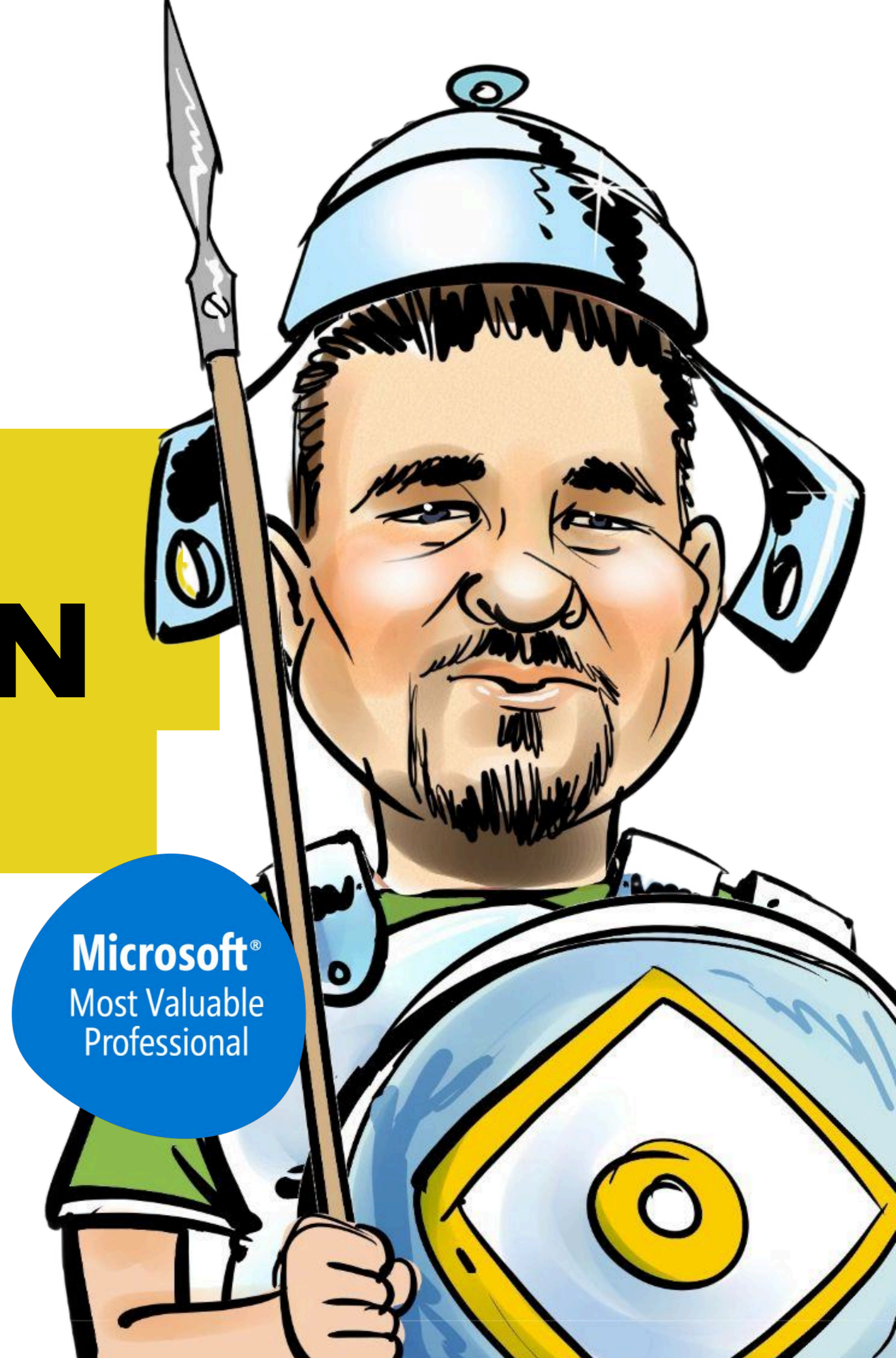


*tip!*  
A Crucial ~~Step~~ in Creating  
Meaning in Power BI

# WHY SEPARATION MATTERS

*Just a couple of ideas for  
you power bi designers*

Microsoft®  
Most Valuable  
Professional



# Separating Structure and Content in Power BI Using a Wallpaper

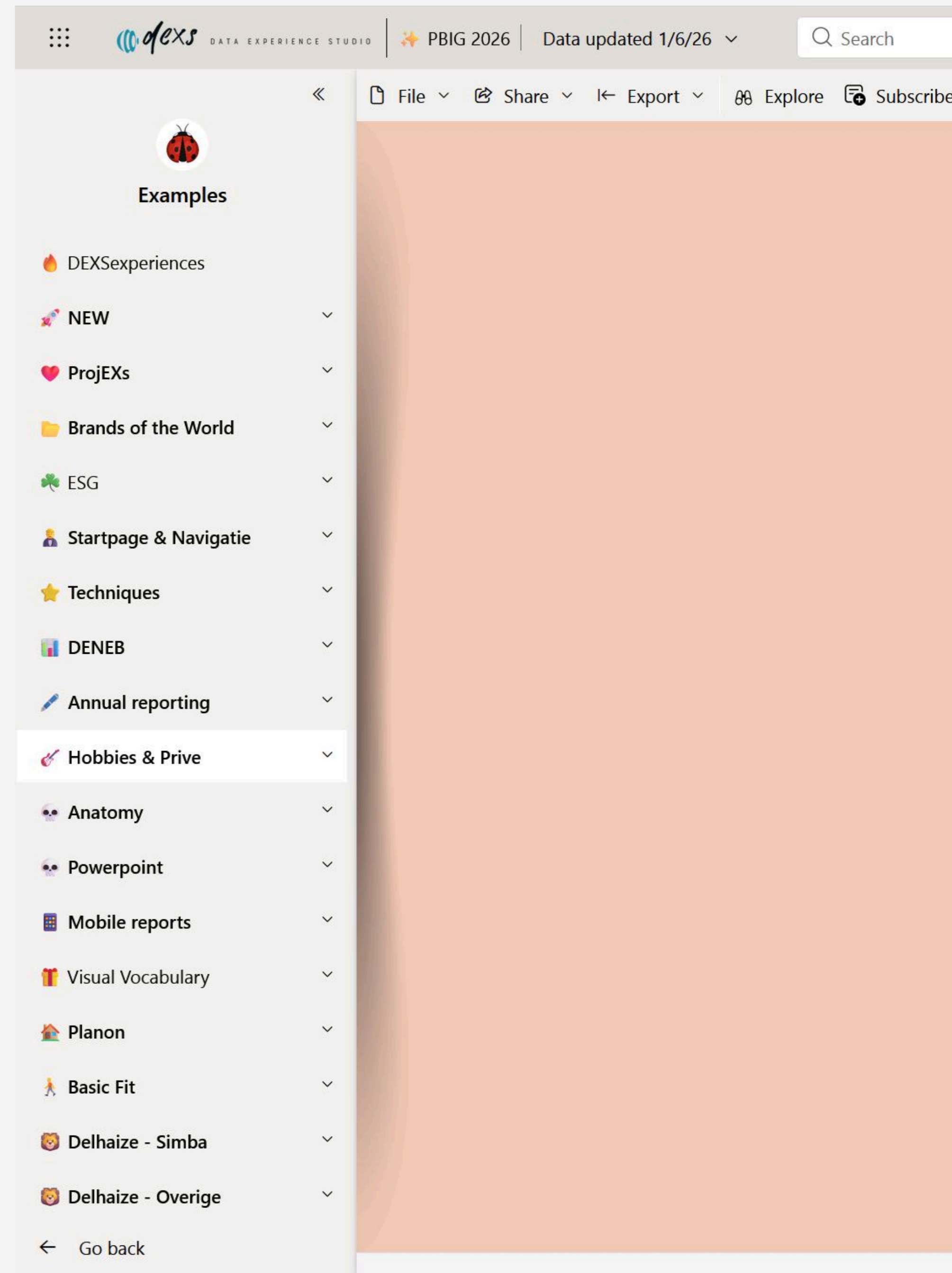
In this example I use a simple but powerful design technique: separating the left and right side of the report using the wallpaper layer. The goal is to visually distinguish navigation and context from analytical content, without adding visual noise or extra visuals. By introducing a subtle background split and a soft shadow line, the report becomes easier to scan, easier to understand, and more pleasant to use — especially in dense analytical pages.

How to do this in Power BI?

