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Professor Gives World Economic Forum Presentation

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An Indiana University information visualization professor is serving on a global panel in Switzerland aimed at illustrating how design can foster change. IU says Katy Börner is believed to be the first person from the school to ever give a presentation at the World Economic Forum. She is sitting on a panel that includes the founder of the World Wide Web.

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January 23, 2013

News Release

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. - Indiana University's Katy Börner began offering what is currently the university's only massive open online course this week, and just to underscore how globally connected education has become, the international leader in information visualization kicked off the class from Davos, Switzerland, where Börner is apparently the first person from IU to ever present at the World Economic Forum.

And she's not just making one presentation.

Today Börner, the Victor H. Yngve Professor of Information Science at IU Bloomington's School of Library and Information Service, sits on a panel with Sir Tim Berners-Lee, founder of the World Wide Web and the current director of the WWW Foundation. The topic, "The Global Design Challenge," is a session designed to provide insights on the growing importance of design and to share ideas on how it can foster change in addressing a range of global issues.

"My perspective is most relevant for understanding and managing complexity using data mining and visualization," she said of the panel session that also includes Eben Bayer, the founder of Ecovative Design, and Zhang Xin, CEO and co-founder of SOHO China. The panel is chaired by Paola Antonelli, director of research and development at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

On Thursday, Jan. 24, Börner gives a 45-minute talk titled "Visualizing What We Know," while using the World Economic Forum's Davos BetaZone, a studio room that uses new technology to visualize innovations at the annual meeting on a nearly 24-square-meter display wall.

Finally, on Saturday, Jan. 26, she participates on a second panel discussion, this one on the topic "Reinforcing Critical Infrastructure With Cyber Experts." The panel includes technology leaders from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Carnegie Mellon University. Börner will speak specifically on the topic, "Dangerous Visualizations: Big Data Is Watching You."

Börner said "Big Data" is the new definitive source of competitive advantage across all industries, yet also the raw material for fraud, identity theft and a generation of dangerous visualizations that could reveal sensitive information impacting an entity's reputation and security. As "Big Data" is exposed, interlinked, mined and visualized for broader consumption, it will be important to have norms and policies in place that ensure high data quality, best analysis and visualization workflows, and continuous improvement of legal regulations.

"The key takeaways for the presentation will be that 'Big Data' also means big trouble, that advanced data mining and visualization tools can help prevent abuse, and that proper norms, policies and legal regulations are key," she said.

Börner said she was invited to participate at the World Economic Forum after being recommended by a peer, and that she welcomed the opportunity to continue her efforts at informing how insightful information visualizations can aid a variety of users, from elementary-age school children to the CEOs of the world's largest corporations.

"The WEF is unique in that it brings together academic, business, political and other leaders of society to discuss and shape regional and global agendas in science and industry," she said. "Over the last 10 years, we have worked closely with researchers, companies and science policy makers to develop data mining and visualization tools



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that help improve daily decision-making. I am looking forward to introducing our plug-and-play macroscope tools, visualizations from the Mapping Science exhibit and the information visualization MOOC to an even broader audience."

The World Economic Forum annual meeting is a five-day, invitation-only annual event that brings together some 2,500 top business leaders, international political leaders, selected intellectuals and journalists to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world, including health and the environment. This year the annual meeting can be followed through a variety of social media tools, including Twitter, Facebook, live and video webcasts and blogs.

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