CS 467 Social Visualization Karrie Karahalios

**Critique: A Tour Through The Visualization Zoo**

The paper provides various insightful examples of data visualizations along with a description of their advantages and disadvantages. Through these demonstrations we understand that each set of data can convey various amount of information depending on how it is visually represented. This emphasizes the importance of studying the art and science of translating data into pictures. Although I agree that as data becomes larger the need for a better interface is necessary, our intention of conveying an accurate and precise meaning from the data can sometimes be misinterpreted. The article mentions the importance of translating data into the most effective visual form but it lacks an explanation when dealing with the responsibility of maintaining a correct interpretation of the data. One could argue that each person consumes information differently. Creating a single most intuitive visualization may not be possible but finding a trend or pattern is one viable direction to pursue. Another important idea to consider is that data can also be used manipulatively. For example, statistics are often skewed in order to meet certain agendas and persuade the public with inaccurate or incomplete ideas. Improvements to further the work would include a visualization that illustrates visualizations themselves and highlights which techniques are best in which situations. Although it is interesting to see the various examples and unique cases applied here, it would be extremely valuable and insightful to see the underlying patterns and reasoning behind certain visualization schemes. This would provide a foundation for others to create their own visualization as well as solidify the inherent cognitive psychology that takes place when we look at data in visual form. It is clear that as humans we possess a wide range of senses, vision being possibly the one we use most. The concept of visualizing data exposes an intention to speed up or optimize the process of absorbing and processing information. As we know, it takes longer and is arguably more difficult to parse through pure text. Without taking advantage of context, spatial arrangement, color-coding, etc. we are not fully using our ability to think in relationships, metaphors, and pictures, a trait that separates us from most other life on Earth. This kind of progress in the visualization of information demonstrates the profound ability for humans to communicate through symbolic thought. Further research into this topic could explore even more innovative interfaces in which data can be communicated.

**Critique: Visualization Rhetoric: Framing Effects in Narrative Visualization**

The article shines where it provides a multitude of practical examples that describe certain techniques and their influence on the user. We are able to get a detailed explanation of how many techniques such as Anchoring affect the user’s attention as well as real world situations and applications in which this strategy is used to help navigate the procedure of information processing. As a whole, the document provides a holistic approach to discussing visualization rhetoric and is supported by a multitude of quality sources and examples. Its strengths are in its attention to detail commitment to an extremely thorough investigation of the subject matter. However, the amount of information presented can be overwhelming for some readers and could be seen as a hindrance to those who are looking for something that is more concise. It also seems to assume a certain level of proficiency with the literature as it frequently references other material and concepts that it uses to build upon. Without the necessary prerequisite knowledge, it is sometimes difficult to come to a complete understanding of the issues at hand. Moreover, a critique of the article might point out its lack of clarity and grace. On one hand, it is important to provide enough information and relevant content, but on the other, presenting it in an easily consumable and digestible form is just as crucial. I found the writing to be unnecessarily verbose and sophisticated where much simpler language or figures could have been used to illustrate the same ideas. With all the discussion about visualization, and its intention of “simplification”, it is reasonable to conclude that some forms of writing are more visually appealing than others. In order to further this work, I think the author could explore techniques that cross visual boundaries by utilizing other senses such as auditory queues as well as touch sensory forms of communication.