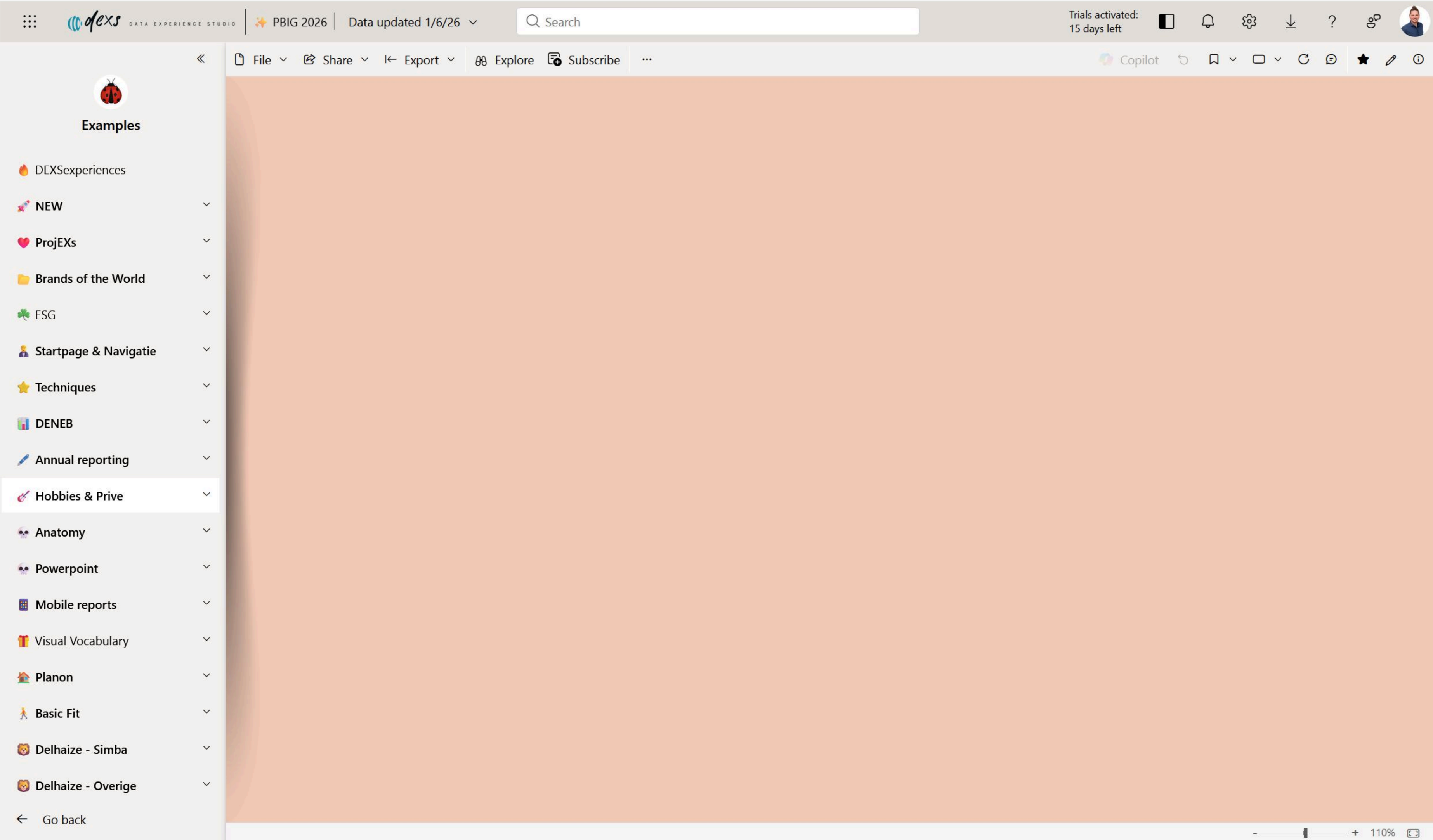


# Why Separation Matters

Users naturally scan a report from left to right. If everything sits on one flat background, the brain has to work harder to understand structure and importance. By visually separating the left side where navigation and context live from the right side where insights and charts are shown, a clear mental model is created. The user intuitively understands what is interactive and what is informational, which reduces cognitive load and improves usability without introducing visual clutter.

