Research Papers and Process

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http://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/courses/547-25

Today

- papers & research: pitfalls & process
  - writing infovis research papers
  - review reading, review writing, conference talks
- course endgame expectations
  - final presentations
  - final report
    - incl. course paper vs research paper differences
- [evaluations]
- open science
  - making research available, reproducible, replicable

Writing InfoVis Papers

Pitfalls

- writing infovis papers: pitfalls to avoid
  - Process and Pitfalls in Writing Information Visualization Research Papers.
    Tamara Munzner. In: Information Visualization: Human-Centered Issues and Perspectives.
    Andreas Kerren, John T. Stasko, Jean-Daniel Fekete, Chris North, eds.
    Springer LNCS Volume 4950, p 134-153, 2008.

Idiom pitfalls

- Unjustified Visual Encoding
  - should justify why visual encoding design choices appropriate for problem
  - prerequisite: clear statement of problem and encoding!

- Hammer In Search of Nail
  - should characterize capabilities of new technique if proposed in paper

- Color Cacophony
  - avoid blatant disregard for basic color perception issues
    - huge areas of highly saturated color
    - categorical color coding for 15+ category levels
    - red/green without luminance differences
    - encoding 3 separate attributes with RGB

- Rainbows Just Like In The Sky
  - avoid hue for ordered attribs, perceptual nonlinearity along rainbow gradient

Later pitfalls: Strategy

- What I Did Over My Summer Vacation
  - don't focus on effort rather than contribution
  - don't be too low level, it's not a manual
- Least Publishable Unit
  - avoid tiny increment beyond (your own) previous work
  - bonus points: new name for old technique
- Dense As Plutonium
  - don't cram in so much content that can't explain why/what/how
    - fails reproducibility test
- Bad Slice and Dice
  - two papers split up wrong
  - neither is standalone, yet both repeat

Later pitfalls: Tactics

- **Stealth Contributions**
  - don't leave them implicit, it's your job to tell reader explicitly!
  - consider carefully, often different from original project goals

Contributions in research papers

- what are your research contributions?
  - what can we do that wasn't possible before?
  - how can we do something better than before?
  - what do we know that was unknown or unclear before?
- determines everything
  - from high-level message to which details worth including
- often not obvious
  - diverged from original goals, in retrospect
- state them explicitly and clearly in the introduction
  - don't hope reviewer or reader will fill them in for you
  - don't leave unsaid should be obvious after close reading of previous work
  - goal is clarity, not overselling (limitations typically later, in discussion section)

Later pitfalls: Tactics

- Stealth Contributions
  - don't leave them implicit, it's your job to tell reader explicitly!
  - consider carefully, often different from original project goals

- I Am So Unique
  - don't ignore previous work
  - both on similar problems and with similar solutions

- Enumeration Without Justification
  - "X did Y" not enough
  - must say why previous work doesn't solve your problem
  - what limitations of their does your approach fix?

- I Am Utterly Perfect
  - no you're not; discussion of limitations makes paper stronger!

Later pitfalls: Results

- Unfettered By Time
  - choose level of detail for performance numbers
  - detailed graphs for technique papers, high-level for design & eval papers
- Straw Man Comparison
  - compare appropriately against state-of-the-art algorithms
  - head-to-head hardware is best (re-run benchmarks yourself, all on same machine)
- Tiny Toy Datasets
  - compare against state-of-the-art dataset sizes for technique (small ok for eval)
- But My Friends Liked It
  - asking labmates not convincing if target audience is domain experts
- Unjustified Tasks
  - use ecologically valid user study tasks: convincing abstraction of real-world use

Final pitfalls: Style

- Deadly Detail Dump
  - explain *how* only **after** *what* and *why;* provide high-level framing before low-level detail

- Story-Free Captions
  - optimize for flip-through-pictures skimming

- My Picture Speaks For Itself
  - explicitly walk them through images with discussion

- Grammar Is Optional
  - good low-level flow is necessary (but not sufficient), native speaker check good if ESL

- Mistakes Were Made
  - don't use passive voice, leaves ambiguity about actor
    - your research contribution or done by others?

