



THE BOHEMIAN BOOKSHELF

Supporting Serendipitous Book Discoveries through Visualization

Strolling through a library or a bookstore can be a very rewarding experience especially when we discover intriguing books that we were not looking for initially. However, common digital interfaces for library catalogues are more geared toward targeted search rather than open-ended explorations of books. They require the input of a search term before they display a list of books that match the query. This can be a problematic starting point when we don't exactly know what we are looking for but just want to casually browse through a book collection and be inspired.

With the Bohemian Bookshelf our intention was to create a digital parallel to the open-ended "browsing the shelves" experience that has been shown to encourage serendipitous discoveries in libraries or bookstores. The Bohemian Bookshelf consists of five interlinked visualizations, each providing a different perspective on the book collection. The visualizations represent the aesthetic and tangible qualities of books, as well as content data. By providing a variety of perspectives on books, we aim to provide different access points to the collection and to encourage a playful, open-ended yet pleasurable approach to book exploration.

This project was a collaboration between Alice Thudt, Uta Hinrichs and Sheelagh Carpendale at the InnoVis Group of the University of Calgary.



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