

A note about "The Humane Representation of Thought"

2-2 minutes

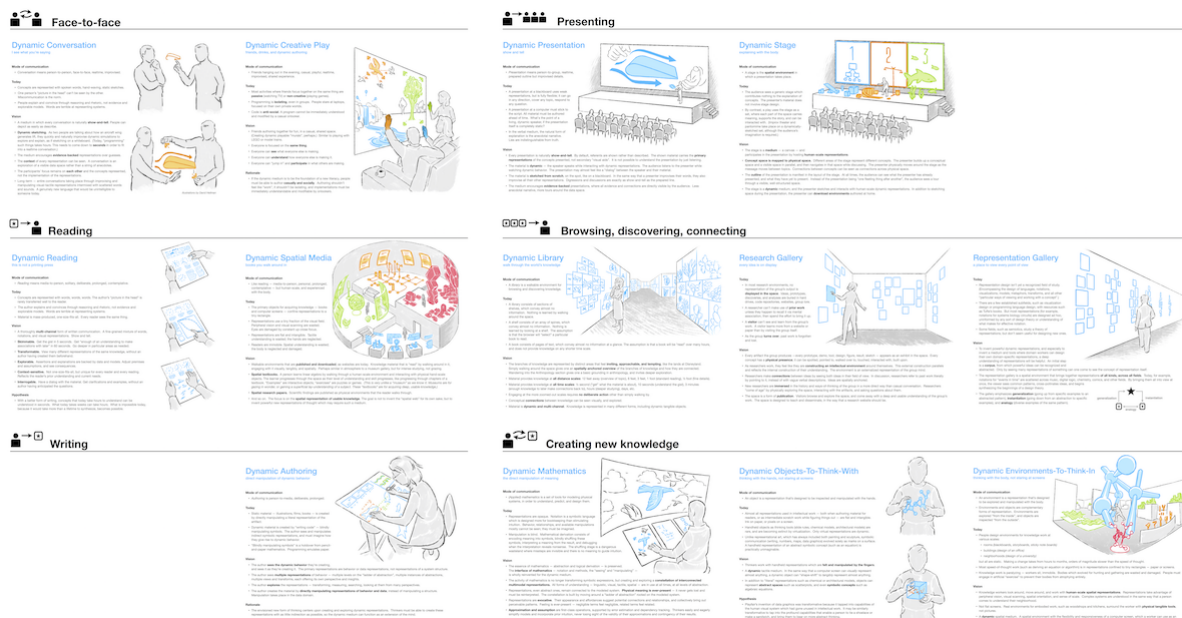
Bret Victor / December 21, 2014

A year and a half ago, on a plane, I wrote [An Ill-Advised Personal Note about "Media for Thinking the Unthinkable"](#). The talk was my most personal one to date, and the note was perhaps the most honest thing I had written in public.

There was a paragraph which didn't make the cut, but never left my mind:

I'm figuring this out as I go. One's ability to articulate an idea always lags behind the understanding of the idea, and the understanding of an idea often lags behind the embodiment in which it is first given life. It can take a surprising amount of time to come to understand what a prototype is trying to "say", and longer still to say it oneself.

The talk I'll be releasing tomorrow is called [The Humane Representation of Thought](#). It's based on a piece of writing that I started over a year ago, a long-term research agenda (and floor plan) for myself and my then-nascent research group, an attempt to unearth the demons that have driven my work over the last decade, and draw a map of the destination they're trying to get to.



This piece of writing has not achieved escape velocity from the revision cycle, and I don't know when it will. These are not easy things to articulate, and I want to get them right. But you can't hide indefinitely, and this talk was an initial attempt to try something out in public.

The talk was given as the closing keynote at both [UIST](#) and [SPLASH](#) this year. There's very little overlap between the two conferences, but the subject matter seemed to encompass both territories.

The talk describes a world that does not yet exist; thus, I had nothing to demo. I'm looking forward to sharing some provocative prototypes in 2015.