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I Feel Data

Explorations in Physical Data Representation

Syllabus

There is so much data around us; it has always been. Some think it is overwhelming. In order to make some sense out of data, we invented information visualization. First hesitant and cautious. Maps, diagrams and pie charts that would visualize a handful of numbers. Even then we noticed things we haven't seen before. But then information visualization became more daring. Computer-based routines crunched big chunks of numbers and brought light into otherwise unreadable amounts of data. We even invented strategies for self-organizing and organic information visualizations.

But all of the time the results remained on a sheet of paper or a computer screen. Only recently people started to conquer physical space. They milled wooden data landscapes, cut cardboard graphs, built mechatronic displays and cast information layers on lifeless things. Technologies became available that would enable us to break free (interestingly these technologies acted as catalyst, rather than starting points). Let us join into the quest for bringing data back into the physical space, the space where it belongs, the space around us.

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In this course we will explore the relation between data, information and meaning. We will discuss and use technologies that empower us to transform virtual into physical. We will learn how to put all this into context, into physical context. We will end up with a project that hopefully means something more to someone than just the numbers it is made of.

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Questions you could
ask yourselves

- _ How do we get hold of data?
- _ How can we turn data into information?
- _ How much does context matter?
- _ How much does production of data matter?
- _ What is the difference between seeing & touching pie charts?
- _ What is the difference between touching & smelling pie charts?
- _ Is information political?
- _ Is it more political when it gets a physical representation?

Keywords you should
investigate further

- _ Infosthetics
- _ Edward Tufte
- _ Processing.org
- _ Arduino
- _ Augmented Sculptures
- _ Data Sculptures
- _ Ambient Information Visualization

Technologies we will talk
about later

- _ Projectors
- _ CNC-Mills
- _ Lasercutter
- _ 3D-printer
- _ knitting machines

Books and Papers you
might want to read

- _ ›DATA FLOW‹, Gestalten Verlag
- _ ›Organic Information Design‹, Ben Fry
- _ ›Processing - a programming handbook ...‹, Ben Fry & Casey Reas
- _ ›Envisioning Information‹, Edward Tufte

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Links you might find
helpful

http://delicious.com/tag/hfkbremen_i-feel-data
<http://i-feel-data.tumblr.com/>

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