The oldest businesses in the world

August 22, 2024

0.1 1. The oldest businesses in the world

This is Staffelter Hof Winery, Germany's oldest business, which was established in 862 under the Carolingian dynasty. It has continued to serve customers through dramatic changes in Europe such as the Holy Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and both world wars. What characteristics enable a business to stand the test of time? Image credit: Martin Kraft

To help answer this question, BusinessFinancing.co.uk researched the oldest company that is still in business in almost every country and compiled the results into a dataset. Let's explore this work to better understand these historic businesses. Our datasets, which are all located in the datasets directory, contain the following information:

| businesses and new_businesses |
|--|
| column |
| type |
| meaning |
| business |
| varchar |
| Name of the business. |
| year_founded |
| int |
| Year the business was founded. |
| category_code |
| varchar |
| Code for the category of the business. |
| $\operatorname{country_code}$ |
| char |
| ISO 3166-1 3-letter country code. |
| countries |
| column |

```
meaning
      country_code
      varchar
      ISO 3166-1 3-letter country code.
      country
      varchar
      Name of the country.
      continent
      varchar
      Name of the continent that the country exists in.
      categories
      column
      type
      meaning
      category_code
      varchar
      Code for the category of the business.
      category
      varchar
      Description of the business category.
      Now let's learn about some of the world's oldest businesses still in operation!
[114]: # Import the pandas library under its usual alias
       import pandas as pd
       # Load the business.csv file as a DataFrame called businesses
       businesses = pd.read_csv('datasets/businesses.csv')
       # Sort businesses from oldest businesses to youngest
       sorted_businesses = businesses.sort_values(by='year_founded', ascending=True)
       # Display the first few lines of sorted_businesses
       sorted_businesses.head()
[114]:
                                 business year_founded category_code country_code
                               Kongō Gumi
                                                                    CAT6
       64
                                                      578
```

type

```
94
     St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium
                                              803
                                                            CAT4
                                                                           AUT
                                                            CAT9
                                                                           DEU
107
           Staffelter Hof Winery
                                              862
106
                Monnaie de Paris
                                              864
                                                          CAT12
                                                                           FRA
103
                   The Royal Mint
                                              886
                                                          CAT12
                                                                           GBR
```

```
[115]: %%nose
       def test_pandas_loaded():
           assert "pd" in globals(), \
           "Did you correctly import the `pandas` library under the alias `pd`?"
       import pandas as pd
       test businesses = pd.read csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
       test_sorted_businesses = test_businesses.sort_values("year_founded")
       def test_bus():
           assert isinstance(businesses, pd.DataFrame), \
           "Did you create a `businesses` DataFrame using `pd.read_csv()`?"
           assert test_businesses.reset_index().equals(businesses.reset_index()), \
           "Your `businesses` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame. Did_{\sqcup}
        you load your `businesses` DataFrame from `datasets/businesses.csv` using⊔
        → `pd.read_csv()`?"
       def test_sorted_bus():
           assert sorted_businesses.iloc[-1:].equals(test_sorted_businesses.iloc[-1:
        →]), \
           "Did you create `sorted_businesses` by sorting `year_founded` in_
        →_ascending_ order?"
           assert test sorted businesses.reset index().equals(sorted businesses.
        →reset index()), \
           "Your `sorted businesses` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame. ...
        □Did you create it by calling `.sort_values()` on `businesses` and sorting by □
        → `year_founded`?"
```

[115]: 3/3 tests passed

0.2 2. The oldest businesses in North America

So far we've learned that Kongō Gumi is the world's oldest continuously operating business, beating out the second oldest business by well over 100 years! It's a little hard to read the country codes, though. Wouldn't it be nice if we had a list of country names to go along with the country codes?

Enter countries.csv, which is also located in the datasets folder. Having useful information in different files is a common problem: for data storage, it's better to keep different types of data separate, but for analysis, we want all the data in one place. To solve this, we'll have to join the two tables together.

countries

column

type

meaning

country code

varchar

ISO 3166-1 3-letter country code.

country

varchar

Name of the country.

continent

varchar

Name of the continent that the country exists in.

