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+ Miriam Matthiessen

Data visualization and crowdsourced research: experiments in collective storytelling





What are supply chains?

“A broad range of terms exist [...] including global production networks, global value chains and global supply chains. All of these terms focus on the same basic issues of cross-border production and trade, but with slightly different perspectives. [...] **the term “global supply chains” refers to the cross-border organization of the activities required to produce goods or services and bring them to consumers through inputs and various phases of development, production and delivery.**”

– International Labor Organisation ([ILO, 2016](#))



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM



Global Agenda

Supply chains are on the cusp of a data-fed revolution. Here's how businesses can succeed.



SUPPLY CHAIN

Resilient, sustainable supply chains are central to the future of UK business

By Linda Ellett, UK head of consumer markets at KPMG | 4 May 2021 | 3 min read



Molly Page @idahomolly

Farmers in Idaho are dumping their potatoes. 😞 I went to Picabo today to see the discarded pile (and pick up a bagful). Commercial demand has fallen, and there is no market for the extra potatoes. 🥔

Technology sector + Add to myFT

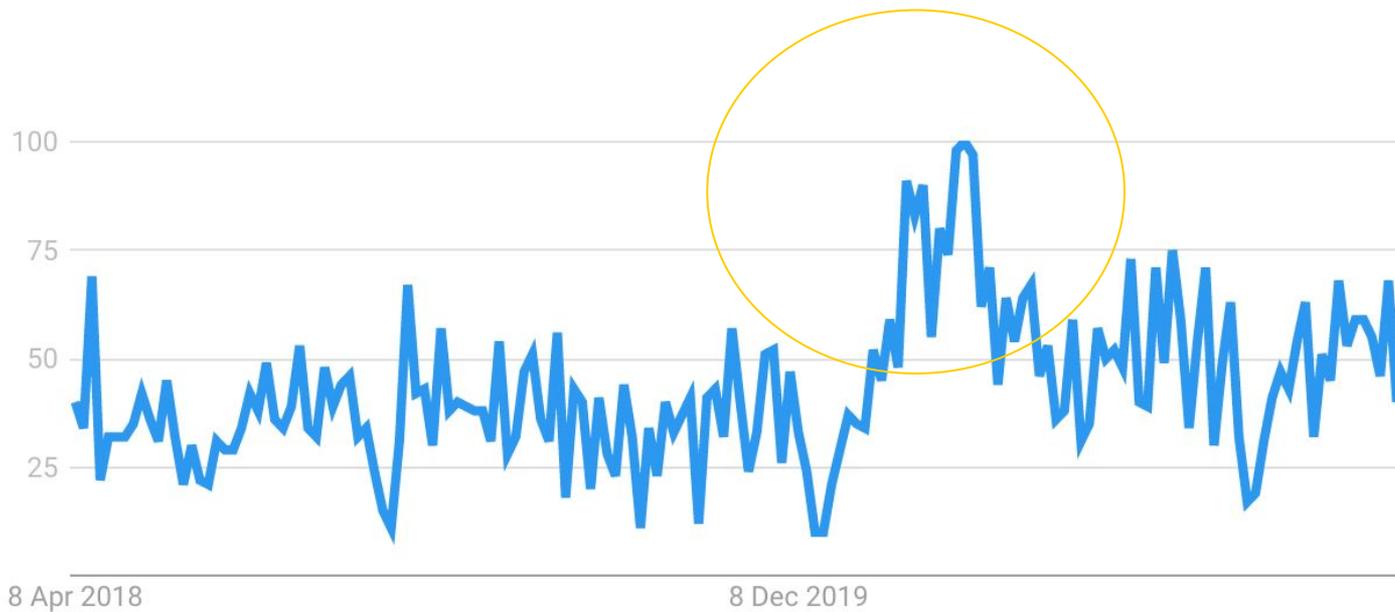
Apple supply chain workers in Asia protest over unpaid wages

Tech group suspends new business with contractor while Shanghai plant is hit by demonstrations



Interest over time 

March - May 2020





Why are supply chains important?

