



Using Canva to Create Graphics

Bruin Sports Analytics

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1 Introduction

With Bruin Sports Analytics' growing social media presence, we have increased our focus on creating content specifically for our social media accounts. The purpose of this shift is twofold. First, it helps increase our club's visibility through graphics that are more accessible to the general audience, as opposed to our data journalism articles and research papers, which can be quite statistically complex. And second, providing our members, especially those who aren't that experienced, with an opportunity to hone their data visualization skills and showcase their creativity.

This guideline will cover how to create a graphic using [Canva](#). While there are dozens of such websites and software out there, I would recommend using Canva as it offers a wide-range of templates that can be used to make everything ranging from presentations to infographics. However, you are free to use any other graphic design software for creating your social media graphics.

2 Collecting and Presenting Data

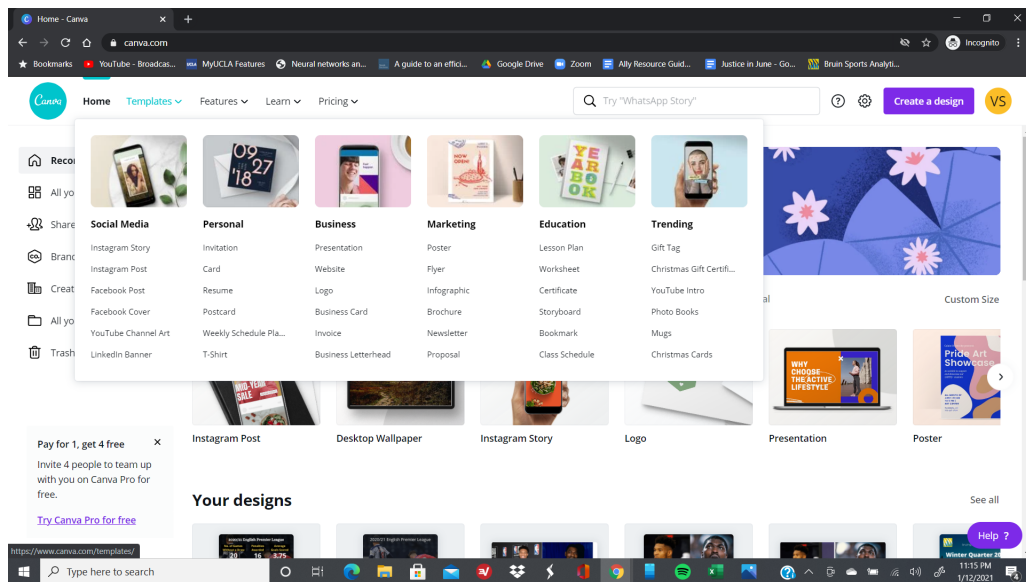
The aim of our social media posts is to create graphics which present simple and interesting data in visually aesthetic ways. As such, doing complex data analyses and creating intricate plots isn't the priority. However, that doesn't mean that you should take any shortcuts as we expect these posts to hold up to the same standards as our articles and research papers. Be sure to use data sources that are reliable and be wary of presenting data in a way that might mislead the audience. For more details on how to collect, clean, and parse data, check out the [Data Journalism Guidelines](#) on the [Resources](#) page of our website.

A few other things to keep in mind while making your graphics are: choose a topic that is relevant right now and make sure your graphic is accessible to people who may not have a Stats background. While a comparison of the goals scored by Ronaldo and Messi might seem compelling to you, one can find dozens of such graphics flooded all over sports pages. On the other hand, providing a breakdown of a recent UCLA Basketball game would be more relevant and would also be more interesting for our followers, most of whom are affiliated with UCLA. Furthermore, presenting the results of a t-test to show the statistical significance of some particular metric is not an appropriate use of this medium. For data journalists and research members, another point that I would like to raise is try not to make graphics about topics that you're already working on. We want you to take this opportunity to venture out and explore different things.

