

Participant 04

1. How are the concepts for creating animations that we talked about today similar to tools that you design with? *Time in: 00:19*

Very similar. Yeah. I've used After Effects and Keynote and a little bit of D3 before. So yeah I think it pretty much just captures all of my previous experiences.

2. What is missing in those tools for creating animated data visualizations? *Time in: 00:52*

So you want like tools with you UI. Yeah I see.

So I could probably just list for you. What are the drawbacks of each type. So like right now I am kind of into you node based programming. Like so to Quartz, Origami and Touch Designer. The advantage of those tools is that I could do that in like 10 minutes. Like I could just take it at csv and like play with nodes and have them spit up stuff really fast. The downside of it is it's really hard to manage. Once you get it like once you have like maybe 10 nodes each node is trying to reference each other basically like your your GUI is screwed. Yeah because it's so complex and like you have lines to go from here to here to here, and more time is spent on trying to get these nodes look like - makes sense. And and also you can't really do it and logic on there. Yeah. So you kind of like that is like a very ideal example of what like a logic switch would be. Is it really really hard to do so all of it is based on like really procedural like there's no advanced logic involved but also like it's a very cheap. An economical way to do stuff. Like I can't do it just like take a csv and just like plug it in and I don't have to write code or anything.

And Keynote can't allow me to do that. So on the other hand you have After Effects right which is completely based on key frames. Like the problem of that is you have to get really good at organizing stuff to cheaply visualize stuff for let's say an operation. Or to present to like your colleagues or your superior. Like a little time is spent on like creating small little comps that you can use to plug into larger comps. And so I think that like it it allows you basically like a maximum control. But then the downside is you can't do as fast the thing in there is. And so I think like the like if I want a tool it will be just like is a combination of both of those things. Like it allows me like the flexibility of a node based programming. And it also allows me the like the fine control and and the simplicity of the mind. I get in there, I have to think about like what I am doing. But in keyframe in an After Effects I don't have to think about what I'm doing. It's just like oh this changed to this. Change to this.

3. What information about the underlying data do you think should be exposed? *Time in: 04:35*

Oh. Ideally it would be one on one like a half a data on here. Yeah that's like numbers numbers numbers. And then I have my graphic on here. Ideally I would want to change my data. Let me change my graphic and my data point changes. I want to change my data point and my graphic changes. So it's a lot like website builders nowadays. Like Squarespace or WebFlow you're basically like you drag a button's position and the CSS changes, or you change your CSS and the button changes.

4. Were there any concepts that you felt were too difficult to understand? *Time in: 05:22*

No, nope. Yea...

5. What's hard about creating animations? *Time in: 05:55*

I think it all comes down to the amount of stuff that you're trying to animate. It can be driven by like, maybe its like an (in-audible??) where you're able to declare I want this to look like this and there's like ten thousand lines there. Or it could be like a data thing, where there are ten thousand data points changing from some other data points. Like the challenge is always ... so now if you do kind of like a trim path animation in After Effects it takes an immense amount of time to do. Umm, because each of the shapes that you're trying to animate have to be individual shapes and they all have their own individual trim path property. And the thing thats like maddening about After Effects is that you can't batch select! Which is like if you have a thing thats like 50 lines then you have to draw 50 times. Not just batch select, or batch change - but how can you present a way so that I can tell my computer if I want to do this on all of them, you go do it for me. Not making me more powerful, its making the computer more intelligent in learning what I want to do, and doing it for me. And thats why there's a large community on scripting in After Effects, and expressions, and all of these plugins that cost almost the price of and Adobe subscription just to do all of that stuff. Its basically like, not trying to make me more powerful, its in a way trying to make the computer more intelligent to do it for you.

6. When do you consider using animations in a project? *Time in: 08:06*

If I know I should use its because I got asked to do it (laughs). Motion graphic stuff, you have to do that. And I guess sometimes if you're trying to tell a story or trying to convince somebody in a like non verbal way - animation is a very good way to that. Maybe its in slides, or maybe its in your own website.

7. From your experience, what makes a good animation? *Time in: 08:46*

Good or effective animation. Well animation it doesn't have an intrinsic good - its only as good as it helps you to tell a story or make an argument and be persuasive. I think its the same criteria that you apply to static design or like UI design - its basically same thing, where self-evidence is really important. Sometimes you can, because things move and thats one thing thats charming and also dangerous in animation. Things move and if you don't have enough time you lose it - and you can confuse the audience. I think its even more important to have it be self-evident. Not even have the animation start, and have the audience understand what I'm looking at, and what the story might be, that the person making it is trying to tell. Sometimes you will see really crazy animations, like this giant pie chart with like ten thousand colors and like tiny text on top of it, and like animating it and it scrolls and changes. If you really take your time to pause it and take like 2 minutes to look at it and understand it. But its not self-evident at first glance. And then the other thing that I think is more tied to cognitive psychology - what type of properties are you changing and how much is too much? Yea, and is the property that you're trying to animate the more salient or persuasive one in the whole storytelling process for your audience. Sometimes things that aren't necessarily, and you can't animate those things, its not necessarily a useful thing to have that animation show up. Sometimes you can just do a fade and have the thing go away and like pop up in another point. And just be able

to focus on the one thing that you're trying to tell. From my previous experience with either UI design or animation or these type of interactive storytelling - there is probably a very sad statement that I can conclude and that is that people are stupid. And impatient too. They can't interpret a lot of information at the same time, you really have to water it down, and you really have to hammer it once, twice, and a third time. And if they can't get it the first time - they leave. Or like they get a negative response to it. So yea both things, I think it holds in this too.