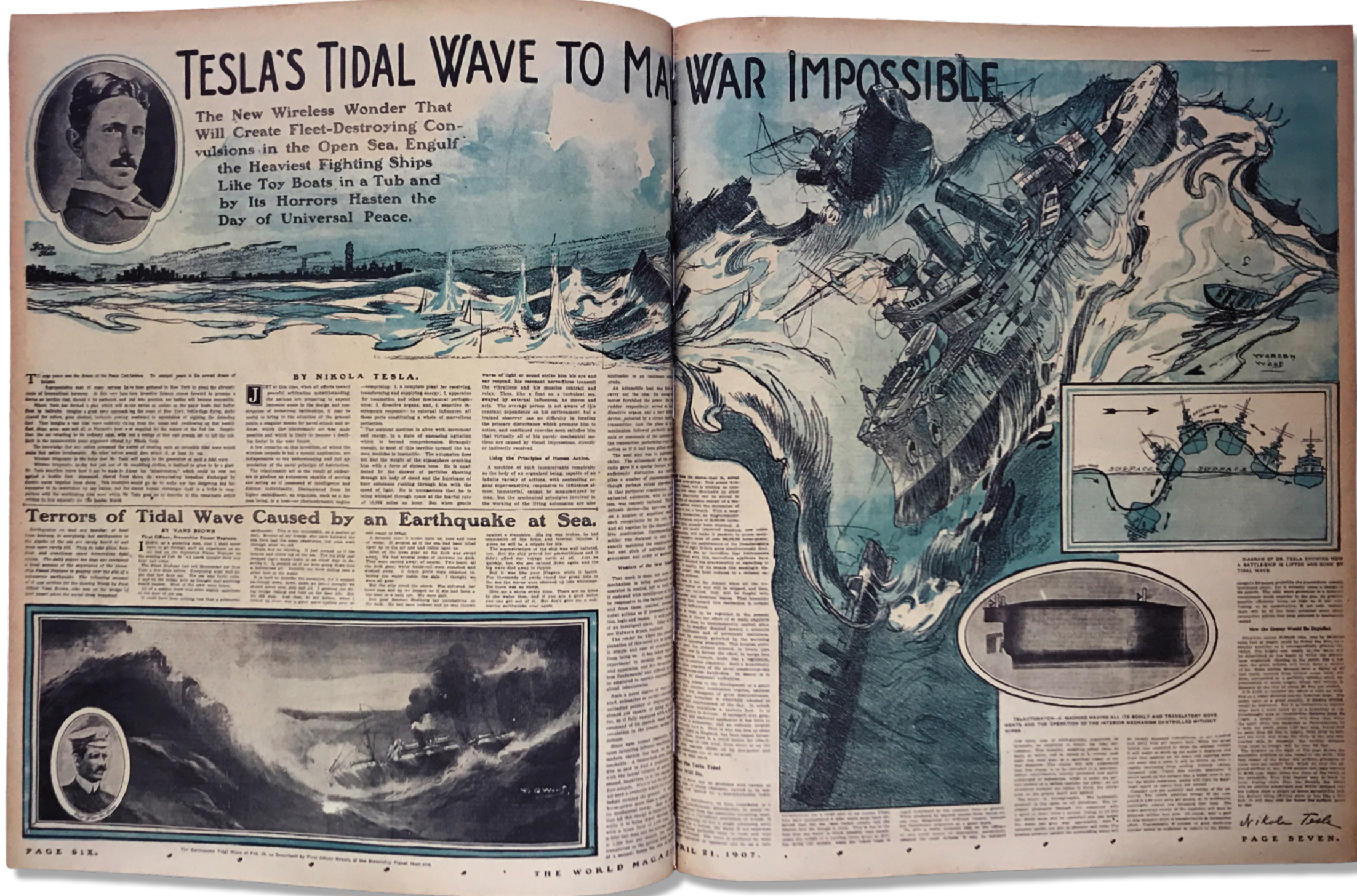


An important venture from the first half of the twentieth century is *Fortune* magazine, founded by Henry Luce. First published in 1930, four months after the collapse of Wall Street, it aimed “to reflect industrial life in ink and paper and word and picture as the finest skyscraper reflects it in stone and steel and architecture.” It earned a reputation for its firm social commitment during the years of the Great Depression, exemplified by its publishing of photographs by Margaret Bourke-White and Walker Evans, the latter of whom went on to serve as the magazine’s photography editor from 1945 to 1965. Exquisitely printed in a large format on expensive, non-glossy paper, the visualizations published in *Fortune* in its first years can be seen as a second highpoint of journalistic infographics for their intelligence, precision, and stylistic breadth. Among the authors was Richard Edes Harrison. An architect and ornithologist, he is considered one of the most revolutionary infographers of all time for his original use of perspective in maps and for his experimentation with new ways of visualizing data. A short time later, another legendary mapmaker, Robert M. Chapin, began his career at *Time*, the sister magazine of *Fortune*. From the 1960s on, Peter Sullivan represents a third milestone in modern journalistic infographics prior to the boom of the 1990s for his thoroughness and for “inventing” the figure of the reporter-infographer: the person who leaves the newsroom to visit the scene of events to collect information firsthand. The teacher to entire generations of British infographers (Nigel Holmes, John Grimwade, Geoffrey Sims, Duncan Mil, and others), Sullivan’s long career allowed him to report contemporaneously on many major events of the last third of the twentieth century: the manned landing on the Moon in 1969, the Falklands War of 1982, and the disaster of the *Challenger* space shuttle in 1986.

