

RESEARCH THEME

Title of the doctoral research Information Design and data visualization: unpacking the access to information

Proponent professor Michele Mauri

Abstract

Today diagrams, visualizations, and infographics are present in a huge variety of fields, from the most technical to the most popular. Thanks to its ability to provide insights and suggest a reading of the data, the persuasive power of such language is fully acknowledged.

When information visualization started to become more accessible, it was seen as a way to promote the “education” of masses by proposing clear and well-presented data. It didn’t require many times to realize that even data, and its visual representation, can be used to promote misinformation. Even worse, due to its persuasive power, its appearance of “objectivity”, and its visual appeal, data visualization is a perfect medium to promote a highly biased point of view by blackboxing the underlying analyses process and hiding the link with data sources. In this context, there is a need for a reflection of our role as visual translators, as well as on the identification of new approaches and methods to promote an ethic of openness of the information. Not just on the technical side (as for the open data or free and open-source software), but in terms of showing the underlying design process.

The research will be carried out within the DensityDesign lab, and it will aim at:

- defining new design methods and practices to support fields involving information design;
 - understanding roles, opportunities, and perspectives for communication design within the current and future scenarios in information design;
 - - experimenting and evaluating the impact of visual explorative interfaces through the design practice and the development of new solutions for them.
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Keywords Information Design, Open Source, Visual explorative interfaces