

VISUALIZAR'08: Database City

Advanced project development and production workshop

Curated by: **José Luis de Vicente**

Instructors: [Bestiario](#) and [Fabien Girardin](#)

Dates: **3rd - 18th November, 2008**

Venue: **Medialab-Prado, Madrid**

Call for projects

Medialab-Prado issues a call for data visualization projects to be carried out within the context of the *VISUALIZAR 08: Database City* International Workshop, that will take place from 3rd to 18th November 2008 at Medialab-Prado (Madrid, Spain).

Submissions Deadline: October 5, 2008

Open call for collaborators: October 15, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Data Visualization is a transversal discipline which harnesses the immense power of visual communication in order to explain, in an understandable manner, the relationships of meaning, cause and dependency which can be found among the great abstract masses of information generated by scientific and social processes.

Visualizar, one of Medialab-Prado's lines of work, is directed by José Luis de Vicente, and is conceived as an open and participatory research project around theory, tools and strategies of information visualization.

VISUALIZAR'07 was held for the first time in November 2007 and explored the social, cultural and political possibilities of the art and science of data visualization. This year, *VISUALIZAR'08: Database City* will have the city as its sole focus.

Urban environments, which are becoming increasingly dense, complex and diverse, are one of contemporary society's largest "databases", daily generating volumes of information that require new methods of analysis and understanding.

How can we use the data visualization and information design resources to understand the processes governing contemporary cities and better manage them? What can we learn from studying traffic and pedestrian movement flows through the streets of Madrid? What would happen if we filled the streets with screens providing information updated each moment about water and electricity consumption?

For two weeks, lectures, presentations, and an intense project development programme will involve participants from all over the world in a collaborative process that will culminate in eight new proposals for the city.

VISUALIZAR'08: Representing Data Cities

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The projects developed during **VISUALIZAR'08** will explore questions such as:

- What role to information networks and structures play in the construction of a modern city?
- What can we learn about cities via the data flows generated by their everyday activity? Can we develop tools to visualize this data to help us improve urban design and management?
- How can we integrate dynamic representation of information in buildings and urban spaces?

Several workshops objectives might include the development of:

- Visualization tools that enable us to understand how citizens use urban spaces.
- Visualization tools that map and represent big cities' social and cultural diversity.
- Visualization tools that show the relationship between networks and the urban spaces where they are located, be they service networks (traffic, public transport, electricity or water networks) or information networks (telephone networks, radio and television broadcasts, data networks).
- Visualization tools that represent the activity in specific locations, and that display and integrate them as an architectonic element.

OPEN CALL GUIDELINES

Purpose of the open call

The purpose of this open call is to choose a maximum of eight data visualization projects related to the topic "Database City", to be developed collaboratively at a two week workshop in November 2008. The selected projects will be developed with the aid of several instructors, in addition to a large group of assistants and collaborators.

The open call is aimed to creators and professionals in the fields of graphic design, art, sociology, architecture, urbanism, education, psychology, information science, environmental studies, mathematics, statistics, scientific visualization, computer analysis, computer science, physics or any other field where data visualization may be applied or may contribute valuable innovations.

Proposals may be presented by individuals or groups. Each participant or team may present as many projects as they wish.

The selected projects must be open to the participation of other interested collaborators, who will be able to contribute to the production of the pieces during the development of the workshop. Therefore, there are two levels of involvement with the workshop:

1 - as a project leader

2 - as a collaborator in any one of the selected projects.

Once the projects have been selected, the second step in the process will involve a new call for those people who would like to participate in the projects' production. The call for collaborators will be published on **October 15**, 2008 at the [Medialab-Prado website](#).

General workshop information

- **Methodology**

This workshop aims to be a collective platform for research, production, and learning, offering substantial help and support in developing the projects selected. The proposals will be carried out in multidisciplinary task groups comprised by the author(s) and interested collaborators, with conceptual and technical advice from the teaching staff.

During the workshop, various activities will be scheduled such as talks, presentations, seminars or specific mini-workshops.

Work days will be adapted to the specific needs of the projects in conciliation with the activities organized for the seminar and Medialab-Prado's norms for all matters related to the hours the centre is open.

The necessary means to carry out the selected projects and to document them will be made available by Medialab-Prado Madrid, as far as possible.

Given that one of the main objectives of the workshop is to foster the development, distribution, and free access to new approaches and new tools related to information visualization, participants are encouraged to prepare proper documentation for the projects developed, both during and after the workshop, and to publish the results and source code under licenses that grant access and distribution of the knowledge produced during the workshop.

- **Technical requirements**

The jury will make a detailed evaluation of the technical feasibility of carrying out the projects. For that reason, projects with clearly specified technical and spatial requirements will be judged positively.

Projects will be carried out and exhibited at the Medialab-Prado buildings. Medialab-Prado will contribute only the basic equipment and means to produce the selected projects, pending prior application from the proposal's author(s).

The access and use of Medialab-Prado's technical material will be supervised by a coordinator from the center.

Any expense not previously planned or approved in material or equipment rental will be paid by the project authors.

Medialab-Prado promotes the use of free software tools. Therefore, Medialab-Prado encourages participants to work with shared and open code applications and environments.

Should the jury have doubts about any technical requirements, they will contact the authors of the proposal.

- **Language**

The workshop will be held partly in English and partly in Spanish, with no translation.

- **Travel and lodging aid**

Pending application, Medialab-Prado will provide lodging in a Youth Hostel for participants residing outside of Madrid and will consider the possibility of covering travel expenses wholly or in part, on a case by case basis.

Registration

All those interested in taking part in the workshop must fill in and send the application form published at www.visualizar.org

Application Deadline: October 5, 2008

Further Information: visualizar@medialab-prado.es

Final Decision

- **Selection committee**

The jury will comprise the workshop instructors, the director of the platform, and Medialab-Prado.

- **Assessment of the projects**

Projects will be judged based on:

- Project quality
- Clarity in the exposition of the project
- Suitability to the general purpose of Visualizar and to the specific objectives of this call for projects.
- Combination of various fields of knowledge
- Technical and logistical feasibility
- Educational value

- Willingness to collaborate with others in project development
- Use of open software tools and licenses that grant access to the processes and the results
- **Notification of winners**

Winners will be announced on October 13, 2008 and applicants will receive notification by email.

Projects' Promotion

The finished works will be presented to the public by their creators on the final day of the seminar-workshop.

An exhibit of those projects will remain at Medialab-Prado from November 19, 2008 through January 11, 2009.

In addition, the projects or related documentation will be published on the Medialab-Prado website. Medialab-Prado will provide Web hosting as needed for the projects and also the tools and platforms required by participants to properly document the process and the results.

Winners' obligations

- The winning individuals or groups agree to attend the workshop and prior seminar from November 3 through 18, 2008. They also agree to finish and document their proposed projects, as far as possible.
- The winning individuals or groups may use equipment, pending prior application and approval. Any expense not previously planned or approved in material or equipment rental will be paid by the project authors.
- Projects carried out will be the property of their author(s), although whenever said projects are shown at festivals or exhibits, and whenever images of said projects are reproduced in catalogues or websites, their relation with the *VISUALIZAR'08: Database City* workshop carried out at Medialab-Prado should be mentioned. The names of the people who collaborated in developing the projects should also be shown.
- Projects exhibited may be shown in Medialab-Prado website.

Entry constitutes acceptance of all contest rules.