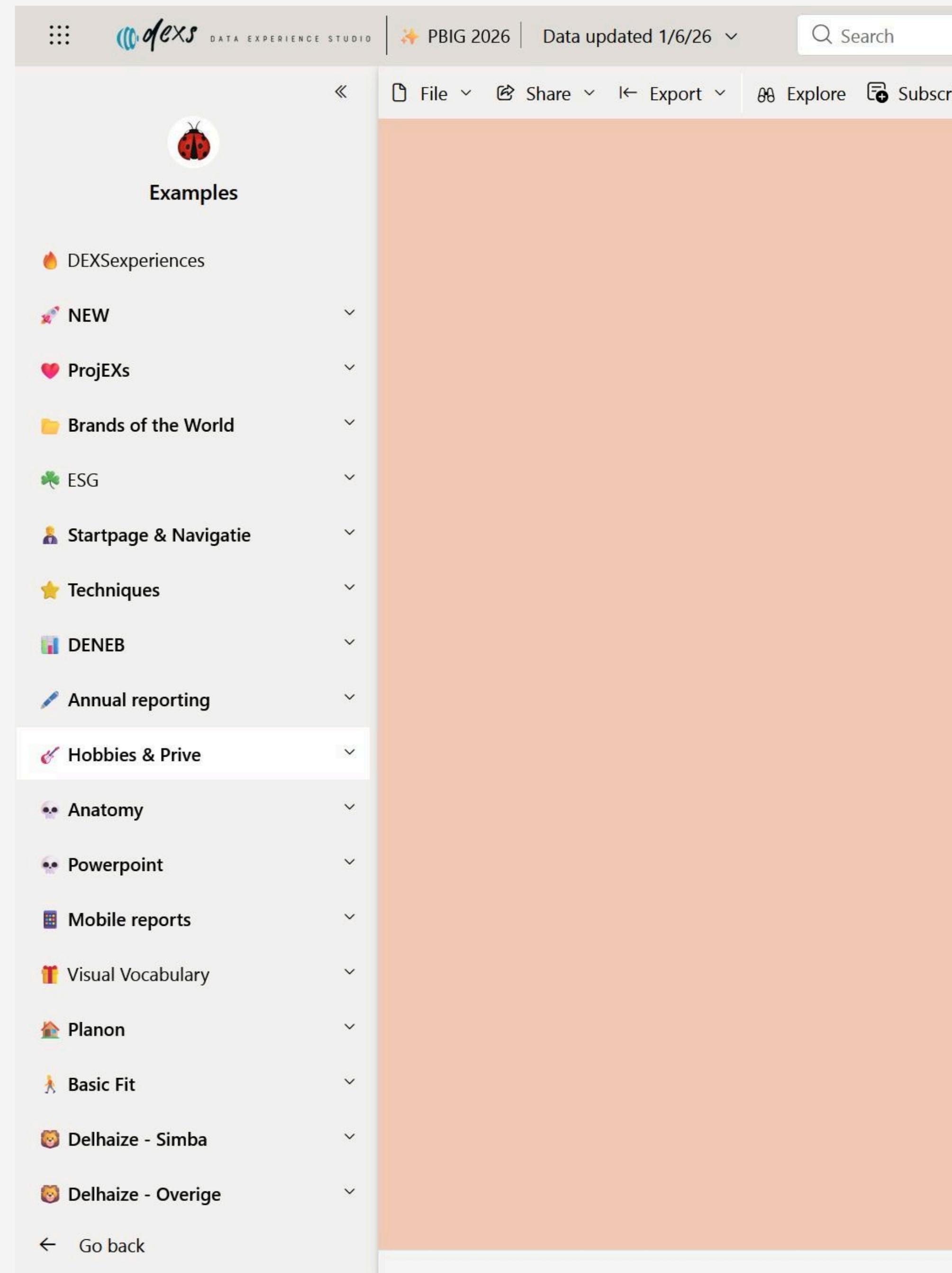


# Separating Structure and Content in Power BI Using a Wallpaper



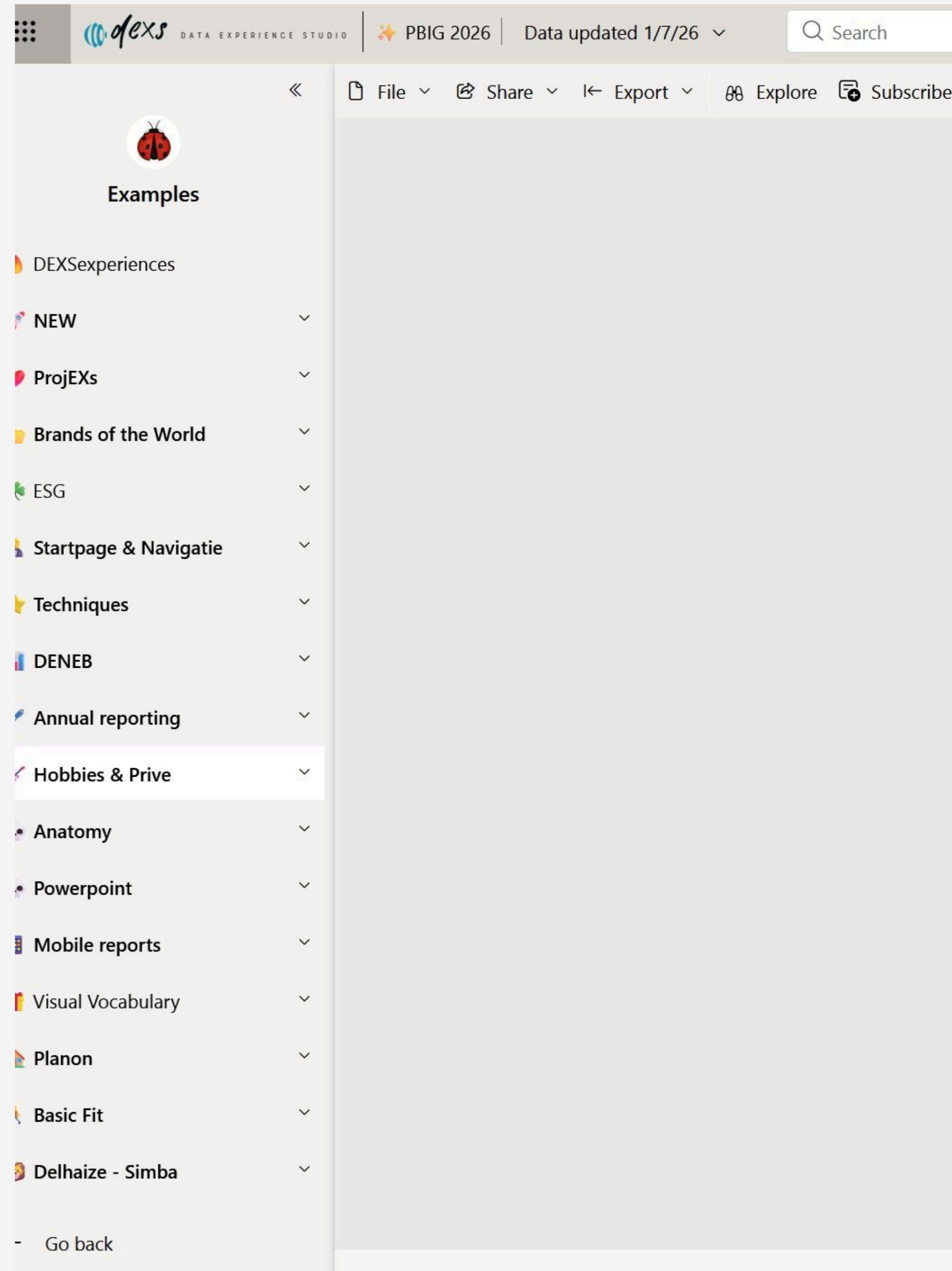
# Example Without Shadow Line

This example shows the same layout but without the shadow line between the left and right side. Although the content and structure are technically the same, the visual separation is much weaker and the two areas start to feel like one continuous surface, which makes it harder for the eye to distinguish between navigation and analytical content. As a result, the page feels flatter, denser, and slightly more tiring to scan, especially when the report contains many visuals or a lot of information.