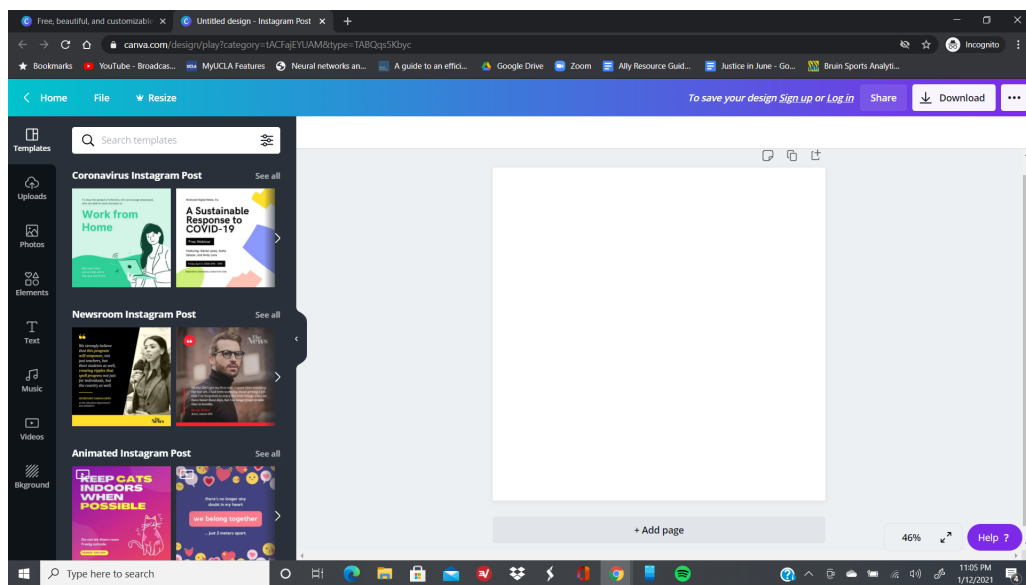
However, you should make sure that you are using the best possible way to represent your data. Check out this guide on [Visme](#) about what kinds of graphs are best suited for different types of data. You might also find this paper, [An Economist's Guide to Visualizing Data](#), helpful as it contains some tips on how to reduce the clutter and integrate the text and graph, which will allow you to make graphs that convey your message more effectively and efficiently. Finally, exploring websites and pages like [FiveThirtyEight](#) and [r/dataisbeautiful](#) can help introduce you to different and unique data visualization tricks and techniques.

3 Creating the Graphic

Once you're on [Canva](#), the first thing you need to do is choose a template. Since we want these posts to be posted on our Instagram page, select the [Instagram Post template](#) so that the graphic doesn't require editing after completion. Once you select that option, you'll see a variety of templates that you could start off with, or alternatively, you could choose to begin with a blank Instagram post.

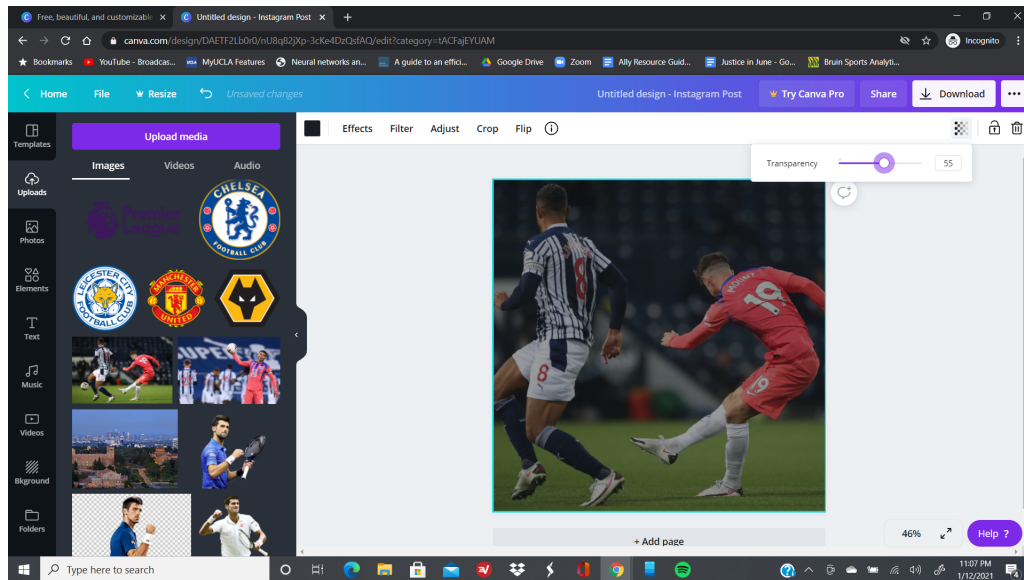


Once you have chosen your template, the next thing you should focus on is selecting the background image. The **Uploads** tab allows you to use upload media stored on your device and use those for the graphic. Since we want these graphics to be visually appealing, choosing a background image which complements your plots is important.

