

2016 Conference Transcription

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Session Title	Fireside Chats
Session Time	14:15 - 15:00
Speakers	Stefanie Posavec, Hannah Redler
Notes	n/a

Intro	<p>Hello and welcome to FutureEverything's 2016 festival podcast series. Over two days, in Manchester's iconic Town Hall, we tasked designers, artists, scientists, and many more, to rethink our resources, from life, earth and intelligence, to community and uncertainty, our speakers ask what we might need less, and more of, in our near future. 7</p> <p>In this fireside chat, we heard from designer Stephanie Posavec and curator at the ODI and Institute for Physics, Hannah Redler, who are in conversation discussing data visualisation, art, and the issues surrounding representation, information and identity. They looked at Dear Data, Stephanie's most recent award-winning work, with collaborator Giorgia Lupi, and Hannah Redler's work as a curator to explore how their practices might make data more tangible.</p>
Female	<p>So thank you very much for joining us in the post-lunch fireside chat. My name's Hannah Redler. I'm an independent curator, and this is Stephanie Posavic, who is a designer, and we are going to chat, and the way we're going to do it is we're just going to give you a few minutes introduction to each of our practice first, and then we'll launch into our hopefully deep and meaningful, and at least interesting conversation, which will be focused on our practice.</p> <p>So I'm currently an independent curator, but for a very, very, long time I was working at the Science Museum in London, where I ran the contemporary art programme and Science Museum arts projects. And I mention this, because a really big part of that programme was working with artists engaged with technology, and I was thinking that a big part of this conversation will centre around Stephanie's major work, Dear Data, which challenges lots of assumptions about data and artistic practice and how we represent ourselves with and through data. And I wanted to think about some projects that I've worked on that perhaps have a bit of a context or were involved with maybe similar issues.</p> <p>So in 2000, when I was at the Science Museum, we did a big gallery all about digital technology, which then was very much explaining what this digital</p>

revolution might mean to ordinary people. And we commissioned several software artworks, including David Rokeby's piece, 'Watched and Measured', which is the piece with the archive of faces, and that was a piece which was addressing the truth of the CCTV image, if anyone remembers that being an issue, which it was sixteen years ago, and it captured people's faces with a digital zoom, and then applied value judgements onto those faces, like happy, sad, antagonised. And it was a piece that, even then, was starting to play with notions about assumption, privacy, and surveillance, which we are all asking ourselves in evidence-based culture.

The piece next to it, where you can see two little boys playing used algorithmically generated sound to play with people, sound is vibrated through their body, that they generated. And the piece at the bottom was a piece that played with Machine Vision by Tess Elliot and Jonathon Jones-Morris, and it used a database of objects that the artists had input into the machine, along with a self-learning neural network that the artists had written, which was a really visionary piece of work software for its time, to be written by artists, not by an industrial organisation, but compared visitors' faces to the objects, and it was to re-present you with what it thought you looked like.

So already at that time, in 2000, where 1999, '98 we started working on these things, artists are really starting to address how machines see and mediate the world around us. In 2008, I purchased a piece called 'Listening Post' by Mark Hanson and Ben Rueben which is a major work of art, which culls the internet for fragments of written text at the time. Mark Hanson and Ben Rueben were really looking at the way that people communicate through internet chat rooms, and it uses different algorithms to identify different aspect of chat. So they noticed that one of the most common terms that people used at the time was 'I am' when they were talking about themselves. We don't see that so much on Twitter or social media, but we used to see that in bulletin boards. And I think a big thing that we're going to address is notions of everybody getting involved in stuff, and a project that we ran at the Science Museum in relation to purchasing Listening Post was called 'Being Connected', where we invited a group of young people to come and spend a week working with different artists and technologists to create their own work in response to that. So inclusivity, the democratising nature of new tools, are things that are really important to me.

