

Position Paper

Using visual content to enhance your collaborative communications in support of university research grantees

Use visual content such as Visible Legacy Navigator interactive maps to show the impact of research sponsored by your Foundation and to tell a more comprehensive story across grantees.

Introduction

Visible Legacy is the “Google maps” of academic research. We contribute visual content as a tool to facilitate collaborative communication strategies. We help Tech Scouts in industry find technologies emerging from academic research. We help University licensing offices communicate the context of new innovations. In this Position Paper we begin by reviewing results from the Packard Foundation showing that Grantees and Foundations alike benefit when a Foundation's voice is used to advance its program areas, especially in contexts where it can add a unique perspective. We propose to help Foundations do this effectively with Visible Legacy, by telling the story through visual content, navigating the details through interactive maps and tools, and showing program impact through metrics. We will conclude with our vision to scale more broadly.

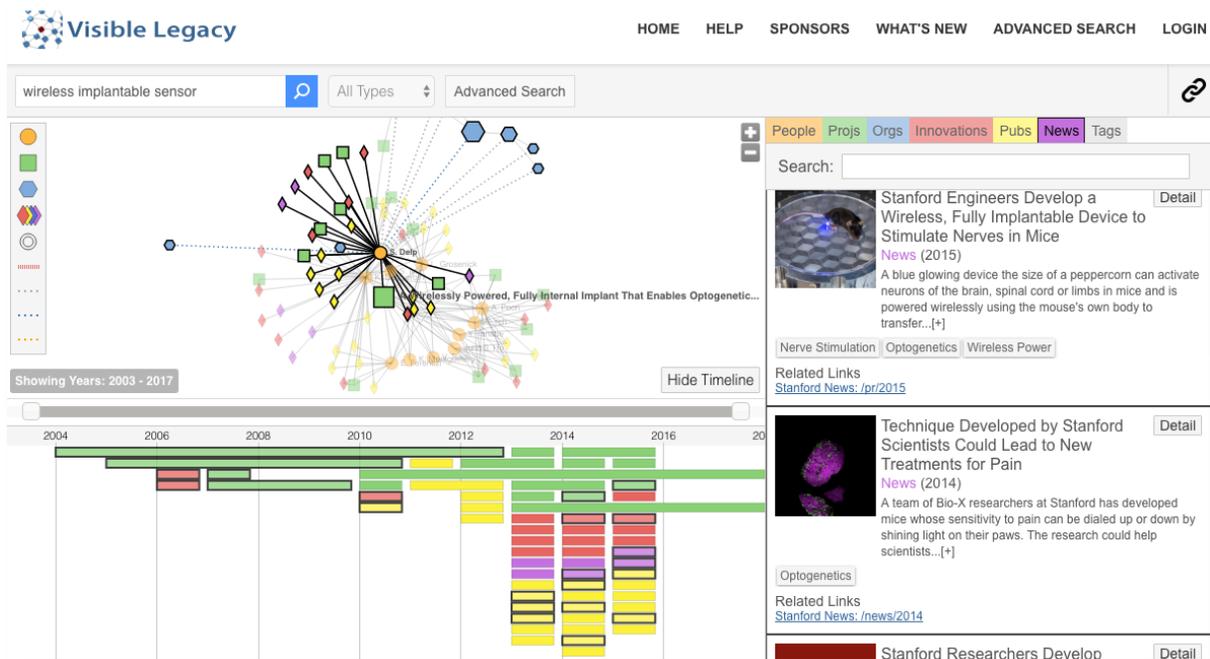


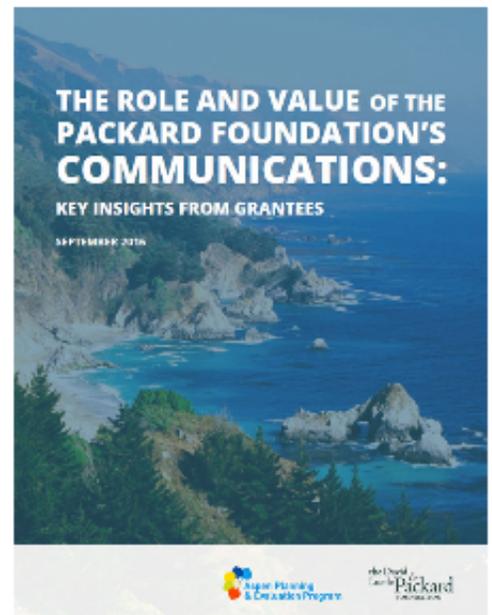
Figure 1. Visible Legacy Navigator map page

I. The Packard Foundation Study

Communications can support grantmaking in many different ways, and foundations vary widely in how they use communications to support grantees and advance their work. How loud a voice should foundations have? How should they use it? The David and Lucile Packard Foundation conducted a study¹ in September 2016 to answer these questions.

