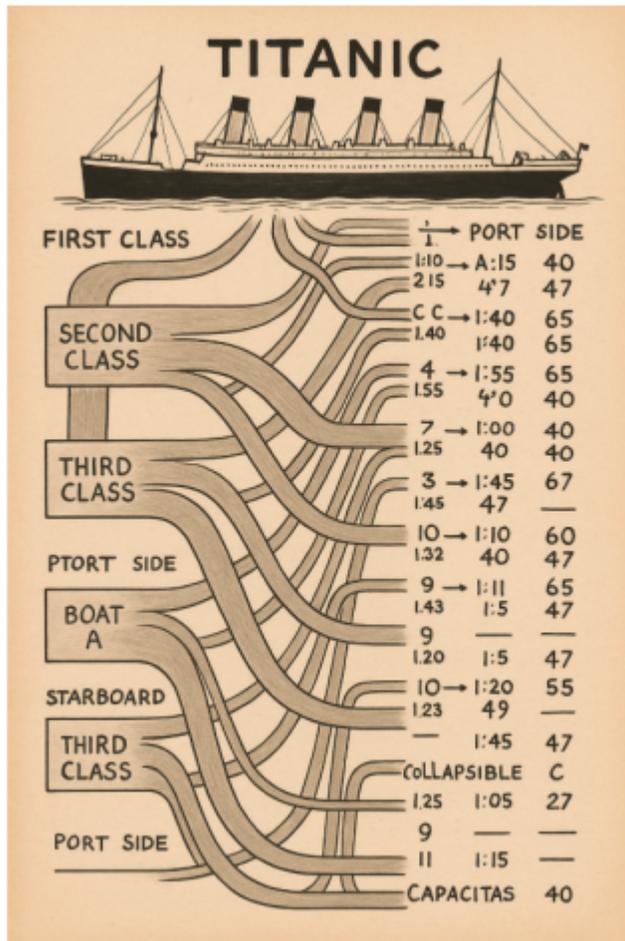


# Between the Lines: How AI Unwrapped New Stories from the Titanic's Glowing Rivers of Data

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Blaine Fisher, Ph.D., MS, MA, NRP, PG-Cert [bfisher3@tulane.edu](mailto:bfisher3@tulane.edu)

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*the Titanic*," I felt the hair rise on my forearms. Each glowing band wasn't just data—it was a current of flesh-and-blood hopes, fears that once breathed and dreamed in 1912. The thickest band, a royal blue torrent streaming from Southampton to the "Crew" category, represented hundreds of stokers, stewards, and mechanics who had signed on for steady work. A whisper-thin green filament traced Belgians in third class, while a stout magenta channel carried wealthy Americans to first-class cabins.

Yet the longer I stood there, mesmerized by color and contour, the more those variegated bands fused into a single word in my mind: **noise**. Beautiful noise, yes—but to a data scientist, noise is never merely chaos. It's fertile soil. To researchers like me, noise signals the presence of undiscovered patterns waiting just beneath the surface.

I raised my phone and captured a dozen photographs of the displays, knowing full well the images would be flawed—uneven lighting, tourists bobbing in and out of frame, reflections on the protective glass. Still, a question nagged at me: what could modern artificial intelligence make of this visual feast? Could a multimodal model cut through the noise and extract a coherent narrative? Perhaps even stories that human researchers had overlooked?

My family scattered toward the gift shop. I settled onto a bench, opened ChatGPT's o3 model on my phone, and typed five simple words: "**Interpret this infographic.**" I dropped the first image into the chat and pressed send.

What followed in the next thirty minutes forever changed my understanding of AI's role in historical research. This essay explores that revelation—why it worked, what it uncovered, and how it signals a seismic shift in how scholars might extract fresh knowledge from visual artifacts. Consider this both a travelogue through digital

possibility and a field guide to your own expeditions: by the end, I hope you'll pack a camera on your next museum visit, confident that a conversation with AI can transform those imperfect smartphone captures into genuine discovery.

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