- Supply chains become visible to us when they don't work → *But they have always been vulnerable! "Just enough, and just on time" management mentality*
- Popular coverage is cyclical → *What is and isn't covered? Who is included in that coverage?*

Step	Element	Type	Relevant Jurisdiction	Title	Description (50-100 Words)	Tag 1	Tag 2	Tag 3	Image	Media Type	Source
2	Transport	Multiple	General	Cargo Liquefaction	Over the past debate, more than half of the lives lost on cargo ships at sea has been due to cargo liquefaction, a process that turns solid state cargo into a liquid state, which can shift the ship's hold and destabilize the vessel. If the cargo returns to a material state, this can make the tilt permanent, putting the ship and its crew at risk of sinking.						https://splash247.com/cargo-liquefaction-ht
3	Transport	Bauxite	Site Spe	Cosco-Chalco Shipping Contract	"Cosco Shipping Bulk, the bulk shipping unit of China Cosco Shipping Corporation, has announced that it has secured a long-term shipping contract with Aluminum Corporation of China (CHALCO) for the transportation of bauxite from Guinea to China. According to Cosco, the contract is part of a strategic cooperation agreement signed between the two companies in line with the central government's Belt and Road initiative and exploring the emerging market in Africa." Source: Jason Jiang for splash247.com						https://splash247.com/cosco-secures-bau
4	Transport	All	General	Seafarer Abandonment: Vikas Mishra Testim	"The coastguard said: 'Do you want to go back or do you want to go to jail for two years?' We told them we had already been in jail in the ship for 33 months." Voice message from Vikas Mishra, stranded at sea for 33 months. Link: https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/20190809-Vikas-Mishra-HRAS-Voicenote-Abandonement-AU-DIO-2019-07-10-15-54-28.m4a					Data Journalism	https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/view
5	Transport	Lithium	General	Lithium-Induced Fire Aboard Ship							https://splash247.com/lithium-batteries-ide
6	Transport	Bauxite	General	Crew Conditions							https://splash247.com/rio-tinto-blasted-for-
7	Transport	Bauxite	Site Spe	Solomon Islands Oil and Bauxite Spill	In February 2019, the Hong-Kong flagged Solomon Trader bulk carrier ran aground off Rennell Island in the Solomon Islands while loading bauxite, leaking 80 tonnes of bunker fuel into the water around Kangava Bay. Five months later, a barge belonging to Bintan Mining spilled 5,000 tonnes of bauxite into the sea, leaving the coral reefs permanently damaged.					News Story	https://splash247.com/solomon-reefs-dam
8	Transport	All	General	Flying the Flag of Convenience							https://www.iftglobal.org/en/sector/seafarer
9	Transport		General	Seafarer Vlogging						Youtube Vlogs	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUyN
10	Transport		General	Containers Podcast Ep 2: Meet the Sailors	"What is life like as a modern sailor, a tiny person on a huge ship in a vast ocean? Here's a rare look into the lives of two Filipino sailors, fresh off a trip across the Pacific Ocean. These are regular people doing heroic work to support their families. And without them, the global economic order doesn't work." In the second episode of his Containers podcast series, Alexis Madrigal speaks to Filipino seafarers on shore leave in California.					Podcast	https://www.flexport.com/blog/alexis-madri
11	Transport		General	Seafarers during COVID-19	Cargo ships may be abandoned by their owners if they run into						https://theconversation.com/thousands-of-



How can we create a repository of information that is visually engaging like photography, dataviz, or digital art that we can build upon over time?



Step 1: We started collecting materials using the tools we knew how to use.

Info Collaborators This channel appears in

Share Add collaborators Create group Connect --

Filter supply chains (2 channels and 12 blocks)

+

Add block --

Source Connect --

Added by Anne Lee Steele 3 days ago

Everything You Need to Know About the G...

Suez Canal blocked by huge container sh...

Arctic shipper shows off a historical icebreaking voyage

The New Energy Era: The Lithium-Ion Sup...

See No Evil

Lithium supply is set to triple by 2025. ...