Final pitfalls: Style 2

- Jargon Attack
  - avoid where you can, define on first use
    - all acronyms should be defined

- Nonspecific Use Of Large
  - quantify! hundreds? 10K? 100K? millions? billions?…

Final pitfalls: Submission

- Slimy Simultaneous Submission
  - often detected when same reviewer for both
  - instant dual rejection, often multi-conference blacklist
- Resubmit Unchanged
  - respond to previous reviews: often get reviewer overlap, irritated if ignored

Generality

- encoding: visualization specific
- strategy: all research
- tactics: all research
- results: visualization specific
- style: all research, except
  - Story-Free Captions, My Picture Speaks For Itself

Research Process & Pitfalls

Review reading pitfalls

- Reviewers Were Idiots
  - rare: insufficient background to judge worth
  - if reviewer didn't get your point, many readers won't
  - your job: rewrite so clearly that nobody can misunderstand
- Reviewers Were Threatened By My Brilliance
  - seldom: unduly harsh since intimately familiar with area
- I Just Know Person X Wrote This Review
  - sometimes true, sometimes false
  - don't get fixated, try not to take it personally
- It's The Writing Not The Work
  - sometimes true: bad writing can doom good work (good writing may save borderline)
  - sometimes false: weak work common! reinvent the wheel worse than previous one

Review writing pitfalls

- Uncalibrated Dismay
  - remember you've only read the best of the best!
  - most new reviewers are overly harsh

- It's Been Done, Full Stop
  - you must say who did it in which paper, full citation is best

- You Didn't Cite Me
  - stop and think whether it's appropriate
  - be calm, not petulant

- You Didn't Channel Me
  - don't compare against paper you would have written
    - review the paper they submitted

Conference talk pitfalls

- Results As Dessert
  - don't save until the end as a reward for the stalwart!
  - showcase early to motivate
- A Thousand Words, No Pictures
  - aggressively replace words with illustrations
  - most slides should have a picture
- Full Coverage Or Bust
  - cannot fit all details from paper
  - communicate big picture
  - talk as advertising: convince them it's worth their time to read paper!

Paper writing process suggestions

- pre-paper talk: rapid prototyping for writing
  - write and give talk first, as if presenting at conference
  - iterate on talk slides to get structure, ordering, arguments right
  - then create paper outline from final draft of slides
    - encourages concise explanations of critical ideas, creation of key diagrams
    - avoids wordsmithing digressions and ratholes
    - easier to cut slides than prose you agonized over
- pre-paper/practice talk feedback session: at least **2-3x** talk length
  - global comments, then slide by slide detailed discussion
  - nurture culture of internal critique (build your own critique group if necessary)
- have non-authors read paper before submitting
  - internal review can catch many problems
  - ideally group feedback session as above

Course Endgame

Logistics

- Assignments: Final Presentations on Canvas
  - upload due Thu Dec 11 noon (2.5 hrs before session)
    - required & posted: slides (Project Final Presentation Slides, PDF)
    - optional & posted: video (Project Final Presentation Video, mp4)

- Assignments: Final Report on Canvas
  - upload due Mon Dec 15 noon (PST)
    - required & posted: report (Project Final Report, PDF)
    - required & posted: showcase image (Project Teaser Image, png)
    - required but not posted: code incl README (Project Source Code and Other Materials, zip)
    - encouraged & posted: live demo URL (include in code README)
    - encouraged & posted: video (include in code zip *only* if different from final present video)

Final Presentations

Final presentations: Thu Dec 11 2:30-4 pm

- length (4 projects)
  - **presentation** (live **or** prerecorded): 17 min
  - **Q&A** live: 3-4 min
  - **Break**: 2 min between
- session structure
  - order alphabetical by first name (on project page)
  - CS dept (fac / grads) & infovis group invited, friends/others very welcome!
  - refreshments served

