

Wesley Ratko

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Experienced data journalist and developer.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

- Data visualization developer specializing in transforming complex datasets into easy-to-understand, engaging maps and interactive visualizations using spreadsheets, GIS, Python, and pandas.
- Proven track record as a collaborative team member, working effectively across disciplines. My work is focused on crafting narratives with a public interest angle, ensuring that the methodologies used are transparent and meticulously documented.
- Committed to continuous learning and application of the latest technologies in GIS, data analysis, and artificial intelligence to produce innovative solutions to understand and present data stories online and in print.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

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|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| ● Cartography/GIS | ● Data analysis | ● Reporting & interviewing |
| ● Data visualization | ● UX design | ● Internet-based research |
| ● Publication design | ● Graphic design | ● Copy writing and editing |

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS | SAN ANTONIO, TX

2022–PRESENT

Data Visualization Developer

- Write code to find, analyze and visualize large datasets.
- Report data-driven articles and create interactive graphics for [expressnews.com](https://www.expressnews.com) and other Hearst Newspapers.
- Perform research and produce maps derived from vector and raster geospatial datasets.

CITY OF ATHENS | ATHENS, OH

2017–2021

Freelance Designer

- Designed a branding and logo package to publicize outreach and marketing of the city's comprehensive plan update.
- Visualized resident survey responses in a series of easy-to-read charts and maps.
- Created the 90-page final report for distribution to the public, which won the 2021 Excellence in Small Town and Rural Planning Award from the American Planning Association.

MONTGOMERY CO. PLANNING COMMISSION | NORRISTOWN, PA

2007–2014

Transportation Planner

- Created an interactive series of data tables and GIS maps that characterized the benefits of proposed highway, bridge, and transit projects for elected officials in Montgomery County to build support for what became the Act 89 Transportation Plan (2013).
- Produced an annual report summarizing the public transportation activity in the county, including ridership figures, route maps, and capital and operating costs to the county.
- Created maps of local, county, and regional transportation projects in GIS for presentation to our planning commission board and at public stakeholder meetings for elected officials and the general public.

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RELEVANT EXPERIENCE (continued)

THE CHESTNUT HILL LOCAL | PHILADELPHIA, PA

2010–2014

Freelance Reporter

- Reported on the monthly public meetings of three community association committees that focused on planning and zoning. Wrote 135 articles for publication in the local weekly that explained complex issues of planning and zoning projects and proposals to readers in jargon-free language.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Coding/Web:** HTML/CSS/JavaScript, Python, pandas, Jupyter Notebooks
- **Cartography & GIS Software:** ArcGIS Online & ArcGIS Pro, QGIS
- **Adobe Creative Cloud:** Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop
- **Data & Presentation Software:** Excel, Datawrapper, Flourish, VS code
- **AI & Automation:** Workflow optimization with large language models, prompt engineering for data analysis/cleaning, and applied AI-assisted reporting and visualization

EDUCATION

OHIO UNIVERSITY | ATHENS, OHIO

Master of Arts, Information Graphics & Interactive Design, 2018

- Created an interactive prototype of a mobile app designed to present roadway crash data to the public in a way that empowers travelers to improve trip safety.
- Used JavaScript to build a web application that visualizes the median household incomes of Ohio families by county and race.
- As part of the Soul of Athens project, worked with a team of students to develop and publish 360-degree videos that allow viewers to navigate through various locations within the landscape and experience parts of the terrain within the five regions of Appalachia.

Relevant Coursework

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ● Information Design | ● Editorial Illustration |
| ● User Experience Design | ● JavaScript |
| ● Advanced Web Design and Development | ● Management in Visual Communications |
| ● Information Graphics Design | ● Cartography |
| ● Advanced Publication Design | ● Data Journalism |

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY | PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Master of Science in Community & Regional Planning, 2006

INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA | INDIANA, PENNSYLVANIA

Bachelor of Science in Communications Media, 2000

Minor: Journalism

AFFILIATIONS

Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)

2022–Present