

Week 6 Response

Experiential Data Visualization

By examining the characteristics of experiential data visualization, I will compare *We Feel Fine* by Sepandar D. Kamvar and Jonathan Harris with *Conversation Wall* by Daily Tous Les Jours. *Conversation Wall* is an interactive board created in 2014 for a community bank in South Lake Union, a fast-growing neighborhood in Seattle (Daily tous les jours). The bank features a digital wall that allows people to share what they care about by completing the prompt “We want to have a conversation about _____” (Kamvar and Harris). People can contribute by filling in the entry through phone texting and their submissions will be updated immediately on the wall. They can also fill out a physical postcard inside the bank and it will be displayed on a wall in the bank. These submissions are then used to develop workshops for people in the community to have those discussions and drive the economy in a positive direction.

Conversation Wall meets some of the criteria of experiential data visualization, though not all of them. First, experiential data visualizations should “communicate insights that are often simply communicated in words, but much more powerfully communicated by example” (Kamvar and Harris). For *Conversation Wall*, the data has not been presented in a data visualization that summarizes the results. Rather, the entries are shown, unfiltered. Therefore, the only insight that a passerby can see is what people have written, though they will not be able to search for specific words or easily count entries with the same topic. This project fails at communicating insights for the general public, though the data was probably more useful for the people collecting them, who can count the entries, then create workshops based on the most popular conversation topics. *We Feel Fine* is much more successful at using interactive data visualizations to share people’s collective emotions and analyze them to produce fruitful insights.

Second, while *We Feel Fine* focuses “on interaction models that encourage direct interaction with individual data items” (Kamvar and Harris), *Conversation Wall* does not make the individual entries easily accessible. For instance, the handwritten postcards are showcased on the bank wall, but the database of digital entries is not logged on a public platform for people to see (the public does however see the entries being updated one at a time on the digital wall).

Third, experiential data visualizations should “focus on influencing affect rather than cognition” (Kamvar and Harris). *Conversation Wall* does this successfully by bringing to life actual conversations based on the data. This raises an interesting question: what is more important—being able to see the collected data or actively reacting to it to make use of it? *We Feel Fine* makes people feel less alone by sharing feelings.

Conversation Wall does it by inviting people to socialize and talk about what's important to them. Both projects motivate changes in affect and empower people. Finally, despite the fact that *Conversation Wall* does not meet all the properties of experiential data visualization, it encourages positive change using people's data on their interests.

Works Cited

Daily tous les jours. "Conversation Wall." *Daily Tous Les Jours*, 10 Sept. 2014,

<https://www.dailytouslesjours.com/en/work/conversation-wall>.

Kamvar, Sepandar D., and Jonathan Harris. "We Feel Fine and Searching the Emotional Web." *Proceedings of the Fourth ACM International Conference on Web Search and Data Mining - WSDM '11*, ACM Press, 2011,

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