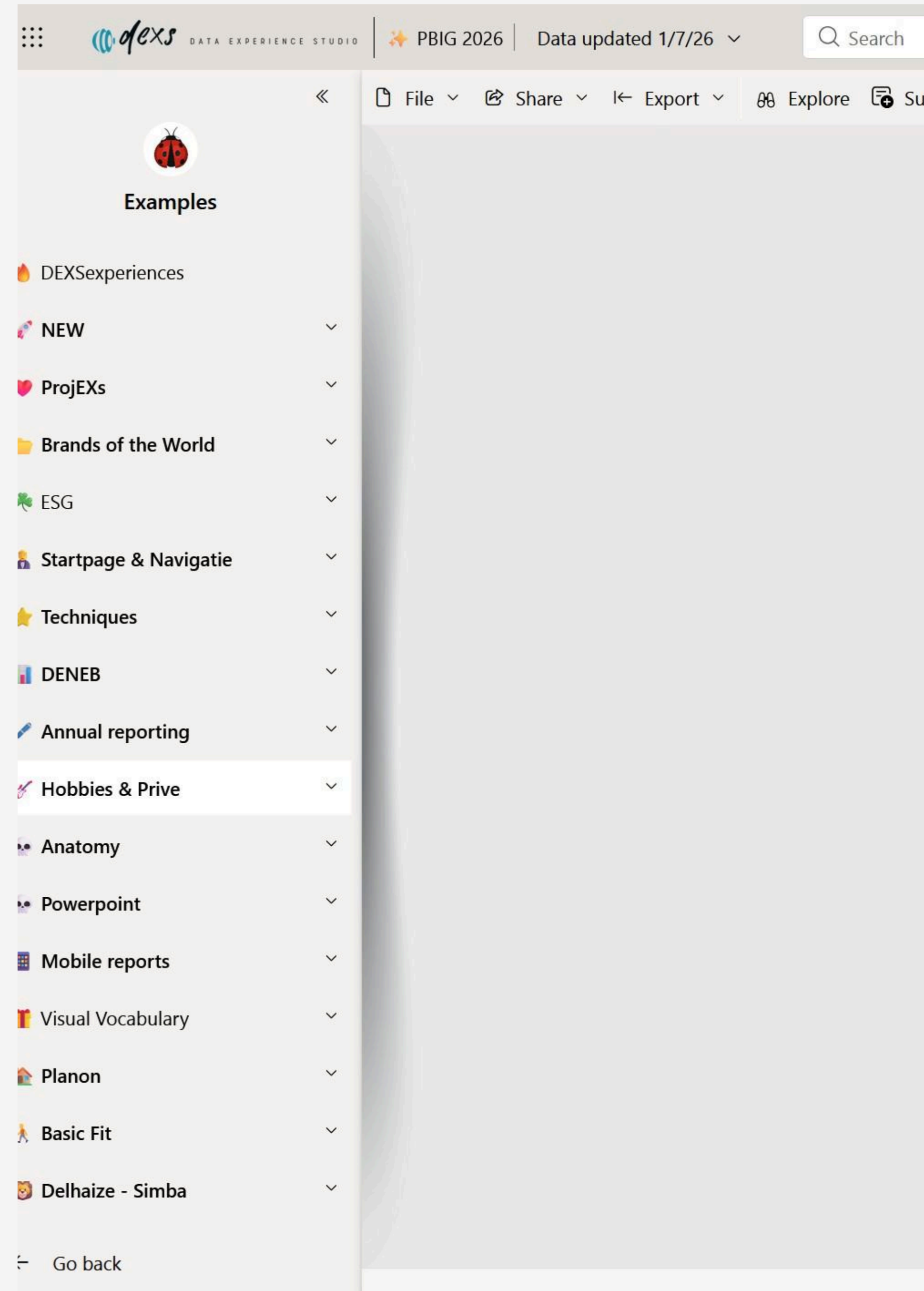
# When Color Is Not Enough

This effect becomes most valuable when both sides use the same or very similar colors. In that case, color can no longer create separation and the layout starts to feel flat and unstructured. The subtle shadow then becomes the main cue that helps the eye understand where one area ends and the other begins. It turns a purely visual detail into a functional element that supports clarity and orientation.



# Same color and line between

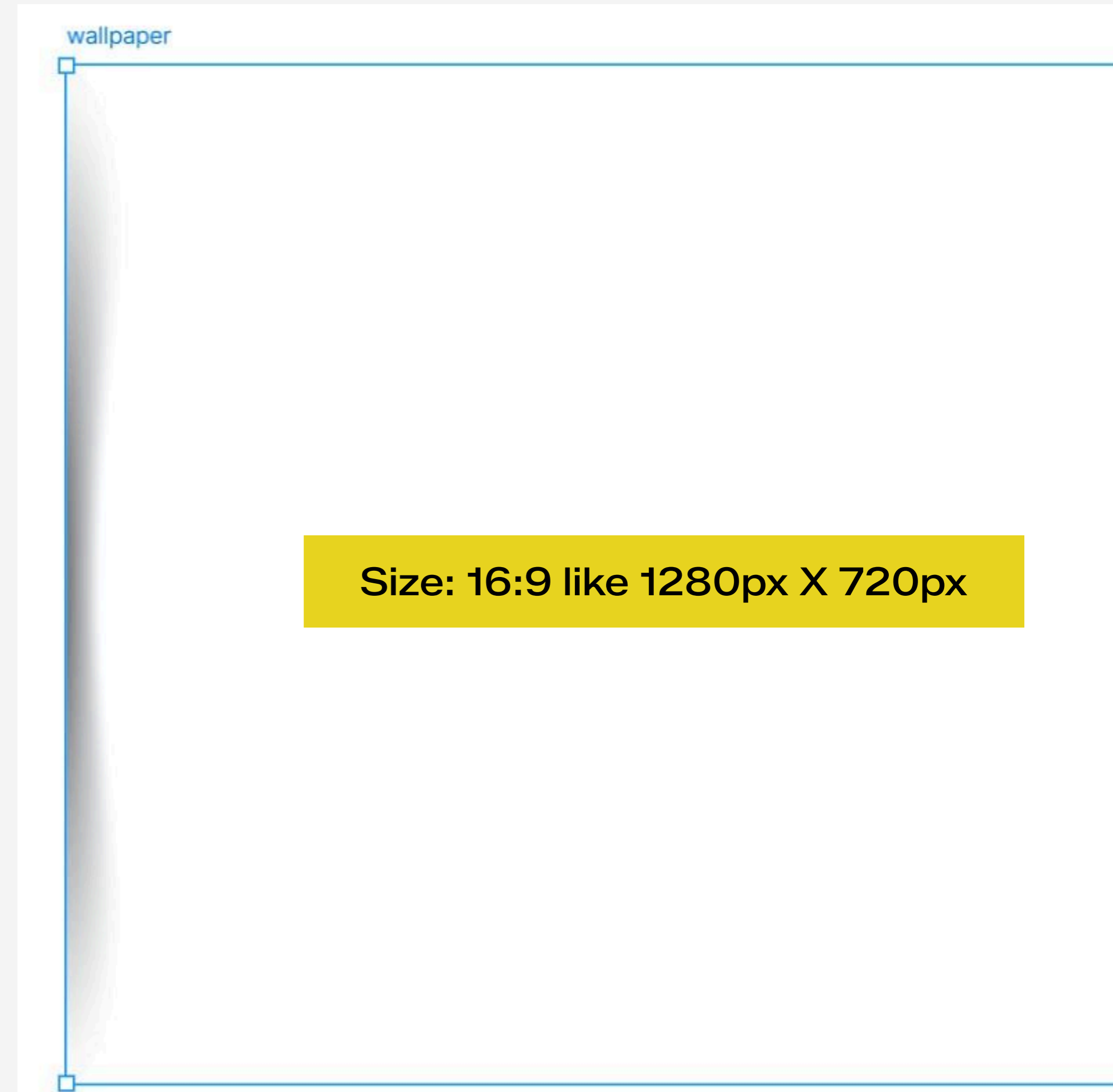
Users naturally scan a report from left to right. If everything sits on one flat background, the brain has to work harder to understand structure and importance. By visually separating the left side where navigation and context live from the right side where insights and charts are shown, a clear mental model is created. The user intuitively understands what is interactive and what is informational, which reduces cognitive load and improves usability without introducing visual clutter.