We also commissioned concept ideas. London Fieldworks created a project called 'Art Emergent', which is on the left there, which involved a theory of connecting a database of brainwaves and hooking up visitors to the piece and getting them to think about stuff. And they never made this, but they did make a piece called Null Object where they hooked Gustav Metzger to a brain scanner and got him to think about nothing, and made a sculpture out of stone through his brainwaves.

I'm now working with the Open Data Institute in London. The Open Data Institute is an innovation and technology company that catalyses open data culture. It works across industry and across sectors, and as well as all that fabulous industrial and technological work, it has an art programme called Data is Culture, which I run with the artist Julie Freeman. Data is Culture has been

going as long as the Open Data Institute. It started from the day that Gavin Starks, the CEO, took up post. He wanted art to be part of a company that was essentially underwriting the next stage of the internet through linked open data. And he felt that artists really had to be part of this new world, which of course I agree with.

We're currently involved in a programme called 'Data Anthropologies'. That's our theme between last year and 2017, and that's included new work from Julie, 'We Need Us', which is a piece of work that responds to metadata. It's a live, online, animated artwork responding to the metadata of users contributing to the Citizen Science piece website [zoomiverse? 06:46]. And we also had artists and residents who didn't see themselves as working with data at all. Thompson and Craig had Natasha Caruana, Thompson and Craig had work with media technology. They'd been interrogating the internet ethnographically for about twenty years. And Natasha Caruana is a photographic artist who is really looking at the networked image and ways that that affects our lives. 7

Currently we have an artist in residence called Alex McClean, who's a live coding pioneer, and Alex is really, really interested in process, and as the end product as being not the point that people get involved in, but the process being the point that people get involved in, and again I think that's quite relevant to us. And so quickly, this is some of the work that's been on display at the ODI.

I'm not going to talk in detail, but I did want to say another thing that matters to me, is what this all means. And I see a lot of resonance between the conversations we're having about data today and the conversations that have been going on with broadcast media since the 1960s. So Gene Youngblood's piece here writing the media must be liberated, must be moved from private ownership and commercial sponsorship, must be placed in the service of all humanity. We must make the media believable. We must assume conscious control over the videosphere. We must wrench [inter-media? 08:00] network free from the archaic and corrupt intelligence that now dominates it. That's Gene Youngblood.

What happens when you change media for data? Still meaningful, right? And so through all these conversations I've had with loads of brilliant artists, loads of other thinkers, curators, I've been starting to think about how our society and our cultural thinking are changing. I've stolen a phrase from the conceptual artist Stephen Willets, who when he's dismissing backward thinking, he says 'oh, last century thinking, last century thinking' and I love that phrase. So I've been trying to think, well, okay, what's last century? What's next century? Are we moving from a hierarchical object-based, ownership-based society to something that's more distributed, sharing, democratic, hybrid. I don't know if we are. I hope so. I think we have that possibility, but we also have darker possibilities. So hopefully we can address some of those questions. And over to Stephanie please.

