email

essays and sketches

There are many things that can be depicted in email visualizations. One can look to discern patterns of response - what are the temporal rhythms in a conversation? Is there a missing response? Is this a very symmetrical relationship or is one person doing most of the mailing. One can look for patterns of conversation scale - are these one to one dialogs or large group discussions? One can look at the length of the response chain, distinguishing broadcast announcements from back and forth discussion. One can look to the words in the email - what is being discussed? How is it being discussed?

- Read the papers for today.
- Email can be used to paint a portrait of a relationship. Using 4 different people with whom you have corresponded, create a visualization of an email relationship. (I.e. you should have 4 such depictions, one for each person). Think about what the patterns mean - it may be that content-free, short emails are typical of conversations with closer friends while longer, more formal prose has more substance, but also represents a less close tie. Thus, you might want to both depict the slightness of the content in the former, while also representing that it is not representative of slightness is meaning. Your first set of sketches should not include words.
- Redo the above 4 sketches, this time including in some way the words (or an analysis of the words) in the conversation.
- Email can be a diary. Depict one month in your life via email. A simple example of such a "diary" is Post-History, and you can use that as a starting point for your sketch (but you don't have to). Think about what patterns you want to show. Think about the discussion we had about depicting time - how do you want to show cyclical vs. progressive time? This can be a sketch for an interactive piece - things can happen when you click on dates, etc. What are the significant events? Do you want to show new contacts? Big conversations? The time you spend emailing?