Final presentations, cont

- presentation structure
  - content: **motivation/framing**, **project**, **results**, **critique/limitation**
    - standalone: don't assume audience has read proposal or updates (or remembers your pitch)
  - slides (***& slide numbers)*** mandatory for main part
  - demo strongly encouraged, either live or prerecorded
  - format is up to you: live presentation or prerecorded video or a mix
- slides/video upload
  - upload to Canvas Assignments: Final Slides (mandatory), Final Video (optional)
  - by noon Thu Dec 11
- note: **code freeze after presentations!**
  - no additional work on project allowed after presentation deadline
  - additional few days to get it all written down coherently for final report

Final Presentations Schedule

- 2:30-2:50 Alice Kang, Minju Park.
  Exploratory Visual Analysis of Multivariate Correlations in Global Demographic Data

- *2:52-2:54 break*

- 2:54-3:14 Gale Chen, Ricky Curry.
  Canadian Federal Election Data Visualizer

- *3:14-3:16 break*

- 3:16-3:36 Haeji Jung, Yuri Kim.
  Read Bible in Context with BibleViz

- *3:36-3:38 break*

- 3:38-3:58 Kevin Wang, Raymond Liu.
  Visualizing RAG Chatbots in Education

Final presentations marking

- template (may change)
  - Intro/Framing: 20%
  - Main: 30%
  - Limitations/Critique/Lessons: 10%
  - Slides: 10%
  - Presentation/Video Style: 10%
  - Demo: 10% (or N/A)
  - Question Handling: 10%

- marking by buckets
  - great 100%
  - good 89%
  - ok 78%
  - poor 67%
  - zero 0%

Marking: Course overall

- 50% Project,
  summative assessment at end
  - 15% Final Presentation
  - 25% Final Report
  - 60% Content
  - *(Milestones pass/fail,
    penalty only if missed or unacceptable)*
    - *pitch 5%, proposal 10%, update 10%*

- 37% Async Discussion
  - 8 weeks, 4% per week (+ week1, 1%)
    - 75% own comments, 25% responses
    - *(most got full credit)*

- 13% Sync: In-Class Participation
  - 12 sessions, 1% per session
  - 1% final presentations
  - *(most got full credit)*

Final Reports

Final reports

- PDF, use InfoVis templates https://tc.computer.org/vgtc/publications/journal/
  - your choice to use Latex/Word/whatever
- no length cap: illustrate freely with screenshots!
  - design study / technique: aim for at least 6-8 pages
  - analysis / survey: aim for at least 15-20 pages
- strongly encouraged to re-use text from proposal & update writeups
- encourage looking at my writing correctness and style guidelines
  - https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/writing.html
- strongly encourage looking at previous examples
  - https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/courses/547-25/projectdesc.html#examp
  - Example Past Projects (curated list)
  - direct links to all project pages to browse, 2022-2003

Course requirements vs research paper standards

- research novelty **not** required
- mid-level discussion of implementation **is** required
  - part of my judgement is about how much work you did
  - high level: what toolkits etc did you use
  - medium level: what pre-existing features did you use/adapt
  - low level **not** required: manual of how to use, data structure details
- design justification **is** required
  - (unless analysis/survey project)
  - different in flavour between design study projects and technique projects
  - description of design -- what you did -- is necessary but not sufficient
- publication-level validation **not** required
  - user studies, extensive computational benchmarks, utility to target audience

Report structure: General

- low level: necessary but not sufficient
  - correct grammar/spelling
  - sentence flow
  - ideal: formal technical voice, not conversational style
- medium level: order of explanations
  - build up ideas
  - ideal: carefully structured, not stream-of-consciousness infodump
- high through low level: why/what before how
  - paper level
    - motivation: why should I (reader) care
    - overview: what did you (writer) do
    - details: how did you (writer) do it
  - section level
    - overview then details
  - sometimes subsection or paragraph level

