

Data Visualization - Process Book

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1. Abstract

The popular media is an (imperfect) mirror of the society. In this project, we want to study the effect of social trends and events of the past century on TV/Radio broadcasts. The 20th century saw the invention and ubiquity of the broadcast media: first radio and then television. At the same time, many international events (World Wars, the rise and the fall of Communism, the formation of European Union, etc) as well as national incidents (sexual revolution of 1960's, the establishment of women voting right) took place in this period. All of these events had profound impact on the society, and as a result on broadcast media such as TV and Radio. Having access to a wealth of information about TV/Radio emissions all the way from 1930's until today, we believe we can track these events and by means of a data story and a convincing visualization, highlight the events of the decades past.

2. Project Overview

2.1. Motivation

Our main motivation is the sheer amount and scope of the structured data provided by the Swiss public broadcasting organization, RTS. Although the majority of the data is understandably recorded in recent years, it covers an expansive temporal span (from 1900's until today).

More importantly, given that in March 2017 the Swiss will decide by popular vote whether to abolish the "Billag" (which also supports RTS), such a study is very much relevant and timely. An interactive and easy-to-understand visualization has the potential to showcase the added value of this public organization over the course of the past century.

2.2. Target Audience

Given the last point, our target audience is the general public. Ideally, we want our results to be accessible to the electorate, while being accurate and meaningful for the informed citizen.

2.3. Inspirations

This is an inspiring visualization/data story made for a campaign. But since, we have to deal with geographical and temporal data, something like this would be ideal example.

2.4. Visualization

We would like to have an interactive map with a timeline (to keep track of evolution of the map through time) that shows how broadcasts connect different places

together. In order to emphasise the importance of RTS/SRG/SSR in bringing the Swiss together, we have thought of a map where edges (a field map) connect the areas of interest together. (Note that such visualization is only possible for the records that have more than one “geographical theme” (which is a feature in the dataset) associated with them.)

Also, we are planning to demonstrate with which topics that cantons are connected, by displaying the key words related to the topics for each of the connection. By doing that, we also plan to demonstrate which topics are mentioned in broadcasts through years.

3. Dataset and Processing Steps

As we mentioned earlier, we are going to mainly use the RTS dataset. Highly convenient API of the RTS dataset can be found in [here](#). The page also contains information about how to use the API.

The required data for our project is that cantons related to each of the broadcast (from 1900's to 2000's) and the content (or category) of these broadcasts both of which are provided within RTS dataset. For data acquisition we are working with another team (one of our members is also part of this team) from the class Applied Data Analysis. They agreed on providing us the clean data of broadcasts. There might be some missing or ambiguous fields related to broadcasts so, it requires cleaning and filling the missing by data analysis techniques before the data can become useful for our visualization purposes. (Since the Data Visualization class doesn't require us to do these kind of analysis, it is a win-win for both teams.) Collaborating team's Github repository can be found [here](#).

There are couple more steps to mention about data processing. Although the name of the cantons related to each broadcast is provided, we require to retrieve the corresponding geographical locations to use in our map. It is also required to have a .geojson file of to retrieve the border of Switzerland and cantons.

4. Development Process

We've organized the project (and the process book) such that it consists of two major parts which are map and timeline construction. Data acquisition, cleaning and repurposing was also simultaneously done throughout the project.

4.1 Map Construction

The first step to decide was which tool to use for building the map. We decided to use [Leaflet](#) since it is one of the leading open-source JavaScript library for interactive maps (and also the one we've talked about in the class). Creating the initial map with

Leaflet was highly convenient. We created a layer and appended to the map along with the coordinates of Switzerland.

```
var initialLayer =  
  L.tileLayer('https://api.tiles.mapbox.com/v4/{id}/{z}/{x}/{y}.png?access_token=' + mapboxAccessToken, {  
    id: 'mapbox.light'});  
var map = L.map('map', {center: [46.818, 8.227], zoom: 8, layers: [initialLayer]});
```

Then first step was to build plain map of Switzerland which only displays the borders of its cantons as shown in Figure 1. Utilized geojson data can be found [here](#) and the code was fairly simple.

```
var geojson = L.geoJson(geojsonData).addTo(map);
```

