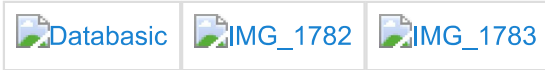


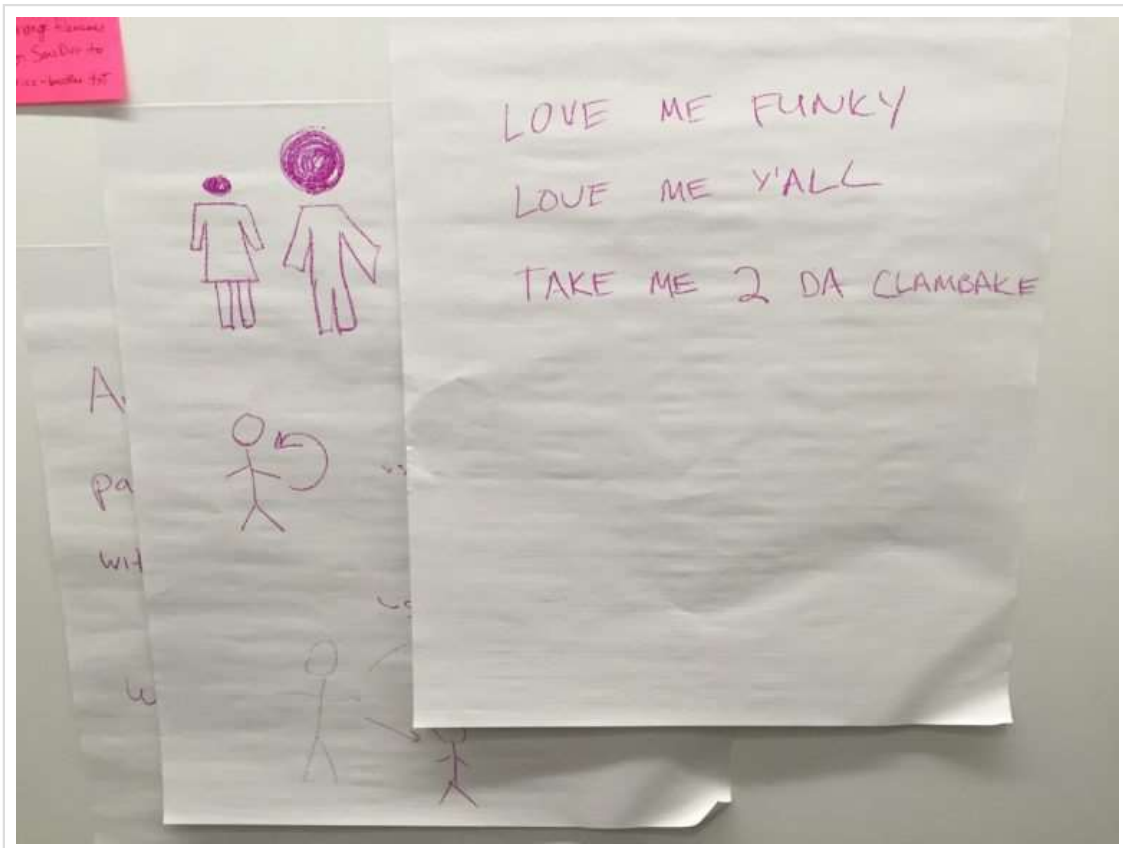
DataBasic's First Workshop

Posted on **November 25, 2015** by [kanarinka](#)



On November 8th, 2015, we ran our first pilot workshop of the DataBasic suite of tools at the MIT Media Lab. We hosted around 10-12 people, mostly trusted friends who we could rely on to be honest but kind about the inevitable bugs and shortcomings of the tools at this early stage. For this event, we first outlined our high-level design goal: Design tools that support data literacy *learners*, not just folks who already know what they are doing with data. We also introduced them to [the principles behind DataBasic](#) and noted that our target audiences are journalists, educators, community organizations and students.

We then introduced our three tools, one at a time, with activities that we have designed to teach the tools in a fun way. For example, in WTFcsv – a tool that provides column-by-column descriptions of .csv files – learners chose to develop data-driven questions around UFO sightings. Did particular cities have higher per-capita sightings of UFOs for example? Why did so many people see UFOs in the form of “fireballs”? If we combined this data with weather data, would some interesting patterns surface?



- If Kanye West and Elvis Presley had a song-baby, the lyrics would probably look like this.

WordCounter and SameDiff teach basic principles of quantitative text analysis. In the activities for these tools, learners worked with sample data from musician's lyrics. They used crayons and simple drawings to illustrate patterns from individual artist's lyrics as well as results from comparative analysis (SameDiff). The above image presents a sample song which would be written by Kanye West and Elvis Presley.

Overall, we learned a great deal from our learners. They had excellent ideas to make the tools more fun, approachable and instructive for new users. We also learned where we had over-complicated things and needed to go back and simplify. And, of course, we had lots of small fixes and feature suggestions that we are working on for our public launch in late December. Stay tuned!



- Small fixes and features – suggestions from an astute group

This entry was posted in [Uncategorized](#), [updates](#) by [kanarinka](#). Bookmark the [permalink \[index.html%3Fp=65.html\]](#) .