Sample outlines: Design study

- https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/courses/547-25/projectdesc.html#outlines
- Abstract
  - concise summary of your project
  - do not include citations
- Introduction
  - give big picture, establish scope, some background material might be appropriate
- Related work
  - include both work aimed at similar problems & similar solutions
  - no requirement for research novelty, but still frame how your work relates to prev
  - cover both academic & relevant non-academic work
  - (you could reorder to have this section later)

Sample outlines: Design study II

- Data and Task Abstractions
  - analyze your domain problem according to book framework (what/why)
  - include both domain-language descriptions and abstract versions
  - could split into data vs task, then domain vs abstract - or vice versa!
  - typically data first then task, so that can refer to data abstr within task abstr
  - **must have tight connections** between data & task abstr
- Solution
  - describe your solution idiom (visual encoding and interaction)
  - analyze it according to book framework (how)
    - only for custom encodings, no need to repeat book material for standard chart types
  - **justify your design choices** as solutions to problem set up w/ data/task abstractions
    - provide rationale, discuss choices with respect to alternatives
  - if significant algorithm work, discuss algorithm and data structures

Sample outlines: Design study III

- Implementation
  - medium-level implementation description
    - specifics of what you wrote vs what existing libraries/toolkits/components do
- Milestones
  - breakdown of who did what work
  - **remember to update milestones:** add actual hours/date to estimated hours/date
  - totals required
- Results
  - include scenarios of use, extensively illustrated with multiple screenshots of your software
    - walk reader through exactly how your interface succeeds (or falls short) of solving intended problem
    - report on evaluation, if you did any (eg deployment to target users, computational benchmarks)
    - **screenshots should be png (lossless compression) not jpg (lossy compression)!**
- Discussion / Future Work
  - **reflect** on your approach: strengths, weaknesses, limitations
  - **lessons learned:** what do you know now that you didn't when you started?
  - future work: what would you do if you had more time?

Sample outlines: Design study IV

- Conclusions
  - summarize what you've done
  - different than abstract since reader has seen all the details
- Bibliography
  - note format is numerical & alphabetical
    - use citation manager / bibtex!
  - make sure to use real references for work that's been published academically
    - not just URL
    - **check arxiv papers**, some have link to final publication venue, also search on titles!
  - **check carefully to ensure consistency & nothing mangled or missing**
  - most online sources require cleanup
    - see guidance at https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~tmm/writing.html#refs

Marking

- **design study** & technique & explainer
  - 12.5% each for
    - intro
    - related work
    - abstractions
    - solution
    - implementation/milestones
    - results
    - discussion
  - 10% style, 2.5% bibliography

Sample outlines: Technique (diffs)

- *Abstract, Introduction (same as above)*

- Related Work
  - big focus on similar solutions, some discussion of similar problems (same task/data combo)

- Data and Task Abstractions
  - much shorter than the corresponding one for design studies, framing context not core contrib

- Solution
  - describing proposed idiom exactly, not justifying its use for particular domain problem
  - as above, analyze in terms of design choices, justify why appropriate vs alternatives

- *Implementation/Milestones (same as above)*

- Results
  - less emphasis on scenarios with particular target users
  - more emphasis on characterizing the breadth of possible uses
  - still definitely include screenshots of the system in action

- *Discussion / Future Work, Conclusions, Bibliography (same as above)*

Sample outlines: Survey (diffs)

- *Abstract (same as above)*

- Introduction
  - discuss the scope of what you're covering, why it's interesting/reasonable partition compared to visualization as a whole

- Related Work
  - **only** previous surveys
    - focus on how your work is similar to or different from them, especially wrt coverage

- Main
  - break up into sections based on your own synthesis of themes of work covered
  - you might want a Background section at the start if domain-focused survey
    - where there's important vocabulary/ideas to establish before diving into main discussion
  - analyze visualizations proposed in these papers in terms of what/why/how framework (if applicable)
    - include images from papers

- *Milestones, Discussion / Future Work, Conclusions, Bibliography (same as above)*

- *marking: intro (10%), relwork (10%), main (60%), milestones/discussion (10%), style (10%)*

Sample outlines: Implementation (diffs)

