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Visual Analytics
Reading: Sensemaking
Due Date: 2/12/20

Questions to answer:

- What are the most important concepts you want to remember from the reading?

  I believe the notional model of the whole analyst's process diagram is an important concept for understanding the process of going from raw data information to concrete schemas and hypotheses ready to be potentially applied for other hypotheses or presentations. The sensemaking process was also very interesting to me because it's exactly what I do when trying to make sense of information without following a procedure. However, what I learned from the research paper is that sensemaking process is Information, Schema, Insight, and Product.

  Another important concept is knowing which type of information processing would be beneficial to the user based on what information he/she has. This involves the bottom-up and top-down process. If initially one is given theories or a presentation developed by an analysts/client, then one would use the top-down process in order to break down the theory and search for information that would generate new hypotheses by digging deeper to the raw data level. If someone was given large amounts of raw data and would need to come up with some sort of theory or presentation based on the data, then the user would use the bottom-up process. The bottom-up process involves searching and filtering data sources and creating subsets/schemas of useful information that would be beneficial to generate some sort portrayal of the data.

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- How can the model be used in practice to design and/or evaluate visual analytics solutions?

In practice, the model is very helpful to display the progression of understanding the data given. From the model there are two areas known as the foraging loop and sensemaking loop. The foraging loop begins with exploring general sets of data that may potentially be useful for the user. From there, the loop goes to the enriching phase, where higher-precision subsets of data were made based on the previous general sets. The filtering of information may lead one to go back to find more general sets or can process further into the exploiting phase. This is where the user is able to formulate inferences, or patterns based on the items in the set. For the user to get to this point, there's a lot of structure and efforts made through extracting these general sets repeatedly.

The sensemaking loop involves structuring of hypotheses and marshalling evidence to support the predictions and schemas made from the output of the foraging loop. An archetype that demonstrates this whole procedure can be seen when intelligence analysts try to figure some sort of leads from large amounts of text files and reports. From the large amounts of the data, the analyst is able to amalgamate large sets of data that may be useful and go through the whole model in order to find some conclusions that knit all the sets of data together.