- “**surprising** realization that **changes** how we see a situation/problem/opportunity”
- Questions to evaluate insights:
  - Why should your audience **care**?
  - What should they **do** about it?
  - What is the potential **business impact**?

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

DATA

CLEAR CENTRAL INSIGHT

CONTEXT (THE "WHY")

CONTEXT (THE "WHY")

- Explains **why** something matters, not just what happened
- **Exploratory** vs. **explanatory** focus
  - Exploratory: open-ended analysis, many questions
  - Explanatory: focused story, one clear message
- Guides interpretation for the audience

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

DATA

CLEAR CENTRAL INSIGHT

CONTEXT (THE "WHY")

STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE

- Unfolds the story step by step
- Builds toward the central insight
- **Presentations**:
  slide by slide
- **Reports**:
  layout, visual hierarchy and emphasis

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

DATA

CLEAR CENTRAL INSIGHT

CONTEXT (THE "WHY")

STRUCTURE

DRAMATIC FOUNDATION

DRAMATIC FOUNDATION

- **Setting**:
  Timeframes, baselines, historical development…
- **Characters**:
  Customers, employees, users…
- Turn data story into something **relatable**

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

DATA

CLEAR CENTRAL INSIGHT

CONTEXT (THE "WHY")

STRUCTURE

DRAMATIC FOUNDATION

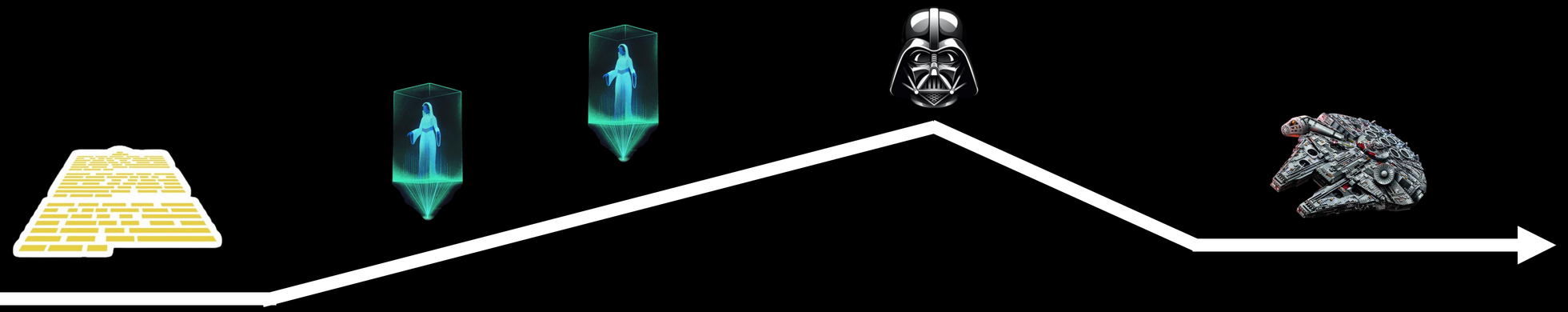
VISUAL ELEMENTS

VISUAL ELEMENTS

- Humans are visual thinkers
- Elements like charts, icons, images and metaphors
- **Simple, well-known chart types** work best