Since countries.csv contains a continent column, merging the datasets will also allow us to look at the oldest business on each continent!

```
[116]:
                              business
                                         year_founded category_code country_code
       22
          La Casa de Moneda de México
                                                 1534
                                                               CAT12
                                                                              MEX
       28
                    Shirley Plantation
                                                 1638
                                                                CAT1
                                                                              USA
       33
                  Hudson's Bay Company
                                                 1670
                                                               CAT17
                                                                              CAN
       35
                         Mount Gay Rum
                                                 1703
                                                                CAT9
                                                                              BRB
       40
                             Rose Hall
                                                 1770
                                                               CAT19
                                                                              JAM
                              continent
                 country
       22
                  Mexico North America
       28
          United States North America
       33
                  Canada North America
                Barbados North America
       35
       40
                 Jamaica North America
```

```
[117]: \%\%nose
       import pandas as pd
       test_businesses = pd.read_csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
       test_sorted businesses = test_businesses.sort_values("year_founded")
       test_countries = pd.read_csv("datasets/countries.csv")
       test_businesses_countries = test_sorted_businesses.merge(test_countries, on=_

¬"country_code")
       test_north_america =_
        otest_businesses_countries[test_businesses_countries["continent"] == "North, "
        →America"]
       def test cntries():
           assert isinstance(countries, pd.DataFrame), \
           "Did you create a `countries` DataFrame using `pd.read_csv()`?"
           assert test_countries.reset_index().equals(countries.reset_index()), \
           "Your `countries` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame."
       def test_bus_countries():
           assert len(businesses_countries.columns) == len(test_businesses_countries.
           "Your `businesses_countries` DataFrame should have six columns: `business`, __

    year_founded`, `category_code`, `country_code`, `country`, and `continent`."
           assert test_businesses_countries.reset_index().equals(businesses_countries.
        →reset_index()), \
           "Your `businesses_countries` DataFrame is not equal to the expected_
        →DataFrame."
       def test_north_am():
           assert north america.shape[0] == test north america.shape[0], \
           "Did you filter `businesses_countries` to include only countries in North
        America? It looks like your `north_america` DataFrame has a different number
        ⇔of rows than expected."
           assert test_north_america.reset_index().equals(north_america.
        →reset_index()), \
           "Your `north america` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame."
```

[117]: 3/3 tests passed

0.3 3. The oldest business on each continent

Now we can see that the oldest company in North America is La Casa de Moneda de México, founded in 1534. Why stop there, though, when we could easily find out the oldest business on every continent?

```
[118]: # Create continent, which lists only the continent and oldest year founded
      continent = businesses_countries.groupby("continent").agg({"year_founded":

¬"min"})
      # Merge continent with businesses_countries
      merged_continent = continent.merge(businesses_countries, on=["continent",__

¬"year_founded"])
      # Subset continent so that only the four columns of interest are included
      subset_merged_continent =_
       -merged continent[['continent','country','business','year_founded']]
      subset merged continent
「118]:
             continent
                                                     business year_founded
                         country
                Africa Mauritius
                                               Mauritius Post
                                                                      1772
      1
                  Asia
                                                   Kongō Gumi
                                                                       578
                           Japan
      2
                Europe
                       Austria St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium
                                                                       803
                          Mexico La Casa de Moneda de México
      3 North America
                                                                      1534
               Oceania Australia
                                               Australia Post
                                                                      1809
                            Peru
                                      Casa Nacional de Moneda
      5 South America
                                                                      1565
[119]: \%\nose
      import pandas as pd
      test_businesses = pd.read_csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
      test_countries = pd.read_csv("datasets/countries.csv")
      test_businesses_countries = test_businesses.merge(test_countries,_
       on="country_code")
      test_continent = test_businesses_countries.groupby("continent").
       →agg({"year_founded":"min"})
      test_merged_continent = test_continent.merge(test_businesses_countries,_
        →on=["continent", "year_founded"])
      test_subset_merged_continent = test_merged_continent[["continent", "country", _
       ⇔"business", "year_founded"]]
      def test_cont():
          assert isinstance(continent, pd.DataFrame), \
          "Your `continent` DataFrame needs to be a DataFrame and not a Series. The
        windex of the DataFrame will be continent names. You can use the .agg()
        ofunction to do this."
          assert len(continent.columns) == len(test_continent.columns), \
          "Your `continent` DataFrame should have `continent` as its index and should_
        ⇔have a single column called `year_founded`."
          assert continent.shape[0] == test_continent.shape[0], \
```

