**Social Media Analytics Group Assignment #1**

**Due: Feb 8, 2017 by 11:59 p.m. (note that the syllabus mentioned 6th Feb as the deadline)**

In this assignment you are an analytics consultant to a (i) brand manager, (ii) product manager and (iii) advertising manager. Your job is to give advice/insights to these individuals based on the analysis of social media conversations. The detailed tasks are described below. We use cars as an example of a “high involvement” good (recall from class discussions that for high involvement goods, people use social media heavily for awareness building and research).

1. Develop a crawler/scraper to fetch messages posted in Edmunds.com discussion forums. The crawler output should be a .csv file with the following columns: date, userid, and message. Before you develop the crawler, carefully study one of the forums on Edmunds.com to understand the html as well as the threading structures.
2. Fetch between 5,000 and 10,000 posts about cars from a General topics forum. Do NOT choose a forum dedicated to a particular brand or model. Instead, you can choose the General & Sedans categories and then select Entry Level Luxury forum <https://forums.edmunds.com/discussion/2864/general/x/entry-level-luxury-performance-sedans>

The idea is to have multiple brands and models being discussed without one of them being the focal point.

1. Once you fetch the data, find the top 10 brands from frequency counts. You will need to write a script to count the frequencies. **Be sure not to count a mention more than once per post, even if it is mentioned multiple times.** Replace **models** with **brands** so that from now on you have to deal with only brands and not models. You will need another script for this job. This step is meant to help simplify the analysis. A list of model and brand names (not exhaustive) are provided in a separate file.

**Task A:** Identify top 10 brands by frequency. From the posts, calculate lift ratios for associations between the brands. You will have to write a script to do this task). Show the brands on a multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) map. You can use XLSTAT (<http://www.xlstat.com/en/learning-center/tutorials/multidimensional-scaling-mds-with-xlstat.html>) for MDS analysis.

**Task B:** What insights can you offer brand managers from your analysis in Task A (choose two brands that you can offer the most interesting/useful insights for)?

**Task C:** What are 5 most frequently mentioned attributes of cars in the discussions? Note that the same attribute may be described by different words – e.g., pick-up and acceleration may both refer to a more general attribute, “performance”. You have to make suitable replacements. Now pick the 5 most frequently mentioned brands. Which attributes are most strongly associated with which of these 5 brands? You don’t have to do a sentiment analysis for this assignment.

**While BMW has claimed that they are the “ultimate driving machine”, is that how people feel on Edmunds? Show your analysis.**

**Task D:** What advice will you give to a (i) product manager, and (ii) marketing/advertising manager of these brands based on your analysis in Task C?

**Task E:** Which is the most **aspirational** brand in your data in terms of people actually wanting to buy or own? Describe your analysis. What are the business implications for this brand?

**Provide the following details in your write-up (I am not setting a strict page limit, but 3-4 pages, single-spaced, 11 font size should be enough with screenshots)**

1. Which forum you chose (provide URL)
2. Which 10 brands you chose – provide the frequency table
3. Show all lift ratio calculations in a table.
4. Show the MDS map (put screenshots in your report)
5. State the 5 attributes you chose (again, a table is good here).
6. For task E, provide all details of your analysis – e.g., how you measured “aspirational” and how you found the most aspirational brand.
7. Advice/insights based on your analysis for brand, product and advertising managers.

Your submission should include multiple files: (i) a Word or pdf file with the above information, (ii) **all** scripts written for the analysis (generally speaking, I won’t run these scripts, but if the numbers don’t look right, I may run some of them), (ii) Final data file after all replacements have been done.