

Automated Web Data Collection with R

GESIS Fall Seminar in Computational Social Sciences 2021

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Course summary

The increasing availability of large amounts of online data enables new lines of research in the social sciences. Over the past years, a variety of data – whether election results, press releases, parliamentary speeches or social media content – has become available online. Although these data has become easier to find, its extraction and reshaping into formats ready for downstream analyses can be challenging. This makes web data collection and cleaning skills essential for researchers.

The goal of this course is to equip participants with the R programming skills necessary to gather online data and process it into formats they can use in their research.

To get the most of the course, participants should have some prior experience with R and be willing to engage with different web technologies.

Participants will learn

- about the characteristics of web data
- how to extract via Application Programmer Interfaces (APIs), including those maintained by popular social media platforms such as Twitter
- how to scrape content from different types of webpages
- important techniques for cleaning and reshaping web and social media data for downstream analysis.

Course details

Learning objectives

By the end of the course participants will:

- Know the most important characteristics of web data, including webpage content and social media data.
- Gain an understanding of a variety of scraping scenarios: APIs, static pages, and dynamic pages.
- Be able to parse, clean and process data collected from the web.
- Be able to write reproducible and robust code for web scraping tasks.

Course materials

We make available course slides and code to all participants. These course materials can be found on Github and ILIAS.

- GitHub: [tba]
- ILIAS: https://ilias.gesis.org/goto.php?target=crs_25965&client_id=gesis

In addition, instructions and exercises will be based on interactive R tutorials contained in the [learn2scrape R package](#) (see Listing A.2 in the Appendix for installation instructions).

Organization

The course will be organized as a mixture of lectures and lab sessions. So we will meet twice daily from 20 to 24 September 2021:

- Morning sessions (“lectures”) will be held between 9:00 and 12:00 CEST
- Afternoon sessions (“tutorials”) will be held between 14:00 and 17:00 CEST.

In the lecture sessions, we will focus on explaining core concepts and methods in web scraping. In the lab and tutorial sessions, participants will apply their newly acquired knowledge and instructors will be available for consultations and support work on assignments.

We will meet **online on Zoom**:

- meeting URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86318490781?pwd=VjlyTUlnQm94MEZCSWdnbFA5bFp3UT09>
- meeting ID: 863 1849 0781
- access code: 360711

Online learning means it is more difficult to get help and to learn from each other. Because of that, you will often be asked to do exercises in groups and we encourage you to go through materials together.

(Virtual) Classroom rules

- ***Ask and answer.*** Our discussion will be better for every question you ask and every idea you share. Unless you are speaking, mute your microphone.
- ***Respect and patience.*** Digital teaching and learning is challenging for everybody. Hence, we all need to be patient and respectful with all people in class.
- ***Show up.*** We encourage you to turn your camera on. For teaching it is essential to see your faces to see how well you understand the content and whether you are following. Feel free to use an alternative background or to blur the background.

Prerequisites

Participants should

- have basic knowledge of and some experience with using the R programming language
- be willing to engage with different web technologies

Participants should install the following programs on their personal computers:

- [R](#) (we recommend version $\geq 4.0.0$)
- [RStudio](#) (or a comparable R interface/IDE)
- the [Google Chrome](#) and [Firefox](#) web browsers

They should install the following **R packages** (see Listing [A.1](#) in the Appendix):

- for web data collection: [httr](#) ($\geq 1.3.0$), [xml2](#) ($\geq 1.3.0$), [rvest](#) ($\geq 1.0.0$), [RSelenium](#) ($\geq 1.7.0$), [rtweet](#) ($\geq 0.7.0$)
- for data input/output: [jsonlite](#) ($\geq 1.7.0$), [readr](#) ($\geq 1.4.0$)
- for data wrangling: [dplyr](#) ($\geq 1.0.0$), [tidyr](#) ($\geq 1.1.0$), [purrr](#) ($\geq 0.3.0$)
- for text wrangling: [stringr](#) ($\geq 1.4.0$)
- for interactive tutorials: [learn2scrape](#) (see Listing [A.2](#) in the Appendix)

Overview of sessions

Mandatory readings are indicated with an asteriks (*)

