



**Geschichte (auf)zeigen. Visualisierung von Daten zwischen Theorie und Praxis
(Dé)montrer l'histoire. La visualisation de données entre théorie et pratique
Showing History. Data visualization between theory and practice**

The visualization of data in the Humanities, after its first rise in the 1960's along with quantitative history and its subsequent fall in the 1970's, has undergone a renaissance over the past few years. While classical, static charts still have a place, new ways of presenting data are increasingly being experimented, such as network visualizations, cartography, lexicometry (e.g. Google Ngrams), or even dynamic multi-medial graphs, to name a few. Various factors accelerate these developments. Easy-to-use visualization softwares together with the increase in computing capacity made once complex quantitative methods and visualization tools available for almost every researcher. Standardized and open data is more and more available and connected. An expanding set of material, including historical sources, is digitized and can be processed by automated methods.

Yet, there have only been some light reflections about how these new forms can be used in historical research and what methodological consequences they entail. Researchers face various challenges when using these new visualizations. What is the data that can be shown? What are advantages and drawbacks of the various data sets and tools available? What sources should historians use for producing their own data sets? Are there any best practices for extracting, preparing and presenting quantitative data and its visualization?

Beyond these important methodological reflections, historians may want to ask larger questions about the significance of those tools. How do data visualizations relate to the surrounding text? Are they merely a way to illustrate the classical textual narrative, and make it more appealing? Or do they constitute a new form of narration? What is the scientific gain from presenting data visually? What can the researcher reveal that cannot be shown otherwise? How does the comeback of these practices affect the historical sciences more generally?

Finally, discussions surrounding data visualization sometimes forget their own historical dimension. Some forms of presenting data, such as maps or timelines, have obviously existed for many centuries. Others can also be traced back at least to the early modern Europe. How and why did these graphical forms appear and evolve? What role did they play for knowledge and science? Are there lessons to be drawn from this history?

The next issue of the journal of the Swiss Association for History and Computing, *Geschichte und Informatik*, will be centered around those questions. The editors would welcome proposals on the following topics:

Historical research using data visualization techniques, for example:

- Cartography (including, but not limited to Geographical Information System)
- Network analysis and visualization
- Language analysis, lexicometry
- Statistical visualizations (line charts, scatter plots, etc)

Methodological reflections on data visualization:

- Data production and preparation
- Choice of statistical methods (e.g. algorithms)
- Choice of tools, problems of creating the visualization
- Presenting the data and visualization

Theoretical reflections on the significance of data visualization:

- Advantages and disadvantages for historical research
- Influence on research questions
- Consequences for historical narration

History of visual representations:

- Historical evolution of various forms (maps, timelines, line charts, scatter plots, networks, etc)
- History of digital forms of visualization
- Place of data visualizations in the history of science

Proposals (abstract of max. 400 words) and a short CV should be submitted by email to info@ahc-ch.ch till the 30st of May.

Editors:

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