Ben Fry: Content/Research

An interdisciplinary man

Created the programming language Processing which is meant to make coding more accessible to beginners and facilitate work wi th graphics
"an open source programming language and environment for people who want to program images, animation, and interactions. It i s used by students, artists, designers, researchers, and hobbyists for learning, prototyping, and production."

Thoughts: there's tons of data in our world now, so much that it's hard to understand
Think massive excel spreadsheets and lists of information
It's the way that we can learn about and improve ourselves and make decisions
But it's hard to wade through
But this guy tries to make it easier
More than that though, he tries to make it beautiful
Because patterns are beautiful, and what we really are looking for when we look at data is patterns
Significance of how data is presented to how it is interpreted: financial data, for instance
    Also political data: see Health care flow chart; deliberately confusing
Wrote the book Visualizing Data

Importance of data and information design:
http://news.cnet.com/8301-30685_3-20031295-264.html

Incorporating the idea of people's sense of number from How People Learn Math: visualization is very important because it is hard for people to conceive of large values

Notes from His Talk at UX Week 2010

http://vimeo.com/15006552
Began as a User Interface Designer at Netscape
Then went to MIT Media lab

Infographics vs. visualization:
Infographics, manageable amount of data
Data visualization: more data
Good job security-- "there will never be less data"

See next page for transcript with highlights

Another brief interview:
http://ben.fry.usesthis.com/

A biography from Columbia's Grad School

The amount of information our society generates is difficult to quantify, but one estimation holds that we now create more data each year than was produced in all prior human history. Generating actionable knowledge from this information is a critical design challenge with substantial economic, political and intellectual consequence. Data Visualization is a term that is increasing being used to describe strategies for interpreting and visualizing the mass amount of data we collect about our world. Ben Fry believes a collaborative multi-field approach is necessary to solve current data visualization and interpretation problems. He will discuss his approach as well as attempt to define this emerging field.
Fry received his doctoral degree from the Aesthetics + Computation Group at the MIT Media Laboratory, where his research focused on combining fields such as computer science, statistics, graphic design, and data visualization as a means for understanding information. During the 2006-2007 school year, Ben was the Nierenberg Chair of Design for the Carnegie Mellon School of Design. Ben went on to become director of Seed Visualization and its Phyllotaxis Lab, a design laboratory in Cambridge, Massachusetts focused on understanding complex data. Ben now runs his own design firm focusing on Data Visualization.

Pasted from <http://www.arch.columbia.edu/event/gsapp-event/defining-data-visualization-ben-fry>

About the programming language he created: Processing:
http://processing.org/about/

Tens of thousands of companies, artists, designers, architects, and researchers use Processing to create an incredibly diverse range of projects.

- Design firms such as Motion Theory provide motion graphics created with Processing for the TV commercials of companies like Nike, Budweiser, and Hewlett-Packard.
- Bands such as R.E.M., Radiohead, and Modest Mouse have featured animation created with Processing in their music videos.
- Publications such as the journal Nature, the New York Times, Seed, and Communications of the ACM have commissioned information graphics created with Processing.
- The artist group HeHe used Processing to produce their award-winning Nuage Vert installation, a large-scale public visualization of pollution levels in Helsinki.
- The University of Washington's Applied Physics Lab used Processing to create a visualization of a coastal marine ecosystem as a part of the NSF RISE project.
- The Armstrong Institute for Interactive Media Studies at Miami University uses Processing to build visualization tools and analyze text for digital humanities research.

Pasted from <http://processing.org/about/>

Biography from 2005:
http://www.infovis-wiki.net/index.php?title=Fry,_Benjamin

Photo of him and biography from CMU
http://www.design.cmu.edu/show_news.php?id=69&m=2006

http://www.tierra-innovation.com/blog/2009/05/11/processing-merging-code-and-design/

Ben fry in seed magazine
http://revminds.seedmagazine.com/revminds/member/ben_fry/

Good and thorough interview: http://www.katiepeek.com/dataminecanary/2010/03/a-qa-with-ben-fry-data-visualist-extraordinaire.html

I studied graphic design and computer science, but separately. I was interested in both since I was young, then during undergrad, majored in design at Carnegie Mellon, and minored in computer science.

Pasted from <http://www.katiepeek.com/dataminecanary/2010/03/a-qa-with-ben-fry-data-visualist-extraordinaire.html>

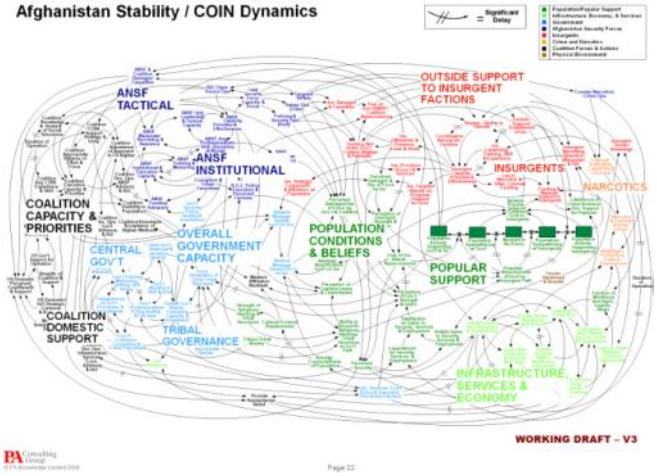
Biography
Ben Fry has a doctorate from the MIT Media Laboratory and was the 2006-2007 Nierenberg Chair of Design for the Carnegie Mellon School of Design. He worked with Casey Reas to develop Processing, which won a Golden Nica from the Prix Ars Electronica in 2005. Ben's work has received a New Media Fellowship fro m the Rockefeller Foundation, and been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, Ars Electronica, the 2002 Whitney Biennial, and the 2003 Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial.

