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Helen Joyce graduated in 1991 from Trinity College Dublin with first-class honours in mathematics. She obtained a distinction in Part III Mathematics from the University of Cambridge in 1992, and a PhD in Geometric Measure Theory from University College London in 1995. She then spent three years as a post-doctoral researcher before switching to public understanding of mathematics.

Between 1999 and 2005 Helen worked for the University of Cambridge's Millennium Mathematics Project, latterly editing Plus, an online magazine about mathematics and its applications, aimed at the general public. She was founding editor for Significance, the quarterly magazine of the Royal Statistical Society, launched in 2004. In 2005 she joined The Economist, writing for the Britain section on a variety of subjects and globally on education. Since 2008 she has been one of a small team piloting innovative ways of displaying data graphically online.

Data-driven online journalism

Abstract:

The Economist's charts and other graphics are key to its reputation for excellence in data presentation. Its data-heavy, sometimes data-driven, style of journalism relies on their clarity and beauty to tell stories and get messages across. The explosive rise of online journalism brings new opportunities and challenges.

Among the new approaches being taken are videographics: short animations (90 seconds to 4 minutes) during which a chart or map unfolds, while a voice-over tells the story. Piloted during 2008, these charts will become a regular feature of our website, and the podcast version of the paper, in 2009. Somewhere between a mini-movie and a traditional chart, they throw up their own editorial challenges.

In the future: what should The Economist be doing with data online? Our indicators pages in the paper could be transformed with interactive tools - but how?