Female	<p>I'm happy that data is on a now and beyond list instead of the last century. But yeah, I'm Stephanie, and it's hard to figure out how to define myself, but I guess I could call myself a data-centric designer, whatever that means. But in my day job, I create data-driven designs for both art conventions and commercial work, which will range from more traditional information, graphics, to things like public murals or pieces like this piece, this one mural that was up at the Olympic Park which was made from data that children had gathered about the park over the last summer, to projects where you can actually physically dance for a couples' interaction data, like their interactions on Facebook, and that was installed at the Facebook campus in Menlow Park, to drawing data from the thousand most frequently used words in the English language onto a thousand index cards in order to highlight the beautiful variation in the English language, for a mural that was displayed at the British Council Pavilion book fair in Mexico last winter, to then moving and working with data in a more physical way.</p> <p>I'm working with my friend Marian Crick to explore accessible physical and friendly ways of communicating open air quality data from Sheffield. So we decided to present three weeks of particularly interesting data, something you can feel and touch and worn on the body where pollution damages the most, like heart and lungs. Then also another part of the project we were creating these glasses that present data from three particularly interesting days of Sheffield air quality, like days from 2014 where if you put the glasses on, the more pollution you have in the air, the less visibility you have through the glasses. So merging kind of a more traditional presentation of data through numbers with something that's more subtle and experiential. So I'm kind of interested in exploring that mode of communicating data as well.</p> <p>So why do I work with data as a designer? I think for me, I see it as an honest material. I know there's a lot of caveat to that. But for me, I really like the idea of communicating something subjective, using something that's hopefully honest and that hopefully does have integrity and will hopefully bring integrity to my message. And then I do also just really enjoy this challenge of finding new ways of communicating numbers in ways that are memorable or impactful. Now again, thinking about data as a material, it does feel physical and tangible, to me anyway, because for many of my projects in the past, I've often ended up analysing data by hand, and so I don't really do this very much anymore, and you know, I do obviously work with developers of course. This really laborious handmade process still underpins a lot of the projects that I do. And also, really, it is I guess the reason, the precursor to the project that I'm talking about today, which is Dear Data.</p> <p>So just to give you a little bit of background about Dear Data, it's a collaborative project between myself and Giorgia Lupi, who is an Italian who lives in New York who's an informations designer. She runs a design studio called Afarat. I am an American in London, so we're both expats who swapped places. So when we started the project, we had only met twice, but we have a lot of similarities; same age, both expats, only children, I mean just personal ones to start with, but also we both start from a very analogue, hand-drawn starting point in how we work with data visualisation, which within our community, it's kind of very... there aren't very many people who would start like this, so it's unique.</p>
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And so what we wanted to do is we thought it would be interesting to collaborate together, and so we decided that since we spoke the language of data visualisation in our job that would be the language we would use to get to know each other better, and get to know each other through our data, and ideally, in a very analogue, hand-drawn way, because we're both interested in that. And so then we had to think, well, if we're on two different continents, how will we work on an analogue project where we're in two different places? And so after thinking, we thought, okay, well, why don't we just draw on things and post them to each other? So that's when Dear Data started; where we would just visualise data and draw it on a postcard and send it to the other.

So the way the project worked, it lasted a year, so for each week of this year we would collect personal data around a shared topic, like what you see on screen, and we did this onion investigation and revealed aspects of ourselves and our data to share with the other person. Then once we gathered that data, we would print the insides of patterns and then draw hand-drawn visualisation onto a postcard, and then drop the postcard in a post box or mailbox, and then wait with their fingers crossed, because you know, a lot of them would go missing. But if all went well, the postcard would finally arrive at the other person's address with all the scuff marks of their journey over the [inaudible 15:08]. All the postcards, for these fifty two weeks, followed the same structure. The postcard doesn't contain any text, and then the back of the postcard has, of course, the stamp and the address and a legend that says 'how to read our drawings.'

So just to quickly run through some of the weeks very briefly. We started the year where the first week was a week of clocks. So gathering data and how often we checked the time's something very mundane but converted into these sorts of outputs. Or we spent a week trying to track our laughter. So while you might use a phone or a reporter app to collect our data, all the data is gathered manually. So you know where we had this challenge of trying to remember when we laugh, and remember the context around it. So it was quite mentally taxing data gathering. Or we would move to certain aspects of our lives; so books we own, or wardrobes, or the music we listen to. So you know, really trying to understand more about the other person, and learn more about ourselves, I guess. Then we've also moved to performative weeks, where just through the act of data gathering, your behaviours will change while you're gathering the data. So we thought we'd just try to use it to force ourselves to change bad habits. So we were looking at a week of trying new things, or a week of being nicer to people, or smiling at strangers in the hope that if we gather data on it, we would actually do it more. And this is what the end result was. So these are all of Giorgia's postcards and these are mine. And the website's still up, so you can either follow us on Twitter or go to gear.shader.com. So there's a blog we write every week and all the postcards are up there.