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

STRUCTURE



1	2	3	4
Context & Hook	Rising action	AHA-Moment	CTA & resolution

ANATOMY OF A DATA STORY

STRUCTURE

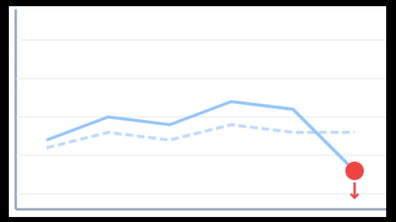


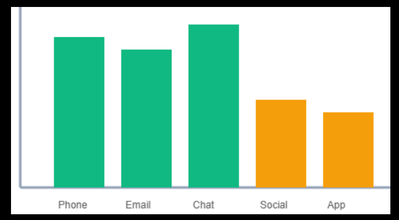


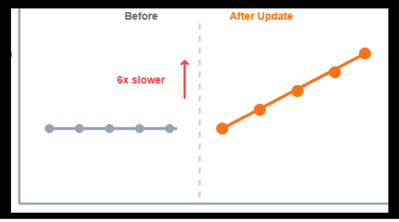


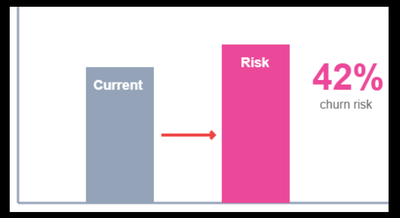


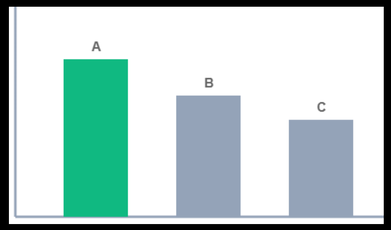












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The science behind the force

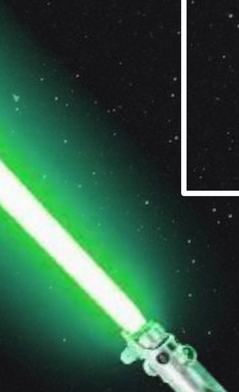
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HOW TO BECOME A STORYTELLER

1.
EVALUATING CONTEXT
(WHO, WHAT, HOW)



EVALUATING CONTEXT

WHO – KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE TYPES

Role \ Focus	Business	Technical
Executive	**Strategic - Commercial** (long-term, high impact decisions)	**Strategic - Technological** (long-term, high impact decisions)
Non-Executive	**Operational** (medium-term, processes)	**Tactical** (short-term, execution)

SITUATIONAL REFERENCE

- Topic knowledge ⟷ Data expertise
- Seniority level ⟷ Expectations
- State of mind ⟷ Timing constraints
- Audience size & mix ⟷ Your relationship

EVALUATING CONTEXT

WHAT – CLARIFY MESSAGE & BUSINESS CONTEXT

- What should the audience **know** or **do**?
- Why should they **care**?
- Understand the **business context**
  - Strategy
  - Goals
  - Constraints
  - Priorities

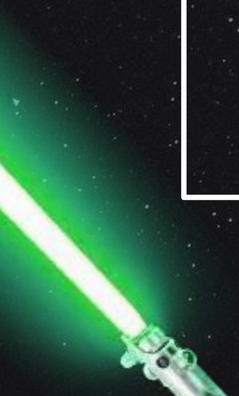
HOW – CHOOSE THE RIGHT TONE & STORY MECHANISM

- **Format** matters
  - Live presentation → narrative & pacing
  - Written update → self-explanatory
- **Tone** matters
- **Anticipate resistance**

HOW TO BECOME A STORYTELLER

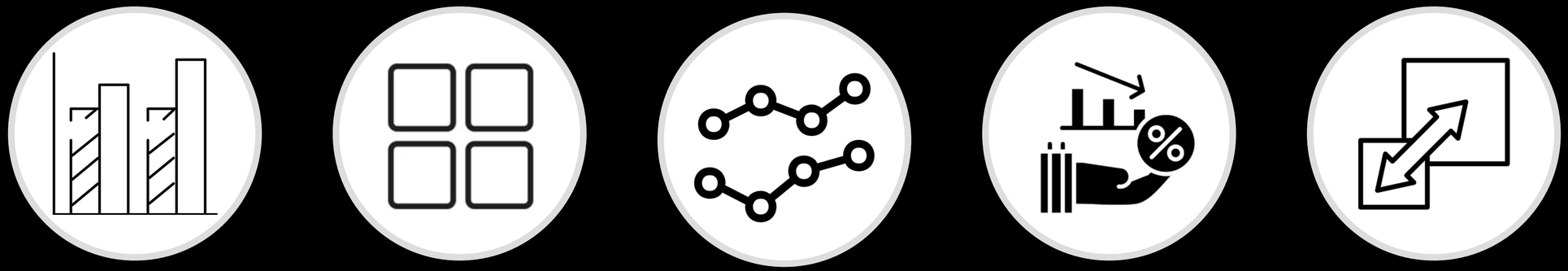
1.
EVALUATING CONTEXT
(WHO, WHAT, HOW)