## How ..

Instead of drawing shapes or containers on the canvas, the wallpaper layer is used as a structural design layer. The wallpaper contains a subtle color shift between the left and right side and a very soft vertical shadow at the split point. Because this separation lives in the wallpaper, it never interferes with visuals, it does not affect performance, it cannot be accidentally selected or moved, and it stays consistent across all pages. This makes it a robust and scalable way to apply layout structure in Power BI.



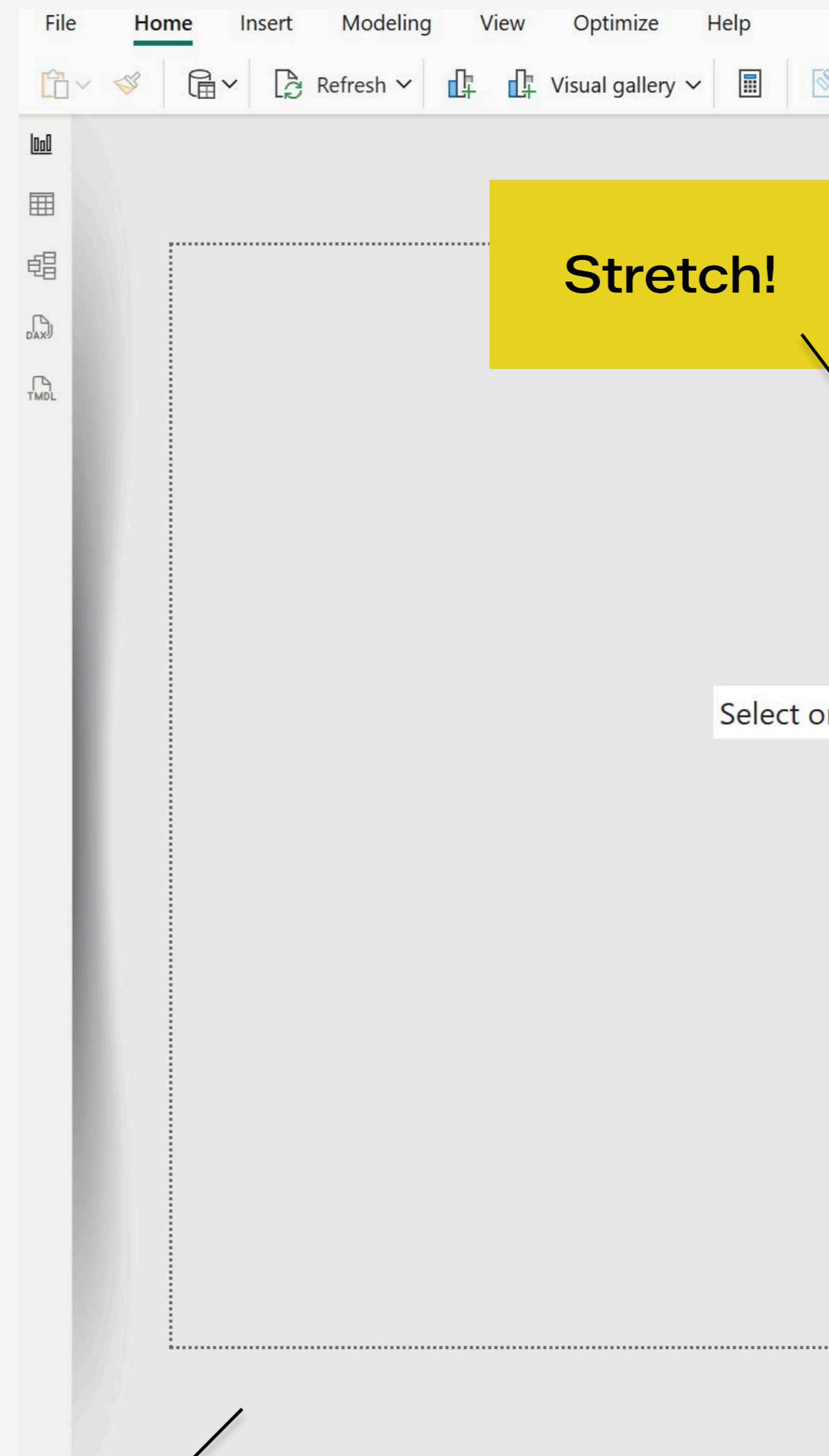
Size: 16:9 like 1280px X 720px

Use Figma to create a wallpaper file



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### Wallpaper

Color



Image

wallpaper.png

Image fit

Stretch

Transparency

0 %



Put the file inside the wallpaper layer of your PBIX inside PBI desktop



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That white background sucks

You also have to make change to the canvas!

