Carto

What is it?
Carto helps you make cool, responsive maps for the web.

How it works:
You upload your data to Carto and then use their interface to customize what users see when they click on different parts of the map. It's easy to convert addresses and data into an interactive map that users can engage with. It exports an embed code for the web.
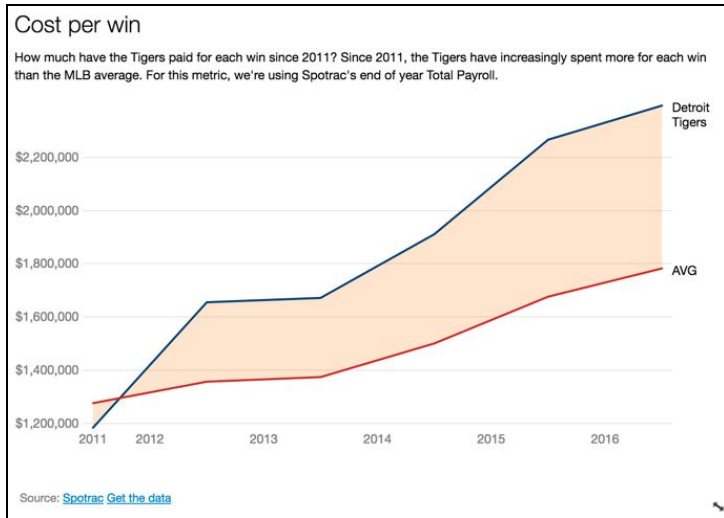
How easy is it to learn?
Pretty easy, no coding skills required. You do have to clean your data up a bit before uploading, but that's not the platform's fault. It's the nature of data: it's dirty.

Note:
If you want Carto to convert the addresses/zip codes/cities to points on a map, they will charge you for that, though it isn't much. If you're only doing a few points you can get the coordinates from Google Maps for free.

Examples:
- [Blight violations in Detroit](#)
- [40 Under 40: Where are they now?](#)
- [Spatial distribution of Swiss soccer fans](#) (very cool)
- [Bridge's college degree map](#)

Cost per win

How much have the Tigers paid for each win since 2011? Since 2011, the Tigers have increasingly spent more for each win than the MLB average. For this metric, we're using Spotrac's end of year Total Payroll.

Source: Spotrac Get the data

DataWrapper

What is it?

DataWrapper allows you to make all kinds of interesting, responsive charts for the web.

How it works:

Data is uploaded to their site and can be customized to some extent via the DataWrapper interface. It has its limitations, but it's a quick and effective way to take data and create a visual for it. It spits out an embed code that is entered into the CMS.

How easy is it to learn?
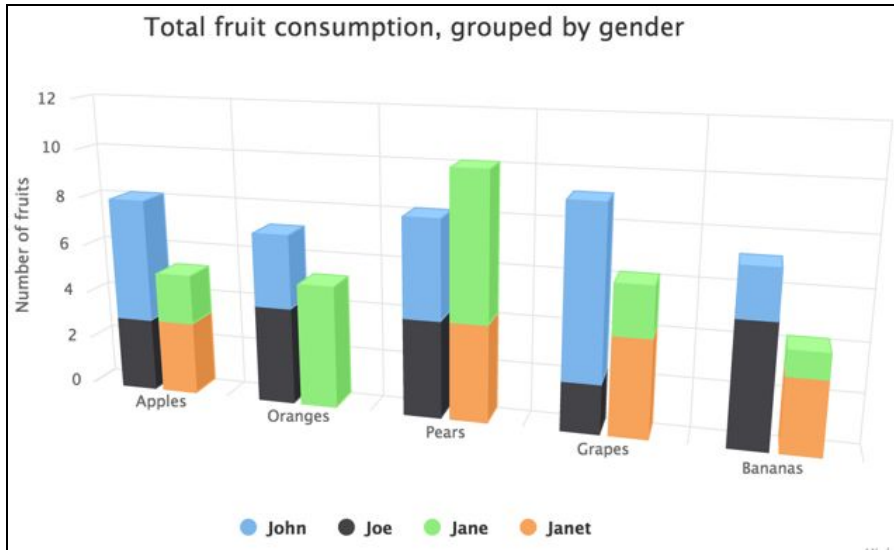
Very easy, no coding skills required. You do have to clean your data up a bit before uploading, but again—dirty data.

Note:

The interface can get finicky from time to time, but is usually pretty reliable.

Examples:

- [Detroit Tigers: Paying for a win](#)
- [Top Giving from Corporate Foundations](#)

Total fruit consumption, grouped by gender

HighCharts

What is it?

Highcharts is a javascript-based charting library that helps you build charts for the web.

How it works:

There are a couple of different ways to use HighCharts: one is to work completely in code and the other is to use HighCharts Cloud, which is a graphic user interface that makes it more approachable (like DataWrapper). It has TONS of options and customizations you can take advantage of.

How easy is it to learn?

You must know some basic Javascript if you want to work natively in the code. HighCharts Cloud, on the other hand, is quite easy to learn.

Note:

Because this is using javascript, you can look at the code and tweak and play with the chart until it's just perfect. At least in your opinion. You can also use an API to generate charts in real time, without having to manually create. If you have some data that's constantly updating and you want to display it in a chart format, this would work wonders.