2.
IDENTIFYING
INSIGHTS



IDENTIFYING INSIGHTS

- **Sources**:
  - tracking reports
  - AI tools like Copilot or Claude
- **AI** can easily spot unusual aspects; **humans** decide whether it matters
- Practice looking at your data through different **context lenses**



HOW TO BECOME A STORYTELLER

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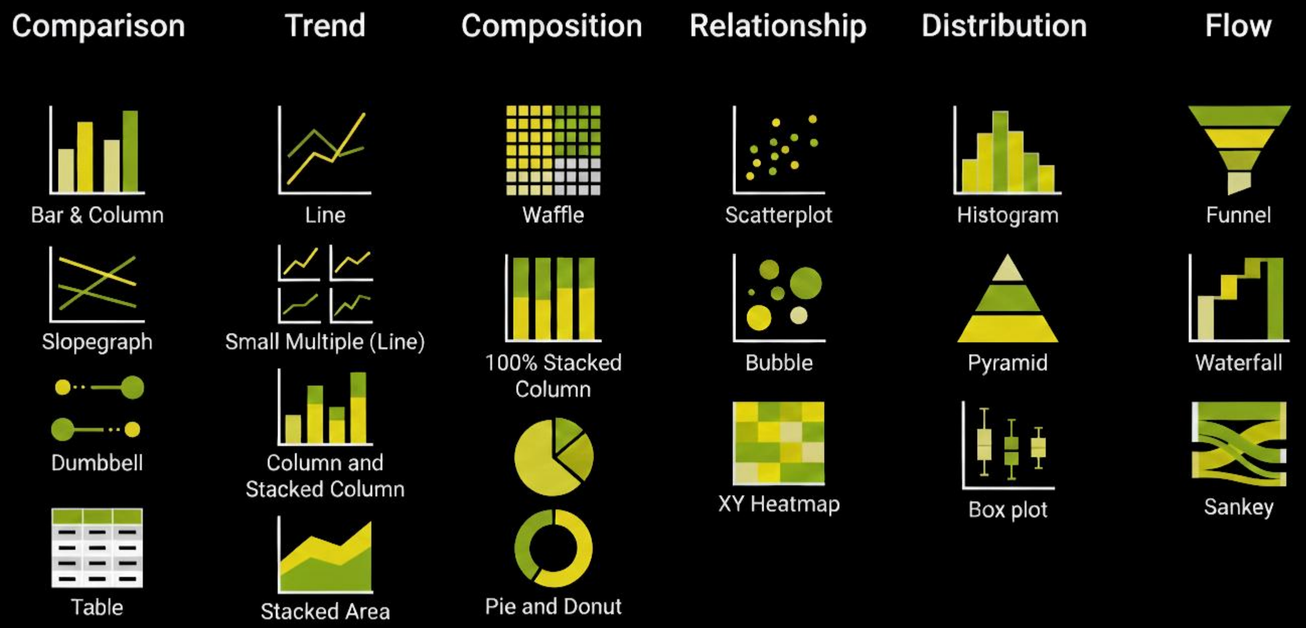
2.
IDENTIFYING
INSIGHTS

3.
CHOOSING
THE RIGHT VISUALS



CHOOSING THE RIGHT VISUALS

- Think in **chart categories**



Your audience should **never** have to **wrestle** with **how a visual is displayed** to **understand** what you're trying to say!