- *Abstract, Introduction (same as above)*

- Related Work

  - paper you're reimplementing, maybe other closely related work for framing context

  - much shorter than other project types

- Scope

  - big picture of what you did, esp. only a subset of original paper or covering multiple papers

  - nice to have somewhat comprehensible & standalone document but no need to explain in full

    - ok to discuss similarities and differences assuming familiarity with goals of original work

- Implementation

  - detailed implementation discussion: much more than other project types

  - as above, include specifics of what you build on vs what you coded yourself

  - issues that arose: choices unclear in original, subtleties and nuances you discovered along the way, challenges in adapting toolkit capabilities

Sample outlines: Implementation (diffs)

- Results
  - as above, should include screenshots of your software that illustrate scenarios of how to use it
    - but less emphasis particular target users in scenarios
  - definitely include computational benchmarks to evaluate your work

- *Milestones, Discussion / Future Work, Conclusions, Bibliography (same as above)*

- *marking: intro (10%), relwork (10%), main (60%), milestones/discussion (10%), style (10%)*

Report marking

- required: at least material I've listed
  - you may include more material
  - you may choose alternate orderings

- reminder: project **content** is 60% of entire project mark
  - report is 25%, presentation is 15%

- you'll get detailed written feedback
  - combined: final presentation, final report, project content
  - in some cases, next steps

Code / Video

- required: submit your code
  - so I can see what you've done, but I will not post
  - include README.txt file at root with brief roadmap/overview of organization
    - which parts are your code vs libraries
    - how to compile and run
      - but I do not necessarily expect your code compiles on my machine
    - no need to submit data if it's huge
- encouraged but not required
  - submit live demo URL (provide in README.txt file)
  - open-source your code (if so, fine to just send me that URL)
  - submit supporting video (if different from final presentation)
    - with or without voiceover
    - voiceover is very very nice to have later, software bitrot makes demos not last forever!

Showcase image

- showcase image for projects page
  - 300x300 image
  - call it showcase.png
  - required

# Course Evaluations
(link on Canvas)

Open Science:
Available, Reproducible, & Replicable Research

Making your research available & reproducible: why bother?

- moral high ground
  - for Science!

- enlightened self-interest
  - make your own life easier
  - you'll be cited more often by academics
  - your work more likely to be used by industry

Making the world care about your research!

- Increasing the Impact of Visualization Research panel, VIS 2017
  - Krist Wongsuphasawat, Data Visualization Scientist, Twitter

