**Discussion Three**

This week’s assignment covers several topics discussed so far in class; treemapping (developed by Ben Schneiderman), usability metrics, the explosive growth in the amount of data we create every day, and how we visualize and sort that data in a way that is meaningful to us, in a way we can use.

There are many methods of sorting data for the purposes of visualization, everything from a simple ordered list, to color coding, to groupings, the latter of which we talked about in terms of the Office ribbon, and many others. For the purpose of this exercise, we are going to examine a method of data visualization known as treemapping, in which grouped, colored boxes are used to categorize and organize top level information for easy evaluation and drill-down if necessary. The size of the boxes and the depth of their color are based on some pre-determined criteria that is specific to the map, as you will see.

You will be using two, possibly three treemaps, and evaluating their usability criteria. Recall that these are effectiveness, efficiency, utility, learnability, and memorability.

The first treemap can be found at newsmap.jp – before formally evaluating its usability criteria listed above, give the group’s overall first impression of the site. You can address any aspects of its design you feel are pertinent, don’t overthink it, just respond; the first reaction is meant to be just that. Then, evaluate it in terms of its usability criteria listed above. Then, having done all that, give a final impression of the site. Once you formally evaluated it, did it live up to your initial thoughts, did it exceed them, or did it fall short? Indicate what the group feels is the site’s strongest aspect, and indicate one thing the group feels it would change, and why.

The next site you’ll need to evaluate is a pseudo-interactive treemap of the 200 top-scoring Reddit posts of all time (<http://ukdataexplorer.com/top_reddit/200/all/> - Warning! This is Reddit, so some things may not be appropriate for humans to ever see and should never have been created). Evaluate it according to the same criteria as you used for newsmap.jp, however you’ll notice at the top of this site there is a link titled “See the original visualization of front page posts.” Click that, compare the two, and indicate which one you feel is better and why. Again, only one sentence is required to address that.

Finally, this next part is not required because it may expose files you don’t want others to see, however if one or more of the group is brave/has nothing to hide, you can download a treemapping program that will show you all the files on your hard drive, colored and categorized according to type, and can be very helpful in identifying what is clogging up space. For Windows, the program is WinDirStat, and for OSX it is Disk Inventory X. All I would ask here, if you choose to investigate, is not to do a full evaluation, but simply indicate if there were any surprises, and if you feel it is an effective means of seeing what is on your drive and the space that is used and by what.

Four pages max double-spaced, be sure all names are on it

Due Monday, Feb. 1, in class