OnCreate

Teaching Method

LivingDataViz—Working with information visualisation of student groups

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LivingDataViz—Working with information visualisations of student groups

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Abstract

»LivingDataViz« is a teaching method that helps to introduce groups to each other; it is recommended to be used in the beginning of an collaborative online course.
»LivingDataViz« are visualisations of a student group, like personal informations, group matches or differences, and visualisations of local characteristics. This method aims to introduce groups to each other on the one hand and to learn to collect and to visualise data on the other hand. The effort is limited in time, but preparation of the content is necessary (which information do we want to tell).
Furthermore, depending on the size of the group and depending on the project, half a day is needed to photograph and implement the visualizations. This time can be shortened if teachers agree on the questions beforehand. However, it can be seen that quantitatively more and qualitatively more surprising topics are developed, if students elaborate visualisation topics themselves. It's a good idea therefore to offer a mixture of predefined topics/themes as well as discussion time, where students group develop own topics/themes by themselves.

Description of method

Students are asked to find matches and dismatches in their group. This can be local characteristics, personal data, behaviour, or simple data facts. The finding can be done either manually (e.g. Brainstorming and Clustering) or automated (evaluation of their self-tracking data). The combination of manual and automated data collection within one infographic is possible because data will be selected anyway in the design process (which data do you want to collect, which story do you want to tell).

The collected data are evaluated, which means they are viewed, sorted, and structured, e.g. according to the LATCH principle by Richard Saul Wurman. Wurman notes the finite ways to organise information. „It can only be organized by location, alphabet, time, category, or hierarchy.“ but He points to the great possibilities of structuring „While information may be infinite, the ways of structuring it are not. And once you have a place in which the information can be plugged, it becomes that much more useful. Your choice will be determined by the story you want to tell. Each way will permit a different understanding of the information—within each are many variations.“ (Wurman, R. S. (2001): Information Anxienty 2. Que, Indianapolis, p. 40)

After organisation of collected data, students have to select correct visualisation methods. The representation of quantities, spatical data, principles and structures is the next unit practiced with this teaching method. In this method each student is responsible for one topic. He or she directs the group according to the type of representation they have to set up. A team of two people takes care of the light conditions and the photography.

Examples

Examples of themes for group visualisations and results of »LivingData-Viz« can be found on the following pages. All visualisations were made by students from the first term in two half-days. One visualisation is about, who is Adobe Cracker and Supporter (crack/buy the software liscence). This visualisation will not be presented in this document: Nevertheless the topic is quite interesting in the context of used tools in online collaboration or in the context of courses about media law etc.

Literature

Wurman, R. S. (2001): Information Anxienty 2. *Que*, Indianapolis, p. 40

Examples

Far away from home *— Visualisation of distance from Potsdam to home town*

Broken Bones *— How many times did you break your bones already?*

Smartphone and Operating System — *How old is your smartphone? Raise your hand if you installed the latest version of the operating system.*

»Berlin vs. Potsdam«

Living DataViz
»Wer wohnt wo?«

Kurs:
Grundlagen Interfacedesign:
ANALYSE — Informationsarchitektur
und Visualisierung
Prof. Constanze Langer

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Robin Müller, William Heiko Schmidt

