Analysis of Social and Cultural Data

Course description

The joint availability of massive social and cultural data sets (including social media and digitized cultural artifacts) make possible fundamentally new paradigms for the study of social and cultural activities and histories. While the recently emerged field of social computing started to explore some of these possibilities, we are only at the very beginning.

Image analysis will be used to illustrate basic concepts of exploratory data analysis. We will also examine both papers from computational social science science and data analysis/visualization projects by designers and artists

Topic List

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Basic concepts and methods of data analysis (using R)

- visualization techniques (using R / Mondrian / Tableu / other software)

- use of visualization for explorative data analysis

- elements of graphic design as they relate to visualization and project web site design

- strategies for presenting projects online

- how to write effective project descriptions for the web presentation;

- promoting projects through social media and getting media coverage

Learning Goals

- Understand current research directions in social and cultural computing

- Identify not yet explored possibilities in working with social media data

- Learn how to prepare data for analysis

- Learn basic techniques for data exploration

- Becom proficient with data visualization techniques

- Understand the structure and organization of web projects that present results of social and computing projects, or visualizations of cultural data

- Learn how to clearly and effectively write project summaries for general audiences

- Learn how to contact members of the press / getting project publicity and promote projects using social media;

Assessment

Students will complete 3 practical assignments which involve organizing data set, analysing them and creating effective visualizations. The goals of these assignments is to meet learning goals 3-5. Students will work in groups on final projects which address goals 6-8. They will be also responsible to completing and discussing readings and sample projects (goals 1-2).