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New app helps users visualise complex data

By Kenny Chee

COMMUTERS who want to map their daily travel patterns, or Facebook users curious to see where their friends are anywhere in the world may now have a new app to do just that.

DataCollider takes numerical information like statistics and turns it into in images that can be more readily grasped.

The Web-based application should be available to the public by the end of the year.

It is being developed by a team of seven researchers from the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (Smart) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Senseable City Laboratory in the United States.

The app was initially conceived in 2011 as a tool to help researchers understand complex sets of data, and how they relate to each other, by presenting them visually.

A potential application would be to track the spread of dengue in Singapore.

Members of the public can get a sneak peak of DataCollider with a touchscreen installation, called Data Drives, at the National Museum of Singapore from today until Feb 24.

A simplified version of the tool has been loaded on three 55-inch touchscreen displays in the museum's foyer.

Said Professor Carlo Ratti, a principal investigator at Smart and a team member on the project: "We thought it would be interesting to allow people in Singapore to explore things about their city."

Visitors would be able to see, for instance, how power use in different parts of Singapore has changed over time.

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