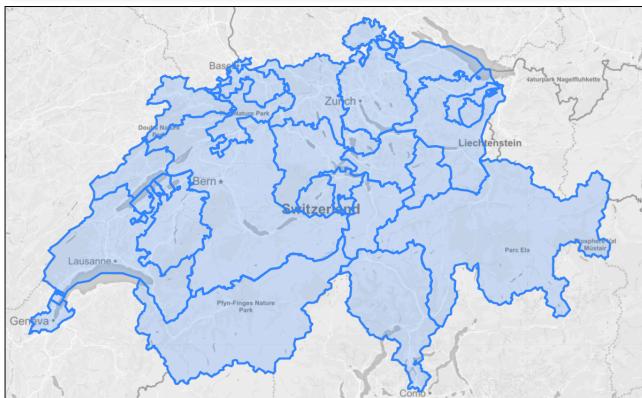


Figure 1: Plain Switzerland Map

The next step is to color the map since color schemes might be a good indicator of how well a cantons is connected with others (via broadcasts). In this stage, we didn't have the real data so we created an arbitrary data and color the map accordingly. The resulting map is in Figure 2. We coded a function (called getColor) to map values into corresponding colors. In order to find a suitable color scheme, we used a pretty helpful website called [Carto](#). Then we added the style function to the map.

```
function styleFunction(feature) {  
  return {  
    fillColor: getColor(feature.properties.density),  
    weight: 1,  
    opacity: 1,  
    color: 'black',  
    fillOpacity: 1  
  };  
}  
geojson = L.geoJson(geojsonData, {style: styleFunction}).addTo(map);
```

One of the main property of our visualization will be the lines connecting cantons according to broadcasts. But again, since we didn't have the data yet, we randomly connected each canton to five others. We used PolyLine function of Leaflet to create the lines and added them to the map (as in Figure 3). We thought that the most convenient way to show the connection lines is when a canton clicked on.

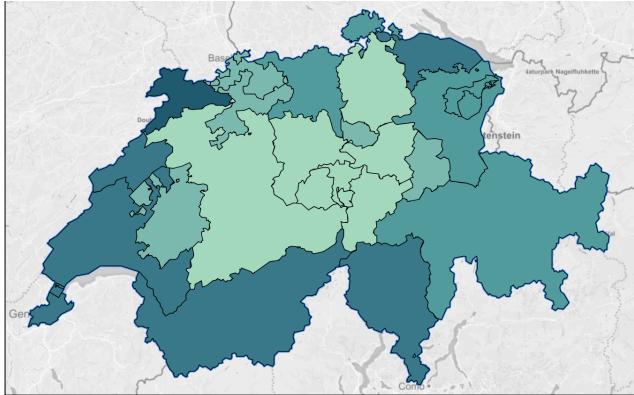


Figure 2: Colored Switzerland Map

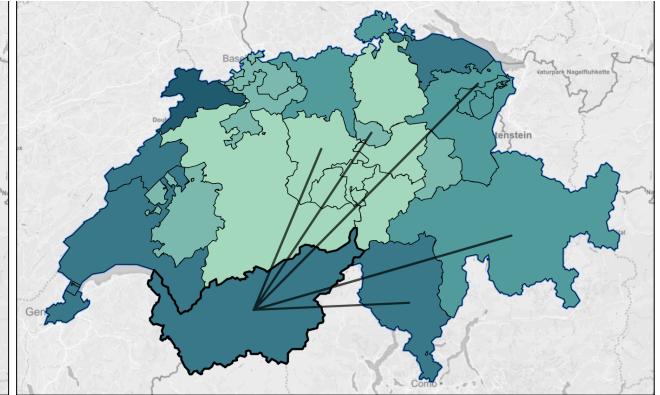


Figure 3: Lines Connecting Cantons

We are planning to serve some information (e.g. excerpt) about broadcasts that connect cantons. Our plan is to display this information inside a separate box when a canton is clicked but at this point we are not yet decided how exactly we do that. As a prototype, we created an information box on top-right of the map for information display purposes. In addition to that, we made a legend for color mapping. The initial prototype of the map resulted as demonstrated in Figure 4.