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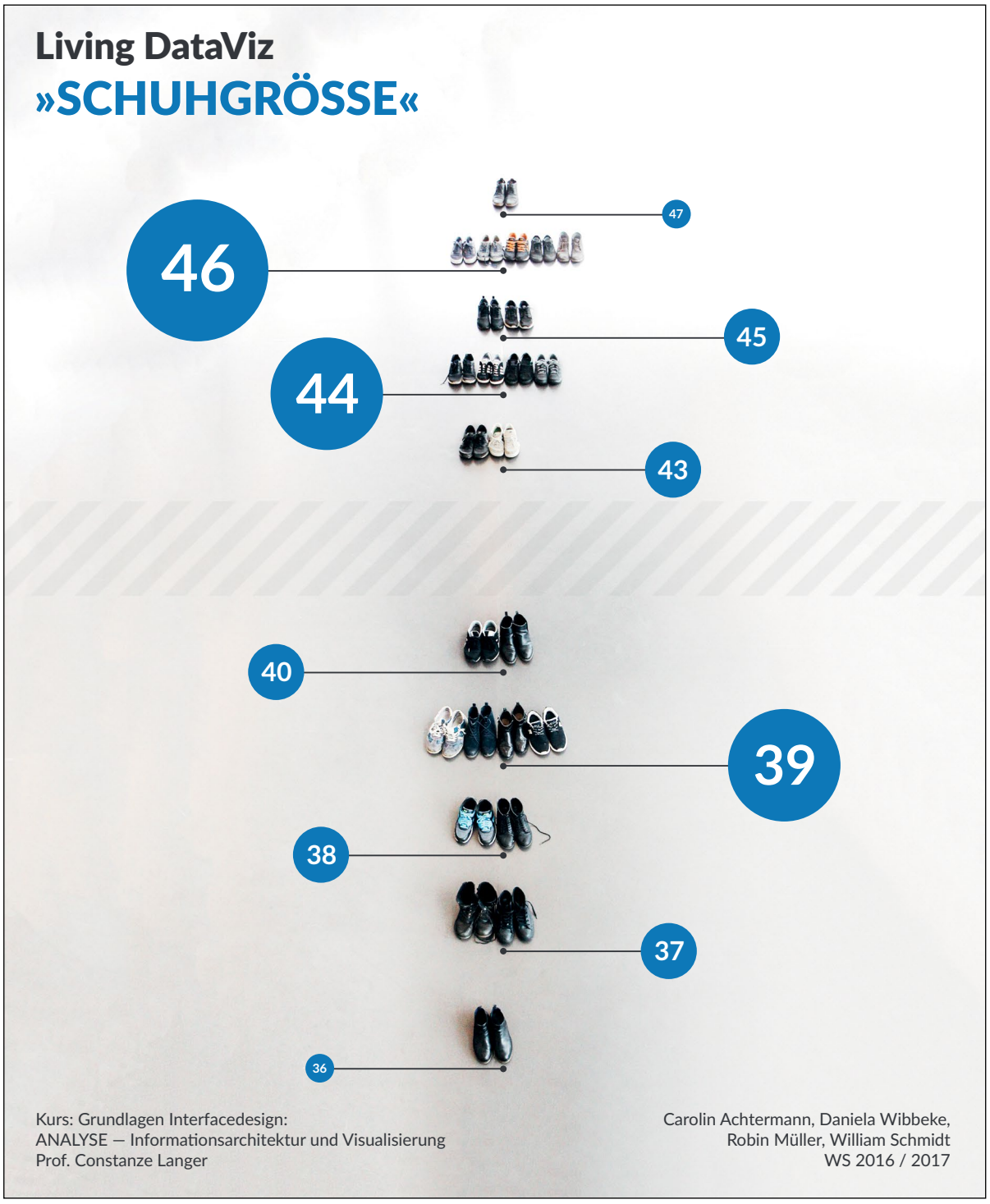
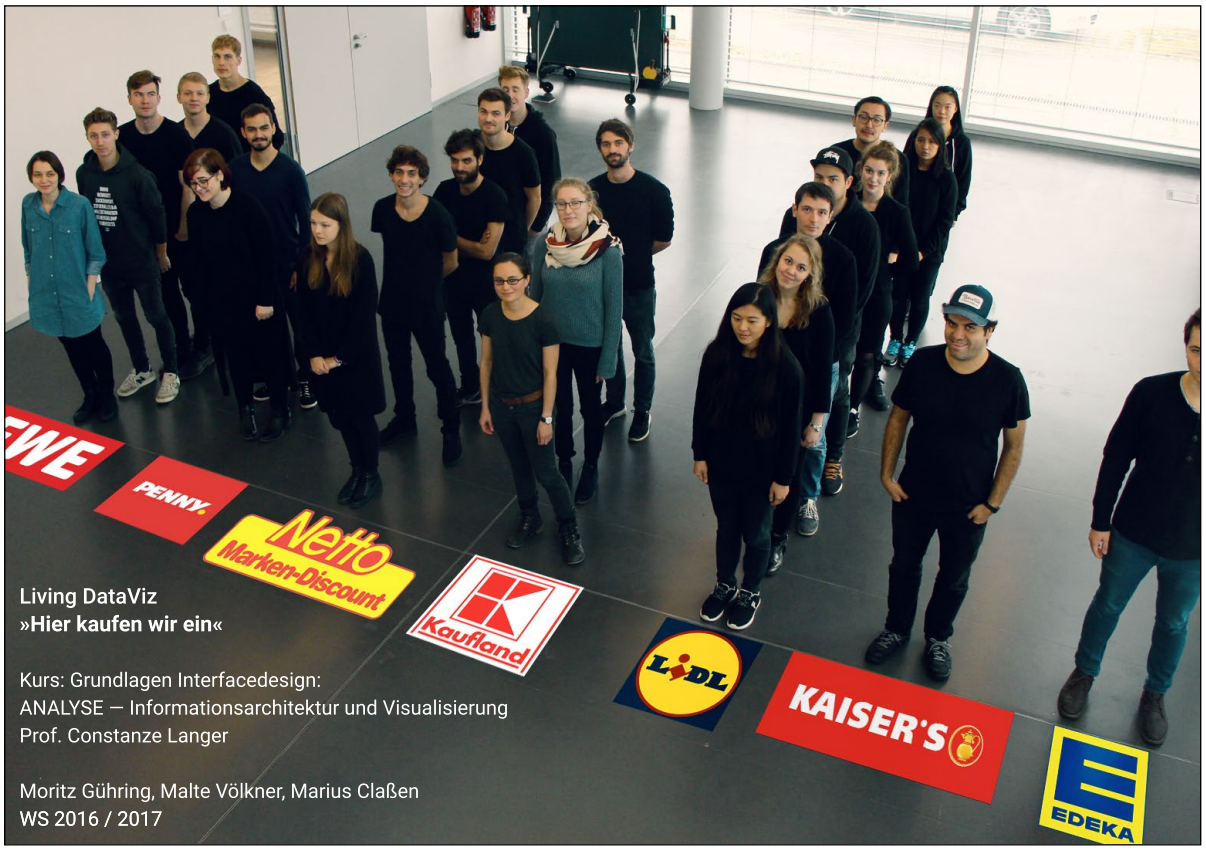
Where do you live? Berlin or Potsdam? *— Berlin based people have to stand outside of our design building.*

