**Exploring the Data Visualization Process**

In this activity, we will explore the data visualization process – data collection, analysis and visualization – and all of the considerations and decisions along the way. The data for this activity is a week of text messages on your phone or a week of emails. You will have to make decisions about what aspects of the data you will explore and visualize to tell a story. This activity combines independent work with group discussion. You may not end up creating a final visualization, but think about visualization best practices when you sketch your ideas.

1. Collect and summarize data from a week’s worth of text messages. Look at your own text messages/emails and think about the following questions:
   1. What characteristics/categories are interesting to you? (Example - number of texts per hour)
   2. What characteristics/categories might be interesting to others? (Example - text topics)
   3. What research question could you answer with the data?
   4. What methods will you use to collect the data?
2. Discuss your data and collection methods with the people at your table.
   1. What are some challenges or obstacles to collecting data?
   2. Is there additional data that you need?
3. Use a laptop, pen/paper, or the whiteboard tables to plan and design a visualization of your data. You can look up examples for inspiration and use the [Data Visualization Catalogue](http://www.datavizcatalogue.com/) to explore different char types. Consider the following:
   1. What is the research question that the visualization will answer?
   2. What story will the final visualization tell?
   3. Who is your target audience?
   4. What visual style or chart type will you use and why?