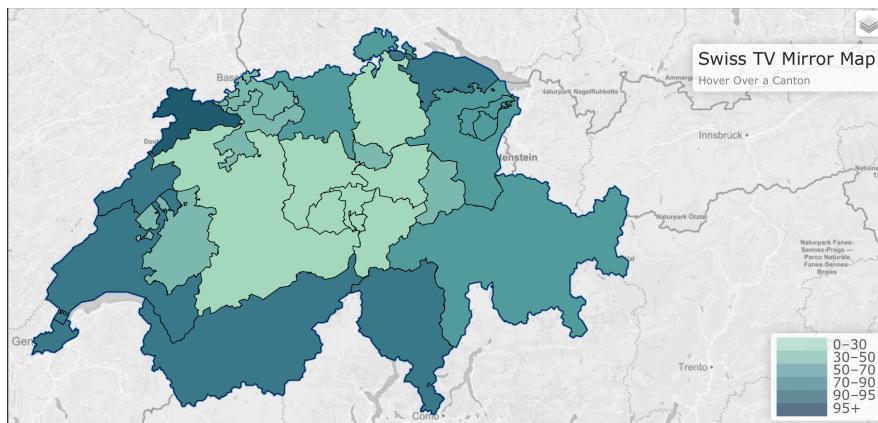


Figure 4: Initial Version of the Map Prototype

As mentioned earlier, in order to emphasise the importance of RTS on connecting Swiss together, we want to draw a map where edges (a field map) connect mentioned areas together for each broadcast. So far, we've only created a map with basic edges. As the next step, we want extend this edges and create polygons that connects multiple cantons together. First, we've created a json data (from RTS dataset) that maps locations to their coordinates in the map. We created a listener so that when a canton is clicked, some other random locations are randomly chosen then, these location were connecting together using polygons. At this point we still don't have the real data so we just try to simulate real connections.

After this stage, we got the real data from ADA group so, we now have actual data of broadcasts and which locations are mentioned within each broadcast. So now, we were able to draw actual connections between locations and we tried to do that for some broadcasts. The resulting map is demonstrated in Figure 5. Note that a broadcast in RTS dataset can be related to not only cantons of Switzerland but any other place on earth and therefore, our initial polygon drawings are not restricted to

Switzerland. Since the purpose of our visualization is to illustrate the connectedness of Switzerland via RTS, the next step is to prune the dataset so that it only contains broadcast within Swiss cantons.

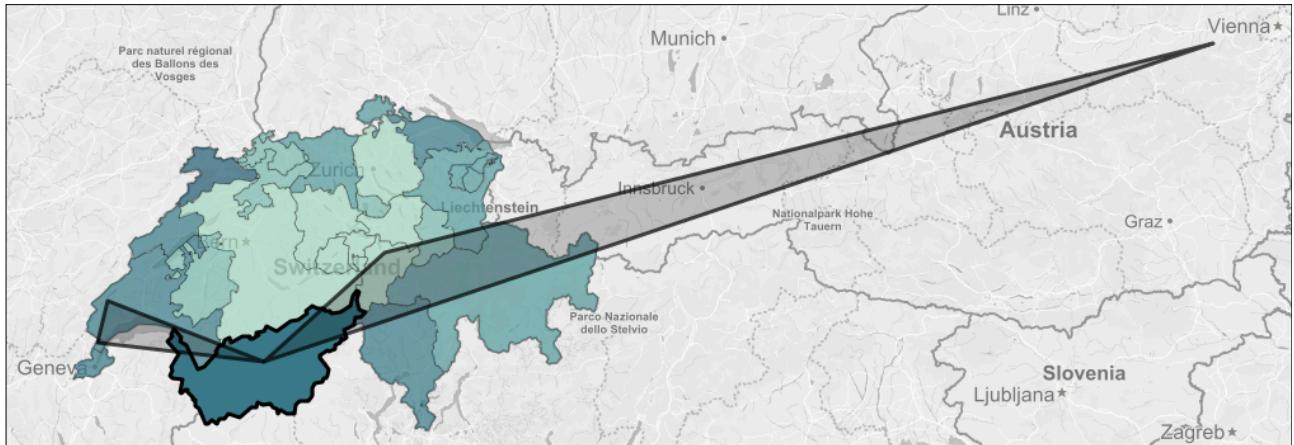


Figure 5: Polygons Showing Connection between Places

As it is seen from the map, we only demonstrated 2 broadcasts that canton Valais mentioned in it. Since we didn't prune the dataset at this point, we choose to display just 2 broadcasts related to each canton. The natural next step was to prune the dataset so we did that. Now, we wanted to visualize all the broadcast related to each canton but since we didn't have timeline slider yet, we decided to use broadcasts data only from one specific year. Map with these changes is displayed in Figure 6.