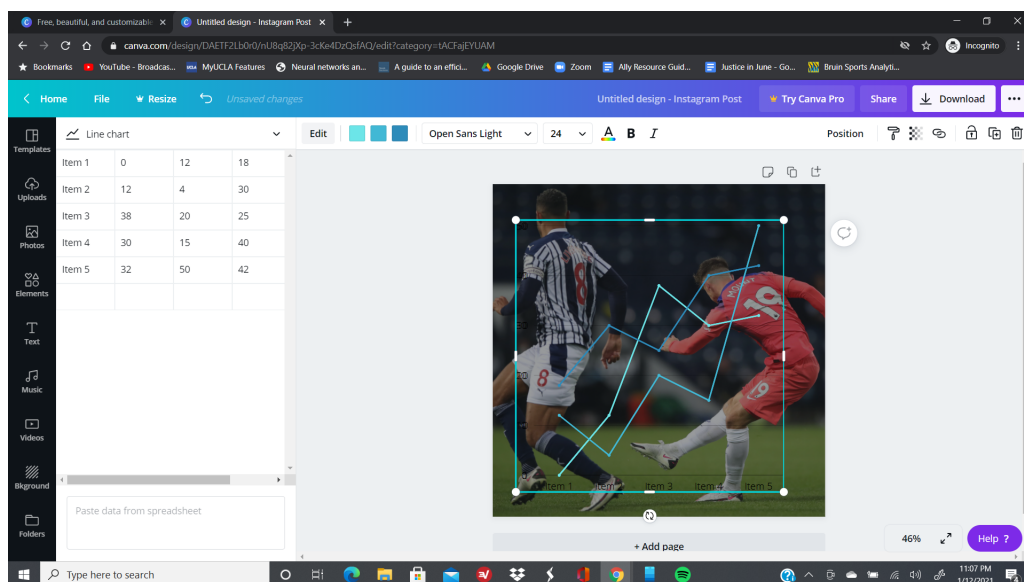


After uploading the desired background and selecting the image, you can Right Click on the image and choose the **Set Image as Background** option. Once you have done that, you can browse through the various **Effects** and **Filter** options that Canva offers and try different combinations to get the visual look that you want from that image. Don't forget to adjust the transparency of the background image, in order to ensure that the plots in the foreground are clearly visible. Alternatively, instead of setting an image as a background, you

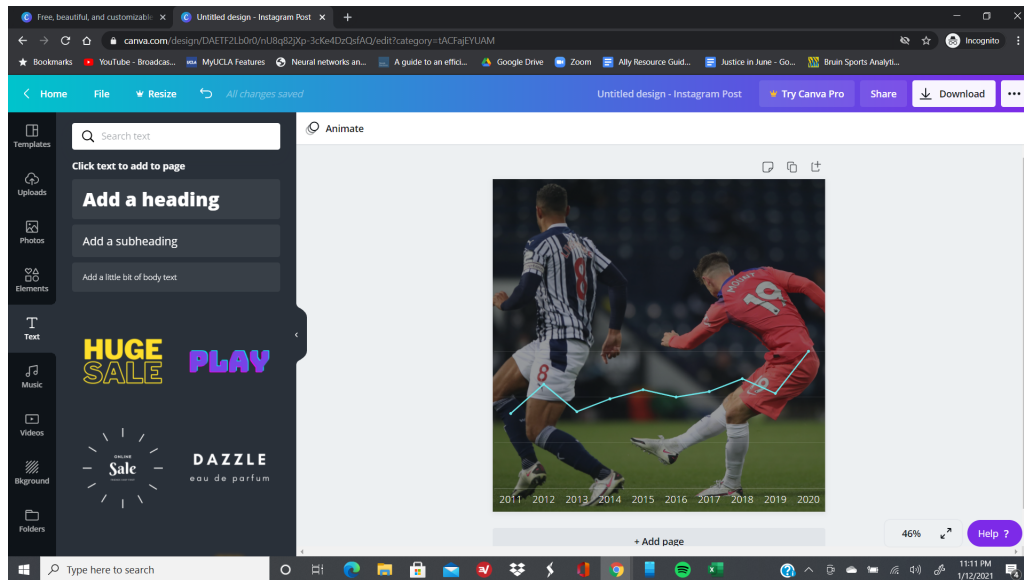
can have a solid color or a gradient as the background and incorporate the images together with the plots.