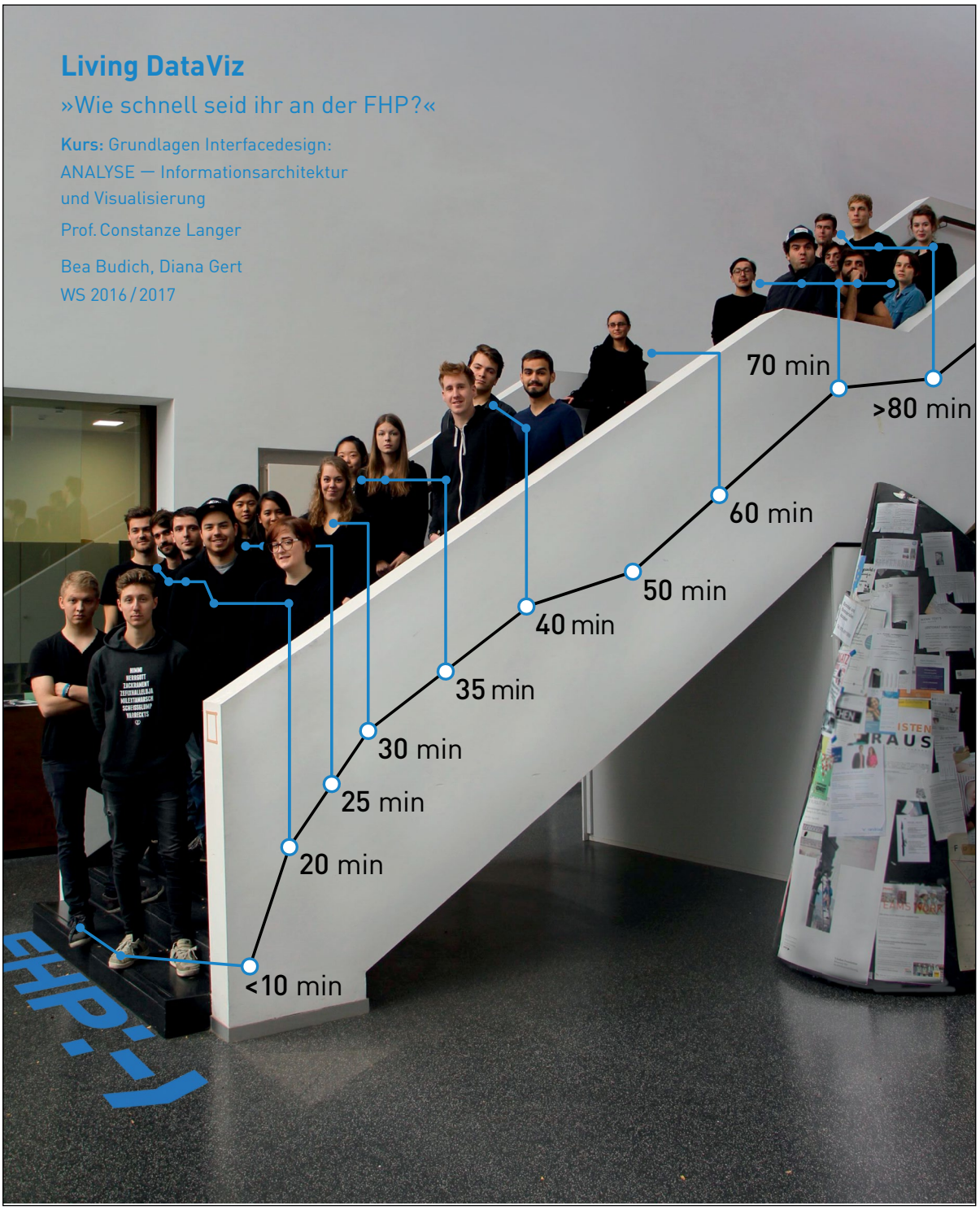


Shoe size of the course — *Size of the bubbles indicates frequency*



Where do you buy your food? — *Shopping behaviour*

Our hair — *sorted by brightness and length*



How long do you need to get to university? *— Students' travel times*