https://www.slideshare.net/kristw/increasing-the-impact-of-visualization-research
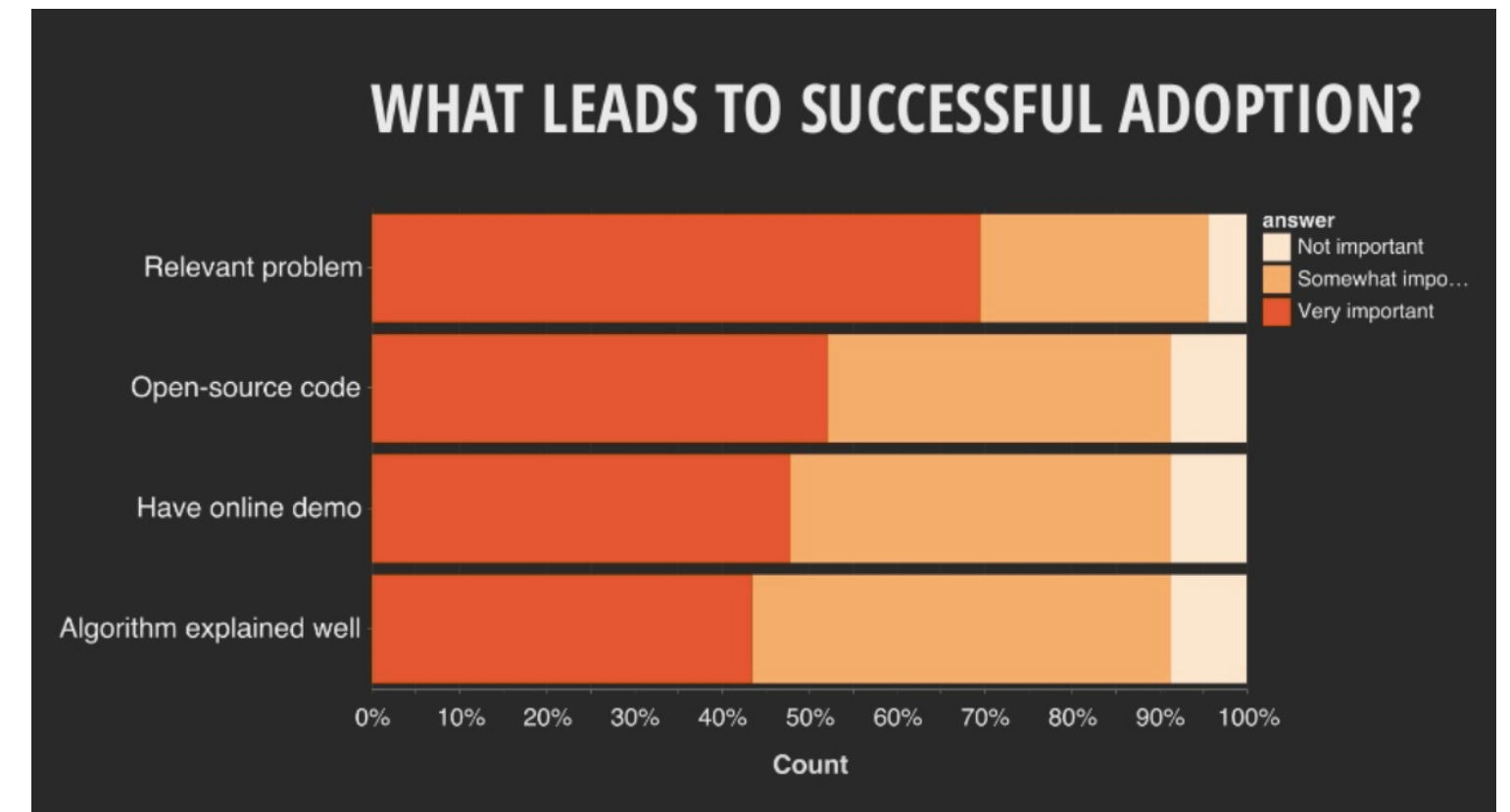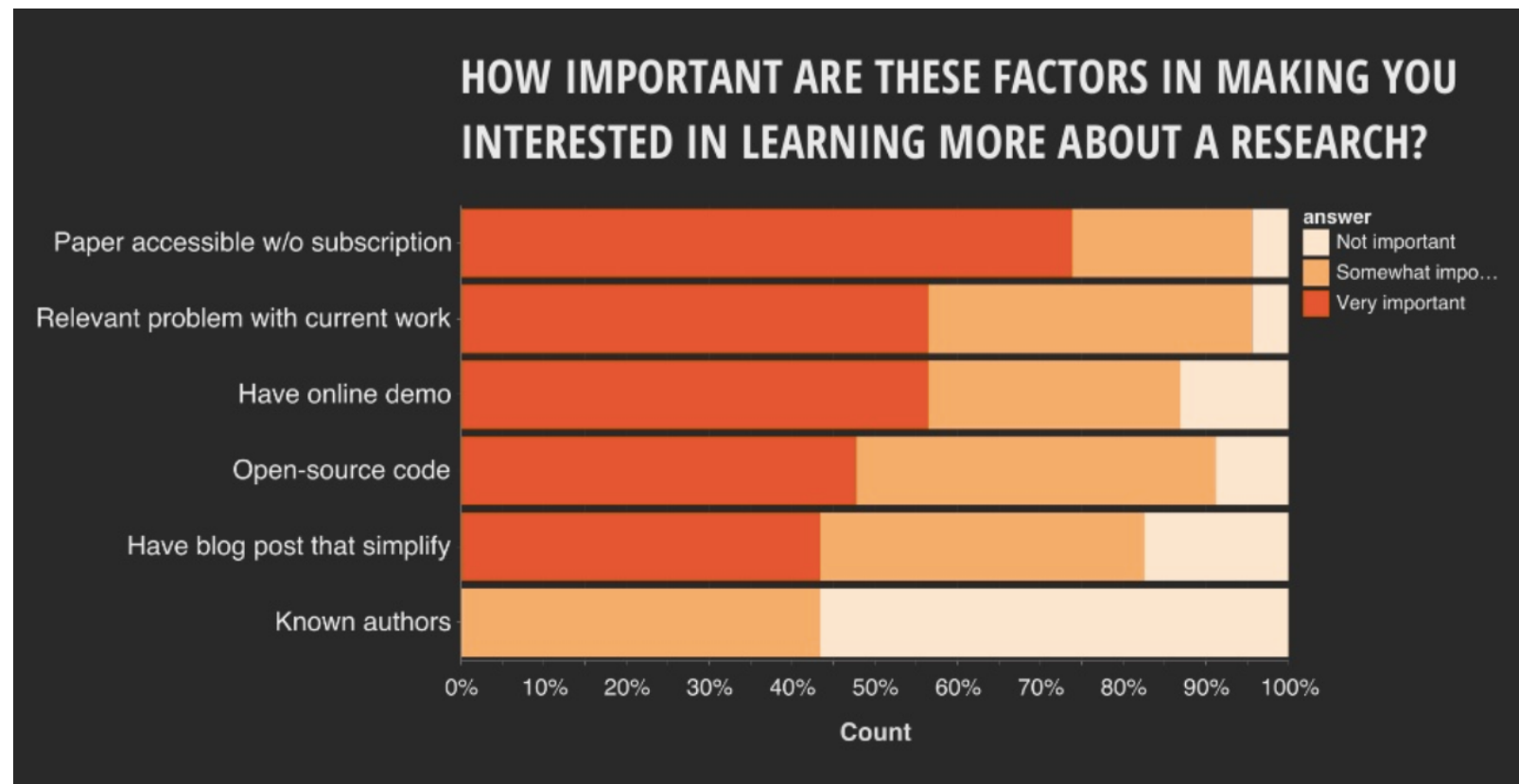
Disseminating research