Before the course

Before the first day of our course, please

- please complete the pre-course survey at <https://forms.gle/By7J4PYEHtrkxker8>
- install the [learn2scrape R package](#) (see Listing A.2 in the Appendix for instructions).
- complete the “001-tutorial-how-to” and “002-r-basics” tutorials in the `learn2scrape` R package (if you have already programmed in R, this won’t take more than 30 minutes).
- apply for a Twitter [standard developer](#) or [academic track](#) account (see tutorial “103-twitter-setup” in the `learn2scrape` R package and [this](#) vignette)

Day 1 (September 20): Introduction to web data

Preparation

Before we meet, please

- work through the following sections in the W3 school’s [XML tutorial](#): “Introduction”, “How to use”, “Tree”, “Syntax”, “Elements”, and “Attributes” (this won’t take more than 45 minutes)
- work through the following sections in the W3 school’s [HTML tutorial](#): “Introduction”, “Basic”, “Elements”, “Attributes”, and “Links” (this won’t take more than 45 minutes)
- watch [this video about HTTP](#)
- watch [this video about Web architectures](#) (until about 9:26)

Morning session

We will cover what web scraping is and how it can be used in social science and digital humanities research. Participants will be asked to share their expectations of the course and how they plan to use web scraping in their research.

We will then introduce most fundamental concepts including HTTP, APIs, and the XML and HTML formats. Finally, we will discuss how websites are commonly organized.

Afternoon session

We will first ensure that all participants have a working R setup (incl. a Twitter developer account). We will then have series of coding exercises designed to ensure that all participants are comfortable with basic R programming concepts and techniques.

Readings

- ! Matthew J Salganik (2019). *Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age*. Princeton University Press, chapter 1 (introduction, pp. 1–5) and 2 (observing behavior, pp.

13–41)

David M. J. Lazer et al. (2020). “Computational Social Science: Obstacles and Opportunities”. In: *Science* 369.6507, pp. 1060–1062. DOI: [10.1126/science.aaz8170](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaz8170). pmid: [32855329](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32855329/)

Note: Exclamation marks (“!”) in front of references mark mandatory readings.

Day 2 (September 21): APIs and social media data

Preparation

Before we meet, please

- install/update the following R packages: `httr` ($\geq 1.3.0$), `rtweet` ($\geq 0.7.0$), `jsonlite` ($\geq 1.7.0$), `xml2` ($\geq 1.3.0$)
- skim through the “[Getting started with httr](#)” vignette
- follow the instructions provided in tutorial “103-twitter-setup” of the `learn2scrape` R package to obtain Twitter API credentials and to make them accessible in R as `rtweet` access token (see also [this](#) vignette)
- read Hadley Wickham (2020). *Managing Secrets*. URL: <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/httr/vignettes/secrets.html> and implement one of the recommend best practices to securely handling secrets for your Twitter credentials

Morning session

Building on the content discussed on Day 1, we will deepen our understanding of APIs. We will first introduce the `httr` R package, show how to use it to send API requests, and discuss how to work with different content types returned by APIs such as JSON and XML. We will also discuss authentication, pagination, and API rate limits.

Participants will learn to apply this knowledge with a small project on the Wikipedia API.

Afternoon session

In the afternoon, we will talk about the specific challenges of social media research. Wwe will use Twitter as an examples to show how to extract social media data.

Readings

! Deen Freelon (2018). “Computational Research in the Post-API Age”. In: *Political Communication* 35.4, pp. 665–668. DOI: [10.1080/10584609.2018.1477506](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1477506)

! Axel Bruns (2019). “After the ‘APIcalypse’: Social Media Platforms and Their Fight against Critical Scholarly Research”. In: *Information, Communication & Society* 22.11, pp. 1544–1566. DOI: [10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637447](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637447)

Moreno Mancosu and Federico Vegetti (2020). “What You Can Scrape and What Is Right to Scrape: A Proposal for a Tool to Collect Public Facebook Data”. In: *Social Media + Society* 6.3, p. 2056305120940703. DOI: [10.1177/2056305120940703](https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120940703)

Alexander Halavais (2019). “Overcoming Terms of Service: A Proposal for Ethical Distributed Research”. In: *Information, Communication & Society* 22.11, pp. 1567–1581. DOI: [10.1080/1369118X.2019.1627386](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1627386)

Manoel Horta Ribeiro, Kristina Gligorić, Maxime Peyrard, Florian Lemmerich, Markus Strohmaier, and Robert West (2021). *Sudden Attention Shifts on Wikipedia During the COVID-19 Crisis*. arXiv: [2005.08505](https://arxiv.org/abs/2005.08505) [cs]. URL: <http://arxiv.org/abs/2005.08505>

Day 3 (September 22): Scraping static webpages

Preparation

Before we meet, please

- install/update `rvest` ($\geq 1.0.0$)

Morning session

We will learn how to extract data from static websites. Building on what we have learned about HTML (Day 1), we will cover how to systematically extract web data using the `rvest` R package, including a discussion of CSS selectors and the Xpath method to navigate the HTML tree.