So the project ended in September, but we're still constantly thinking about it, because we're currently drawing a book for Penguin right now and it'll be published in the UK on 1st September and in the US by Princeton Architectural Press at the same time. And I think, just to sum up what I'm really interested in

	<p>as a designer is really... I think maybe that's my target market, like I was having drinks yesterday and was like, I really just want to make people give sh*t, like people who might not care about data or think it matters to them, or they might think it's only clinical and cold, and I really would like to show people that there's a value in it. So I'm kind of interested in working at the starting point instead of any of the secondary more complex points at the end of that.</p>
Female	<p>Thanks very much Stephanie. So one of the things that we've talked about is the fact that Dear Data is a hand-drawn project, and when you showed the last slide, that's different versions of data, big data, whatever data, it does remind me that data isn't new, but what's reasonably new is the computational power that's allowed an awful lot of digital data to be harvested, collected, and analysed. But one thing that you're really interested in Dear Data, is that notion of just being able to pick up a pencil and get on with it. Can you say a bit more about that?</p>
Female	<p>Yeah, I think what we really liked about the project is, I think [inaudible 19:00] Giorgia said this, but yeah, she likes that data isn't big, it isn't scary, and that all you need is a pencil just to make this idea. People can gather their data with just no technological skills or even really knowing how to draw. Like I don't know how to draw. But I think the one thing we've been really excited about is that because it's really accessible, we've had a really great response from people, both within the data visualisation community as well as further afield.</p> <p>So since we've started the project there have been a lot of people who have got in touch with us who are gathering their own data. There's a Dear Data 2 of people who are trying to do a whole year. There's a Dear Data 3. There's a data chain website with about twenty data people doing their own postcards around each other, and so we've just set up a more open Dear Data Google group, and there's about thirty people that are looking for people to write to, and it's also being taught in universities, in high schools, and in middle schools, which is quite a wide range to get people to feel more comfortable with this idea of working with data, and I guess, communicating it.</p>
Female	<p>So do you think this has made data more personal to people who see the D word and think 'it's technical, it's maths, it's not me'?</p>
Female	<p>I mean, I hope so. Sometimes I am worried about not focusing on the hard-hitting issues that are surrounding data, but I think I feel okay just trying to get people to make that first step, and I think one way to get people interested in taking that first step is by presenting data in a very domestic setting that they can relate to and makes you realise that it can be found anywhere in your life in a very small, personal way. And I think that's how people can be drawn in, and they realise it can apply to them in a very emotional way. And maybe that's the first step in thinking about these bigger picture issues.</p>

Female	<p>Yeah, I think the things that really appeal to me is the fact that it's not thinking about the individual as a consumer, it's thinking about the individual as a person who has a daily life, who has habits, who has little rituals, and you're shining the light on those rituals. But also I'm really interested to hear about your behaviour change through it, so it has this performative aspect.</p>
Female	<p>Yeah, I think... should I show more examples? I'll show more examples of work, I think, because I do work by hand. Like I mentioned before, I'm really interested in this very labourious side of working with data and this kind of like physical toil that you normally don't experience when you're doing something... I mean, it's a different type of toil than when you're doing something digitally. But I think if I just skip through a million things, I'm really interested in the performative aspect of data gathering where just the act of gathering can be a performance, it can be like this valuable act.</p> <p>One example that I really like of this is there's this really wonderful artist in London called Sam Winston and he did a piece called 'Drawing Breath' where he, for fifteen hours, every time he took a breath, he drew a line. And so in effect, he is visualising his breath for fifteen hours, but also that drawing he's making is a souvenir of this particular performance. And so that's one aspect that in a way Dear Data is a souvenir of a performance that Giorgia and I have made for a year, and I think a lot of this, we can't forget to mention Nicholas Felton, who's obviously been gathering data about his life for about ten years with his annual reports for every year he looks at... I think there was this year where he was gathering data on every single time someone communicated with him; like high-fives, nods, handshakes, whatever, and so he was continually gathering it. So that's a year-long performance as well, and then his annual report is a souvenir of that. And I think I just like projects where there's this physical pain and the only way that it'll ever get good is if it is physically taxing. So Dear Data was really, really difficult. It was mentally and physically taxing. I think I put a lot of value into pain. [Laughter].</p>
Female	<p>Let's move on. So which were the most difficult weeks? Because I was surprised by which weeks they were.</p>