→`continent` DataFrame has a different number of rows than expected."

```
def test_subset_merged_cont():
    assert test_subset_merged_continent.columns.all() ==__
    subset_merged_continent.columns.all(), \
    "Did you correctly subset the `continent` DataFrame by selecting the__
    columns of interest (in order)?"
    assert subset_merged_continent.shape[0] == test_subset_merged_continent.
    shape[0], \
    "Did you subset the `merged_continent` DataFrame _columns_? The number of__
    rows in `subset_merged_continent` and `merged_continent` should be the same."
```

[119]: 2/2 tests passed

0.4 4. Unknown oldest businesses

BusinessFinancing.co.uk wasn't able to determine the oldest business for some countries, and those countries are simply left off of businesses.csv and, by extension, businesses. However, the countries that we created does include all countries in the world, regardless of whether the oldest business is known.

We can compare the two datasets in one DataFrame to find out which countries don't have a known oldest business!

```
[120]: # Use .merge() to create a DataFrame, all_countries
all_countries = businesses.merge(countries, on="country_code", how="right", ___
indicator=True)

# Filter to include only countries without oldest businesses
missing_countries = all_countries[all_countries["_merge"] != "both"]

# Create a series of the country names with missing oldest business data
missing_countries_series = missing_countries["country"]

# Display the series
missing_countries_series
```

```
[120]: 163
                                          Angola
       164
                            Antigua and Barbuda
       165
                                         Bahamas
       166
                             Dominican Republic
       167
                                         Ecuador
       168
                                             Fiji
       169
               Micronesia, Federated States of
       170
                                           Ghana
       171
                                           Gambia
```

```
173
                    Iran, Islamic Republic of
      174
                                   Kyrgyzstan
      175
                                     Kiribati
      176
                        Saint Kitts and Nevis
      177
                                       Monaco
      178
                         Moldova, Republic of
      179
                                    Maldives
      180
                             Marshall Islands
      181
                                       Nauru
      182
                                        Palau
      183
                             Papua New Guinea
      184
                                    Paraguay
      185
                          Palestine, State of
      186
                              Solomon Islands
      187
                                     Suriname
      188
                                   Tajikistan
      189
                                 Turkmenistan
      190
                                  Timor-Leste
      191
                                        Tonga
      192
                                       Tuvalu
      193
             Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
      194
                                        Samoa
      Name: country, dtype: object
[121]: \%\nose
      import pandas as pd
      output =
      test_businesses = pd.read_csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
      test_countries = pd.read_csv("datasets/countries.csv")
      test_all_countries = test_businesses.merge(test_countries, on="country_code",_
       →how="right", indicator = True)
      test missing countries = test_all_countries[test_all_countries[" merge"] !=_
      test_missing_countries_series = test_missing_countries["country"]
      def test all():
          assert {'business', 'year_founded', 'category_code', 'country_code', |
       "Your `all_countries` DataFrame should include the following columns:
       ⇔`business`, `year_founded`, `category_code`, `country_code`, `country`,⊔
        → `continent`, and `_merge`. Did you create the DataFrame using an outer merge_
       ⇒with `indicator = True`?"
          assert all_countries.shape[0] == test_all_countries.shape[0], \
          "Did you use an outer merge to create `all_countries`? It looks like your
        →`all_countries` DataFrame has a different number of rows than expected."
```