- paper page for each paper
  - everything! PDF, supplemental materials, videos, software/demos, talk slides, figures, …
  - examples:
    - Table Scraps, http://www.cs.ubc.ca/group/infovis/pubs/2020/table-scraps/
    - TimeLineCurator, http://www.cs.ubc.ca/labs/imager/tr/2015/TimeLineCurator/

- write blog post to accompany each paper
  - very high-impact bang for the time buck
    - Multiple Views: Visualization Research Explained umbrella blog
      https://medium.com/multiple-views-visualization-research-explained
    - UW IDL individual lab blog
      - Surprise Maps: Showing the Unexpected
        https://medium.com/@uwdata/surprise-maps-showing-the-unexpected-e92b67398865
      - Bayesian Surprise Maps
        http://idl.cs.washington.edu/papers/surprise-maps/

Archival dissemination: what to provide

- paper
  - post it online at non-paywalled site
- algorithm
  - document well in paper itself
  - document further with code
- code
  - make available as open source (github.com)
  - pick right spot on continuum of effort involved, from minimal to massive
    - just put it up warts and all, minimal documentation
    - well documented and tested
    - (build a whole community - not the common case)
- supplemental materials

Supplemental materials: provide as much as possible

- demo videos: show interactive look & feel
- data for computational benchmarks & case studies
  - tricky issue in visualization: data might not be yours to release!
- qualitative work: thematic analysis raw & intermediate materials
- quant experimental stimuli: full set of images, not just a few examples
- quant evaluation: data analysis code/scripts
- evaluation: detailed study results
  - advance planning: ethics approval! if sanitize PII (personally identifiable information)
- technique refinement: previous iterations
- parameters: how exactly to regenerate/produce figures, tables
- additional case studies, screenshots, other exposition
- surveys / design spaces: interactive faceted browser
  - examples: treevis.net, dashboarddesignpatterns.github.io