Female	<p>For me, it was definitely the performative week. So I think it's really easy to integrate data gathering into your life. You just have to become hyper aware and really start... it's a positive thing, it helps you really notice the... it's very easily integrated into your life, and just be really good at inputting the data when you find it. But, I think, the ones that I hated the most were these performative weeks where we had to try and be nicer to people, we had to smile at strangers, and so like there was this one week where we were trying to smile at more people, and in the beginning, as soon as I knew that we were going to do that, which Giorgia will say [inaudible 25:41] so I think she was better at doing these than me. I mean, because no one smiles at anyone in London. They think you're crazy, right? So I really hated it when I went to a show and no one smiled at me when I was just barging through the crowd, and I just went on strike. And I think I really didn't like it.</p>
Female	Smile strike?
Female	<p>Yeah, smile strike, like I'm not playing this game anymore this week, and I didn't smile at anyone. I think I enjoy the purity of just seeing and inputting, seeing and inputting, and I think the performative ones were kind of commenting on the fact that you do start to change your behaviour when you are gathering data, but it felt like, it didn't feel neutral enough. As neutral as something can be when you're making the methods.</p>
Female	<p>And some of them were quite intimate, so you had to come up with strategies. What sort of strategies did you come up with to be revelatory without explicit?</p>
Female	<p>Yeah, so this is a week of physical contact. So obviously the person in the middle is my husband. I'd be lying if I said there was no sexual contact, that was actually listed there, but I didn't explicitly say like what I had, I wasn't going to go into detail because there are limits I think, and I also think my husband wouldn't allow me to put forward that type of... I mean, there are multiple people who are okay with me gathering data on them, but I don't think he would be alright with me going into major detail for Giorgia. So you're using euphemisms and you're categorising things into euphemisms that don't... they allude to it, but they don't really tell the bigger picture. So it does make you realise that... I've been as honest as I can be with my data but I think more, as Stephano said, authorship</p>

	and nothing is neutral and it's how much I choose to reveal is definitely not neutral.
Female	What about the sense of you having to spy on your husband? Wasn't there a week where you had to spy on your husbands and they became subjects for the art? But you couldn't tell them?
Female	<p>Yeah, I had a conversation with Glogia recently and she said 'it didn't bother me as much as it bothered you' but we agreed that we would have a week of my husband, her boyfriend, but we wouldn't tell them that we were gathering data on them, because we didn't want to mess up the data. So the entire week I was gathering data on things he had done that inspired feelings of love, and things that he had done that inspired feelings of annoyance. So like the annoying things on my card here, all the annoying things are at the bottom. So it was actually a really great exercise because it made me really appreciate him and it leads me to think, like I often say, counting something does mean it matters. So all the people that really matter to us, were people that we were noting down in this year of data gathering. So it was really lovely being reminded of all these great things that he does for me. But then at the end of it, I had to tell him and get permission to use his data, and he was alright with it in the end. Then on Monday, he said he thought it was weird. He said 'it's okay, I kind of like it' and I said I thought he might think it was weird, and he said 'it is weird, weird but nice.' So he wasn't too angry, but I think it's just an example as well, that even in this domestic setting, there are still these issues of privacy and are you allowed to take someone's data and then give it to a friend without their permission? And I had him look over the postcard before I sent it so he'd be okay with it, and I know that's very small scale, but scaled up, the same issues are in play.</p>
Female	<p>Yeah, the piece I mentioned, 'Listening Post', which is by Mark Hanson and Ben Rueben, which is two hundred and fifty vacuum fluorescent screens with little green text there in a sort of large curtain, and it's cycled through six movements, and they take fragments from online chat rooms, online conversations, and people don't submit stuff. So the software takes it, so it's stealing content in one way. And as I say, it's an early piece, and when we first brought it to the Science Museum and when I first saw it at Oz Electronica, probably in about 2006 or 7, it was very much seen as something that spoke about online communication and spoke about individuals, and controversially won the Best Interactive Art Prize, and lots of people said 'well, it's not interactive' and I thought, well, it's kind of unwittingly interactive, because they said one reason they made it is when someone puts up a message and presses 'send', they're calling for a response, and Listening Post is our response.</p> <p>But then, after the Snowden revelations, which we've talked about a bit, the BBC came to interview me as a curator of the work at the museum to say you know 'what about this big data piece?' and suddenly it took on this role of being a giant spy in a way. And we've talked a lot about the personal and the political</p>

