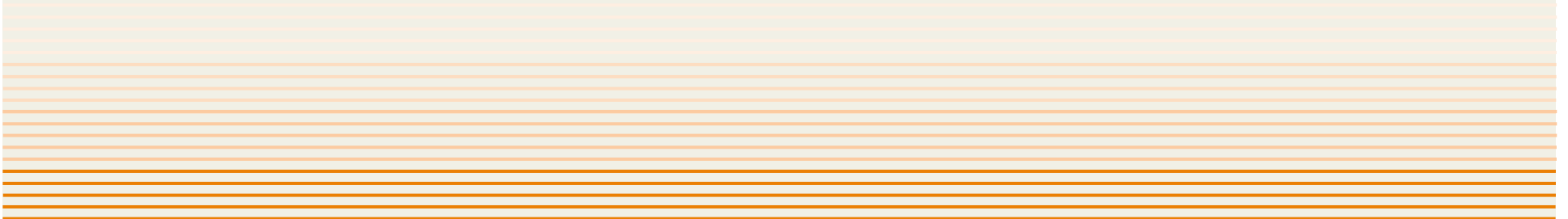




Google Refine

An Introduction



Today

- A word about me
- Very short introduction
- Then we get down to putting Google Refine to use
- Working through a generally plausible example
- Goal: Find out more about historic police stations in NSW
- Start with basic set of data from OEH, then use Google Geolocation API, then State Records NSW API
- Not intended to be thorough research!

Google Refine

- Richard described it as Excel on steroids
- Kind of true
 - Exploring datasets
 - Cleaning up datasets
- Most datasets are messy
 - Variant spellings – Sydney, Sidney
 - Different number formats – “1000”, “1,000”, “1,000.00”, “1.000,00”
 - Myriad of date formats
 - Compound fields – “Sydney, NSW”

Google Refine

- Typical workflow:
 1. Import dataset – CSV, tab – file, URL
 2. Rearrange, split, sort
 3. Explore data using facets
 4. Use cluster analysis to make consistent
 5. Supplement with an API call
 6. Repeat 2-5
 7. Export dataset

Google Refine

- Faceting:
 - Grouping the dataset based on one or more parameters, properties, fields, columns
 - Like tagging
 - You can then explore just those records at the intersection of the facets
 - A “suburb” facet, for instance, would group all records that have the same suburb
 - Possible to facet on text, number ranges, pairs of numbers, etc.

Google Refine

- Clustering
 - Often faceting will reveal inconsistencies in the data
 - Cluster analysis attempts to form clusters of data based on certain algorithms
 - Google Refine allows you try a variety of clustering methods
 - These are quite good at revealing inconsistencies, e.g.:
 - **10-12 Church St.** vs **10,12 Church Street**

Google Refine

- APIs
 - Increasingly, APIs are being used to expose services – databases, registries, mapping services, etc.
 - Google Refine makes it relatively straightforward to call into an API, receive a response, and supplement your dataset with a portion of it.

Google Refine

- Let's have a go!
- The Dataset:
 - <http://bit.ly/zonJkP>
- Tutorial Document:
 - <http://bit.ly/yA0lZt>