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UnBiasedVote

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OVERVIEW

Here is a summary of research for different topics relevant to the project UnBiasedVote. There are more links than necessary, but I have separated them into five categories.

WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE

These sources expand further on why this issue is an important issue facing not only the US but the first world. They give facts and sources which show that voter interest is decreasing and why. Things like false political promises create apathy among young and well-educated individuals. Mistrust of candidates who are not seen as authentic leads to cynicism in the political and democratic process.

This further enhances the reason to create a service which has easily digestible info for younger generations whose attention spans have decreased with the advent of the internet, as well as one service which would let users find information about political candidates, when to vote reminders and campaign finance and voting records. It also gives the hope that if statistics are readily available it will help disenfranchised to vote. The economist article states half of people age 18-33 declare themselves independent, meaning perhaps they will be more responsive to other party candidates who fit their ideals, and will be more eager to vote if they know the numbers. Questions raised are how to generate

interest when voters seem to be so mistrustful of any and all information as well as disheartening info.

Also the scope of the project should possibly only aim at this age group since this is the age group that isn't voting well. This raises the questions of how exactly the project will attract young voters and keep them coming back. This service will not be especially interesting but there should be a plan for how to make it more interesting. Perhaps so that even 16-18 year olds take notice, as mentioned in the article, some countries are lowering voting ages to try to get younger people to vote earlier. This is one of the more important categories for UnBiasedVote because this helps to identify a major problem with voting today as well as the target audience and their specific problems.

LINKS

- Drum, Kevin. "Why don't millennials vote?" Mother Jones. June 23, 2017. Accessed October 23, 2017. <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2016/03/why-dont-millennials-vote/>.
- "Millennials across the rich world are failing to vote." The Economist. February 04, 2017. Accessed October 23, 2017. <https://www.economist.com/news/international/21716023-democracies-are-risk-if-young-people-continue-shun-ballot-box-millennials-across>.

US VOTING DATES AND INFO

Building an API was a daunting task, as well as finding the databases for local election dates etc. because that information is not easily found on the internet. Most websites have info down to state and if they do have local links they lead to local government websites which are mostly cumbersome and hard to navigate.

Luckily there are prebuilt APIs that have been built by not only private organizations like Google and USVoteFoundation.org but also from DATA.GOV which has built an API for the purpose of "a rich resource for civic hackers,

tech entrepreneurs, data scientists, and developers of all stripes.” This enhances the grounds of building this project within the financial limit. These sources are free unlike some other APIs, and it makes sourcing data from trusted sources easier.

It also adds the question of whether multiple APIs should be used so the information can be double checked against each other. Perhaps a user doesn't trust a government source as much as an NGO or vice versa. As well as what type of information should be included about the offices the length of time what the office power scope is etc.

There is little doubt about these sources because they come either directly from the government Google, who would not want to appear to spread false information, or from a foundation whose sole goal is to increase voter turnout in local elections. Also included are examples of what the site should not look like, vote.org does not allow the user to find information without lengthy signup process, which can be a big turn off. However the US Vote Foundation has a search tool that is easy to use although only for state information.

LINKS

- "State Election Dates & Deadlines." U.S. Vote Foundation | Election Dates and Deadlines. Accessed October 23, 2017.
<https://www.usvotefoundation.org/vote/state-elections/state-election-dates-deadlines.htm>.
 - Absentee Ballot Request and Voter Registration Services for All U.S. Voters in All States at Home and Abroad." LOElections - A New Initiative of U.S. Vote Foundation | U.S. Vote Foundation. Accessed October 24, 2017.
<https://www.usvotefoundation.org/LOElections-ExecSumm>.
- <https://www.vote.org/election-reminders/> (Example of what I dont want)

API's

- <https://developers.google.com/civic-information/>
- <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/Civic-Data-API>
- <https://api.data.gov/>
 - <https://api-all-the-x.18f.gov/>
 -

BILL TRACKING/ VOTING RECORDS

GovTrackUS is a really informative site about members of Congress and Bill tracking. They also have a very informative page about sourcing, which is very open and something that should be included in the UnBiasedVote. They have links to the sites of the senate and congress where XML lists are provided about members of congress and the voting records of members as well as bill going through and being voted on.

There are some other sites that have more information on bill formation, and further reading included as well but GovTrackUS has a very well explained and sourced information page which can be used for the site. I thought it would also be very hard to collect this information, but it was only hard to find it. It is great this website exists and it will be very helpful to collect the info I want.

This source raised the question of whether the site needs information about bills. Perhaps the site, to avoid information overload, can link to other sites with this info and just have short explanations of bills voted for by politicians. GovTrack is perfect as a source of information of data and where to get good and correct data for the new site.

LINKS

- "About the Data on GovTrack.us." GovTrack.us. Accessed October 24, 2017. <https://www.govtrack.us/about-our-data>.
 - Git repository: "Unitedstates/congress." GitHub. Accessed October 24, 2017. <https://github.com/unitedstates/congress/wiki>.
 - Federal Bill Tracking Research Guide — Gallagher Law Library. Accessed October 24, 2017. <https://lib.law.washington.edu/content/guides/FedBillTrack>.

POLITICIANS IN AMERICA

The APIs provided in the previous sections can also be used for the local and federal politicians in America, as well as links to their personal sites. There is also a git repository about US congress and GovTrack should be very helpful as well. These sources are great and further relieve the burden on data gathering.

Questions raised will be what type of background information about the politicians should be raised. Will they only include data about voting histories compared to campaign promises? Further investigation and research will need to be done about this.

These sources are great for this project, GovTrack ,again, is perfect as a source of information of data and where to get good and correct data for the new site.

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<https://www.govtrack.us/about-our-data>.
 - Git repository: "Unitedstates/congress." GitHub. Accessed October 24, 2017.
<https://github.com/unitedstates/congress/wiki>.

APIs

- <https://developers.google.com/civic-information/>
- <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/Civic-Data-API>
- <https://api.data.gov/>
 - <https://api-all-the-x.18f.gov/>

FINANCING

Financing is the largest way to see who controls which elected official and whether a voter wants to vote for the backer of the person running. The site Open Secrets has extensive research on financial links to politicians in the US. It provides APIs, documentation and strives to create open data to use by anyone. Mother jones has a great infographic research article which lead me to open secrets documentation. Questions raised by these sources are how exactly to display this information, in an easy to digest manner as well as easy to go through and find. Perhaps it should just be listed in each section of each politicians.

This source is a great resource and there is a wealth of information about this topic online. Open secrets is a trusted source of information and gets data directly from the government. This is perfect for sourcing for the new site.

LINKS

- "Data on Campaign Finance, Super PACs, Industries, and Lobbying." OpenSecrets. Accessed October 24, 2017. <http://www.opensecrets.org/>.
 - <https://www.opensecrets.org/resources/create/apis.php>
 - <https://www.opensecrets.org/resources/create/data.php>
 - https://www.opensecrets.org/resources/create/data_doc.php
- Gilson, Dave. "Who Owns Congress? A Campaign Cash Seating Chart." Mother Jones. June 25, 2017. Accessed October 24, 2017. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2010/10/congress-corporate-sponsors/>.