Pasted from <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Visualizing-Data/Ben-Fry/e/9780596514556#TABS>

http://www.amazon.com/Processing-Programming-Handbook-Designers-Artists/dp/0262182629
Commentary from amazon about his book and Processing

http://www.design.cmu.edu/show_news.php?id=118&m=2007

Deliberately Bad Information Design



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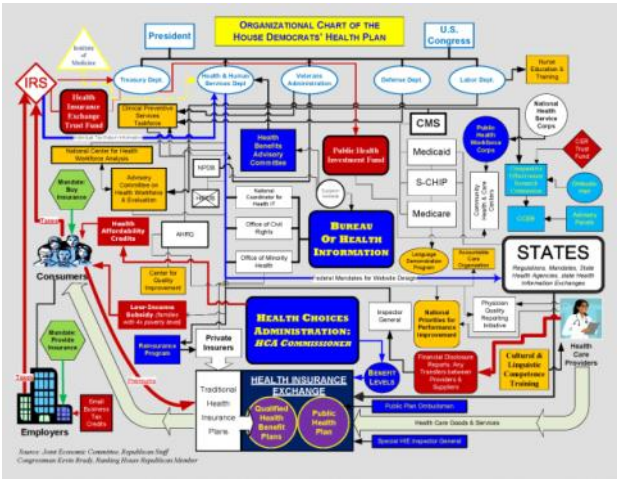
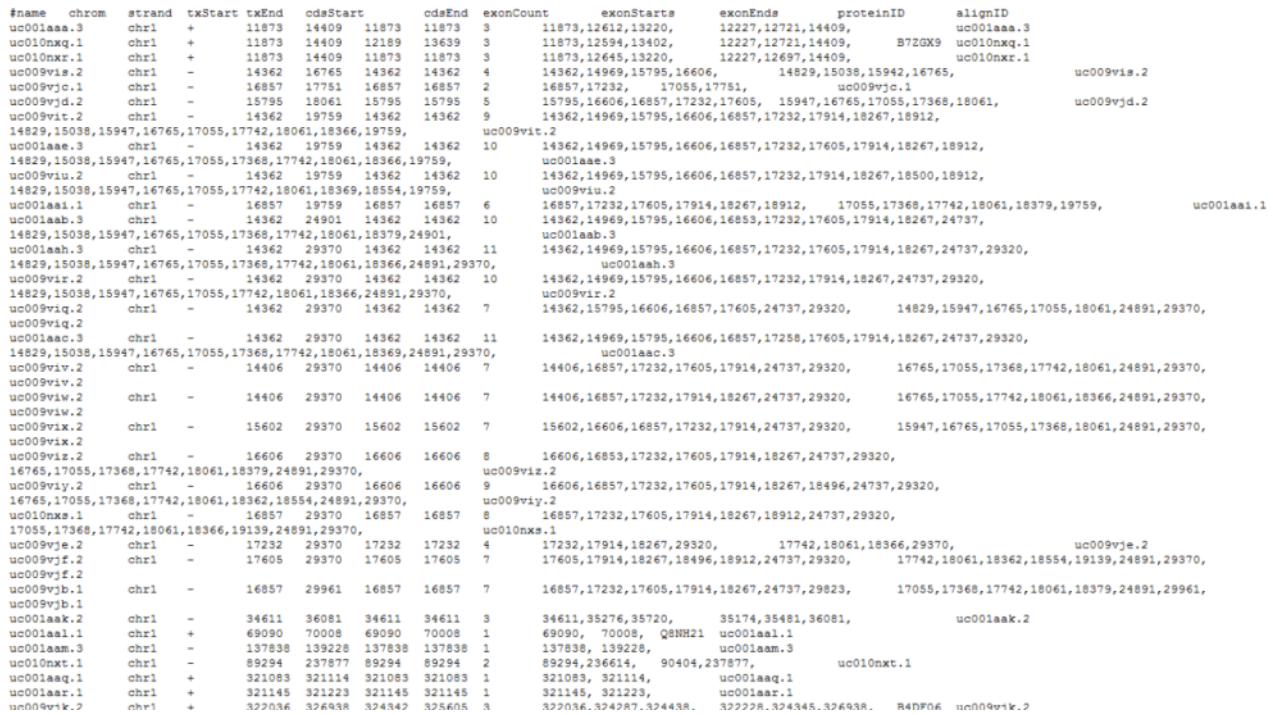