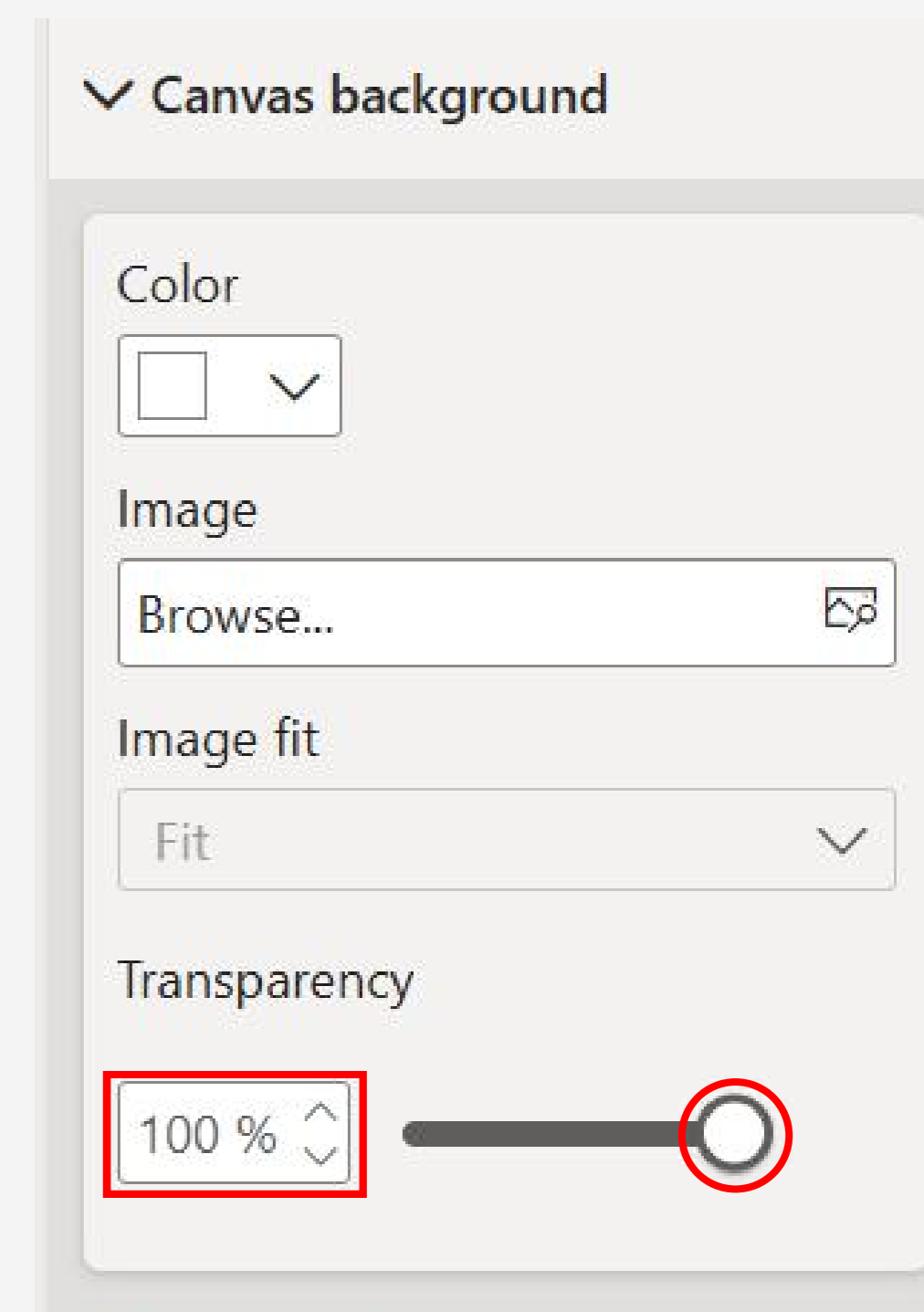
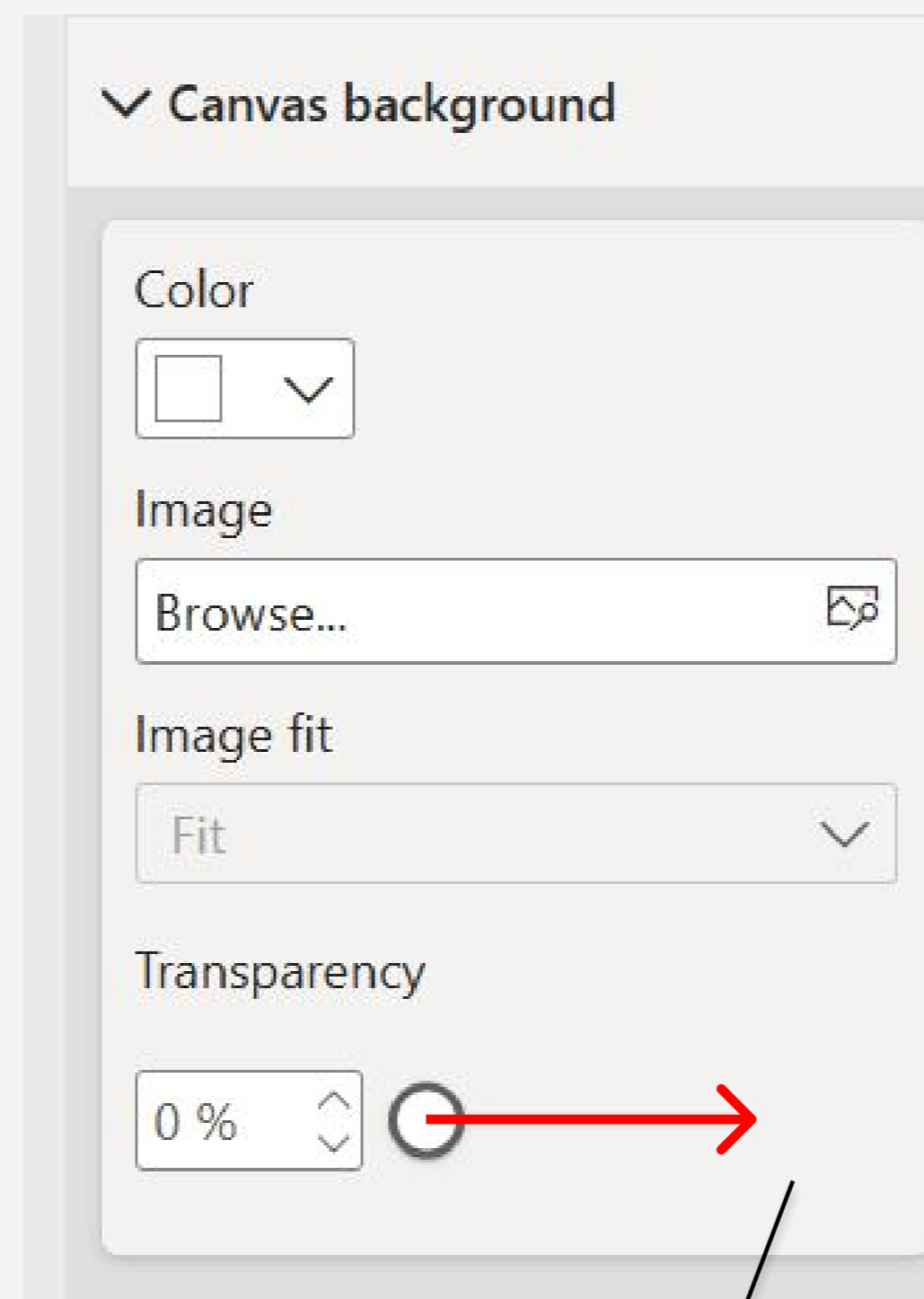
Build visuals with your  
Select or drag fields from the Data pane on





