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Interactive Media

Blog post 4

Historic Data Visualization

Data visualization is a visual representation of data or information. This can be graphs, charts and maps of any kind that can display information accurately. This also helpful in being able to see common data sources, outliers and common trends in the data that is being provided.

I will be analysing maps as a form of data visualization, as they were actually the first forms of data visualization, cartography. There are different ways that data can be displayed on maps, such as: Heat maps, line maps, point maps, land owner ship, flow maps and regional maps.

Maps were used historically, for data visualization even before it was categorized as data visualization. People had used maps to show significant land data, where cities, towns, building, churches, roads and cities were. These are landmarks that helped people navigate there way through places without getting lost.

Personally, I believe that having a map as data visualization for specific data can be really helpful. It becomes of aid to people with navigation and exploration, it informs, as well as communicates. Although, not all maps were necessarily perfect/accurate at the time of development or creation. Only after measurement tools were invented did maps become more accurate with distances and measurements, then having the press eventually mass producing and printing more accurate maps.

According to Kidd, “*Theories of Representation*”, in “Representations in Reality” (Kidd, 2016), Kidd discusses the way language, symbols and code have a representation in our reality. This can be portrayed in maps using data visualization. The signs and symbols on the map have their own representations and meanings, therefore making it easier and universally known as to what the symbols mean on a map. Symbols and codes are like having a language that is universally understood, allowing communication and information to be displayed easily.

According to Thompson, “*The Surprising History of the Infographic*”, “The idea of visualizing data is old: After all, that’s what a map is—a representation of geographic information—and we’ve had maps for about 8,000 years.” (Thompson, 2016 ). Thompson mentions how rare data was and that there never was data that was published, as it had not been collected yet. this changed when people had finally become more aware and started publishing their data, therefore being able to use it to fix problems and social issues.

In conclusion, data visualization has been around for a really long time, especially maps as a source of visualization. This allowed people to begin understanding data and how it can be used to fix issues, as well as displaying data and information to track to data, look at trends and outliers in sets of data.

# References

Kidd, J., 2016. Theories of Representation . In: *Representation.* New York: Routledge, pp. 18 - 39.

Thompson, C., 2016 . The Surprising Hisory of the Infographic. *Smithsonian Magazine,* pp. 1 - 11.