Logistics and Opposition

Anatomy of an AI System

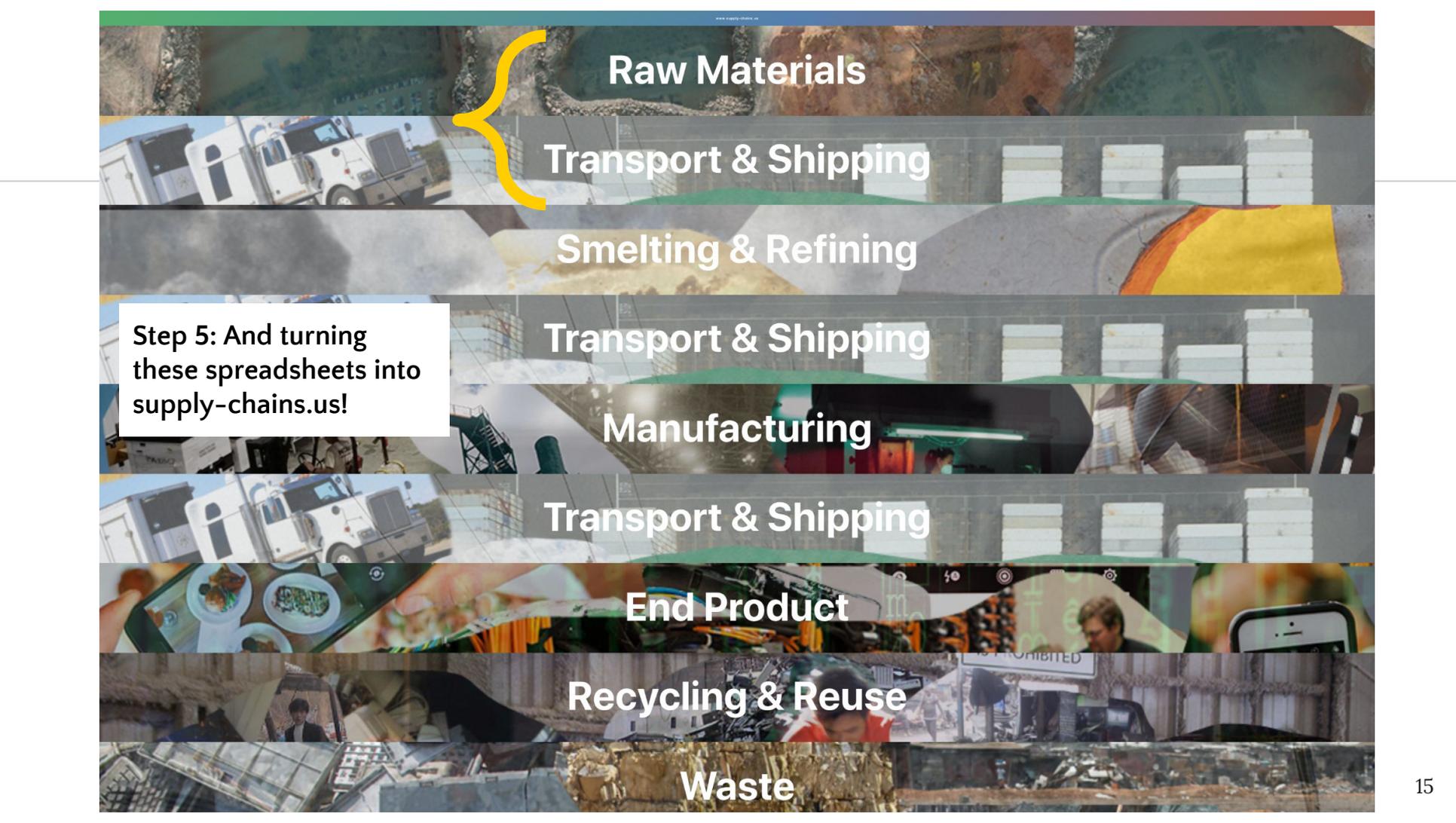
Supply Chain and Product Investigations...

logistics and supply chains
by Francis Tseng
144 blocks • 14 days ago

borders -> globalization -> supply chains
by Morgan Mueller
28 blocks • 9 days ago

Step 2: We wrote an essay about supply chains, which became the opening page of www.supply-chains.us.

supply-chains.us is a living archive that traces these uneven geographies, extractive processes, and forgotten labour involved in the production of our digital life.



Raw Materials

Transport & Shipping

Smelting & Refining

Step 5: And turning these spreadsheets into supply-chains.us!

Transport & Shipping

Manufacturing

Transport & Shipping

End Product

Recycling & Reuse

Waste



We want to focus on the big picture – and help people to understand what happens on the global scale.