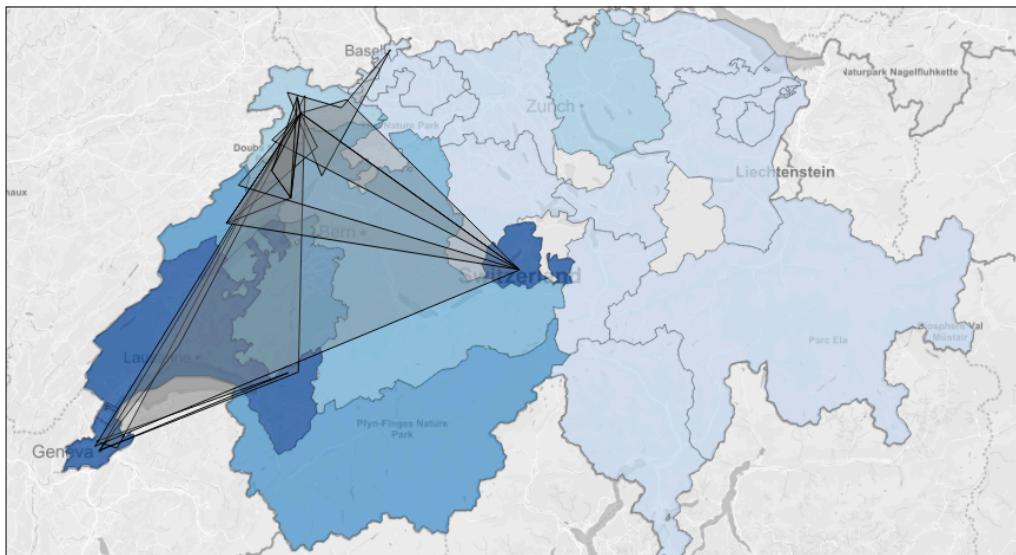


Figure 6: Polygons showing all the connections between Jura and all other cantons for year 2006.

It is worth mentioning that at this point, we started used real data to color the map, the more a canton have connections the dark it gets. And if a canton has no connections, we made it naturally, un-clickable. About the polygon visualization, there were two very clear problems. These polygons were too mixed with each other, it was not possible to extract meaning out of them. And the other problem was the corner points. It was not clear where exactly they were at, especially for the ones who don't know Switzerland very well. The first solution that we thought of to solve the confusion with polygons was to draw a big concave hull instead of polygons. That way, it would

be possible to have a better understanding of the overall area that are connected with broadcasts. About the implementation, we've used a function called ConcaveHull that works basically like standart Polygon function of Leaflet, the code can be found [here](#). About the second problem, we decided to display actual names of mentioned locations. To do that we decided to use Popup function since names will be popup when canton is clicked. The resulting map can be seen in Figure 7.

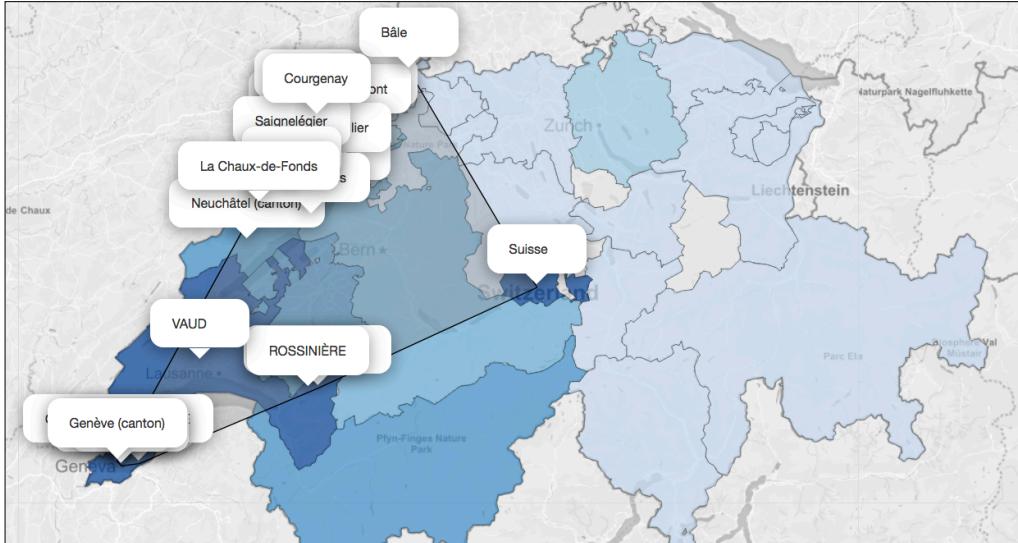


Figure 7: Concave hull representation of connections with actual location names

Although it was more clear that potential area that the broadcasts were effective of, displaying location names obviously was something we need to change. They were on top of each other and some location were mentioned in couple broadcast and displaying couple of times. As a solution to that, we decided to display only corresponding canton names (Figure 8). We though that doing os would be informative enough to have a general understanding of locations that are influenced by broadcasts. **[HOW MAPPED LOCATIONS]**

