Instituted in 1994, the Nutrition Facts Label represents a huge step forward in the reporting of accurate nutrient content. However, the nutrient reference data for percent recommended daily values referred to on the label is inaccurate for much, if not most, of the American population. Basing the standards on a 2000 Calorie diet indicates that this is the normal, or average, intake requirement. However, Calorie requirements for adults, range from 1500 to 2500, depending on age, gender, activity level, and other factors. This and other factors, such as a lack of context for this data, is reflected in the continued confusion concerning the Nutrition Facts Label and its use.

In 2005, the USDA replaced the Food Guide Pyramid with the MyPyramid system which includes the revised food pyramid, as well as a website that allows personalized nutrient intake and activity information. This change recognizes the difficulty of applying general requirements to the entire population. However, the MyPyramid graphic cannot function without the website. The USDA attempted to simplify the information into a single image that required little if any text. In doing so however, they have removed much of the important information, leaving vague generalizations of how much of each food group one should consume relative to the others.

Developed in 1992, the Food Guide Pyramid, sponsored by the USDA, is one of the most powerful public education campaigns. Over 58% of Americans recognize the image. Yet of that 58%, just 13% actually understand it. One of the reasons for this is that it was out of date before it was even published. The pyramid was based on research from the late 1970s and early 1980s, which had an excessive focus on reducing dietary fat, yet did not differentiate between different types of dietary fat, some of which are part of a healthy diet and some which are not. An additional problem is that the serving size indicated on the pyramid is not comparable to serving sizes either in normal food consumption nor the Nutrition Facts Label. This leads to misunderstanding as people believe themselves to be choosing food wisely, whereas they may not be.

The Food Guide Pyramid was the USDA's attempt to create such a tool in order to educate American public on what exactly a healthy diet consists of. However, it has no connection to the Nutrition Facts Label, regulated by the FDA, making them two separate campaigns, neither of which are adequate for complete understanding of personal nutrition.

While information itself does not modify behavior, information that is understood can support consumers who already care about nutrition in making good decisions. This thesis will explore how nutrition information can be communicated in a way that is easier to understand as well as what types of tools can be created to allow consumers to relate the information on the packages to their specific nutrient needs.