## How ..

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You change the background of the canvas!

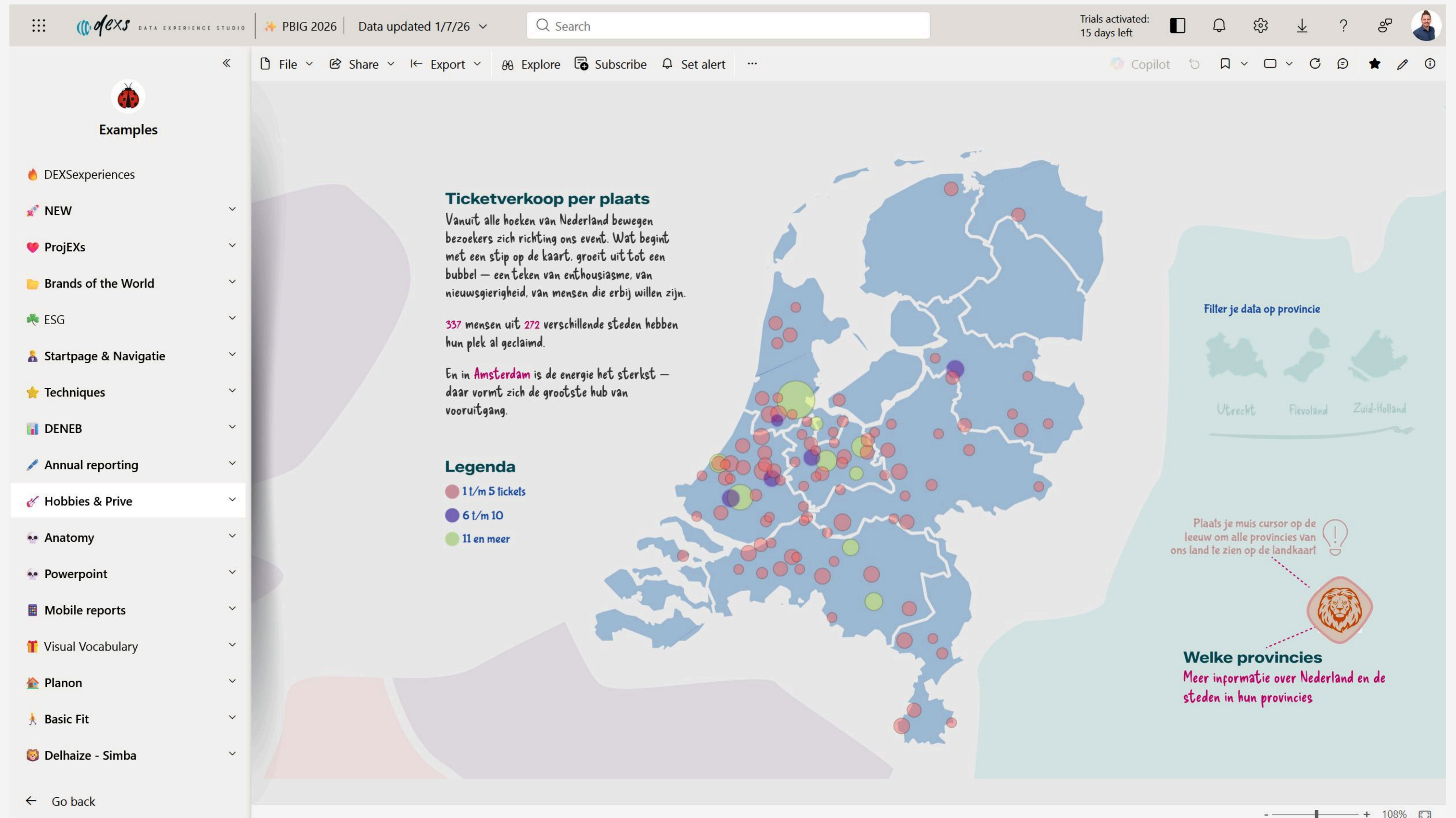
# Resulting User Experience

The end result is a report that feels structured without looking designed, calm without feeling empty, and intentional without being decorative. Users intuitively understand where navigation belongs and where insights live. This makes the report easier to use, easier to explain, and easier to maintain. It also shows that good design in Power BI is not about adding more, but about removing friction between the user and the insight.



# Results

The end result is a report that feels structured without looking designed, calm without feeling empty, and intentional without being decorative.



*Thanks!*  
*You are*  
*amazing!*

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. Your support, enthusiasm, and positive energy make our community a truly special place. Together, we've created a space where ideas flourish, friendships grow, and support abounds. Thank you for being the heart and soul of this wonderful community.

Let's continue to thrive together, inspire one another, and make our community even more vibrant in the days to come.

With sincere thanks,  
Armand van Amersfoort  
Founder dexts.me



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Most Valuable  
Professional