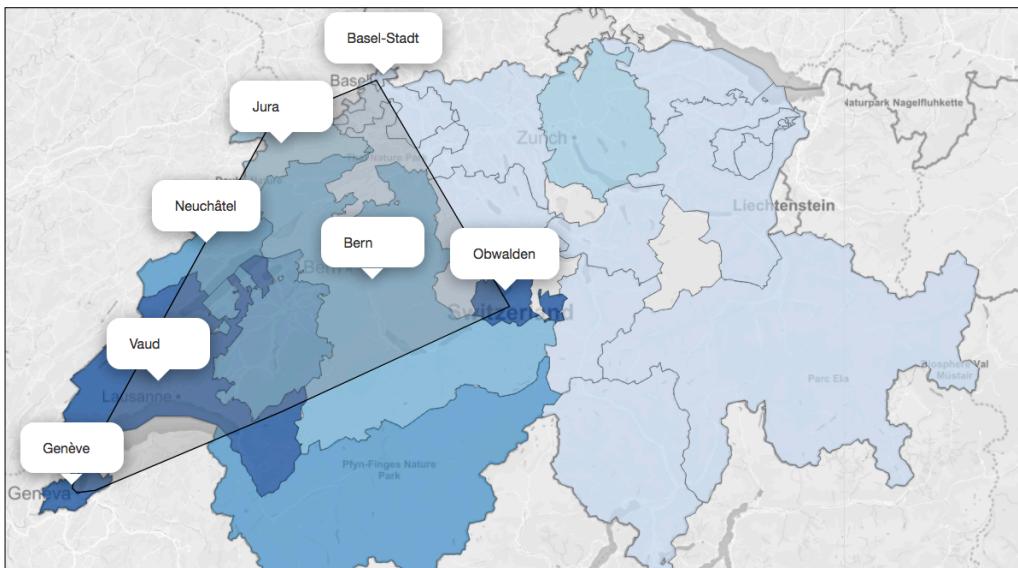


Figure 8: Connection displayed by canton names

By drawing Concave Hull instead of polygons and displaying canton names instead of actual locations, we were able to obtain more clean and descriptive map that gives the overall idea about which areas were influenced by broadcasts in general. By doing so, we basically compromise individual informations about each broadcasts. We needed to find a way to display the overall picture without giving up informations related to individual broadcasts. The solution that we found was to display the concave hull with cantons names when a canton is clicked and along with that, show the list of actual broadcasts in a separate menu in a way that they can be clicked. And, when they are the polygon that connects the locations mentioned in this broadcast are drawn on the map with actual location names. The resulting map is in Figure 9. As a small technical details, each of these (concave hull, polygons, names and map itself) is implemented as separate layers to be able to attach and detach them freely. This was especially useful while experimenting on the map to improve it.

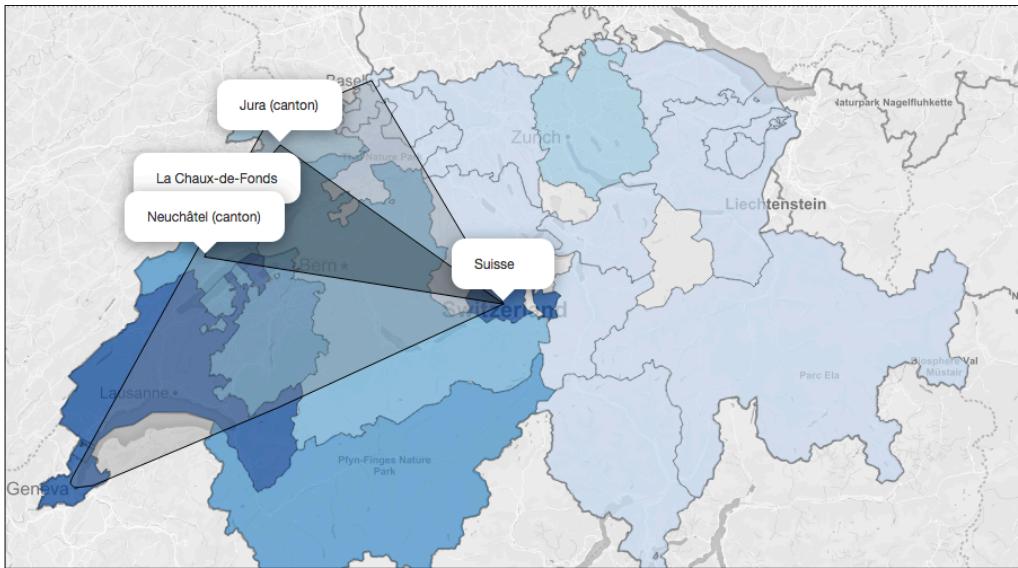


Figure 9: Polygon related to an individual broadcast along with concave hull that shows the are of influence for all broadcasts for a clicked canton

We mentioned that we wanted to serve some information related to broadcasts and since we already in this stage where individual news can be selected, we decided to create a text area to show excerpt of the selected broadcast (Screenshot 1).

