# Journal of Visualization and Interaction

## Reviews for 2024-heinicker-visualizing-round3

### Review #1

Completed: 16-09-2025 00:56

Recommendation: Accept Submission

**Conflict Declaration**

I declare that I have no known conflicts of interest with the authors.

**Review**

This paper is a timely reflection on visualisation practice, its failures, its dominant forms, and how to move beyond them. Specifically, it advances our knowledge of InfoVis by classifying two dominant models of visualisation practice - data exceptionalism (DE) and affirmative visualisation (AV). These two classifications synthesise key criticisms of visualisation practice.

Data exceptionalism (DE) may be more familiar to the reader and refers to "the idea of the special presence of data" and a potential "data superiority" where the presence of data is an unquestioned good that is central to society and a crucial foundation for knowledge production. The author breaks this down into three aspects: data narratives (rhetoric around the magnitude and use of data), data affinity (its affinity to a specific context - numerical and computational structures), and data critique (that critique of data focuses on its socio-political consequences rather than foundation).

As for affirmative visualisation (AV), this may be less familiar (but no less illuminating). AV is "a specific attitude toward the data image that prioritises visualisation as an inevitable and unquestioned endpoint of data practice". This critique of some kind of telos or endpoint "shifts focus inward, toward solving problems internal to the image" and away from engaging with where the data and image come from and what they are based on. AV is also comprised of three aspects (perhaps a bit too neatly in comparison to DE). These are exclusion (via boundary policing or "chart crimes"), trivialisation (where visualisation becomes a "reassuring end-state"), and idealisation ("the visualisation process is presented as inherently enriching and self-revealing").

Taken together, the models of DE and AV can be seen as "ideal types" (in the sociological sense) of visualisation practice. Rather than simply corresponding how really existing visualisation practice happens all the time, it classifies/synthesises dominant strands for the

purpose of recognising and reasoning about them. Such reflection on DE and AV strikes me as crucial for the discipline to advance. The author motivates the case for these dominant models by grounding each of the three aspects for each model with specific examples and relevant literature.

I believe the real advance in knowledge from the author's work is to classify these dominant strands into models the field may recognise and act on. In the conclusion of the paper the author offers several (very welcome) suggestions for how to act on the criticism advanced - noting how critique can be a beginning.

**Openness**

On openness and transparency, I believe the author makes their case cogently, the two classifications (DE and AV) can be used productively, and the suggestions at the end can be taken up.

**Classification**

Emprirical Research - Qualitative

**Classification**

Systems or design research

**Classification**

Systematic Literature Review

**Classification**

Theory

**Recommendation**

Accept

**Revisions Requested**

**Reviewer Name**

anonymous

**ORCID**

N/A

# Review #2

Recommendation: Accept Submission

## Conflict Declaration

I declare that I have no known conflicts of interest with the authors.

## Review

This paper presents views on attitudes both in working with data (Data Exceptionalism) and visualising that data (Affirmative Visualisation). I have reviewed this paper previously and continue to think it is an interesting and timely argument.

The phenomenon discussed within the paper are things which I do believe occur, and this paper provides some language to be able to identify, discuss, and combat them. The examples used to evidence these phenomena are relevant, and I think in some cases provide quite an interesting different lens to look at these issues through.

The changes made to this paper in the last revision are very good in my opinion - the addition of some light guiding principles results in a more actionable conclusion that feels more hopeful and I hope will lead to interesting future directions in Information Visualization research.

I have a few minor editing suggestions but other than that I believe this paper is ready for publication.

## Openness

Acceptable - As the paper is a commentary no data are used which could be shared.

## Classification

Commentary

## Recommendation

Accept

## Revisions Requested

All of these are extremely minor and should not affect the paper being accepted.

## References

References [1] and [17] are stylistically unexpected - I would generally not expect to see additional text in a reference - were they perhaps intended to be footnotes? I would personally move any text from references into the body of the text, but again, this is stylistic preference.

Reference [18] and reference [32] are the same reference and should be condensed into one.

DOIs where available should be included in references.

**Structure**

The subheadings for the different sections in AVn are nice, and while DE reads well as it is you could replicate that structure to aid readability.

**Reviewer Name**

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# Review #3

Completed: 24-12-2025 21:42

Recommendation: Accept Submission

**Conflict Declaration**

I declare that I have no known conflicts of interest with the authors.

**Review**

I feel that the revision has successfully addressed many comments from previous reviews. The organizational structure is much clearer and I appreciate the new examples that were added to support the discussion of DE and AV.

**Openness**

The revision offers clear definitions of concepts that other researchers can apply in their own work.

**Classification**

Theory

**Recommendation**

Accept

**Revisions Requested**

n/a

**Reviewer Name**

Jonathan Zong

**ORCID**

N/A

# Metareview

Completed: 2026-01-12 16:37

Recommendation: Accept

**Conflict Declaration**

I declare that I have no known conflicts of interest with the authors.

**Review**

All reviewers agree that the paper is now ready for publication.

**Revisions Requested**

None except minor formatting tweaks (to be handled in final copyediting stage).

**Reviewer Name**

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