INF1006H - Information Workshop Description

Social data analytics

Section 0108, Thursdays from 1-4pm (week of February 27, 2017 to the week of April 3, 2017)

Instructor: Alex Hanna

The advent of data science and "big data" analysis has allowed researchers unprecedented insight into the social world. Trace data from tweets, news feeds, and other types of digital social interaction can give us hints into motivations of human behavior, social identity, and group formation. At the same time, these analyses need to be subject to the same kind of ethical and design considerations of the rest of social scientific inquiry.

This workshop focuses on analyzing social data and building skills to undertake those analysis. It is a lab-intensive course intended to build up data analytic skills for graduate researchers. We start with reviews of recent studies using "big data" which are primarily theoretical, including critiques of data analytics and data ethics. We then cover several fields: health, communication, information technology, and politics. Using the Python programming language and other existing tools, students will learn how to scrape social data, clean and store those data, run basic statistics, and generate visualizations. At the end of the course, students will create a report based on a project of interest.