[DETAILS ABOUT THE CODE] We choose to design both the list where broadcasts can be chosen and the information field as foldable so that they can be closed when not in use. Since use purposes of our visualization can vary from user to user so, we thought that modular design would be much more convenient. Each user can see what they are interested in.

Broadcasts Related to Selected Canton

Il y aura 3 nouveaux centres nationaux à Fribourg, Langenthal et Zurich. 3'500 des 8'500 employés concernés ne retrouveront pas d'...
 Il y aura 3 nouveaux centres nationaux à Fribourg, Langenthal et Zurich. 3'500 des 8'500 employés concernés ne retrouveront pas d'...
 * FRANCE : 20021023, on les appelle les arbronautes. Ils se retrouvent et suivent un guide-arbre, comme l'est TORTEL Valérie. Dans...
 Il y aura 3 nouveaux centres nationaux à Fribourg, Langenthal et Zurich...
 * SUISSE, Plateau : 20020115, les opérateurs de télécommunication tels que Swisscom, Orange ou encore Sunrise proposent de nombre...
 * La Chaux-de-Fonds, Valais, Montana, SUISSE, Sion : 20020113 et archives, des médecins et des malades reconnaissent les effets th...
 * Plateau, Genève-ville, Lausanne, Monthey : 20020112, présentation des coulisses et de l'actualité des émissions de la TSR au dép...
 * Plateau : 20020408, itw du commissaire pliseur PURY Simon de, président de Phillips de Pury et Luxembourg sur les ventes aux enc...
 * Lac de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel-ville : 20020527, RAPP Jean-Philippe reçoit à bord du bateau Idée Suisse ses invités DE POURTALES Fr...
 * SUISSE, Vaud, Prilly, Lausanne, Vevey, Genève-ville, Grand-Lancy : 20020829, le sentiment d'insécurité est en augmentation parmi...
 ...
 * Neuchâtel, Lac de Neuchâtel, Yverdon, Biel, Morat, Lausanne : 20020623 et archives 1964, HEINIGER Florence reçoit ses invités ...
 * Valais, Fribourg, Mont Vully, Jura (canton), Auvernier, Vaud, Tartegnin, Genève : 20010000, présentation de plusieurs vignobles ...
 * Plateau, Genève-ville, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Lausanne : 20021205, HEINIGER Florence reçoit ses invités pour parler du prix suisse r...
 * Lac de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel : 20020710, CERUTTI Michel reçoit l'écrivain Eugène et Lili, la mascotte de l'exposition nationale E...

Broadcast Details

* FRANCE : 20021023, on les appelle les arbronautes. Ils se retrouvent et suivent un guide-arbre, comme l'est TORTEL Valérie. Dans cette démarche, voulue comme un retour à la nature, ils passent une journée et une nuit à escalader, vivre, et dormir dans les arbres * Gland : 20021023, itw de clients afin de comprendre ce qui les poussent à acheter des plantes pour leurs appartements * SUISSE : 20021023, points de vue du directeur de l'Office Fédérale de l'Environnement ROCH Philippe, du bio-géographe HAINARD Pierre et d'un membre de WWF international LANDENBERGUE Denis sur la situation de l'environnement en Suisse et des solutions qui sont ou non proposées pour l'améliorer * Genève-ville, Lac Léman, SUISSE, Ste-Croix : 20021023, interviews entre le journaliste ENGEL Raphaël et des personnes qui tentent de répondre à la question suivante "Seriez-vous prêt à changer de vie pour sauver la planète ?" * Oregon : Oregon, Eugène, Full Crik 20021023, le vidéaste anarchique LEWIS Tim est aussi un militant écologiste, sympathisant du mouvement américain du front de libération de la Terre. Ce mouvement est considéré, par les autorités américaines comme un mouvement terroriste, et toutes ses manifestations ou actions, sont sévèrement réprimées. A ce titre, un de leur militant de la première heure LUERS Jeffrey "free" a été condamné à une peine de prison de 23 ans pour avoir mis le feu à 4 voitures * ARCTIQUE : 20021023, quelques images du médecin-aventurier ETIENNE Jean-Louis dans une des ses expéditions en solitaire.

Screenshot 1: Foldable menus for broadcast and details of them

4.2 Timeline Construction

Until this state we've only worked one year worth of data but since we are trying to show how RTS connects locations and people together throughout years, a timeline slider was a must-have. So, the next step was to build a timeline slider. We started with a simple slider called `d3.horizontalSlider` and made it to change text of the heading according. Detailed information and the code of this slider can be found [here](#). It was simple as it is seen in Screenshot 2.