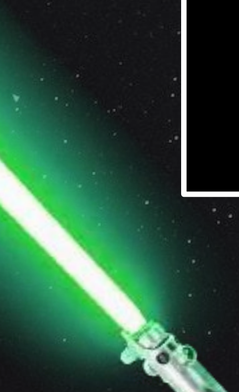
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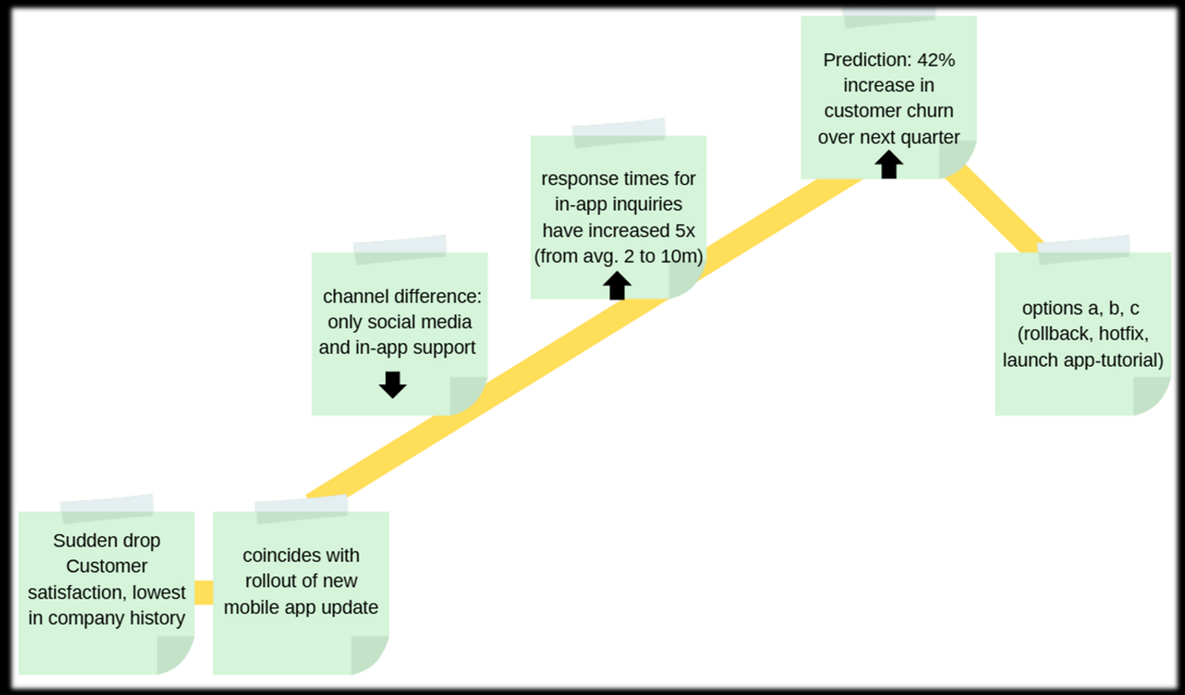
3.
CHOOSING
THE RIGHT VISUALS

4.
CREATE
STORYLINES



CREATE STORYLINES

- **Storyboarding**
  - **Before** opening PPT / PBI
  - **Visual outline** of your story
  - **Low-tech** usually works best
  - Start with the **end** in mind
  - Helps **uncovering gaps** and **missing context** early on



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DECISIONS

PERSUASION

CHANGE

THE FORCE IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE

RECAP



01
Why storytelling?

- Storytelling aligns with how our brains process information
- Data storytelling is the combination of data, visuals and narrative

02
Anatomy of a data story

- Strong data stories combine context, insight and structure
- Facts become powerful when they answer “why” and “what next”

03
From analyst to storyteller

- The role shifts from reporting numbers to guiding interpretation
- Knowing your audience and structuring the story is as important as the analysis

04
From reports to journeys

- Dashboards don’t have to tell stories — but they can support them
- Applying storytelling principles turns reports into guided journeys

THANKS FOR ATTENDING

MAY THE FORCE OF DATA STORYTELLING BE WITH YOU

Feedback

Katharina Covadonga Clören

Data Community Day Austria, 23.01.2026

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