http://boehner.house.gov/images/HealthCareChart.jpg

DATA: Genetics data http://genome.ucsc.edu/cgi-bin/hgTables



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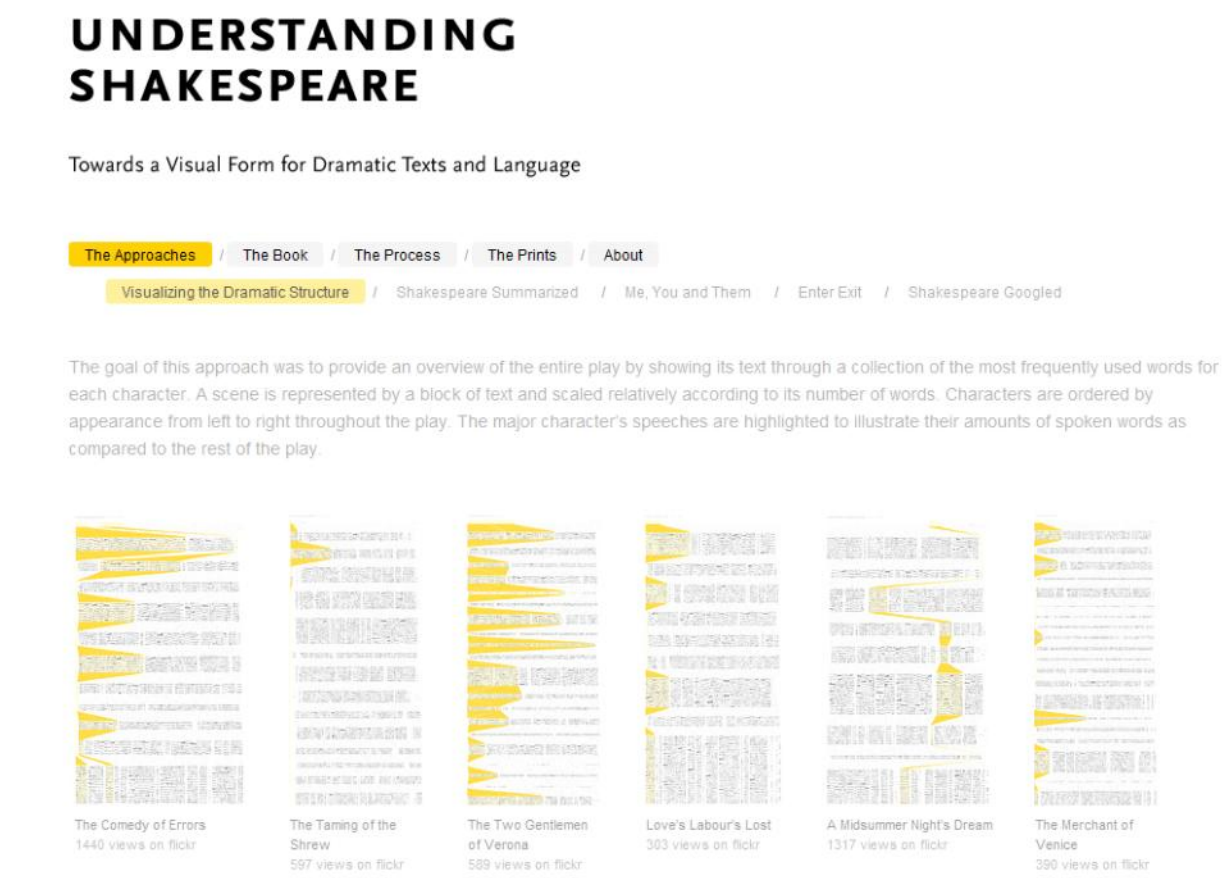
A project that uses processing to visualize the dramatic structure of shakespeare (the digital humanities)



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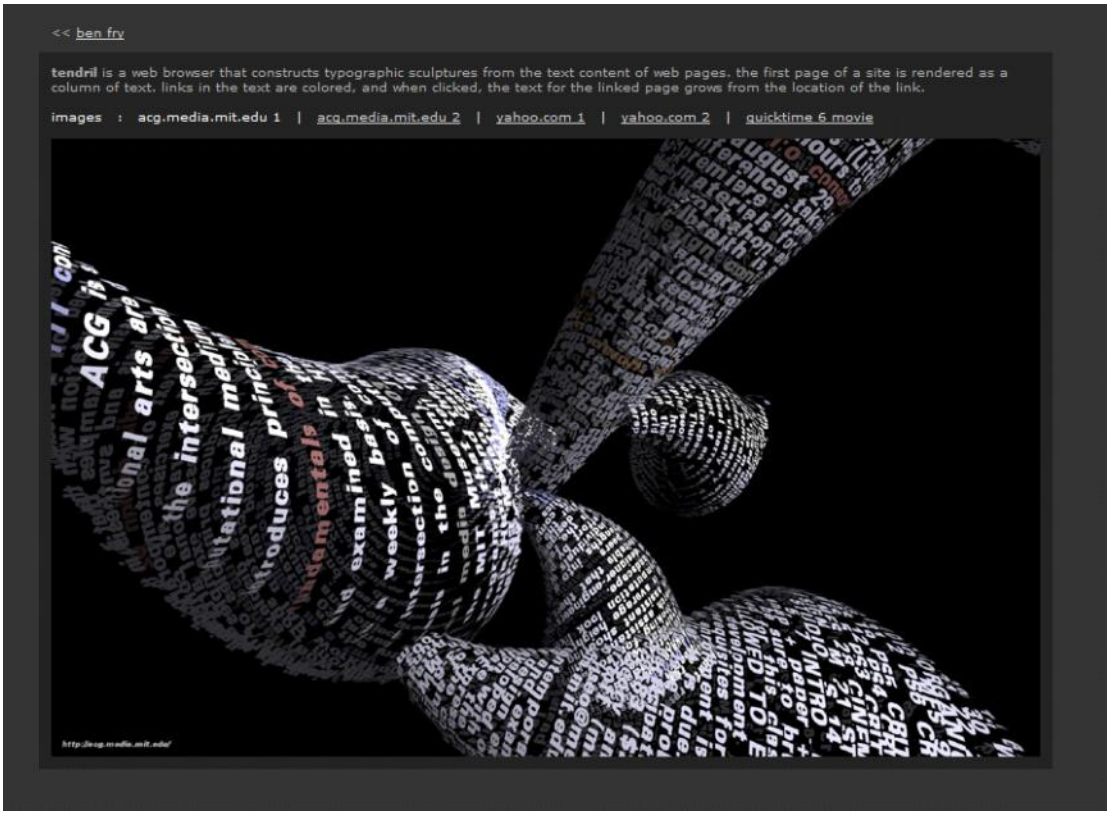