Grenada

172

```
def test_missing():
    assert missing_countries.shape[0] == test_missing_countries.shape[0], \
    "Did you filter `all_countries` to include only countries that \_don't\_ have_{\sqcup}
 →a 'both' value in the `_merge` column? It looks like your
 →`missing_countries` DataFrame has a different number of rows than expected."
def test_series():
    assert isinstance(missing_countries_series, pd.Series), \
    "Are you sure your `missing_countries_series` is a _Series_ and not a_
 →DataFrame?"
    assert len(missing_countries_series) == len(test_missing_countries), \
    "The number of missing countries is different than expected. It should not
 ⇔change between the `missing_countries` DataFrame and _
 → `missing_countries_series`."
    assert test_missing_countries_series.equals(missing_countries_series), \
    "Your `missing_countries_series` is not equal to the expected series."
def test_display_series():
    assert test_missing_countries_series.equals(_), \
    "Did you display `missing_countries_series` as cell output?"
```

[121]: 4/4 tests passed

0.5 5. Adding new oldest business data

It looks like we've got some holes in our dataset! Fortunately, we've taken it upon ourselves to improve upon BusinessFinancing.co.uk's work and find oldest businesses in a few of the missing countries. We've stored the newfound oldest businesses in new_businesses, located at "datasets/new_businesses.csv". It has the exact same structure as our businesses dataset.

```
new_businesses

column

type

meaning

business

varchar

Name of the business.

year_founded

int

Year the business was founded.

category code
```

varchar

Code for the category of the business.

 $country_code$

char

ISO 3166-1 3-letter country code.

All we have to do is combine the two so that we've got one more complete list of businesses!

```
[122]: count_missing continent
   Africa 3
   Asia 7
   Europe 2
   North America 5
   Oceania 10
   South America 3
```

```
test_count_missing.columns = ["count_missing"]
def test_import():
    assert isinstance(new_businesses, pd.DataFrame), \
    "Did you create a `new_businesses` DataFrame using `pd.read_csv()`?"
def test all bus():
    assert all_businesses.shape[0] == test_all_businesses.shape[0], \
    "Did you use `pd.concat()` to create `all_businesses` from `new_businesses`_
 →and `businesses`? It looks like your `all_businesses` DataFrame has a_
 ⇒different number of rows than expected."
    assert all_businesses.shape[1] == test_all_businesses.shape[1], \
    "Did you create `all_businesses` from `new_businesses` and `businesses` by_
 ⇔stacking them _vertically_? It looks like your `all_businesses` DataFrame⊔
 ⇔has a different number of columns than expected."
    assert test_all_businesses.reset_index().equals(all_businesses.
 →reset_index()), \
    "Your `all businesses` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame. __
 →Did you use `pd.concat()` to stack `new_businesses` and `businesses` ⊔
 ⇔vertically?"
def test new all cntries():
   assert {'business', 'year_founded', 'category_code', 'country_code', '
 "Your `new_all_countries` DataFrame should include the following columns: _{\mbox{\tiny L}}
 → `business`, `year_founded`, `category_code`, `country_code`, `country`, u
 _{
m \hookrightarrow}`continent`, and `_merge`. Did you create the DataFrame using an outer merge_{
m \sqcup}
 ⇔with `indicator = True`?"
   assert new_all_countries.shape[0] == test_new_all_countries.shape[0], \
    "Did you use a right or outer merge to create `new_all_countries`? It looks_
 ⇔like your `new_all_countries` DataFrame has a different number of rows than ⊔
 ⊶expected."
def test new missing cntries():
    assert new_missing_countries.shape[0] == test_new_missing_countries.
 \hookrightarrowshape [0], \
    "Did you filter `new_all_countries` to include only countries that _{don't_{u}}
 ⊶have a 'both' value in the `_merge` column? It looks like your⊔
 →`new_missing_countries` DataFrame has a different number of rows than_
 ⇔expected."
def test count miss():
   assert isinstance(count_missing, pd.DataFrame), \
   "Your `count missing` DataFrame needs to be a DataFrame and not a Series. ...
 The index will be continent names. You can use the .agg() function to dou
 ⇔this."
```

```
assert count_missing.shape[0] == test_count_missing.shape[0], \
"Did you create `count_missing` by grouping `new_missing_countries` by_
continent? It looks like your `count_missing` DataFrame has a different_
number of rows than expected."

try:
    assert count_missing.columns == ["count_missing"]
    except AssertionError:
    assert False, "Does `count_missing` have only one column? Did you_
forget to rename the column to `count_missing`?"
    assert test_count_missing.equals(count_missing), \
"Your `count_missing` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame. Did_
you aggregate the data by _counting_ the number of countries missing from_
each continent group?"
```