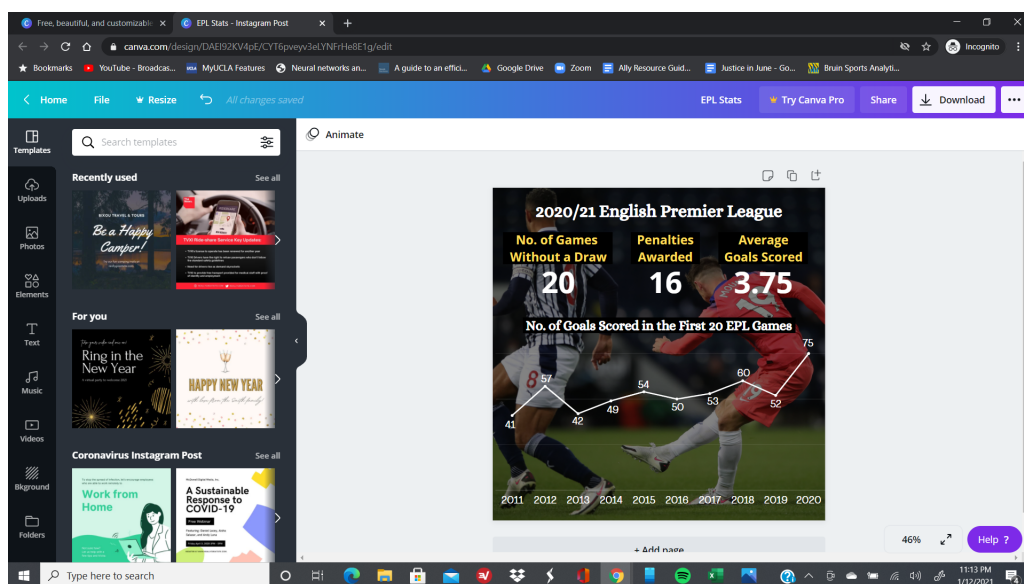
Once you have images sorted out, you can focus on integrating your plots into the graphic. Canva has some in-built plot options which can be accessed under the **Elements** tab. If your graphic involves basic plots such as a pie chart or a stacked bar chart, these in-built options can serve as a great choice. You can paste data from a spreadsheet into Canva and have the plot ready to go. However, if you want to make use of complex plots, you can create them using the software of your choice (Excel, R, Python, Tableau) and then upload them into Canva. Canva even allows you to upload videos, which means that in lieu of a plot, you can even try to make an animation such as a bar chart race if you're feeling adventurous.



An important part of making these visuals accessible to a wider public is to incorporate some text into the graphic, which provides some context and highlights important statistics. Using the options in the **Text** tab, you can add a heading for your graphic and additional information that you might want to showcase to the viewer. Make sure to try different font styles, colors, and sizes to see what fits better for your graphic.



When you are satisfied with how your graphic looks, use the **Share** option to send the graphic to us (bruinsportsanalyticsclub@gmail.com). This will allow us to directly make any final edits to the graphic and ensure that it is ready to be posted to our social media accounts as soon as possible.



4 Writing the Caption

Along with sharing the graphic with us, we want you to email us the caption for the post. The caption is an important tool that, if used well, can help drive up engagement for your post. Since we are going to be posting these on both Instagram and Twitter, try to limit your captions to around 300 characters.

The caption should be used to narrate a story. It should provide context to viewers who might not be familiar with what your graphic is depicting, while also demonstrating the importance of what you're trying to present. Furthermore, using the right hashtags might help your post get attention from a wider audience and with the unpredictability of social media, you never know which post might blow up. Finally, don't forget to include your Instagram and Twitter handles in the email so that we can tag you.