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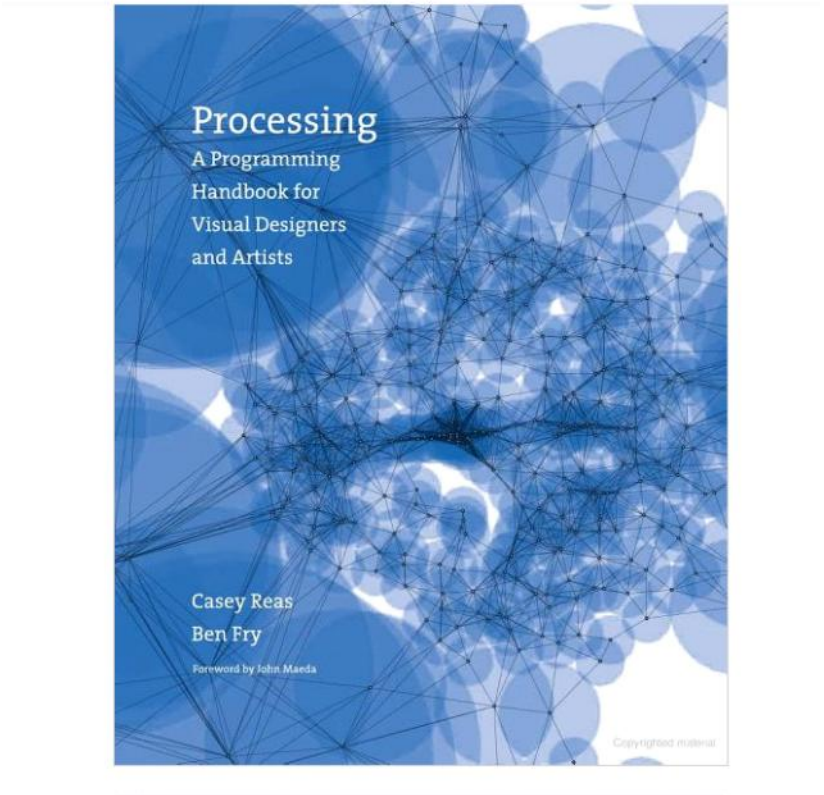

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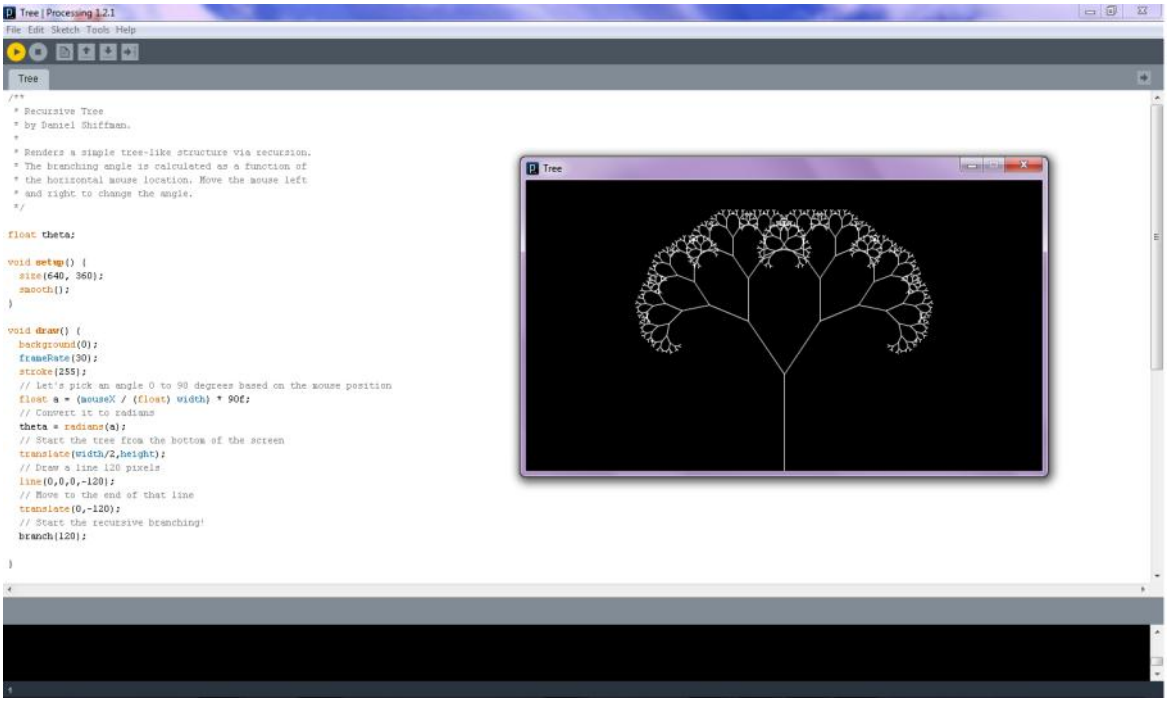

