

The future of information representation may simply be less of it

A journey forward in time with future-historian and winner of the 2031 Best Astronaut Award, Jam

Commercial information visualisation has enjoyed a boom in the last decade. We're in a period of massive data collection and the ability to represent that data, afforded to us with smaller and more powerful, wearable technology.

We can see this change happening with popular consumer items like the Nike Fuel band's colour display, in the haptic feedback of the Apple Watch, in the proliferation of online visualisation tools and the adoption of the infographic by major brands.

So where do we go from here? More data will be represented, sure, it's inevitable as capabilities and opportunities in hardware and data collection continue to accelerate and expand.

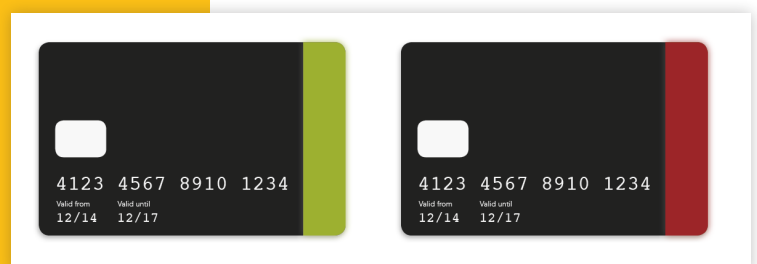
We anticipate information visualisation to become more immediately visible, to become more passive and ultimately to become less important. Less data visualisation in favour of insight or action or prompts or even automation. Less reliance on the reading of data means more meaningful interactions:

Imagine a health app that doesn't say "You've walked 200 steps today! Congratulations!" Imagine instead one that says "Walk more tomorrow."

Imagine an astronaut with oxygen levels lit up on their backpack so other astronauts can check the safety of the team.

Imagine a bank card that is green when funds are high and red when funds are low to prompt you to limit your purchases.

Some of these exist on one form or another, and we could see it become the prevalent method in years to come.



Imagine...

In 5 years

What happens in a world where all your products are data-reliant? A world saturated with data collection and information visualisation? What happens when people tire of unprocessed data?

In 10 years

What happens in a world where the data is invisible? A world where we are lead to decision-making without analysing the raw data ourselves? Would you trust your health app with that? Your cooking appliances? A military power? A gun?

In 15 years

What happens in a world where data collection can be used against you? What happens in a world where data is danger? Will we pursue a path of data rejection?

In 20 years

All data is obsolete. The world functions as small factions lead by wise old elders in place of formal government. Decision are made on whims and conjecture rather than analysis and investigation.

In 150 years

Archaeologists discover a strange hand-sized rectangle buried beneath the Earth. Curious minds and curious hands explore the smooth edges and contours. Suddenly, a fruit appears... *fades to black*



In this short talk we aim to discuss the changes we may see in the coming decade prompted by existing possibilities and limitations, and the consequences these may bring. It's easy to think of information visualisation in terms of consumer products, brands and advertising but their adoption will reach much further. New industries, schools, even militaries will invariably adopt visualisation systems for better or worse. What happens when they do?