	<p>dimensions of data representation, data privacy, data surveillance, and the like. And it seems like the Snowden revelations are really important, massively important, but it slightly skewed the conversation to be about them; the big organisations, the big powers that be, and us; the little guys. And what I really think about what's happening in your practice is you expressed some concern that you weren't getting the serious issues.</p>
Female	<p>Yeah.</p>
Female	<p>I don't agree with that. I think you're engaging with the serious issue of personal responsibility.</p>
Female	<p>Well, that's good. [Laughter]. That's the validation that I need, but yeah, I guess maybe you just have to pick your issues, and I think sometimes if you work small, you're afraid you're not working big, but small things still need to be made. It's like I used to be a book cover designer, and I'd talk about my work in places where people were making huge digital installations, and the type of stuff I did would make me feel really small in comparison, but the small things, they still need a look-in sometimes, and I've gone even smaller with postcards.</p>
Female	<p>The other thing that we've been speaking about is the fact that, partly because it's two women doing this project, it can be belittled. I don't know if you shared the Daily Mail comments just now. It might be worth sharing the inspiring comments from Daily Mail readers.</p>
Female	<p>So we've had a lot of really great press, which we've been very proud of, and Giorgia's much more on the ball with this than I am, and so she tweeted 'oh yes, we've been in the Daily Mail' and it was like 'hah, hah, hah, oh my gosh' and she was like 'what does it mean?' I'm like 'I don't think you understand how loaded the Daily Mail is for the UK'. And so she's like 'oh, I didn't realise that it was that kind of a paper.' So basically, I think what they normally do is just take loads of images from everyone else's site, lots of videos from our site, didn't even talk to</p>

	<p>us. Anyway, you're the audience, someone from Daily Mail, I still thank you very much for the opportunity.</p> <p>Yeah, so this is the headline, and I've never really experienced the sort of critique in this way, and my favourite one was 'haven't they got some washing up and a bit of dusting to be getting on with?' And people have experienced even worse things. I know that [inaudible 34:31] are talking about the type of critique and the kind of online grumbling after they launch, but it's just been really interesting being two women doing a project and how people perceive it. Like someone said 'oh, I just saw your talk that the two of you gave, it was really great, you're so adorable.' And that's really not, like I really appreciate the... you know, kind words are always appreciated, but I don't know if adorable or whimsical are words that would be used by any other... for like a man who was creating a personal data project, I have a feeling those words aren't used for Nicholas Felton's annual report. And so it can be frustrating.</p>
Female	He chose the word 'annual report', and you used the word 'dear'.
Female	Yeah, that's true.
Female	So he went corporate and you went individual. But there is a male/female thing. There is a problem with a macho culture in anything related to technology and data. There's a big issue, isn't there?
Female	Yeah, I think it's quite curious, and it's because it's the first time that I've ever had to think about the identity that you put forward in a public space, like writing a weekly blog and posting your life up for a year. Then it's like, are we just manic pixie data ladies? [Laughter]. Because we're so much more than that. I mean, Georgia runs her own company and she's so on the ball, and I don't run my own company, but I'm self-employed and I'm a cynical, very noisy feminist, but like, does that come out? I don't know, and are we becoming what people want us to become? So that's been kind of an interesting... well, it's just been a concern