The Packard Foundation learned that grantees see value in the Foundation using communications to support their work. They also determined that collaborative communications offer benefits to the Foundation itself. They concluded that the most valuable contribution may be using the Foundation's distinctive voice to tell a more comprehensive story.

Packard Foundation Communications Director Felicia Madsen commented on the findings. She states "Communications is no longer just public relations. It is a suite of powerful, accessible tools that can help the Foundation achieve the long lasting change we hope to see." She recognizes an opportunity to leverage communications resources more effectively to achieve program goals.



Grantees see value

The study found that grantees value the Foundation's communications activities overall. In particular, grantees value the Foundation's distribution of their research. This collaboration is of mutual benefit: the Foundation's reputation and brand serve as a valuable resource for grantees while positioning the Foundation as a credible convener and thought leader. The Foundation was perceived by grantees to support their own communications efforts and generally invited the Foundation to do more.

Benefits to the Foundation

The broadest conclusion from grantee feedback was a simple one: the Foundation's voice can and should be used to advance its program areas. The study determined that Grantees and the Foundation share these common benefits:

- Attract new funders to the field of study
- Educate policymakers on the issues
- Lift the profile of grantees
- Educate the public on the field
- Raise awareness of the Foundation's stance on the issues
- Enhance understanding of the Foundation's grantmaking strategy

Grantees observed that the Foundation's voice is most valuable in contexts where it can add a unique or different perspective, or where it can bring clarity or direction among a group of stakeholders.

Telling a more comprehensive story

The study highlights the opportunity to strengthen the Foundation's communications by defining a larger narrative about the Foundation, effectively telling a more comprehensive story than any grantee can and to intentionally pinpoint how individual efforts are connected within a larger communication or program strategy.

The Packard Foundation shares these findings on their website¹ and is regarded highly as a thought leader regarding how Foundations can most effectively use their communications to advance their vision of a better world.

II. Visual content drives better uptake

With data being generated in record-breaking amounts, organizations are looking for ways to synthesize and utilize all the information coming their way. Visual content can be leveraged in innovative new ways. Expertly crafted visual content is easily consumed by viewers and can help increase awareness and productivity, as well as improve



communication and understanding².

Speaking in a TED talk about the beauty of data visualization, writer and designer David McCandless suggested that visual content might provide a sense of relief from massive amounts of data:

“There’s something almost quite magical about visual information. It’s effortless. It literally pours in. If you’re navigating a dense information jungle, coming across a beautiful graphic or lovely data visualization is a relief. It’s like coming across a clearing in the jungle.”

– David McCandless, writer and designer in a TED talk on beauty of data visualization³.

This conversion of data into graphs, charts, maps, or visual stories — also known as “data visualization” or “information design” — has become an extremely popular way to present information in an easily digestible medium. Graphics are an engaging way to help people quickly process the massive amounts of data being produced without having to read large amounts of text².

Compelling visual content makes patterns arise, discovers trends and condenses enormous amounts of information in a very small space. This is where Visible Legacy makes its contribution.

III. Telling a comprehensive story with maps

Visible Legacy is a “graph map of academic research” offered as an online information search and navigation web portal called Navigator™. Aimed at industry Tech Scouts, the map metaphor is faster than a list of search results since it delivers pre-connected relevant data, essentially connecting the dots, to present large amounts of information for each query.

People and projects are presented in a connected "graph" surrounded by the context of relevant organizations, published works and patents, and innovations. Users can utilize the interactive timelines, keywords, and summaries which work with the map to search,

filter and explore the ecosystem, browse conveniently linked online documents, and find innovations and collaborators more quickly that fit their strategic needs⁴.

