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SUBJECT: Author's Note

This workshop is designed to welcome beginners to start with exploring data with critical contextualization especially in the case of data reuse and visualization. I, also as a beginner, could both self-teach and learn from peers and the professor throughout the whole process of developing and demonstrating the workshop.

Trials and Errors: Toward Critical Contextualization of Data

In the beginning, the main objective of this workshop was to open up the possibilities for beginners who have no idea of data analysis or visualization. Since this workshop aims for beginners and tries to involve communication of emotions and experiences throughout the sessions, it also can be an opportunity to build a community among participants.

From personal experience, no background knowledge means you don't know what you don't know. When you start from scratch, what catches your attention is data—how to make a meaningful analysis out of it? Examples and exercises can help beginners to start the journey with guidance. In fact, tools introduced in the workshop may solve your problem with handy templates. You can just mock the data structure and make it pretty by clicking several buttons. However, the buttonology problem comes in at this moment. Buttonology problem happens when training softwares or tools in an introductory manner without considering underlying concepts or lacking critical perspectives (Russell & Hensley, 2017; LeBlanc & Walsh, 2019).

After receiving important feedback on them from peers and the professor, I took it back to readings of Data Feminism (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020), critical data analysis (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020), and data reuse (Harper, 2023). Revisiting those studies, I learned that a critical approach and contextualization of data are the keys to data analysis and the very objectives of DH. Also, by reusing the

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data of the general survey, I could grasp and practice proper data management and contextualization throughout the workshop development. As discussed in the final report, I personally experienced the barriers and enablers of data reuse. The general survey data was accessible and proper for the workshop, but I had to go through data standardization and contextualization without enough original contexts. I had to critically consider the interpretation I made in each step of data manipulation and visualization. This whole experience allowed me to learn by doing. I think this workshop truly started my journey as a DH scholar.

Limitations and Suggestions

Still, some limitations remain with this workshop. The limited time, asynchronous process, and different data visualization made the workshop challenging. As we discuss those limitations, I also want to suggest ways to improve these barriers to revise and build up a more successful version of this workshop in the future.

First, the restricted time was challenging to cover the scope and goal of the workshop. There were various tools to practice and compare while discussing critical contextualization and manipulation of data. The live demonstration was previously about one and a half hours long but went through huge editing to meet the time limit. Spontaneously, several discussions and contexts were cut down in this process. If the workshop could be held in two or three sessions, more profound discussions and interactions may be available.

Second, the asynchronous demonstration was impossible to communicate with the participants. Interactions between instructors and participants are one of the most crucial parts of this workshop. This is because close and sincere interplay helps participants to accomplish the session and build a safe community within the workshop, and instructors can catch up with participants and their understanding to assess and improve the workshop. However, the invisible participants in different timelines made the workshop one-sided unlike its objectives.

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Finally, due to varied visualizations and analyses, in-depth comparison and evaluation between different DH tools were restricted at the end of the workshop. If the analysis objectives and subject variables could be unified, the comparative evaluation of tools would be more available.

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