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Reading 2

Q1. Given the Wikipedia definitions on data and information, what is your own take on this and specifically what is the difference between data and information?

According to Wikipedia, data is “a collection of discrete values that convey information, describing quantity, quality, fact, statistics, other basic units of meaning, or simply sequences of symbols that may be further interpreted,” and information is “an abstract concept that refers to that which has the power to inform.” While there is much overlap between these two terms, there are subtle differences as well. Data seems to be a collection of information that may be analyzed and researched, having a specific purpose. On the other hand, information is a series of values that may require context to understand what it is informing you of, and seems to be a necessary element for data.

Q2. From the Manovich reading, what is the difference between visualization and mapping?

Manovich refers to visualization to “situations when quantified data which by itself is not visual... is transformed into a visual representation,” such as “stock market behaviors.” He then mentions that “visualization then can be thought of as a particular subset of mapping in which a data set is mapped into an image.” As discussed in class, visualization is the outcome or result of some presentation of data and information, whereas mapping consists of the process and the translating of the data and information into a visual, tangible representation.

Q3. When Manovich states that visualization is the anti-sublime art what is he referring to? Do you agree with this notion?

Manovich describes visualization as 'anti-sublime,' which I agree with in some way. From an art history perspective in landscape painting, I know that the Sublime was associated with the individual connection between the artist and nature, including its mystery, grandeur, and even fear or danger. In this context, the experience and evoked feelings of the artist are not tangible and cannot be directly visualized. When art is anti-sublime as Manovich puts it, he refers to the art itself being no more than straightforward. On the other hand, data visualization is literally taking intangible data and transforming it into something that can be viewed and/or experienced.

Q4. Group take home assignment: You will be assigned to a group, each person in the group is in charge of 1 of 6 artists. Watch the video and then write a paragraph summarizing the artist, on what they showed in their presentation, and the type of art they make. Elaborate on their specific interests in data, language and methods of visualization.

Laurie Frick is a data artist, focusing on the visualization of elements that people usually don't think about or know of themselves, like in her work Imagined Time (2008-2022), which is a visualization of her sleep cycle using a zeo sleep monitor. She enjoys monitoring and researching about her body and the subconscious behaviors and activities that occur in her life. She takes these 'patterns of data' and transforms them into tangible, physical works that in a way, comforts and reassures her. These works can act as a unique timeline and collection of history pasted and mapped for viewing. Frick refers to these patterns as rule systems, and as she gained recognition and attention, these rule systems were being utilized by other people and groups. She reassesses the purpose of these rule systems and considers that they may be a way to find more about ourselves and who we could be. She discusses the prevalence of data tracking of people, and encourages others not to 'hide' from it, but to embrace it and 'get more.