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More Than Insights: Beyond Exploratory Data Visualization

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Abstract: "The purpose of computing is insight, not numbers, R.W. Hamming said, the founder of the ACM. This has certainly been the driving force for most visualization systems to date, which focus on exploring data to discover the unknown. However, these systems typically have complex designs that are unintuitive and cumbersome for non-expert users. On the other hand, visualizations are more and more being used to communicate data and messages to a general audience. But visualization tools for communication are still in their infancy. In this talk, I will reexamine the role of visualization beyond data exploration. I will use concrete examples from my own work to illustrate how we might go beyond traditional charts to design expressive data graphics for communication, use elements of storytelling to convey messages more effectively, and understand cognitive processes of visualization. I will conclude with my research vision for the democratization of data and speculate future research directions on deepening our understanding of visualization and designing better systems for interacting with data.

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