Processing in action

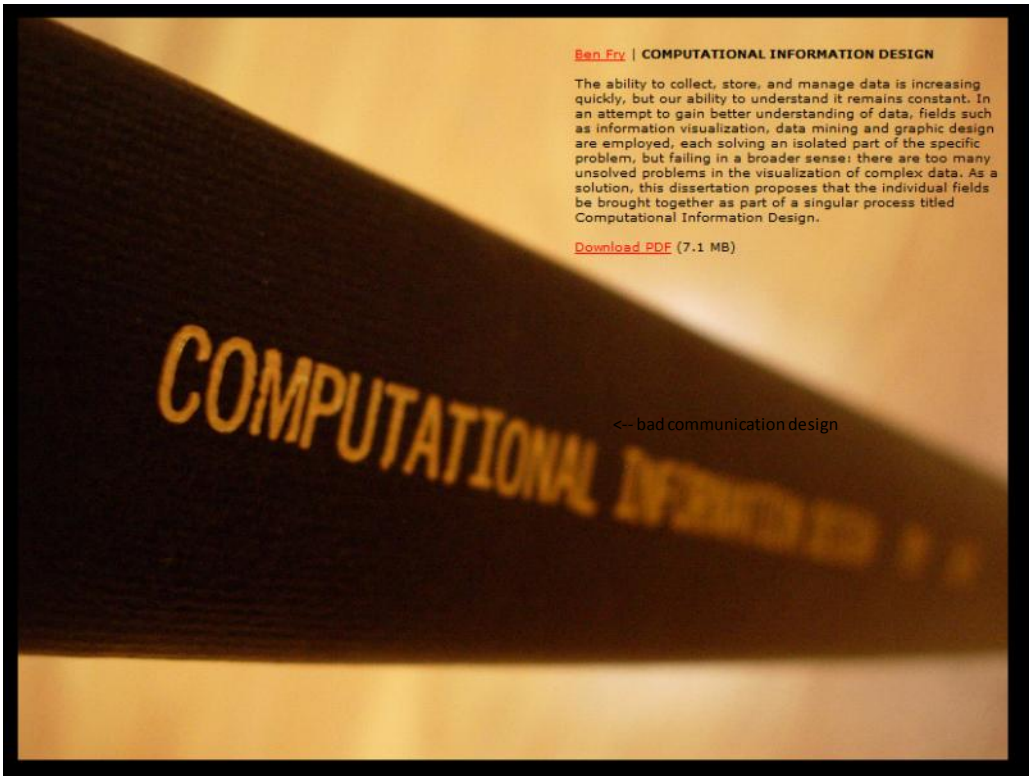

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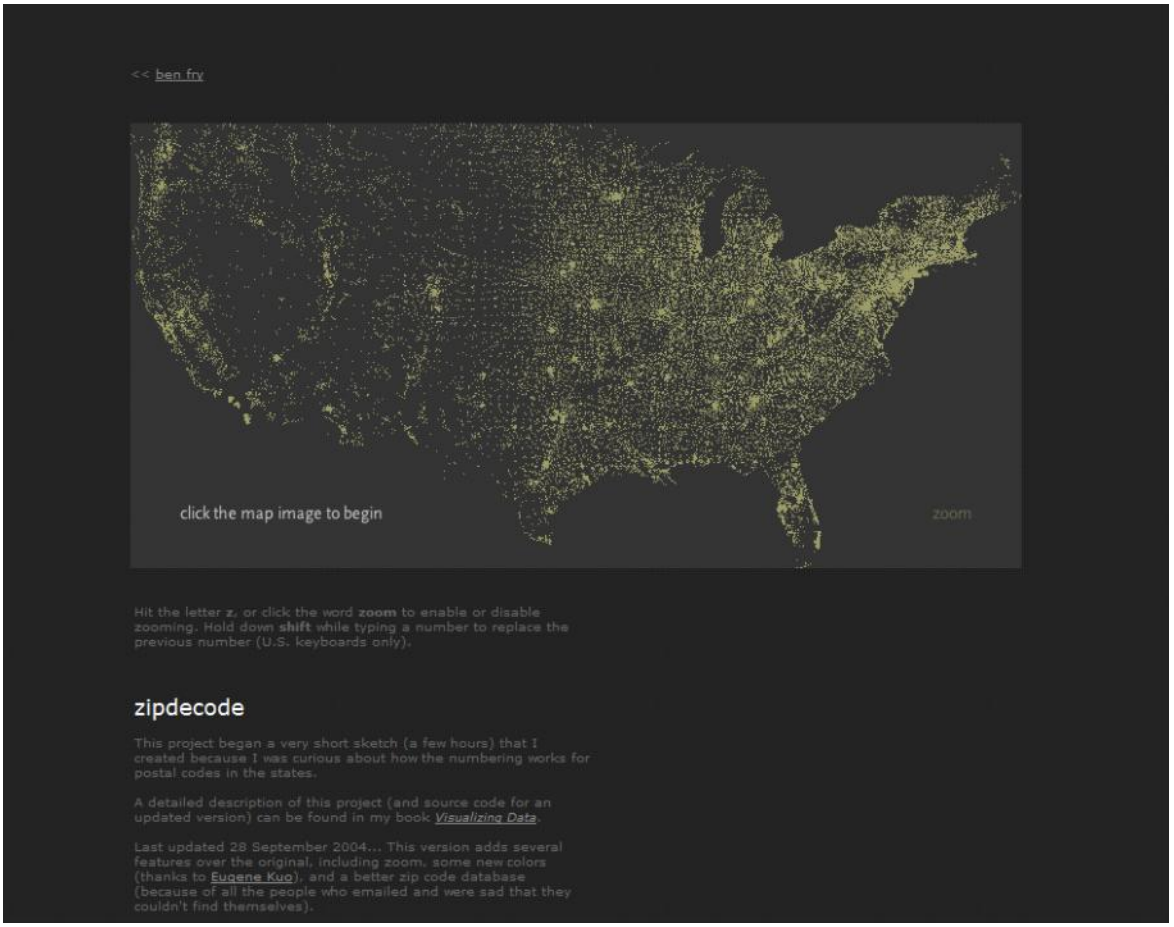
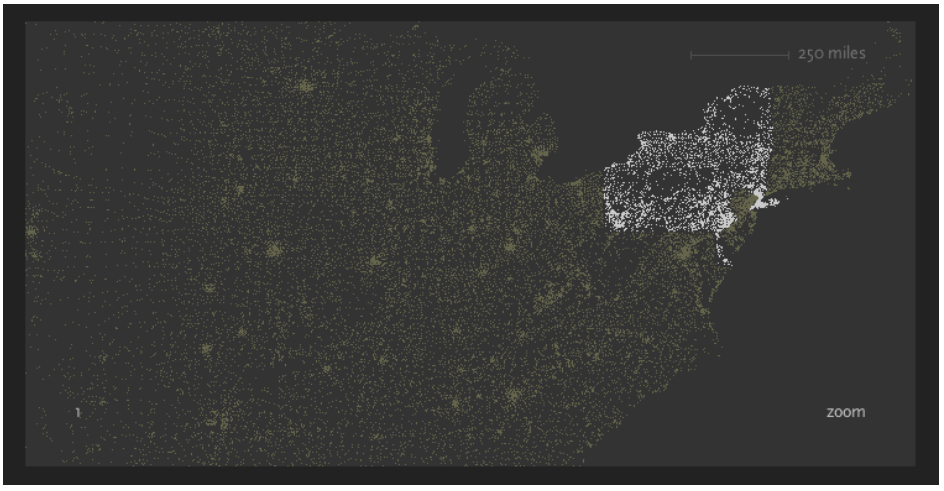
Image and description of his PHD thesis: http://benfry.com/phd/