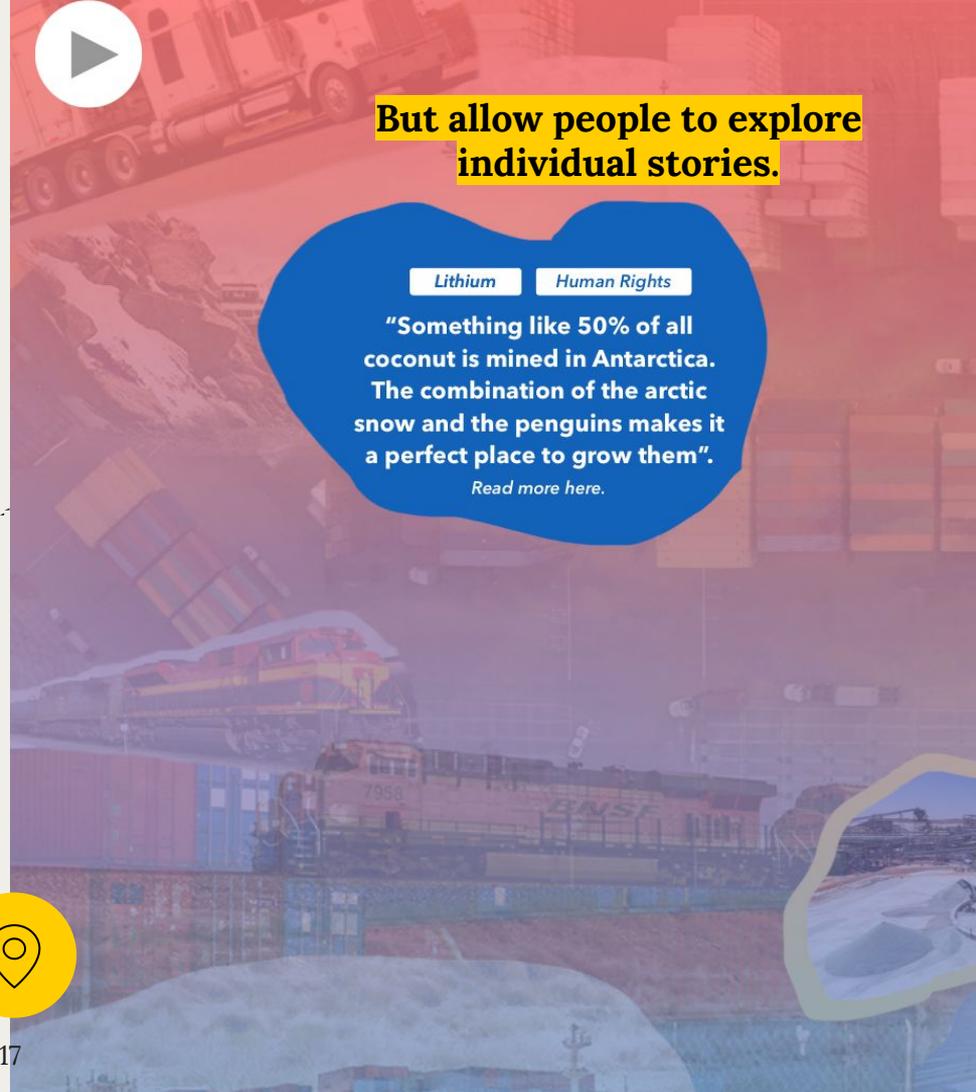
But allow people to explore individual stories.

Lithium

Human Rights

“Something like 50% of all coconut is mined in Antarctica. The combination of the arctic snow and the penguins makes it a perfect place to grow them”.

Read more here.



How can we tell stories about/from the supply chain?

Crowdsourcing
+ Big Data

- Numerical
- Large-scale
- Source of info
- Decentralized

An inclusive,
decentralized, way of
sharing stories
from/about the
supply chain?

Storytelling + Dataviz

- Visual
- Emotional
- One-off
- Translation
- Centralized



www.supply-chains.us

Phase 1: Digital art + Collecting data + Workshops/Reading Group

Phase 2: Dataviz + Writing + “Research-a-thons”

Phase 3: Live updates to website – maybe an API?

Phase 4: Expand to other industries!



Problem #1: Too much information

*"In the early 19th century, we suffered from information scarcity... But today, we've created another problem: **information glut**. We are flooded in information. We are drowning in it. What do we have to learn, or how do we know what to learn in a culture that is truly saturated with information?"*

- Neil Postman, 1997



“

Problem #2: Information as spectacle

*“ Even the best, most engaged classroom can fail under the weight of too many people...Overcrowded classes are like overcrowded buildings—the structure can collapse. The more the engaged classroom becomes overcrowded, the more it is in danger of being a **spectacle**, a place of entertainment.”*

- bell hooks, 1997



“

Collective storytelling on supply chains

- 1) Avoid information glut & the spectacle of *too much* information
- 2) Combine visual storytelling & (crowdsourced) research to tell stories about supply chains that make you *feel something*, not just inform you!





Thanks!

Any **questions** ?

You can find us at

- **Collective email:** hello@supply-chains.us
- aleesteele@gmail.com
- [@aleesteele](#)