

GLOBAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

DATA VISUALISATION SYMPOSIUM 2017



Wednesday 14th June 2017

Overview

Data has recently become the centre of much attention: from big data, to data sharing; from leaked data to private data collected by government agencies and stored to prevent crime. Academics, journalists, policymakers, practitioners and industry commentators have addressed the importance of data to study the world around us and have called for ways of making data more accessible. More accessible data is believed to lead to more accessible services, more accountable institutions, more understandable phenomena. Data visualisation is one of the ways in which data can be made more accessible to a wider audience.

Data visualisation is used in a number of key areas: from news organisations, to government departments, to creative industries, to human rights in social and political conflict. It is used to illustrate events and to explain social phenomena and ideas.

This one day symposium, hosted by MA Global Media Management at Winchester School of Art on Wednesday 14th June, brings together academics, postgraduate students and industry practitioners to explore what visualisation can tell us about information that would not otherwise be as readily accessible. The day will be split into three parts, each introduced by an expert in the field and then opened up to the audience in the final round table.

Programme

Wednesday 31st May

Pre-symposium reading group 1-2.30pm in PhD Study Room (Eastside 1065)

Wednesday 14th June

12.30-12.45	Welcome (Lecture Theatre A)
12.45-13.30	Anna Feigenbaum (Lecture Theatre A)
13.30-14.15	Cath Sleeman (Lecture Theatre A)
14.15-14.45	Break and Communication Design exhibition (Lecture Theatre A Foyer)
14.45-15.30	Cristian Hernández (Lecture Theatre A)
15.30-16.15	Roundtable (Seminar Room 8 and 9)

Speaker Abstracts and Biographies

Anna Feigenbaum: 'Scraping, Sorting and Storytelling: Dealing with Data in Social Justice Research'

Abstract

Drawing from my experience founding the Bournemouth University-based, Civic Media Hub and Datalab project, in this reflective presentation I highlight challenges and opportunities that come with practices of data storytelling for social justice. Specifically, I reflect on data gathering, the ethics of data visualization, and the problem of data distortion, particularly when working with sensitive issues and vulnerable populations.

While the rise of big and open data diversifies the kinds of stories we can tell with numbers, sensitive subjects often have no straightforward data source, documents are scattered across agencies and organisations, or are kept hidden. This 'uneven transparency' raises important questions about the duty to document (Larsen 2014), particularly in regard to vulnerable populations (prisoners, detainees, those living in conflict zones).

In relation to data visualization, recent years have seen an increasing popularity of the use of infographics, maps and other media interactives. At the same time, giving visual narrative to numbers comes with risks and ethical issues that researchers must address, including the statistical and graphic representation of people's lives and deaths.

Linked to these challenges of access to data and its representation, perhaps the biggest challenges in data-driven storytelling is data distortion. In every stage of the data storytelling process, from gathering information to circulating a visualisation on social media, distortion can come into play. For this reason we believe that transparency around data storytelling processes and data sources is at the heart of data storytelling for social justice.

Biography

Dr. Anna Feigenbaum is the author of the forthcoming Data Storytelling Workbook with Minute Works design studio (Routledge 2018). She is a Principal Academic in Digital Storytelling at Bournemouth University where she is the PI and founder of the BU Civic Media Hub and Datalabs project. Established in 2014, this project was designed to bring together a multidisciplinary, cross-Faculty team of academics and students from Communications, Geography and Data Science to work in collaboration with Journalists, NGOs and digital designers to co-create effective ways of engaging sensitive social issues through data analysis and communications. Through continued workshops and public events, our team engages in a participatory approach to data storytelling that combines principles of design, narrative theory, scaffolded technology learning and hacklab style collaborations. Read more at: <http://www.civicmedia.io/>

Cath Sleeman: 'Data visualisation in practice'

Abstract

As more datasets are opened up, finding effective ways to communicate the messages within them becomes increasingly important. Data visualisation can be a highly effective tool for sharing data-driven insights. Visualisations can range from a simple pie chart to an interactive 3D creation. The strength of a data visualisation lies in its ability to show data efficiently, by harnessing our visual strengths and by making efficient use of space on the page. At Nesta we now regularly publish data visualisations alongside our reports and blogs. They cover topics as diverse as measuring Antibiotic Resistance to mapping the network of individuals who contribute to the BBC. In this presentation I will show a range of our data visualisations. I will also discuss how to get started, explaining the process and tools that can be used. Data visualisation is also a fast moving field and so I will cover some recent developments and where to head for more information.

Biography

Cath is the Quantitative Research Fellow at Nesta, working in the Policy and Research team. She is interested in scraping, analysing and visualising complex data. Prior to Nesta, Cath was an Economist at Morgan Stanley, covering the UK economy. She has also worked as a senior economic analyst at the Reserve Bank of New Zealand in its research and modelling teams. Cath has recently completed a PhD in Economics at the University of Cambridge. See more at: <http://www.nesta.org.uk/users/cath-sleeman#sthash.hpiQICgJ.dpuf>

Cristian Hernández: ‘From open to public data: a citizen data science approach’

Abstract

In this presentation I will discuss my approach and practice to “Citizen Data Science” (CDC) which involves the generation of crowdsourced research questions with communities, and the extraction of meaningful information using open data from different sources. CDC represents a methodological proposal and an activist endeavour, in terms of creating participatory research projects where citizen can gather and learn together to solve questions, transforming open data into publicly available findings.

I will discuss how my approach to CDC differ from the use of citizen data science in industry, and is more connected with the field of “digital humanities”, where computational methods are used for social scientist to resolve problems about culture, arts, society or territory (Burdick et al., 2012). In this sense, the aim of CDC is to advance one step further into the use and analysis of open data or “quasi-public” data (Braco, 2013), and moving towards the generation of public information.

Openness is a functional capacity (like downloading data), while public means the capacity to use, and in this case, to extract meaning from data. To illustrate my approach to CDC I will be presenting the experience and outcomes of a series of workshops conducted at two Universities in Santiago, Chile, where participants (architects, designers, students) as data ‘visualizers” were obtaining and transforming open data into public data, using their existing knowledge and developing creative methods to manage and visualize their responses to a research question.

Biography

Cristian Hernández is an expert in spatial analysis and natural language processing. He works as a consultant for nonprofit organizations and start-up’s in Europe and Latin America. Cristian is currently leading a citizen data science project on light pollution called “Octal”, part of the Stars4All Program (EU funded), aimed at training people in data science methods and designing experiences using data visualizations.