Screenshot 2: Basic Timeline Slider

Note that it is also designed as foldable field since a user might want to work on a single year and won't need a slider. Next, we actually utilized the slider so that connections (concave hulls and polygons) were drawn according to year. We basically defined a variable called `YEAR` and made this slider change this variable. According to this variable data related to broadcasts were retrieved. The code to get broadcast for the clicked canton was like the following.

```
var canton_name = e.target.feature.properties.name;
var broadcasts = cantonConnections[canton_name] [YEAR]
```

We follow the same logic to color the map. This time the layer were re-drawn each time value of the slider changed. As mentioned earlier, the color tone of a canton is determined according to number of connections it has on a specific year. We showed the change of the choropleth map in Figure 10.

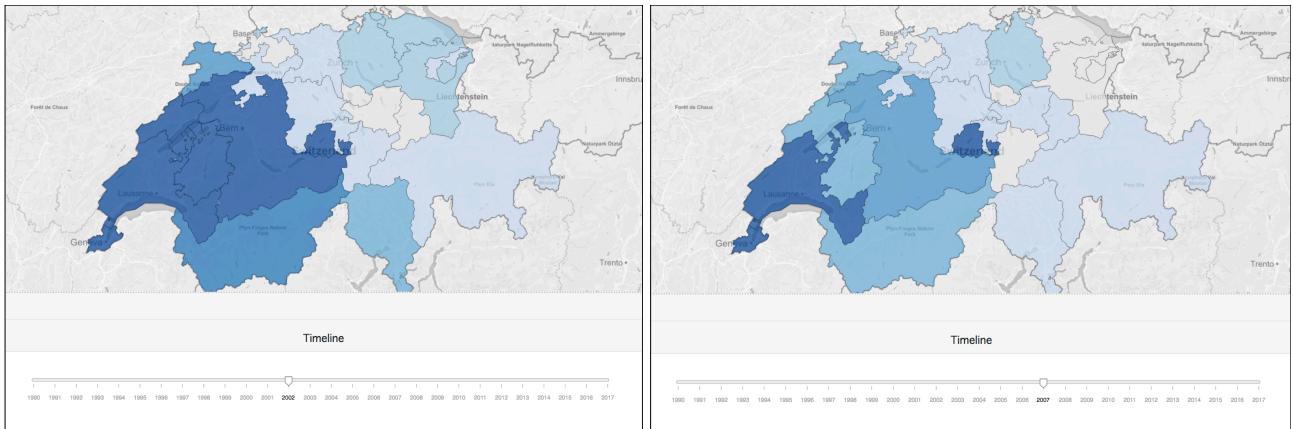


Figure 10: The change of choropleth map from 2002 (left) to 2007 (right)

Timeline was highly responsive and convenient to use, especially for those who interested in change in the connectedness of a canton. However, the actual information about where each of the broadcasts happen were not present in this map. Again, we were generalizing (mapping each location that a broadcast mention to the corresponding canton) to give an overall picture of the connection patterns. As we did when drawing super-edges, we wanted find a way to visualize individual location that a broadcast mentioned without loosing the big picture. The solution we found was to put a dot for actual coordinates of locations mentioned in broadcast along with choropleth itself. In this way, it is easy to see where is the exact places that broadcasts mentioned and how often an area is mentioned (by looking the frequency of dots in near a specific area). Placing these dots were highly simple with Marker object of Leaflet. The resulting map is in Figure 11.