Specifically, we will cover

1. how to extract HTML text and attributes as well as other data from tables and images from web pages
2. how to automatically navigate between and scrape multiple pages of a websites.

Afternoon session

Participants will use `rvest` to solve a web data extraction challenge.

Day 4 (September 23): Scraping dynamic webpages

Preparation

Before we meet, please

- install/update `RSelenium` ($\geq 1.7.0$)

Morning session

We will discuss how to scrape dynamic websites. We will first explain what makes a page “dynamic” and show how to recognize dynamic web elements in the wild.

We will then introduce the `RSelenium` package and show how it enables systematic interaction with dynamic web elements. This will include how to instantiate a web driver in R (Google Chrome), how to find web elements, how to navigate dynamic elements (e.g., accordion elements), how to switch between windows (e.g., a main page and a pop-up), and how to automatically download files.

Afternoon session

Participants will use `RSelenium` to solve a web data extraction challenge.

Day 5 (September 24): Advanced topics and web scraping ethics

Preparation

Morning session

We will begin with a recap of what we have learned during the previous four days and collect the best practices that have been taught during the first four days.

Depending on participants' own plans, we can address advanced topics in web scraping, including web sessions, user agents, proxies, login, "iframes", and other topics participants might be interested in. We can also cover advanced techniques for handling webpage content, including regular expressions.

We will also return to the topic of Ethics in web scraping.

Afternoon session

The focus will be on practicing techniques learned during the week and practicing them with help from the instructors.

Recommended literature

Big Data

Matthew J Salganik (2019). *Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age*. Princeton University Press

Seth Stephens-Davidowitz and Andrés Pabon (2017). *Everybody Lies: Big Data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us about Who We Really Are*. HarperCollins New York

Sandra González-Bailón (2017). *Decoding the Social World: Data Science and the Unintended Consequences of Communication*. MIT Press

Catherine D’ignazio and Lauren F Klein (2020). *Data Feminism*. MIT press

Cathy O’neil (2016). *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy*. Crown

Caroline Criado Perez (2019). *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*. Random House

About Computational Social Science (CSS)

Achim Edelmann, Tom Wolff, Danielle Montagne, and Christopher A. Bail (2020). “Computational Social Science and Sociology”. In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 46.1, pp. 61–81. DOI: [10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054621](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054621)

Scott A. Golder and Michael W. Macy (2014). “Digital Footprints: Opportunities and Challenges for Online Social Research”. In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 40.1, pp. 129–152. DOI: [10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043145](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043145)

Justin Grimmer (2015). “We Are All Social Scientists Now: How Big Data, Machine Learning, and Causal Inference Work Together”. In: *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48.1, pp. 80–83. DOI: [10.1017/S1049096514001784](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096514001784)

Andreas Jungherr and Yannis Theocharis (2017). “The Empiricist’s Challenge: Asking Meaningful Questions in Political Science in the Age of Big Data”. In: *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 14.2, pp. 97–109. DOI: [10.1080/19331681.2017.1312187](https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2017.1312187)

David M. J. Lazer et al. (2020). “Computational Social Science: Obstacles and Opportunities”. In: *Science* 369.6507, pp. 1060–1062. DOI: [10.1126/science.aaz8170](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaz8170). pmid: [32855329](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32855329/)

Helen Margetts (2017). “The Data Science of Politics”. In: *Political Studies Review* 15.2, pp. 201–209. DOI: [10.1177/1478929917693643](https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929917693643)

Burt L. Monroe, Jennifer Pan, Margaret E. Roberts, Maya Sen, and Betsy Sinclair (2015). “No! Formal Theory, Causal Inference, and Big Data Are Not Contradictory

