DAT505 Creative coding report

The Pointless box

For this assignment I had to make a decision on what data I wanted to collect and then visualise, with so many options it was hard to choose what to do. I decided that I wanted to incorporate a bit of an experiment into the project alongside the data visualising. With this in mind I finalised my idea to be the Pointless box, a box that only has a red button on top, with the idea being to just see if people would press it. This would have been interesting due to the insight this would have given me into people’s curiosity.

After presenting my initial idea however, it was suggested that I incorporate more incentives to get people to press the button so I added a LED and a buzzer. I started the creation of the pointless box by getting the core physical components working with the use of Johnny-five. The next step was 3d printing a box so I created a basic box on blender to get printed.

After the first two parts of the project going well I hit my first bump, mongoDB and mlab integration, due to the university security I couldn’t send data to mlab and due to my project needing to be placed in a university room this meant I couldn’t use it. I also tried to use a local server for mongoDB but I had a further issue of the server refusing to initialise and giving me a mongod.lock file. I then tried to get a serial connection to work which after hours trying to resolve the issues I couldn’t get to work. The final solution I have used was using sockets.io to talk between my johnny-five sketch and my p5.js sketch, this solution however meant I could only gather real time data and therefore create a real time visualisation. Due to being unable to gather longitudinal data it means that the usability and utilisation of the pointless box had to change.

The final visualisation is a random generation of a circle of random size and colour in a random location for each press of the button. With the original aims of this project in mind I would say the outcome is slightly disappointing due to the lack of longitudinal data and lack of interaction with unknowing participants. However I do believe that with the limitations in place due to university security the Pointless box is still a fun demonstration for the visualisation of data via sensory input.