

Through the Looking Glass: Talking about the World with Visualization

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Data visualization has historically been accessible only to the elite in academia, business, and government. It was "serious" technology, created by experts for experts. In recent years, however, web-based visualizations--ranging from political art projects to news stories--have reached audiences of millions.

What will this new era of data transparency look like--and what are the implications for technologists who work with data? To help answer this question, we report on recent research into public data analysis and visualization. Some of our results come from Many Eyes, a "living laboratory" web site where people may upload their own data, create interactive visualizations, and carry on conversations. We'll also show how the art world has embraced visualization. We'll discuss the future of visual literacy and what it means for a world where visualizations are a part of political discussions, citizen activism, religious discussions, game playing, and educational exchanges.