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To the NSF Review Panel,

I am writing in support of the Agrawala/Heer/Hellerstein proposal, "Scalable, Social Data Analysis".

I am one of the principal investigators on IBM's *Many Eyes* project—an ongoing experiment in social data analysis and visualization—and worked with Jeffrey Heer at IBM in 2006. From my experience, I'd say that the issues explored in this proposal are central to scaling visual analytics, and that this research has the potential to result in critical theoretical insights as well as broadly applicable technology.

While public social visualization has seen a surge in popularity in the past few years, I know of no system that has a solid, coherent treatment of collaborative data transformation and modeling. Such a treatment is sorely needed. It's a common observation in the field that the critical process of moving from raw "found" information to correct, appropriately filtered data tables is terribly confusing for most users. The process of creating models of data—and the discussion of those models—is similarly unsupported in current systems. Adding such support is a complicated problem that involves balancing technical, social, and psychological considerations.

In summary, this looks like an important and well-timed research proposal that I expect to yield important results.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wattenberg".

Martin Wattenberg  
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