[123]: 5/5 tests passed

0.6 6. The oldest industries

Remember our oldest business in the world, Kongō Gumi?

business

year_founded

category_code

country code

64

Kongō Gumi

578

CAT6

JPN

We know Kongō Gumi was founded in the year 578 in Japan, but it's a little hard to decipher which industry it's in. Information about what the category_code column refers to is in "datasets/categories.csv":

categories

column

type

meaning

 $category_code$

varchar

Code for the category of the business.

category

varchar

Description of the business category.

Let's use categories.csv to understand how many oldest businesses are in each category of industry.

```
count
category
Agriculture 6
Aviation & Transport 19
Banking & Finance 37
Cafés, Restaurants & Bars 6
Conglomerate 3
```

```
[125]: %%nose
       import pandas as pd
       test_businesses = pd.read_csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
       test_categories = pd.read_csv("datasets/categories.csv")
       test_businesses_categories = test_businesses.merge(test_categories,_
        ⇔on="category_code")
       test_count_business_cats = test_businesses_categories.groupby("category").
        →agg({"business":"count"})
       test_count_business_cats.columns = ["count"]
       def test_import():
          assert isinstance(categories, pd.DataFrame), \
           "Did you create a `categories` DataFrame using `pd.read_csv()`?"
       def test count bus cats():
           assert isinstance(count_business_cats, pd.DataFrame), \
           "Your `count business cats` DataFrame needs to be a DataFrame and not a
        Series. The index will be category names. You can use the .agg() function to⊔
        ⊶do this."
```

```
assert count_business_cats.shape[0] == test_count_business_cats.shape[0], \
"Did you group `count_business_cats` by `category`? It looks like your_u
count_business_cats` DataFrame has a different number of rows than expected.
"

assert test_count_business_cats.index.all() == count_business_cats.index.

all(), \
"Did you group `count_business_cats` by `category`? It looks like your_u
count_business_cats` DataFrame indexes aren't the business category names."

assert test_count_business_cats.columns.all() == count_business_cats.

columns.all(), \
"Did you rename the column in `count_business_cats`?"

assert test_count_business_cats.equals(count_business_cats), \
"Did you aggregate the `business` column using `count`?"
```