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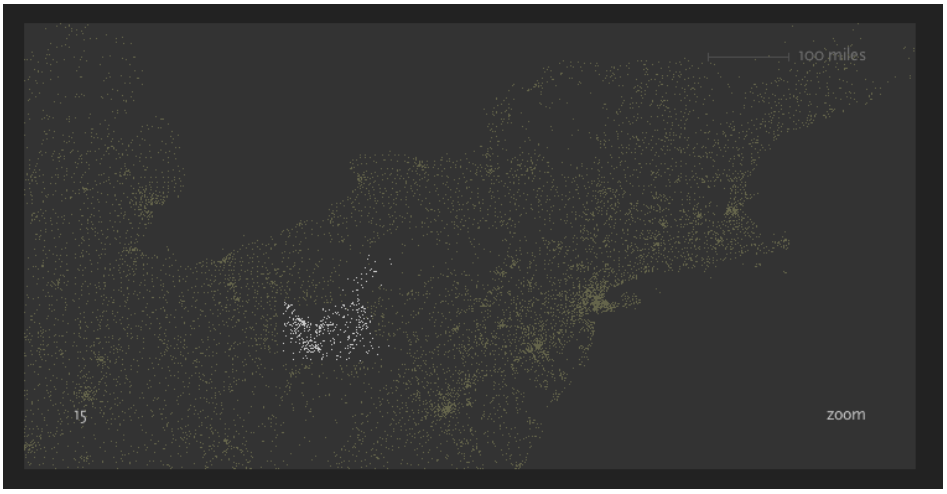

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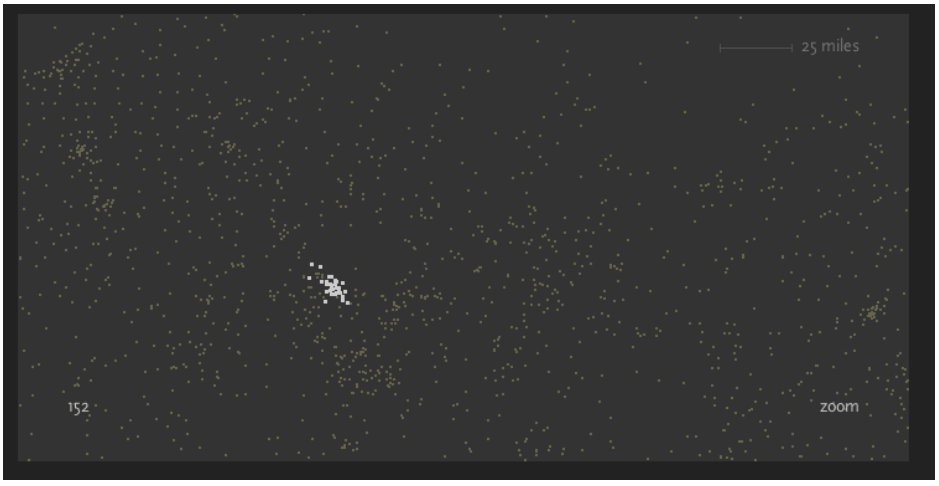

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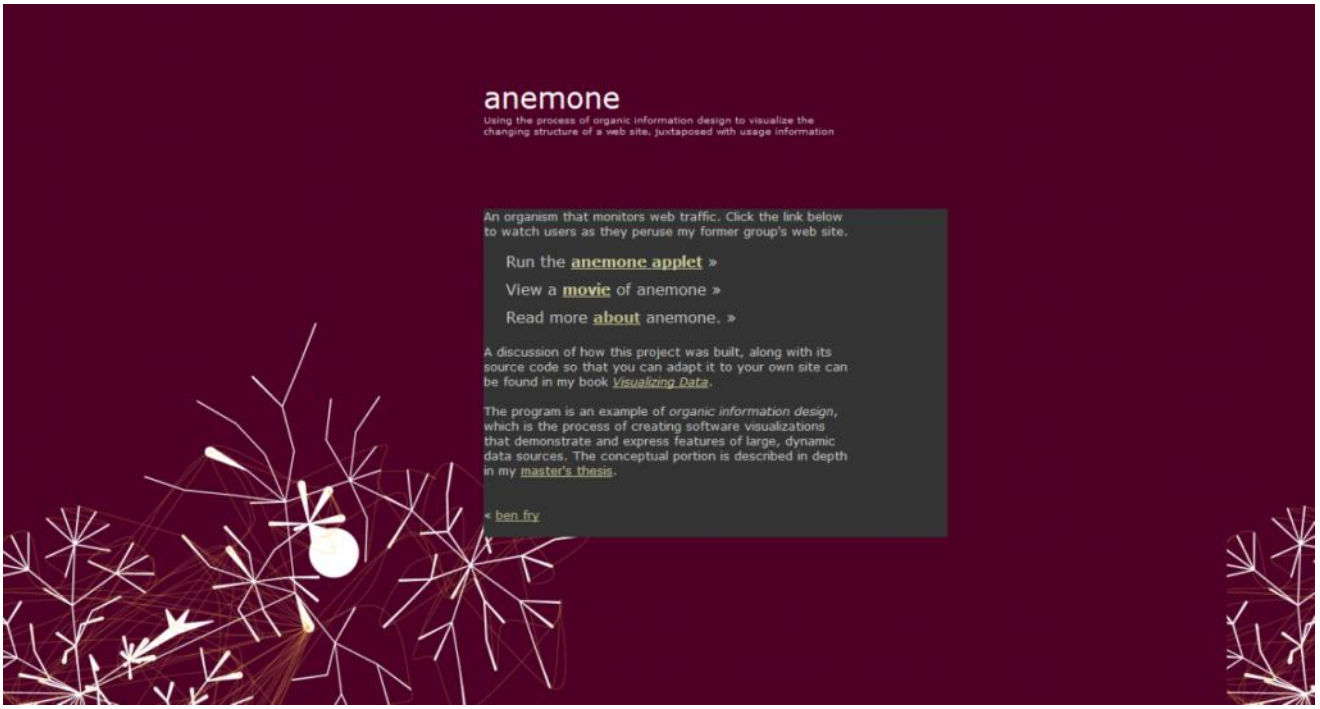

