Review of Journalism in the Age of Data

The video provides an overview of the progress and prospect of the industry, or discipline, of Data Visualization. Starting with the core challenge of information explosion faced by journalism, scholar and even lay people, we start to consider data visualization as one possible answer to the challenge. Essentially, data visualization provides us an extension of human comprehensibility to understand data in a “graphical”, “dynamic”, and “interactive way”. For example, there are things more than the time schedule that we need to examine the condition of air traffic; we also want to see the information about the plane’s trajectory, the time stamp, and the density of traffic, along with access to specified, or classified information by airport, airline companies etc.

Despite its seemingly “omnipotent” potential on showing information, as the video warns us, practices of Data visualization also involves compromises between strengths and weaknesses, not to mention the inherent difference in quality of presentations. The video suggests that presenting visualized data is just like story-telling, and there are multiple ways of doing that with each having its specific advantages. “Story-tellers” are supposed to make balance between different aspects of the data presentation. For example, although being attractive to audience would always be an advantage, a beautifully designed graph might be too complicated for audience to decipher the details; an interactive or film-like pre-designed presentation may unable to bring out the further-information that audience want. Just like different styles of story-telling suit different stories, styles of data visualization should always be of primary importance for practitioner to consider. And this discipline is looking forward for a set of guidance to be made.