	and something that I've been thinking about. And also the fact that Giorgia and I are two different women and we're portraying ourselves in different ways, and we're writing a book together and it's the first time I've had to think about it.
Female	Well, thank you so much. We've got ten minutes for questions, so we'd love to hear any questions from anybody.
Female	Thank you. I love your postcards. I was just interested in the activity that the data you were collecting for that particular postcard... did how you visualised it with those links, because obviously you visualised it in a certain way and they're all different, I just wondered if there was a link to the data you were actually collecting?
Female	I think it depended on our moods for the week. So like sometimes you would try to create a visual metaphor for what you were doing, through the data that you were gathering, but then also part of the interest for me is this idea of using data as just a drawing input, so then I was just really enjoying the drawing, instead of trying to make a connection back to the data, and then sometimes I cared more about the data set, and then tried to make it as insightful as possible. So it was a weekly project with sliding intentions every week. Because we saw it as something very experimental which was away from the eyes of our community, which you know, anything that has science, you know, science on one end, artists on another, and it's all online, has a lot of everyone redesigning stuff on Twitter. So because we were away from this hardcore community, we had this opportunity to muck around and have no fear. And so it was more quite a sandbox type of year.
Female	Another question here at the back?

Male	Thanks. You said you recorded data. You mentioned somebody who recorded data every time someone interacted with them by waving or nodding. How would you be recording the data if you were doing that particular [transgressions? 38:54] of people interacting with you? Would you have your phone out and be recording it like that? Or would you actually have the postcard, and if you were out in town and somebody waved at you or something?
Female	So one day I really wanted to do like a project where if you're data gathering, you're actually drawing it on the postcard. But what we did is, so Nicholas Felton is really like... basically you should buy his app, reporter which came out of that project. So he had an app built for him which helped him input his data quickly. So we used different methods. So originally, we started the project gathering data in small notebooks, like keep the whole thing analogue, but it's just not feasible and it's more socially acceptable to be looking at your phone than it is to be looking at a notebook all the time. I think it is more acceptable to be looking at your phone. So it was still all manual, but you'd set up questions in this app or Giorgia would just take lots and lots of notes. But everything else, yeah, you set it up at the beginning of the week; what are you tracking, what questions do you want to answer – and once you have that ingrained into you Monday morning you just go and just start capturing what's happening to you.
Male	Have any of the postcards inspired you to want to keep on collecting that particular topic of data?
Female	I think there was one postcard. Week fifty two was the week of goodbyes because it was the last one, but then week fifty one was a week of privacy, so gathering data on moments of my life I don't want to share with Giorgia or I wouldn't want to share with other people, and I kind of again couched the postcard in very vague terms about what type of data I was gathering, so Giorgia couldn't really get an insight. So I like this idea of gathering private data that I don't want to reveal, and then creating something from it. Like if you knew what each thing meant you could interpret it, but because I had the legend, no one will know but me. So that's something I'm kind of interested in.
Female	I'm going to jump in, because the thing that we haven't talked about is speed; speed of transmission and the fact that you chose a slow transmission method very deliberately, and what you said about creating speed bumps in the transmission.

Female	<p>Yeah, because I think the reason that engaging with data, or a subject in this very physical way, it's like you are handwriting a lot of your plans for our conversation today, and just writing things up by hand forces you to... I don't know, it puts you in a different place than if you're just typing. So I feel like in a world where everything is made frictionless and seamless, where there are no speed bumps that kind of force you to look at it in the eyes, this very physical slow engagement with data forces you to engage with what you're gathering. So I don't feel the same way about my [inaudible 42:28] data that I feel for what I gathered for every laugh, or... you know what I mean? Like things are kind of normally quite challenging to gather, so those have more of an emotional resonance for me and I probably reflected more upon than my how many steps I've done today, because I hadn't actually had to count each step.</p>
Female	<p>Because a machine did it for you?</p>
Female	<p>Yeah.</p>
Female	<p>Okay, any other questions?</p>
Female	<p>I guess I know a little bit about the work, but can you explain a bit about how other people are explaining the data in a physical sense? Because I know you've had one exhibition already of the work, haven't you, in New York?</p>

