

Acknowledgments

The New York Talk Exchange project would not have been possible without a generous invitation by Paola Antonelli and her team at The Museum of Modern Art to include the *senseable* city laboratory in their *Design and the Elastic Mind* exhibition. It was also because of Carlo Ratti's audacity and vision to propose an entirely new project for that occasion that the New York Talk Exchange was born.

I want to thank our project sponsor AT&T, in particular Alexandre Gerber, Michael Merritt, Chris Rath and Jim Rowland of AT&T Labs who have been partners in this project in the true sense of the word. Without their dedication, patience and effort in elaborating and structuring the data, this ambitious project of data visualization would have been impossible to accomplish. Marilyn Reznick of the AT&T Foundation also played a fundamental role in facilitating the necessary contacts and circumstances needed for such a fertile collaboration between AT&T and the *senseable* city laboratory to flourish.

Throughout this project we have had the pleasure of engaging the notable academics Saskia Sassen and William J. Mitchell as research advisors. They have been invaluable in bolstering the project's strengths and tackling its weaknesses in order to put this complex project on solid ground. The richness and depth of their contribution is evident in the diversity of issues addressed in their essays. We are also thankful that the urban telecommunications scholars (and New Yorkers) Anthony Townsend and Mitchell L. Moss contributed their illuminating historical perspective to this project.

Remarkably, the New York Talk Exchange was organized and assembled in three short months prior to the opening of the MoMA exhibition. Development steps which are usually taken sequentially were turned into parallel processes that went hand in hand: while the AT&T data streamed into our server and was transformed into visual expression, the patterns that emerged

were fed back into the structuring and elaboration of the data itself, and so on, in numerous rounds of refinement.

Realizing this project has been possible entirely because of the project team's wonderful dedication and determination at the *senseable* city laboratory. It is a true interdisciplinary group in which computer scientists contribute also to the process of visual structuring and content while designers, urbanists and theorists tackle the raw data to figure out how to make it speak.

I extend my gratitude to the entire team:

Francisca Rojas for considering how urban theory and the AT&T data together could open up new perspectives on the city and how this could be best communicated to an audience. Francesco Calabrese who masterminded the system architecture and whose overall commitment and support to every single aspect of the project has been felt throughout. Aaron Koblin, whose imaginative contributions have been determinant in this data-driven project of painting with pixels. Andrea Vaccari, for insisting on making the world-map twist and the data flow in real time. Margaret Ellen Haller, who made sure that MoMA and our team were happily on the same page. And Assaf Biderman, for his welcomed insights into directions we were taking and others that could be explored.

Last but not least, I am grateful to Clelia Caldesi Valeri for realizing this beautiful book after having developed a concept that allowed the content to be elaborated concurrently with the final stages of the project's completion.

I am certain that this exhibition project will be the beginning of a promising and continuing research agenda.

Kristian Kloeckl
Cambridge, Massachusetts
January 28, 2008