Trends in Political Science”. In: *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48.1, pp. 71–74. DOI: [10.1017/S1049096514001760](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096514001760)

Jonathan Nagler and Joshua A. Tucker (2015). “Drawing Inferences and Testing Theories with Big Data”. In: *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48.1, pp. 84–88. DOI: [10.1017/S1049096514001796](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096514001796)

John W. Patty and Elizabeth Maggie Penn (2015). “Analyzing Big Data: Social Choice and Measurement”. In: *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48.1, pp. 95–101. DOI: [10.1017/S1049096514001814](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096514001814)

Markus Strohmaier and Claudia Wagner (2014). “Computational Social Science for the World Wide Web”. In: *IEEE Intelligent Systems* 29.5, pp. 84–88. DOI: [10.1109/MIS.2014.80](https://doi.org/10.1109/MIS.2014.80)

Yannis Theocharis and Andreas Jungherr (2021). “Computational Social Science and the Study of Political Communication”. In: *Political Communication* 38.1-2, pp. 1–22. DOI: [10.1080/10584609.2020.1833121](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1833121)

Hanna Wallach (2016). “Computational Social Science: Toward a Collaborative Future”. In: *Computational Social Science: Discovery and Prediction*. Ed. by R. Michael Alvarez. Analytical Methods for Social Research. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 307–316. DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781316257340.014](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316257340.014)

Hanna Wallach (2018). “Computational Social Science Computer Science + Social Data”. In: *Communications of the ACM* 61.3, pp. 42–44. DOI: [10.1145/3132698](https://doi.org/10.1145/3132698)

Resources for R

Brooke Anderson, Rachel Severson, and Nicholas Good (2020). “R Programming for Research”. Ebook. Ebook. URL: <https://geanders.github.io/RProgrammingForResearch/index.html>

Christopher Gandrud (2018). *Reproducible Research with R and RStudio*. Chapman and Hall/CRC

Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund (2016). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. O’Reilly Media, Inc.

Hadley Wickham (2019). *Advanced r*. chapman and hall/CRC

Yihui Xie (2017). *Dynamic Documents with R and Knitr*. Chapman and Hall/CRC

Yihui Xie, Joseph J Allaire, and Garrett Grolemund (2018). *R Markdown: The Definitive Guide*. CRC Press

Resources for web scraping

Simon Munzert, Christian Rubba, Peter Meißner, and Dominic Nyhuis (2014). *Automated Data Collection with R: A Practical Guide to Web Scraping and Text Mining*. John Wiley & Sons

Zachary C Steinert-Threlkeld (2018). *Twitter as Data*. Cambridge University Press

Scraping Ethics

Moreno Mancosu and Federico Vegetti (2020). “What You Can Scrape and What Is Right to Scrape: A Proposal for a Tool to Collect Public Facebook Data”. In: *Social Media + Society* 6.3, p. 2056305120940703. DOI: [10.1177/2056305120940703](https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120940703)

Axel Bruns (2019). “After the ‘APIcalypse’: Social Media Platforms and Their Fight against Critical Scholarly Research”. In: *Information, Communication & Society* 22.11, pp. 1544–1566. DOI: [10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637447](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637447)

Deen Freelon (2018). “Computational Research in the Post-API Age”. In: *Political Communication* 35.4, pp. 665–668. DOI: [10.1080/10584609.2018.1477506](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1477506)

Cornelius Puschmann (2019). “An End to the Wild West of Social Media Research: A Response to Axel Bruns”. In: *Information, Communication & Society* 22.11, pp. 1582–1589. DOI: [10.1080/1369118X.2019.1646300](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1646300)

Alexander Halavais (2019). “Overcoming Terms of Service: A Proposal for Ethical Distributed Research”. In: *Information, Communication & Society* 22.11, pp. 1567–1581. DOI: [10.1080/1369118X.2019.1627386](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1627386)

Gary King and Nathaniel Persily (2020). “A New Model for Industry–Academic Partnerships”. In: *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53.4, pp. 703–709. DOI: [10.1017/S1049096519001021](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519001021)

Fabrizio Gilardi, Lucien Baumgartner, et al. (2021). “Building Research Infrastructures to Study Digital Technology and Politics: Lessons from Switzerland”. In: *Political Science & Politics* forthcoming, p. 10

Applied articles

Below, you can find a list of articles using web-scraped data that we enjoyed reading because they tackle important questions in new ways, have good ways to measure phenomena, or they reflect on important aspects of applied social science research. This collection is neither complete nor in any way representative of research with web-scraped data. There is no need to read everything on this list — but feel free to skim through some of the articles that sound interesting if you want to see some use-cases.