Female	Yeah.
Female	And did it make you reflect on presenting your data in that form? I mean, how people experience the postcard in a kind of display-type format and then how they're going to experience it in a publication, and how it exists online; all of those ways of experiencing your work are quite different. Different interaction with data, and their reflection on the nature of that data is quite different. How does that make you feel from an artist's a designer's perspective?
Female	Hi Sarah, great question. [Laughter]. I think the only time where I've ever really had to confront it is when we've needed to take the post... like just putting it online I don't think I really understood the implications of that; the fact that I was putting my life out for everyone to see, I still haven't really come to terms with that. And so we didn't really think about that. But ever since [inaudible 44:20] big bang data, I think some will be at the Science Museum, some will be elsewhere. I don't think I realised the implications of what it means for them to be on display until I saw them physically displayed with all these people peering over it. And when you actually physically see all the people staring at something... it gave me a little small quake of like 'f*ck, what have I done?' people are reading my husband's card and reading what I like about him, like anonymous strangers. So the physical, seeing people look at the physical made me freak out about that, but I think another... I don't know if I'm really answering your question. I think, I just realised how physicality is a lot... I don't know, it's just more of a challenge to make work that's physical because you can't... it needs to be in a particular place. I'm afraid of it getting lost or burnt. I need to put it in a safety deposit box. It's a lot harder to move them from place to place. I don't know if I'm answering your question.
Female	Yeah, it's kind of similar to that question actually. I was thinking about the implications of the data collection, and when we're busy collecting data at the moment for all different reasons, and you are for very personal reasons, but then how it gets used in the future. So I was thinking if something happened in Giorgia's relationship or something and she gets a new boyfriend and the new boyfriend looks at the cards or something and is like 'oh, my god she's not as happy as she was with her old boyfriend as she is with me.' And you know there's all these kinds of things that can happen with information in the future that are hard to predict. And I think that is indicative of the wider world of data collection, and I wonder if you think about that, how we can start preparing for the future with all this stuff out there?

Female	I'll just say one thing and then hand it over to you. Well, I don't know, but I think the only thing that I've learned with this project is there are probably things that data shouldn't be collected on; probably things relating to love. You know what I mean? There's some things you don't want to know. You don't want to know if your partner is not emailing you as much or if your love is not sending you as many text messages. You probably don't need... you kind of should just probably leave that box shut. And also, even just trying to gather this personal data, sometimes it did get in the way. Like the week of laughter was preventing me from enjoying myself, because every time I laughed I had to enter it. And it was the week of my birthday, so for my birthday, during dinner with my husband, he's like 'you cannot bring this to the nice restaurant.' So I think there are some things that data should not be gathered on. That's my thought.
Female	I think I'd like to echo, there are some things that are immeasurable, and long may it last.
Female	Yeah.
Female	But I do think this is a great project that shouts for the need for us to be data-literate and kind of in the game. You mentioned baseball. Baseball people collect things?
Female	Yeah.

Female	I understand that.
Female	Yeah, there's one person, a talk I gave about five years ago. I really enjoy American baseball score cards, because you score the game in a very pencil-based way, and what I really like about this type of data gathering is that like how we talk about it is people don't gather this data to analyse it later, they're gathering it to be in the game, to be present, to help them enjoy being near the pitch or whatever. So I can sort of see, you know, often with a lot of data people are like 'what's the point? What truth does it reveal?' and I think sometimes people just want to be in the game. Like, I like to gather data just to be more aware of the world around me, and to be more aware of the things that are happening, and I think that's a completely valid reason to gather data.
Female	So we should all aim to be in the game of life.
Female	Yes.
Female	Okay, thank you.

Outro	We hope you enjoyed this fireside chat, and thanks for listening. You can hear the rest of the talks from 2016 at futureeverything.org/2016podcasts .
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[Transcription ends]