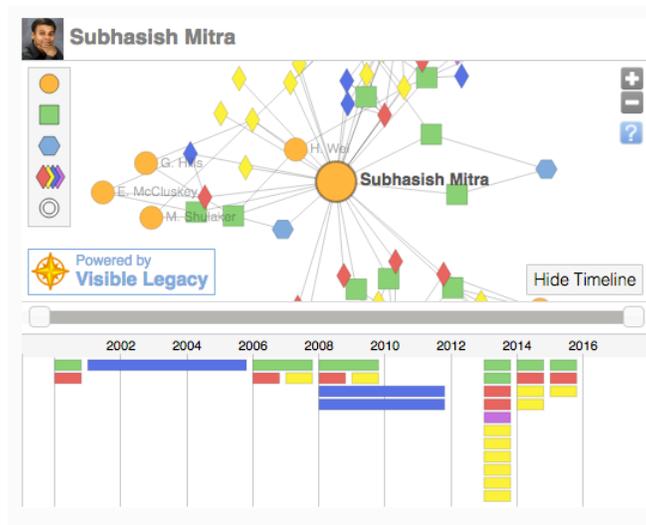


Figure 2. Visible Legacy embeddable widget

Proven at Stanford University, we have recently added the research ecosystem at Duke University⁵. Stanford has adopted our technology in the form of embeddable widgets in their new technologies portal (Fig 2). Our objective is to map the top 25 academic research universities. Using cloud-based technologies and multiple servers, Visible Legacy Navigator now has the capacity to serve Tech Scouts with the ability to search a topic across multiple institutions, the most requested feature.

Navigating with interactivity

To accompany the expanded data set, we continue to add interactive features to the Navigator portal including more powerful search, smoother graphics, faster navigation, flexible filtering, prioritization of collaborative connections, and the ability for users to save and share maps. Users can easily move between widgets on University web pages and full-page views in Navigator to find technologies more broadly.

Showing project outputs and impact metrics

Navigator maps the outputs of collaborations: research papers, patents, follow-on projects, keywords. These outputs show the context of innovations for technology transfer, meeting the desire of the grantee to help distribute research.

Navigator also allows stakeholders to discover the impact of sponsored research measured by: grants received, follow-on funding, technology licenses and startups created. Duke University has a good benchmark infographic⁶, an example shown below.



These metrics inspire future quantitative features in Visible Legacy Navigator for Foundation stakeholders.

IV. Scaling to the top 25 Universities

Visible Legacy’s goal is to serve Tech Scouts by scaling up to map the top 25 research universities to enable search of a topic across multiple institutions⁷. Our objective is to map the ecosystems without burden of cost or effort to the universities since their annual budgets are set far in advance and they have very little flexibility. Approached with this model, university departments such as Licensing, Donor Development, and Industrial Affiliate Programs are delighted to have Visible Legacy help them tell their story and communicate their innovations. We are therefore seeking “institutional support” to allow us to expedite the mapping of more research universities to help these universities communicate and speed technology translation and, in so doing, to help Foundations tell a comprehensive story of their impact.

Top Recipients of NIH Funding, 2015

School	Funding Total
1. Johns Hopkins University	\$584,714,172
2. UC San Francisco	\$560,409,410
3. University of Michigan	\$453,368,007
4. University of Pennsylvania	\$453,359,803
5. University of Washington	\$434,224,865
6. University of Pittsburgh	\$430,310,349
7. Stanford University	\$422,361,283
8. UC San Diego	\$388,697,641
9. UNC Chapel Hill	\$379,585,711
10. Washington University	\$378,098,015

Source: National Institutes of Health

Working together to help universities

Whether your Foundation uses its voice to communicate directly or assists grantees from behind the scenes, we propose that using visual content from Visible Legacy will help tell a more comprehensive story and raise awareness about grantees' research and the Foundation's impact. We suggest that by working together we can collectively speed the translation of grantee's innovations to industry. We would be happy to offer a proposal of how, with your help, we will expedite the mapping of the universities, centers, labs, research fellowships or grant programs that benefit from your support.