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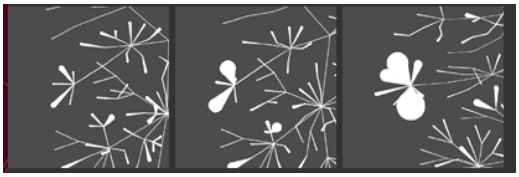

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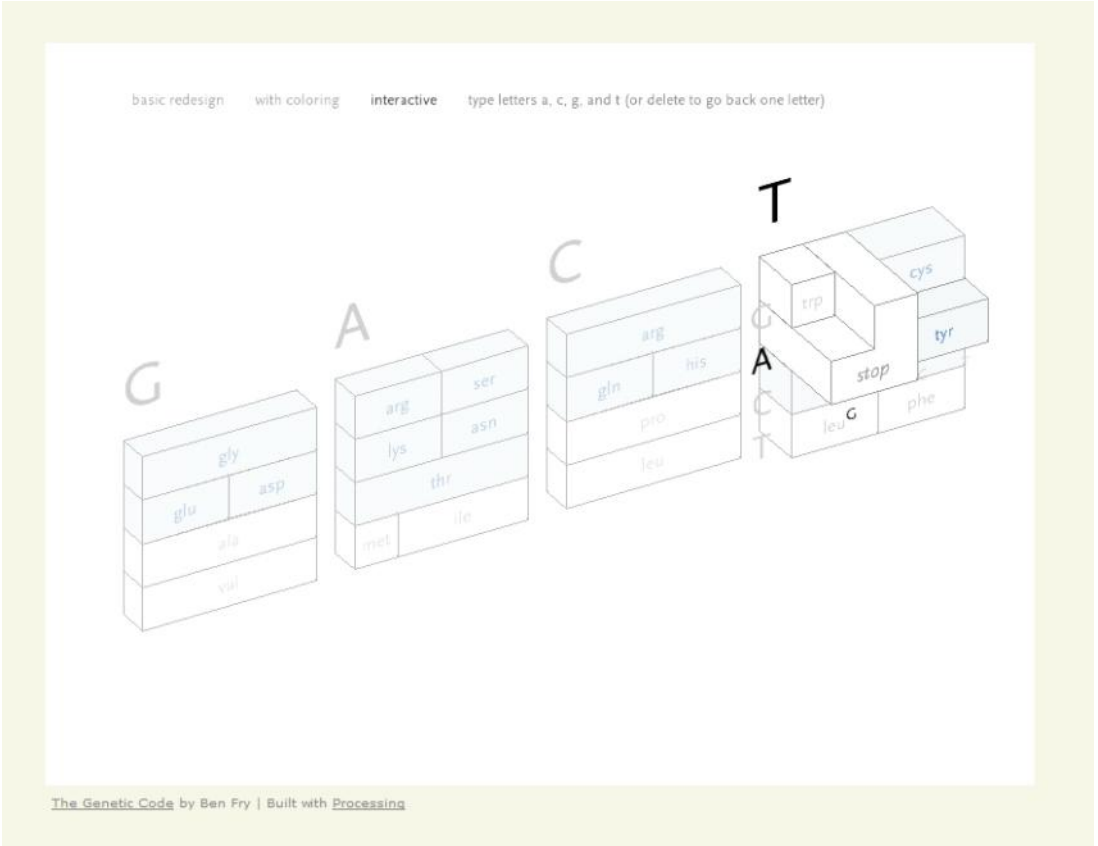

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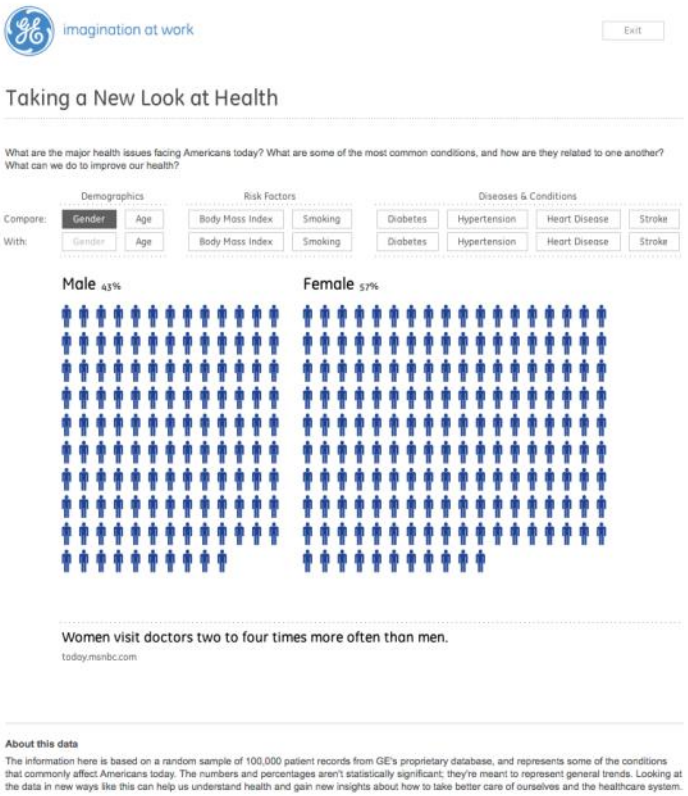