David H. Chae et al. (2015). “Association between an Internet-Based Measure of Area Racism and Black Mortality”. In: *PLOS ONE* 10.4, e0122963. DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0122963](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0122963)

Volha Chykina and Charles Crabtree (2018). “Using Google Trends to Measure Issue Salience for Hard-to-Survey Populations”. In: *Socius* 4, p. 2378023118760414. DOI: [10.1177/2378023118760414](https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118760414)

Amit Datta, Michael Carl Tschantz, and Anupam Datta (2015). “Automated Experiments on Ad Privacy Settings”. In: *Proceedings on Privacy Enhancing*

Technologies 2015.1, pp. 92–112. DOI: [10.1515/popets-2015-0007](https://doi.org/10.1515/popets-2015-0007)

Sascha Göbel and Simon Munzert (2018). “Political Advertising on the Wikipedia Marketplace of Information”. In: *Social Science Computer Review* 36.2, pp. 157–175. DOI: [10.1177/0894439317703579](https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439317703579)

Sandra González-Bailón, Javier Borge-Holthoefer, Alejandro Rivero, and Yamir Moreno (2011). “The Dynamics of Protest Recruitment through an Online Network”. In: *Scientific Reports* 1.1 (1), p. 197. DOI: [10.1038/srep00197](https://doi.org/10.1038/srep00197)

Sandra González-Bailón and Ning Wang (2016). “Networked Discontent: The Anatomy of Protest Campaigns in Social Media”. In: *Social Networks* 44, pp. 95–104. DOI: [10.1016/j.socnet.2015.07.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2015.07.003)

Aniko Hannak et al. (2013). “Measuring Personalization of Web Search”. In: *Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on World Wide Web*. WWW ’13. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, pp. 527–538. DOI: [10.1145/2488388.2488435](https://doi.org/10.1145/2488388.2488435)

Anikó Hannák, Claudia Wagner, David Garcia, Alan Mislove, Markus Strohmaier, and Christo Wilson (2017). “Bias in Online Freelance Marketplaces: Evidence from TaskRabbit and Fiverr”. In: *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing*. CSCW ’17. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, pp. 1914–1933. DOI: [10.1145/2998181.2998327](https://doi.org/10.1145/2998181.2998327)

William R. Hobbs and Margaret E. Roberts (2018). “How Sudden Censorship Can Increase Access to Information”. In: *American Political Science Review* 112.3, pp. 621–636. DOI: [10.1017/S0003055418000084](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000084)

Gary King, Benjamin Schneer, and Ariel White (2017). “How the News Media Activate Public Expression and Influence National Agendas”. In: *Science* 358.6364, pp. 776–780. DOI: [10.1126/science.aao1100](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao1100). pmid: [29123065](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29123065/)

Huyen Le, Raven Maragh, Brian Ekdale, Andrew High, Timothy Havens, and Zubair Shafiq (2019). “Measuring Political Personalization of Google News Search”. In: *The World Wide Web Conference*. WWW ’19. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, pp. 2957–2963. DOI: [10.1145/3308558.3313682](https://doi.org/10.1145/3308558.3313682)

Jon Penney (2016). *Chilling Effects: Online Surveillance and Wikipedia Use*. SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 2769645. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. URL: <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2769645>

Franziska Pradel (2021). “Biased Representation of Politicians in Google and Wikipedia Search? The Joint Effect of Party Identity, Gender Identity and Elections”. In: *Political Communication* 38.4, pp. 447–478. DOI: [10.1080/10584609.2020.1793846](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1793846)

Seth Stephens-Davidowitz (2014). “The Cost of Racial Animus on a Black Candidate: Evidence Using Google Search Data”. In: *Journal of Public Economics* 118, pp. 26–40. DOI: [10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.04.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.04.010)

Alex Street, Thomas A. Murray, John Blitzler, and Rajan S. Patel (2015/ed). “Estimating Voter Registration Deadline Effects with Web Search Data”. In: *Political Analysis* 23.2, pp. 225–241. DOI: [10.1093/pan/mpv002](https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpv002)