Examples:

- RTA proposal
- Timeline example

Hot markets

Large local real estate markets that have seen the biggest increase in home sales so far in 2015:

City	2014 sales	2015 sales*	% change
Ferndale	276	343	24.2
Northville/Northvl Twp	251	308	22.7
Plymouth	341	411	20.5
Bloomfield Hills/Twp	450	535	18.9
Sterling Heights	763	896	17.4
Grosse Pointes (Wayne)	442	508	14.9
Livonia	803	918	14.3
Roch Hills/Oakland Twp	685	780	13.9
Canton Twp	729	830	13.9
Birmingham	322	362	12.4
Royal Oak	875	982	12.2

Tableizer

What is it?

Tableizer is an easy-to-use table maker that is easy to embed in a story.

How it works:

You upload contents of a spreadsheet (simple cut and paste) into Tabeleizer at http://tableizer.journalistopia.com/ and the code generated can be embedded directly into your story.

How easy is it to learn?

Pretty easy, no coding skills required. It's really all about making sure your spreadsheet is easy to digest.

Note:

Tableizer is responsive based on tweaks made by Norm for our use of it. But for it to work well, stick with short descriptions and fewer columns -- and ALWAYS view how it will look on mobile because that's how most people will see it.

Examples:

http://www.crainscleveland.com/section/Crain5216
http://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20151018/NEWS/310189981/new-heat-for-southeast-michigans-housing-market-sales-prices-hit

In a special report in our Feb. 29 issue, *Crain's* will take an in-depth look at the Big Deals of 2015. Can't wait? Check out the deals here. Search the database by industry or by company name. To see the full list, click "search."

🔍 Search again

INDUSTRY	ACQUIRING COMPANY ▲	TARGET COMPANY	VALUE OF TRANSACTION (IN MILLIONS)
Tech	02 Investment Partners LLC, Bloomfield Hills	National Technnologies Inc., Oak Creek, Wis.	$10,000,000
Tech	123.net Inc., Southfield	T2 Communications, Holland, Mich.	$10,000,000
Automotive	AGM Automotive Inc., Troy	Durmont Teppichbodenfabrik GmbH, Austria	$20,300,000
Tech	API Technologies Corp., Orlando, Fla.	Aeroflex/Inmet Inc., Ann Arbor; Aeroflex Weinschel Inc., Frederick, Md.	$80,000,000
Health Care	Ascension Health, St. Louis	U.S. Health & Life Insurance Co. Inc., Birmingham	$50,000,000
Health Care	Ascension Health, Warren (Ascension Health, St. Louis)	Crittenton Hospital Medical Center, Rochester Hills	$225,000,000

Caspio

What is it?
Caspio is a tool for creating searchable databases that can be very simple or very complex.

How it works:
You upload data into the Caspio site as "data pages" and then set styling and functionality for how you want reader to interact with the data.

How easy is it to learn?
It can be confusing to learn because there are so many things you can do with it. Once you've done one or two, it is much easier -- but it's not like riding a bike. You need to be on it regularly or you'll spend a lot of time regaining your balance.

Note:
We pay every time we add another Caspio database, so if you want to do one, you need to let me know so I can upgrade our package. Also, there are data size limits -- we shouldn't ever hit them, without audiences, but it's important to know. There is a really good help area.

Examples:
http://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20160216/NEWS/160219883/searchable-database-michigans-biggest-deals-of-2015
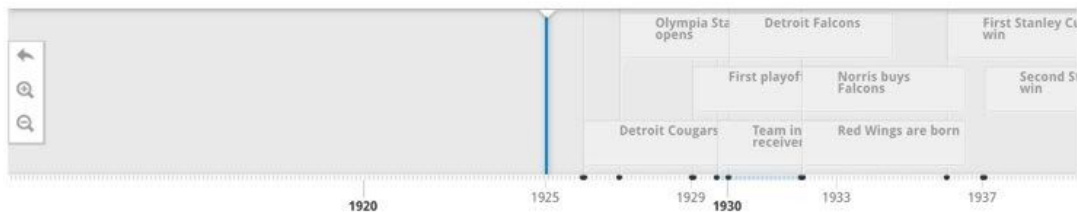
Timeline JS

What is it?
An easy tool for creating embedded timelines in your stories. https://timeline.knightlab.com/

How it works:
TimelineJS is an open-source tool that enables anyone to build visually rich, interactive timelines. Beginners can create a timeline using nothing more than a Google spreadsheet.

How easy is it to learn?
Extremely easy. You can get crazy -- and customize. But the core version is easy and free.

Example:
[Detroit Red Wings through the years](#)

ALSO:
Google fusion tables and maps
Document Cloud
Soundcloud
YouTube

Tools you may or may not know about:

OpenRefine: http://openrefine.org/
 A powerful tool for working with messy data: cleaning it; transforming it from one format into another; and extending it with web services and external data.

Data resources

DATA.GOV and other data-rich sites

https://www.data.gov/

- Tons of data elements, many fully embeddable. As we develop our data center, looking for ways to auto-import data via government sites is a great way to add data and value for our readers.
- Most importantly, it's essential that we ensure our reporters know what's here -- so that we can facilitate adding data sets to their reporting.

The Guardian data store (all open source)
https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/jan/27/data-store-office-for-national-statistics

New York Times data blog
http://open.blogs.nytimes.com/category/data/?_r=0