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## INFORMATION GRAPHICS

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Many blogs and whatnot have commented on the rise of infographics. If you hang out with designery-types, they have at some point likely expelled a self-satisfied non-complaint about how trendy they are right now.

I'm not so sure about this. As someone who didn't really read books till the age of fifteen, infographics - although I don't think that's what they were called back then - could more than hold my attention, because they explained everything better. National Geographic maps showing the expanding and contracting phases of the Mongolian Empire, North America migratory bird paths, the structures of atoms, the periodic table... all posters on my walls, conveying ideas that make the sense only in the form of pictures with arrows and a tiny bit of text - Information Graphics.

Taschen's latest encyclopedic offering is a mighty five hundred page tome collecting the best contemporary infographics from around the world. This useful resource is one of the most delightfully timewasting books I've picked up in ages. Beer consumption across the world, transatlantic flight paths, cultural significance of colour, the amount of animals in sports team mascots... it's all in there.

Now, criticising this book. Many infographics are as large as posters and don't want to fit. Trying to read about the history of American Presidential party allegiance in point two text is not easy. However, this is less a fault of the publisher, and more a consequence of the fact that this is a book of curated material, and I imagine some people will be flipping through it for 'the gist' and don't really care about the political allegiances of George Washington and his successors. I do, so this annoying.

Either way, this book is worth a look, flick through, consideration, purchase, and or liberation. The way that a picture can convey information is universal. Perhaps a quarter of the infographics in this book are not in English. As a resource for ideas to steal, the book is invaluable. And for any information junkies, what more could you want!