Dissemination & reproducibility: motivation & howto

- Open Practices in Vis Research, Steve Haroz
  - https://osf.io/8ag3w/download
- Cody Dunne VIS22 panel talk (10 min) https://youtu.be/nPdr7xybUbA?t=260
  - why important to host stuff on site that will stay forever (arxiv.org, osf.io)
    - vs personal and even research group sites that can disappear
    - appropriately enough his slides hosted at https://osf.io/mfk5z
- osf.io
  - great for supplemental materials in addition to paper (vs arxiv focus on paper PDF)
  - can create anonymous view-only link for double-blind review
    - https://help.osf.io/article/155-create-a-view-only-link-for-a-registration
  - advice: post when you submit, update with camera-ready
    - don't wait conference presentation, might not happen! (worse yet: promise will do it soon)
  - examples: osf.io/tr3sb, osf.io/uezfk

Reproducibility: Levels of effort required

- 5: 15 minutes with free tools

- 4: 15 minutes with proprietary tools

- 3: considerable effort

- 2: extreme effort

- 1: cannot seem to be reproduced

- 0: cannot be reproduced

[Vandewalle, Kovacevic and Vetterli.
Reproducible Research in Signal Processing - What, why, and how.
IEEE Signal Processing Magazine, 26(3):37-47, May 2009.]

Replication: crisis in psychology, medicine, etc

- early rumblings left me with (ignorable) qualms
  - papers: *Is most published research false?*, *Storks Deliver Babies (p= 0.008)*, *The Earth is spherical (p < 0.05)*, *False-Positive Psychology*

- groundswell of change for what methods are considered legitimate
  - out: questionable research practices (QRPs)
    - p-hacking / p-value fishing / data dredging
    - Hypothesizing After Results are Known (HARKing)
  - in
    - replication
    - pre-registration: avoid "<u>garden of forking paths</u>" & motivated reasoning
  - brouhaha with bimodal responses
    - some people doubling down and defending previous work
    - many willing to repudiate (their own) earlier styles of working

Remarkable introspection on methods

- psych: thoughtful willingness to change standards of field
  - Andrew Gelman's commentary on the Susan Fiske article
    - http://andrewgelman.com/2016/09/21/what-has-happened-down-here-is-the-winds-have-changed/
  - Simine Vazire's entire Sometimes I'm Wrong blog
    - http://sometimesimwrong.typepad.com/
    - especially posts on topic Scientific Integrity
  - Joe Simmons Data Colada blog post What I Want Our Field to Prioritize
    - http://datacolada.org/53/
  - Dana Carvey's brave statement on her previous power pose work
    - http://faculty.haas.berkeley.edu/dana_carney/pdf_My%20position%20on%20power%20poses.pdf

When and how will this storm hit visualization?

- they're ahead of us (they = psychology)
  - they have some paper retractions
    - we don't (yet) have any retractions for methodological considerations
  - they agonize about difficulty of getting failure-to-replicate papers accepted
    - we hardly ever even try to do such work
  - they are a much older field
    - we're younger: might our power hierarchies thus be less entrenched??…
  - they are higher profile
    - we don't have vis research results appear regularly in major newspapers/magazines
  - they have rich fabric of blogs as major drivers of discussion
    - crosscutting traditional power hierarchies
    - we have far fewer active bloggers, world has changed
- replication crisis was focus of BELIV 2018 workshop at IEEE VIS
  - evaluation and BEyond - methodoLogIcal approaches for Visualization
  - https://beliv-workshop.github.io/2018/

Upcoming

Next week: Advanced topics, research state of the art

Come talk!

- encourage meeting with me to get advice/feedback before final present
  - chance to get feedback while you can still act on it
  - optional, not mandatory
  - wise to schedule somewhat in advance by email
    - can't meet with all 4 teams at very last minute!