[125]: 2/2 tests passed

0.7 7. Restaurant representation

No matter how we measure it, looks like Banking and Finance is an excellent industry to be in if longevity is our goal! Let's zoom in on another industry: cafés, restaurants, and bars. Which restaurants in our dataset have been around since before the year 1800?

```
[126]: # Filter using .query() for CAT4 businesses founded before 1800; sort results
       old_restaurants = businesses_categories.query('year_founded < 1800 and_
       ⇔category_code == "CAT4"')
       # Sort the DataFrame
       old_restaurants = old_restaurants.sort_values("year_founded")
       old_restaurants
[126]:
                                      business
                                                year_founded category_code \
                   St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium
       142
                                                                       CAT4
                                                         803
       143
                                    Sean's Bar
                                                         900
                                                                       CAT4
       139 Ma Yu Ching's Bucket Chicken House
                                                        1153
                                                                       CAT4
           country_code
                                          category
       142
                    AUT Cafés, Restaurants & Bars
                    IRL Cafés, Restaurants & Bars
       143
                    CHN Cafés, Restaurants & Bars
       139
[127]: \%nose
       import pandas as pd
       test_businesses = pd.read_csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
       test_categories = pd.read_csv("datasets/categories.csv")
```

```
test_businesses_categories = test_businesses.merge(test_categories,_
 ⇔on="category_code")
test_old_restaurants = test_businesses_categories.query('year_founded < 1800_
 and category_code == "CAT4"').sort_values("year_founded")
def test_old_rests():
    assert old_restaurants.shape[0] == test_old_restaurants.shape[0], \
    "Did you filter using `.query()` where `year_founded` is less than 1800 and
 →`category_code` is 'CAT4'? It looks like your `old_restaurants` DataFrame_
 ⇔has a different number of rows than expected."
    assert old_restaurants.iloc[-1:].equals(test_old_restaurants.iloc[-1:]), \
    "Did you sort `old_restaurants` by `year_founded` in _ascending_ order?"
   assert test_old_restaurants.reset_index().equals(old_restaurants.
 →reset_index()), \
    "Your `old_restaurants` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame. __
 →Did you filter using `.query()` where `year_founded` is less than 1800 and u
 →`category_code` is 'CAT4'? Did you sort from oldest to newest?"
```

[127]: 1/1 tests passed

0.8 8. Categories and continents

St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium is old enough that the restaurant is believed to have served Mozart - and it would have been over 900 years old even when he was a patron! Let's finish by looking at the oldest business in each category of commerce for each continent.

```
[128]: year_founded continent category

Africa Agriculture 1947

Aviation & Transport 1854

Banking & Finance 1892

Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries 1933

Energy 1968
```

```
[129]: \%nose
       import pandas as pd
       test_businesses = pd.read_csv("datasets/businesses.csv")
       test_categories = pd.read_csv("datasets/categories.csv")
       test_countries = pd.read_csv("datasets/countries.csv")
       test_businesses_categories = test_businesses.merge(test_categories,_
        on="category code")
       test_businesses_categories_countries = test_businesses_categories.
        -merge(test_countries, on="country_code").sort_values("year_founded")
       test_oldest_by_continent_category = test_businesses_categories_countries.
        Groupby(["continent", "category"]).agg({"year_founded":"min"})
       def test_bus_cat_countries():
           assert len(businesses_categories_countries.columns) ==_
        →len(businesses_categories_countries.columns), \
           "Your `businesses categories countries` DataFrame should have seven columns:
        → `business`, `year_founded`, `category_code`, `country_code`, `category`, □
        → `country`, and `continent`."
           assert businesses_categories_countries.shape[0] ==_
        →test_businesses_categories_countries.shape[0], \
           "It looks like your `businesses_categories_countries` DataFrame has a_{\sqcup}
        ⇒different number of rows than expected."
           assert test_businesses_categories_countries.iloc[-1:].
        →equals(businesses_categories_countries.iloc[-1:]),\
           "Did you sort `businesses_categories_countries` by `year_founded`?"
       def test_grouped():
           assert isinstance(oldest_by_continent_category, pd.DataFrame), \
           "Your `oldest_by_continent_category` DataFrame needs to be a DataFrame and_
        \hookrightarrownot a Series. The index will be continent and category names since it is_{\sqcup}
        grouped by both. You can use the .agg() function to do this."
           assert test oldest_by_continent_category.index.get_level_values("category").
        Gall() == oldest_by_continent_category.sort_index().index.

¬get_level_values("category").all(),\
           "Did you group `oldest by continent category` by `continent` and `category`?
        اا
⇔اا
       def test_values():
           assert test_oldest_by_continent_category.
        →equals(oldest_by_continent_category),\
           "Your `old_restaurants` DataFrame is not equal to the expected DataFrame. __
        Did you aggregate the 'year_founded' column by finding its minimum?"
```

[129]: 3/3 tests passed