Visualization for Better Stakeholder Communication

Design of a visualization strategy tool and an empowering visual tool for multi-stakeholder projects

Project Context

In contemporary times, numerous societal and business projects find themselves contending with a multitude of stakeholders. Designers have also increasingly found ourselves immersed in such multi-stakeholder scenarios. Stakeholders stemming from diverse professional backgrounds often possess distinct knowledge bases, rendering communication within projects a formidable challenge. Some individuals have recognized the potential of visualizing information as an effective means to bridge communication gaps among multiple parties. However, the development of a structured visual communication approach and its practical application within multi-stakeholder projects remain fraught with challenges, both in theoretical and practical realms.

In order to address the primary stakeholder needs within the LIFE project—namely, "Visualization for Mass Communication" and "Visualization for Co-creation"—two distinct tools were developed: the "Visualization Strategy Tool" (VST), and the "Strategic Empowering Visual Toolkit" (SEVT).

Outcome I - VST

The first outcome is the Visualization Strategy Tool (VST). It is a tool designed for those who plan on making information visualization to communicate their ideas to others. It guides its user to think about the audience, their interpretation, and possible methods of visualization. It can provide inspiration and suggestions on how to perform visualizations. This process is best done before starting a draft sketch or opening a 3D drawing software.
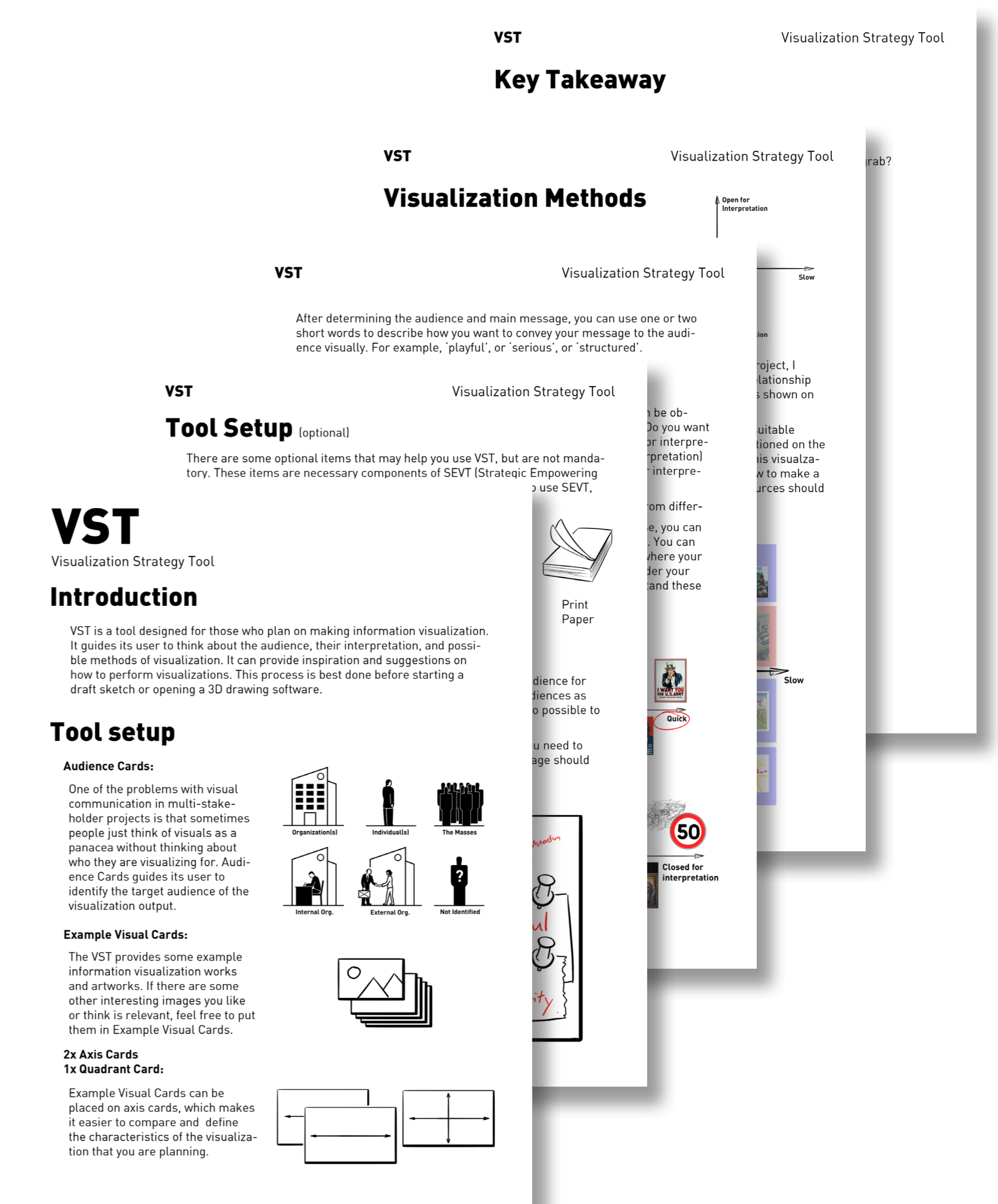
Outcome II - SEVT

Strategic Empowering Visual Toolkit (SEVT) is a toolkit that could empower participants in your workshops or research through a visual approach, playfully engaging your participants. As a result, it generates more meaningful feedback and co-creation outcomes.

"I am not a good painter, I really can't draw... ..."

It is something that I often hear during my research. But don't worry. This toolkit is designed for people without much experience in visualization. And more importantly, information visualization is not always about aesthetics.

Research Outcome

This project was conducted in a research through design process. Through multiple rounds of action research and rapid prototype testing, I discovered a series of research insights, which includes:

1. There is a gap of visualization strategies between people's knowledge of visualization and visualization practices, which is often overlooked.
2. Many people are visually introverted, buy through some empowerment they can also visually communicate ideas that cannot be described in words.
3. Although many designers are committed to visual communication design, this field lacks theoretical support because it is often ignored by researchers.

Kai Zhang
Visualization for Better Stakeholder Communication
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MSc. Strategic Product Design

Committee   MSc. Hoftijzer, J.W.
             Dr. Singh, A.
             Dr. Poolman, H.R.
Company   Gemeente Amsterdam

TUDelft