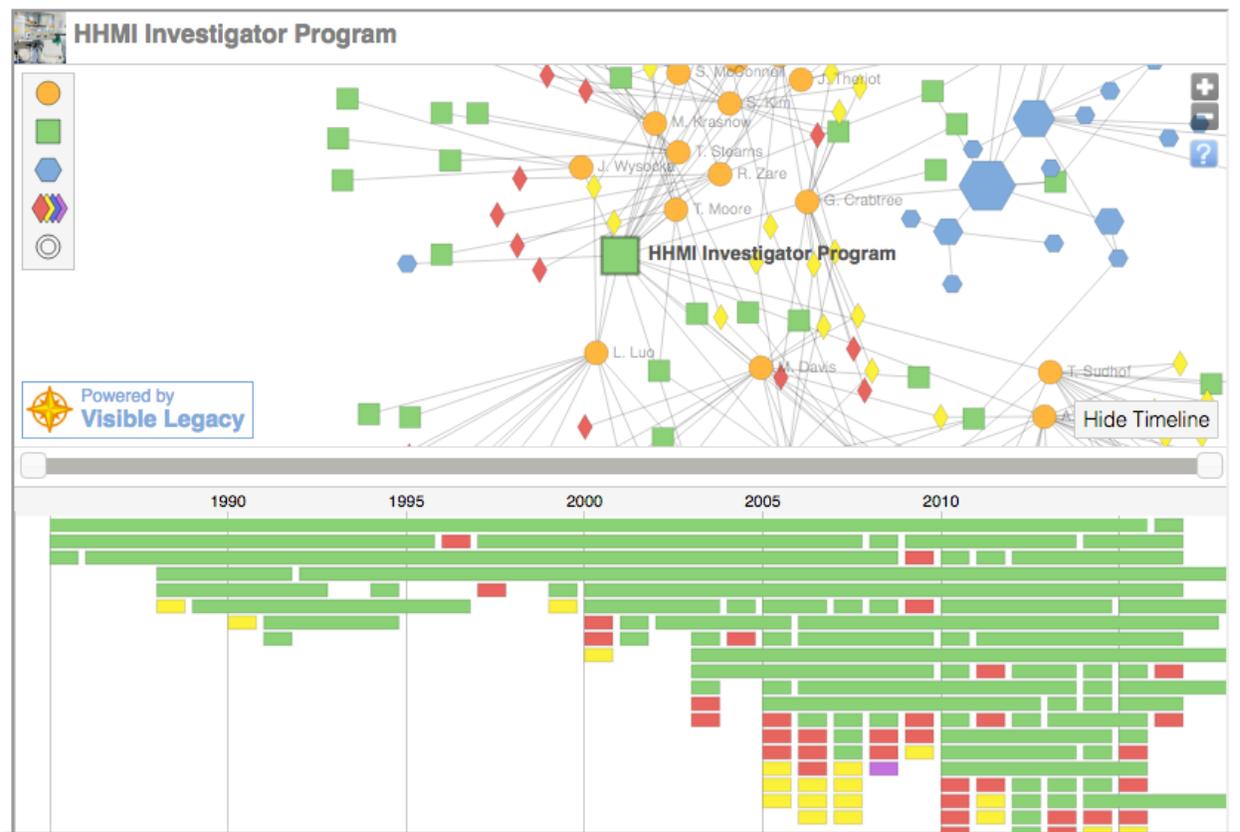


Figure 3. Defining a larger narrative about Foundation Impact

Contact Us

If you would like to receive a proposal or demonstration of Visible Legacy Navigator, we would love to hear from you.

Visible Legacy
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About Visible Legacy

Visible Legacy's mission is to help speed the translation of academic research into real-world solutions. The firm's proprietary machine intelligence algorithms gather information from public-facing academic websites and power a cloud-based service which presents this context as “maps” in an online interactive portal called Visible Legacy Navigator™ for industry “Tech Scouts” and other users. Navigator lets users use powerful navigational-search tools to follow the story of innovation, making connections more quickly to resources and knowledge, helping industry and research organizations find suitable technology and expert teams. The website is offered free through the support of sponsors. The founders are an experienced team who have collaborated on multiple successful startup companies. The privately-held for-profit company was formed in 2010 and is based in Palo Alto, CA. <http://www.visiblelegacy.com>.

Footnotes and links

- ¹Packard Foundation, “The Role and Value of the Packard Foundation’s Communications”
<https://www.packard.org/what-were-learning/resource/role-value-packard-foundations-communications-key-insights-grantees/>
- ²Info Graphic World “How to Leverage Infographics for your Business”
<http://infographicworld.com/blogs/how-to-leverage-infographics/>
- ³David McCandless TED Talk
http://www.ted.com/talks/david_mccandless_the_beauty_of_data_visualization
- ⁴Visible Legacy Navigator Datasheet
<http://www.visiblelegacy.com/company-news/item/88-navigator-datasheet>
- ⁵Visible Legacy Press Release Duke
<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2016/12/prweb13905989.htm>
- ⁶Duke University “Duke Engineers and Clinicians Create Medical Devices Together”
<https://www.ctsi.duke.edu/news/duke-engineers-and-clinicians-create-medical-devices-together>
- ⁷UCSF Schools Continue to Lead Nation in NIH Biomedical Research Funds for 2015
<http://bit.ly/2kCPSQ1>