Controversy platform

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Useful computer science skills: Database design, web technologies, UI design
Useful domain skills: Oversight of political discussions, debating skills

1   Background

In discussions running over longer periods of time, it often happens that some participants significantly change their opinions on the subject. For instance, some candidates of the SPD (Germany) fell strongly in love with the concept of „Vorratsdatenspeicherung" after the attacks on the magazine Charlie Hebdo, although they didn't want it before.
Another more popular example, is the reactor explosion in Fukushima, totally turning around the plans of the german government concerning the future of nuclear power plants.
Such changes are often difficult to keep track of as an individual, because media covers only the last few weeks of events.
It would be nice to have a platform, which makes it easy to document contradictions or changes happening in the opinion of politicians or other public persons, allowing to measure characteristics like *trustworthyness* or *consistency of opinions* as well as *linking specific events to changes of opinion.*

2   Idea

The idea is to design a web platform, which allows to select statements of public persons from different sources (part of a YouTube video, quote in an article of a magazine, wiki entry etc.) and grouping them visually.
This can be done by unexperienced users. The steps may be as follows:

1. The user specifies the question of the discussion. He can choose from existing questions or add a new one (May be similar to tagging in Twitter).

2. The user selects statements of one or more persons to the question.

3. The user enters relationships between those statements, such as

- *contradiction:* statement contradicts prior statements or statements of members of the same political party or a well known fact
- *answers:* statement answers another statement (maybe of another person)
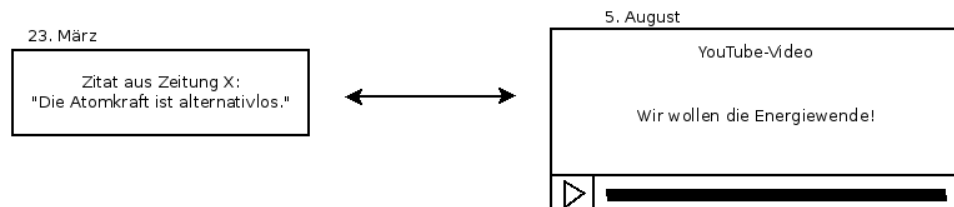- *criticizes:* statement critizes statement of another person
- *etc.*

By use of a database different *filters* on the data are possible, e.g.
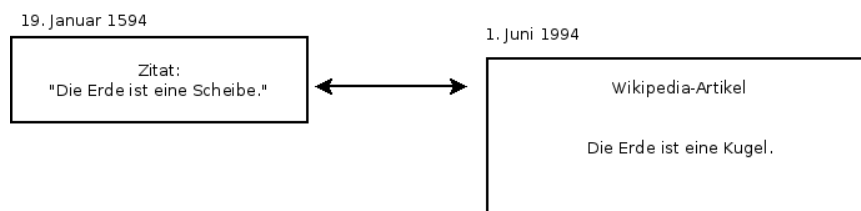
- Persons
- Tags
- Date ranges
- *etc.*

There may also be several different views, e.g.

- Person based view

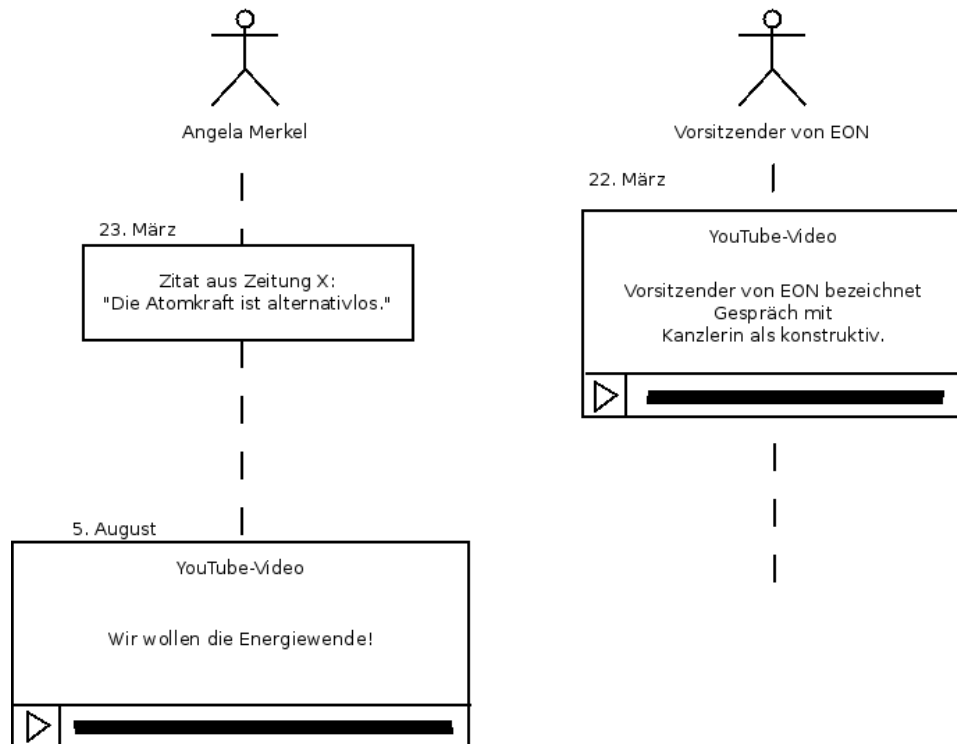### View contradictory statements of Angela Merkel concerning nuclear power

23. März

Zitat aus Zeitung X:
"Die Atomkraft ist alternativlos."

5. August

YouTube-Video

Wir wollen die Energiewende!

▷ ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

View contradictions to facts of Pope XXX

19. Januar 1594

Zitat:
"Die Erde ist eine Scheibe."

1. Juni 1994

Wikipedia-Artikel

Die Erde ist eine Kugel.

- Chronological view:

Chronological view on tag "nuclear power"

The controversy platform allows to monitor and analyze discussions and may possibly lead to an increased focus on content rather than people and glamour. By allowing other internet sites to embed such views with certain parameters, the insights of the controversy platform could be used by journalists.

These are just some rough ideas, one can take this much further (e.g. turn it into a social network).