**Aria Alamalhodaei Alexandra Alberda Anna Feigenbaum Humanising Data through Comics: Strategies for evidence-based activism and advocacy during COVID-19**

In recent years scholars and practitioners have drawn attention to the need for data to be humanised (Lupi 2017, D’Ignazio and Klein 2020, Alamalhodaei et al 2020). In a piece circulated around social media, data visualizer Giorgia Lupi provocatively asked, “Can a data visualization evoke empathy and activate us also at an emotional level, and not only at a cognitive one? Can [it] make you feel part of a story of a human’s life?” (2017).

This workshop explores the emergent area of ‘data comics’, looking at how the fields of graphic medicine and graphic social science integrate quantitative, evidence-based statistics into narratives of human experience in efforts to evoke empathy (Bach et al 2017, Wysocki 2018, McNicol and Wysocki 2019). It then turns to consider the recent rise of data visualisation, and with them data comics, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the fear of getting sick to the boredom of working at home, from the struggles of full-time parenting to the threat of economic upheaval, we offer a brief masterclass in how recent data comics on COVID-19 explore the complexities and potential of presenting data in more humanising ways.

Drawing on examples gathered over the past three months, we argue that integrating data and comics can be a powerful tool for public health communications, social justice and advocacy work. The workshop then turns to a hands-on activity asking participants to create their own data comics from a live brief. The session concludes with practical advice for the planning, production and distribution of data comics.

**Work cited**

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