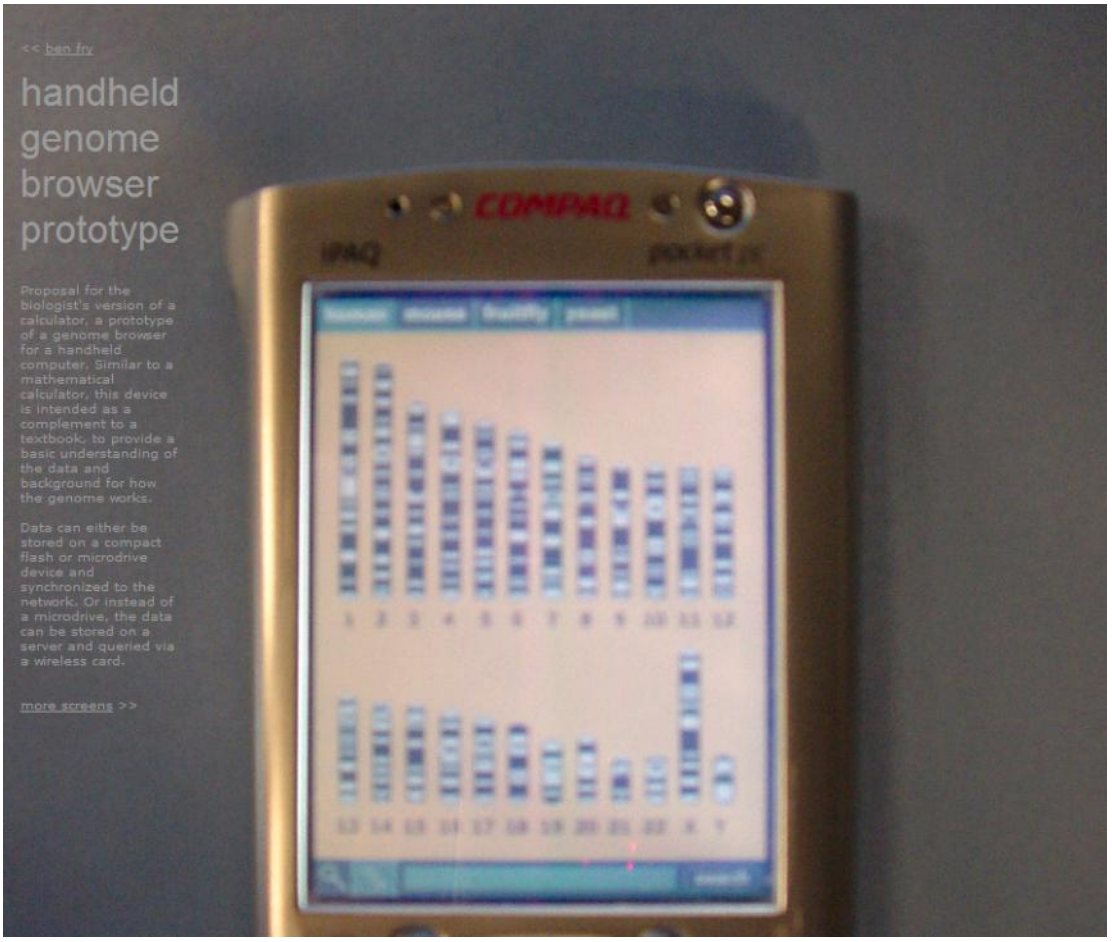

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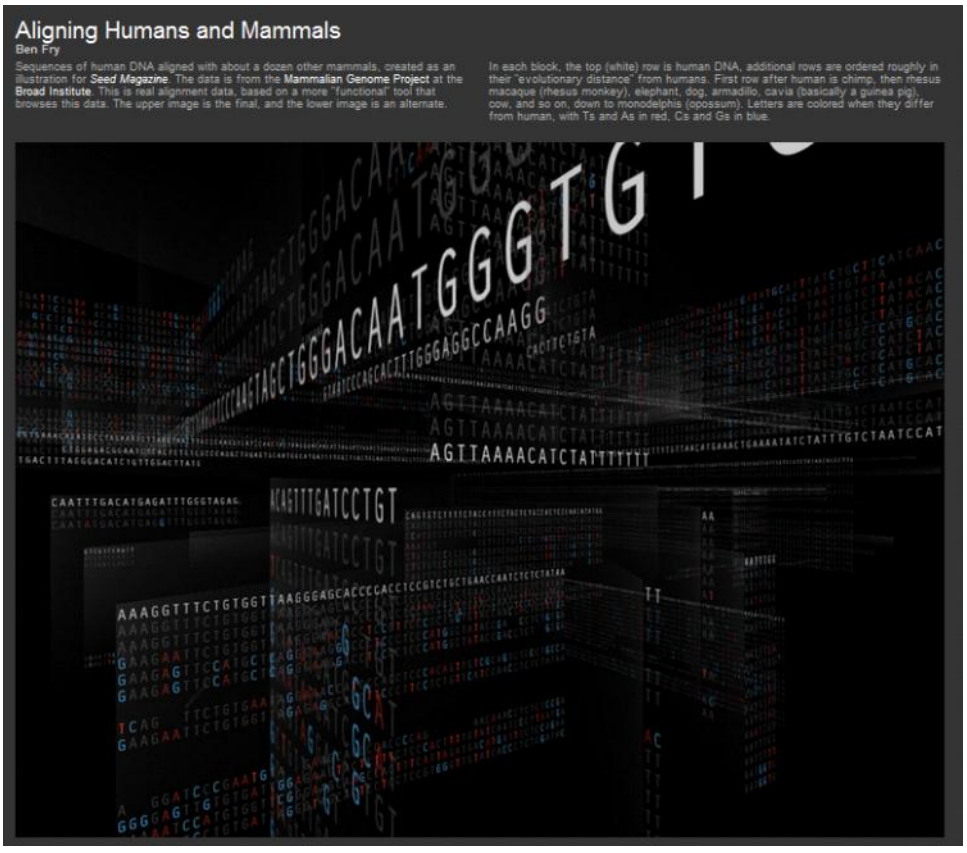

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