The Secret Lives of Numbers

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http://www.turbulence.org/Works/nums/applet.html

This analysis by Eliazar Parra Cardenas
elzr.com/articles/2006/08/04/the-secret-lives-of-numbers

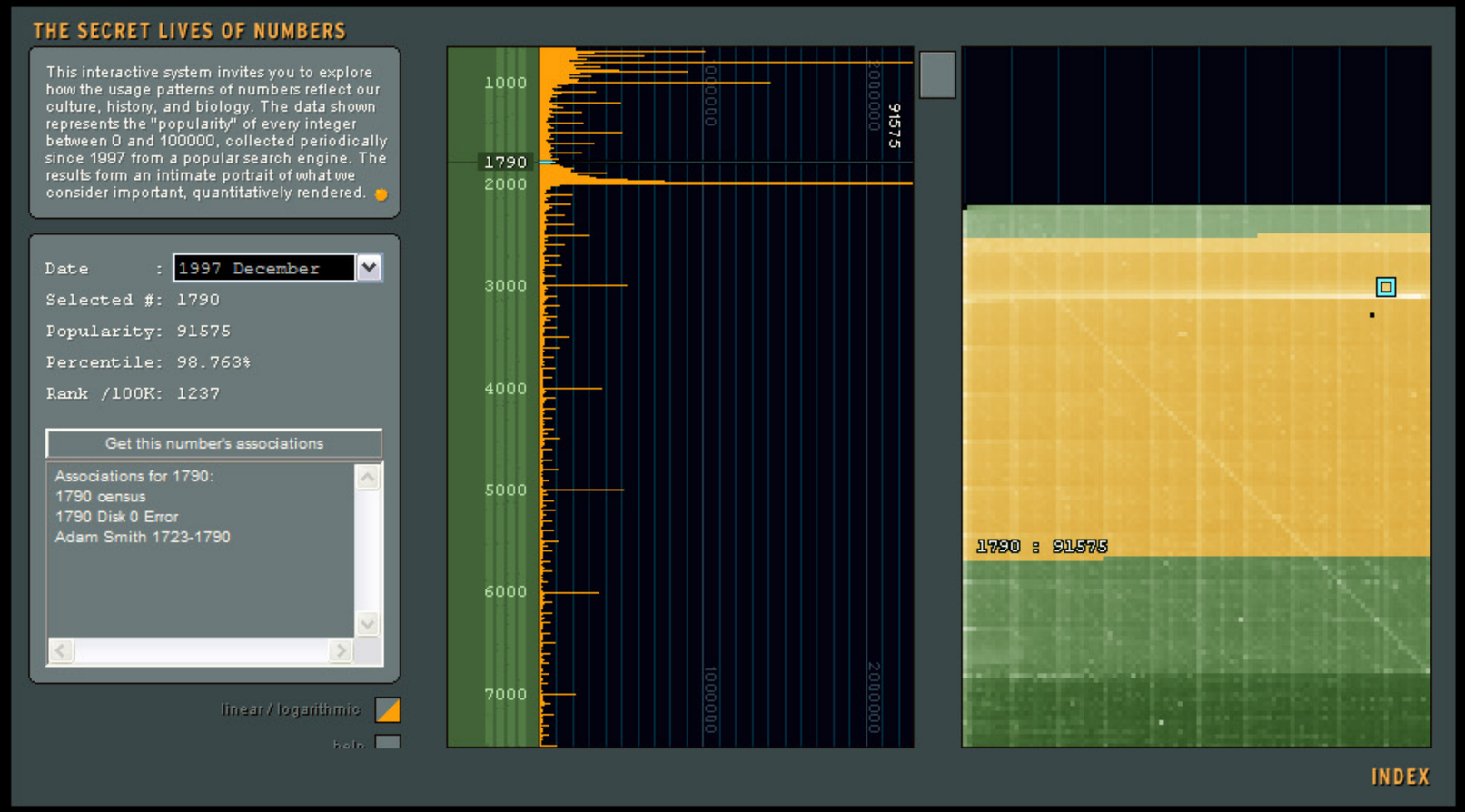
The slider is particularly interesting—when dragged, it works like your run-of-the-mill scrollbar, but it can also be resized (and is in turn resized automatically) to zoom-out or zoom-in in an strange yet intuitive way.

The numbers' popularity histograms are displayed in the central main display. Right-click to zoom-in, left-click to zoom-out. Click on a histogram to see it's corresponding number's associations. Move the cursor near the top to scroll up, near the bottom to scroll down.

One can manually enter a number to jump to, though it's not obvious until one hovers over the selected number and normal text changes to an input field.

A display on numbers had to had lots of numbers about the numbers themselves!

Each number's associations are a particularly juicy, *particular* information.



Each cell in this graph represents an integer (though not all 100,000 integers are shown). The more popular the integer, the brighter the cell. All cells are normally green but those currently selected (and displayed in the left graph) are orange.

One can click any individual cell to select its 100-hundred-cell row and jump to its number, or can drag-and-draw the area one wants selected.

Notice alll the patterns that emerge: the apparent grid corresponds to our preference for multiples of 10, while the diagonals for that for quarters (25, 50, 75...), and the large bright area indicates our marked bias for numbers below 10,000.

As for the bright line early in the cell-mosaic,

it marks our use of numbers as years—and our historical short-sightedness at that: "In the slope of our curve between 1600 and 2002, we see an image of our cultural rate of forgetting."

The linear/logarithmic mode icon is remarkable for both its simplicity and its understandability. When linear is selected the icon is , when logarithmic's on it becomes .

Unfortunately neither "linear" nor "logarithmic" themselves are highlighted or otherwise emphasized when their respective mode is on, making equivocal and otherwise excellent design.

Notice the elegant blue gridlines. and the green vertical numberline (if you zoom in near enough you'll be able to see it's itself made of numbers).

The selected number label floats with you after a while—e.g. if you rest the mouse on the top of the display it eventually follows you there.