It is important to recognize that, in the three hundred years since the appearance of the *Daily Courant*, the principal milestones of infographics in the media have not always been, as some might imagine, technological advances. Technology certainly has driven the development of the genre in all aspects, but the best infographic journalism has never been a result of the best technology alone. Equally as important, if not more so, have been the events themselves: wars, electoral campaigns and elections, natural disasters, and sporting events (especially the Olympic Games and the World Cup). The advent of round-the-clock broadcast news coverage only enhanced the importance of these events. Notwithstanding the scholarly aims behind many graphics and the fact that projects with less urgent deadlines tend to win more awards than graphics for developing news stories, infographic



The World; Tesla's Tidal Wave; 1907
 Purchased and reinvented by Joseph Pulitzer at the end of the nineteenth century, *The World* represents a pinnacle in visual journalism. This double-page spread from a Sunday edition presents Nikola Tesla's latest invention: a tsunami-generator that would make war impossible by sinking all types of vessels.

journalism is inextricably linked to the news. The “breaking news graphic” continues to be the ultimate test for media companies and their teams, a cornerstone of their fundamentally important mission.

At the same time, one must acknowledge the major increase of journalistic infographics since the arrival of computers in the newsroom. From about 1990 on, the transformation of newspapers and magazines—first in print, then on digital, then mobile platforms—has been spectacular. The boom had its origin in the United States with the Society for News Design (SND). It soon after spread to Europe,

particularly to Spain, through the work of the Communications Department of the University of Navarra, which in 1992 made the prescient decision to create the Malofiej World Summit and International Infographics Awards, the most important event in the discipline.

It was no coincidence that infographics from the United States had its first echo in Spain. At the time, Spain was experiencing a major period of prosperity with the Olympic Games in Barcelona and the Universal Exposition in Seville, which served as a fertile ground for the emergence of the first generation of infographers there. Without the benefit of an established graphic tradition or schools, Spain created a very powerful brand that gave rise to scores of professionals who, first of all, brought international attention to their publications and, then, to great extent, emigrated and spread this revolution to media in other countries. Spanish professionals have taken their talents to newspapers in Latin America, especially in Argentina, and gone on to work in the United States and, more recently, the Far East. Mobility and mingling are

the hallmarks of our era and Spain has made a significant contribution to both. Newsrooms today are more cosmopolitan than ever and infographers have been on the leading edge of this trend. Even countries that were at first left out of the visualization boom have joined the first division of infographics: the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Singapore, China, and others.

However, until very recently, aspiring infographers did not have a place to get formal training. Universities and design schools have just begun to add infographics to their curricula. The establishment of the genre over the past thirty years was led by illustrators and designers who educated themselves in the newsrooms. So although many media companies asked where they could find good infographers and many professionals asked where they could study infographics, the response until recently was: nowhere. Fortunately, things have changed. There are several leading U.S. universities offering specific programs and, in Italy, the Politecnico di Milano is a noted leader.

Trends and countertrends have come and gone over the course of the last three decades. At the start of the boom, graphics had to look like they had been made using computers—a symptom of the fascination with technology and scale at that time. But then Jaime Serra arrived on the scene and revolutionized everything with his deeply artistic vision. Suddenly, many people realized that infographics is a hybrid genre that can include any idiom and style, including collage, and that a handmade or artisanal look is as equally valid as a computerized one: it all depends on

the design goals. At almost exactly the same time, at *El Correo*, a regional Spanish newspaper, Javier Zarracina and Fernando G. Baptista returned to drawing by hand, winning many awards in the process, and finally establishing a school of style which has attracted many followers over time. Both of them are now based in the United States and are among the most recognized infographers.

The limits of infographics are still debated. The *Guardian* won a gold medal at one of the Malofiej Awards for a graphic that was, in fact, “just” a photograph of the international space station and the space shuttle *Atlantis* with the sun behind them. The photograph marvelously displayed the dimensions of each element in the image. Was it an infographic? Also winning a gold medal was a work from *National Geographic* about Neanderthal man. Using thousands of scrupulously analyzed pieces of data, a multidisciplinary team at the magazine had worked for months to create an exact replica of one individual and published photographs of the life-sized sculpture. Was it an infographic? Another gold-medal winner from the Brazilian