Jasper Dag Tjaden, Carsten Schwemmer, and Menusch Khadjavi (2018). “Ride with Me—Ethnic Discrimination, Social Markets, and the Sharing Economy”. In: *European Sociological Review* 34.4, pp. 418–432. DOI: [10.1093/esr/jcy024](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcy024)

Applications with Social Media Data

Christopher A. Bail et al. (2018). “Exposure to Opposing Views on Social Media Can Increase Political Polarization”. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115.37, pp. 9216–9221

Pablo Barberá and Zachary C Steinert-Threlkeld (2020). “How to Use Social Media Data for Political Science Research”. In: *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*. London. Sage, pp. 404–423

Javier Beltran, Aina Gallego, Alba Huidobro, Enrique Romero, and Lluís Padró (2021). “Male and Female Politicians on Twitter: A Machine Learning Approach”. In: *European Journal of Political Research* 60.1, pp. 239–251. DOI: [10.1111/1475-6765.12392](https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12392)

Jean Burgess and Axel Bruns (2015). “Easy Data, Hard Data: The Politics and Pragmatics of Twitter Research after the Computational Turn”. In: *Compromised data: From social media to big data* 95

Fabrizio Gilardi, Theresa Gessler, Maël Kubli, and Stefan Müller (2021). “Social Media and Political Agenda Setting”. In: *Political Communication*, pp. 1–22

Andreas Jungherr, Harald Schoen, Oliver Posegga, and Pascal Jürgens (2017). “Digital Trace Data in the Study of Public Opinion: An Indicator of Attention Toward Politics Rather Than Political Support”. In: *Social Science Computer Review* 35.3, pp. 336–356. DOI: [10.1177/0894439316631043](https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439316631043)

Gary King, Benjamin Schneer, and Ariel White (2017). “How the News Media Activate Public Expression and Influence National Agendas”. In: *Science* 358.6364, pp. 776–780. DOI: [10.1126/science.aao1100](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao1100). pmid: [29123065](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29123065/)

Kevin Munger (2017). “Tweetment Effects on the Tweeted: Experimentally Reducing Racist Harassment”. In: *Political Behavior* 39.3, pp. 629–649. DOI: [10.1007/s11109-016-9373-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-016-9373-5)

Sarah Shugars and Nicholas Beauchamp (2019). “Why Keep Arguing? Predicting Engagement in Political Conversations Online”. In: *SAGE Open* 9.1, p. 2158244019828850. DOI: [10.1177/2158244019828850](https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019828850)

Sebastian Stier, Arnim Bleier, Haiko Lietz, and Markus Strohmaier (2018). “Election Campaigning on Social Media: Politicians, Audiences, and the Mediation of Political

Communication on Facebook and Twitter”. In: *Political Communication* 35.1, pp. 50–74. DOI: [10.1080/10584609.2017.1334728](https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1334728)

Appendix

Listing A.1: R code to install required packages.

```
required_packages <- c(
  "httr" = "1.3.0",
  "xml2" = "1.3.0",
  "rvest" = "1.0.0",
  "RSelenium" = "1.7.0",
  "rtweet" = "0.7.0",
  "jsonlite" = "1.7.0",
  "readr" = "1.4.0",
  "dplyr" = "1.0.0",
  "tidyr" = "1.1.0",
  "purrr" = "0.3.0",
  "stringr" = "1.4.0"
)

# loop over required packages
for (i in seq_along(required_packages)) {
  # get current package
  pkg <- required_packages[i]

  # get installed packages' versions
  pkgs <- installed.packages()[, "Version"]

  # check if required package already installed
  if (any(idx <- names(pkg) == names(pkgs))) {
    # if so, upgrade if necessary
    if (pkg > pkgs[idx])
      install.packages(names(pkg), quiet = TRUE)
  } else {
    # otherwise, install
    install.packages(names(pkg), quiet = TRUE)
  }
}
```

Listing A.2: R code to install and use the learn2scrape package.

```
# install
remotes::install_github("haukelicht/learn2scrape", ref = "gesis2021")

# load the package
library(learn2scrape)

# list available tutorials
```

```
available_tutorials("learn2scrape")  
  
# run a tutorial (will open in your Browser/Viewer)  
run_tutorial("001-tutorial-how-to", package = "learn2scrape")
```