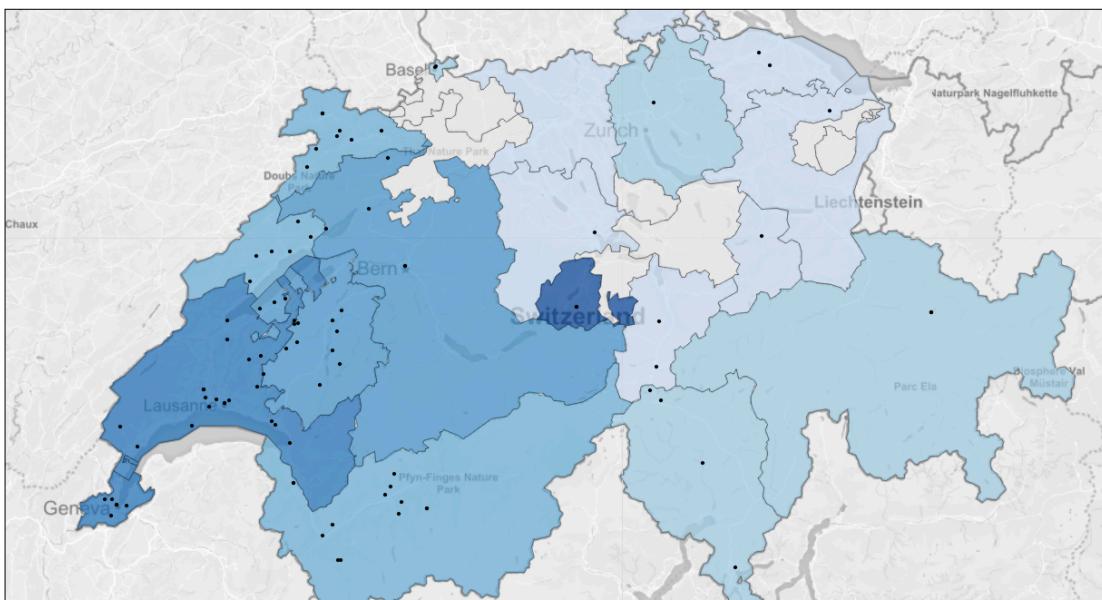
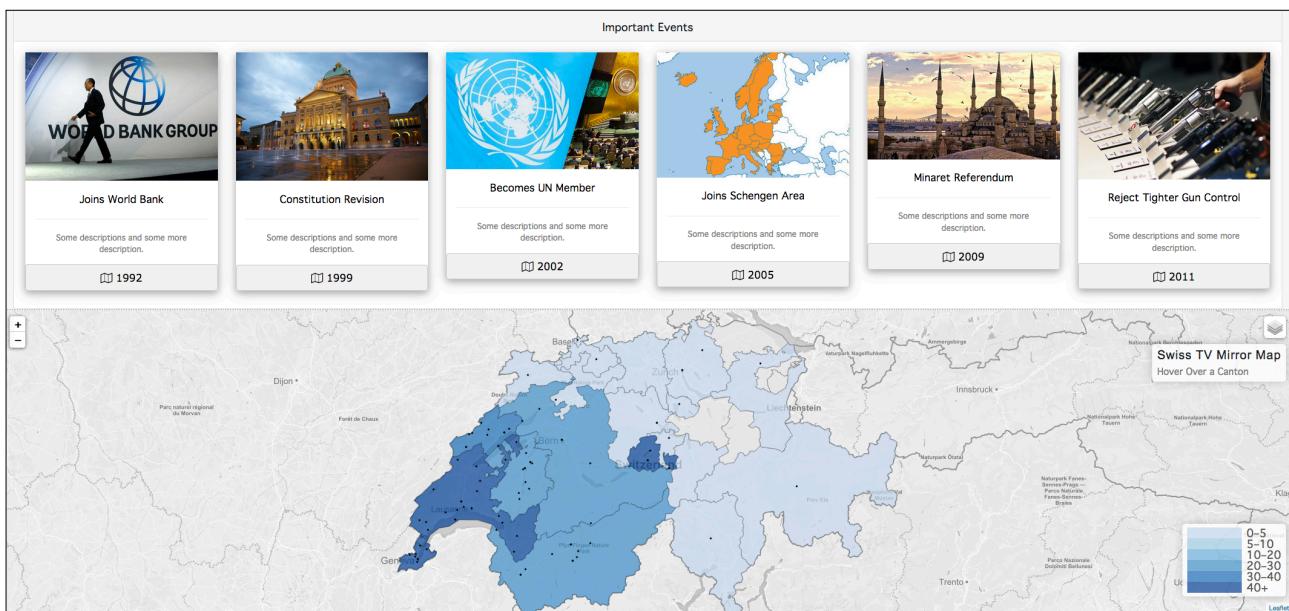


Figure 11: Dots are drawn for each location mentioned in broadcasts on a year

We choose to put small dots by following our logic that our visualization can be used for different purposes. For the ones who are not interested exact location, the dots should be bothering so, we set their sizes just visible enough for who is interested in.

The next thought that comes to our mind was to give users a convenient way of exploring the map in the periods of important event (e.g. when the right to vote given to woman). It is especially, useful to see how RTS brings the nation together during these important events. We decided to design a foldable area where each event is represented by a clickable card and when it is clicked map goes to corresponding year. We made this happen by changing the timeline slider and since, the map is connected to timeline slider, it changes automatically. The resulting design is shown in Screenshot 3.



Screenshot 3: Important event cards that give means of easily accessing corresponding dates

One important point worth mentioning about design is that the main tool that we choose to use in order to have more stylish, easy to use elements (e.g. important events cards, foldable areas) and the website in general was the [Bootstrap](#) which is an open source toolkit for developing website.

5. Conclusion

By developing this visualization, we mainly aimed to show how Switzerland is connected via broadcast throughout years. Also, we tried to make the data related to all the broadcasts from 1900s until today for anyone who is curious about them. We gave means of exploring Switzerland's history and present through broadcast. And once again, we wanted show the importance of RTS and the work that has been done under it.