

Project Title: [REDACTED]: A Look at Censorship in America

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Abstract: We are interested in exploring and understanding censorship in modern America. We argue that the digital age has added a multifaceted complexity to censorship such that one must consider traditional types of censorship (e.g., book bans) alongside forms that have taken shape in the 21st century (e.g., funding for academic research; availability of information from public sources). Through data visualization we explore how these issues look in modern America, showing trends and patterns in book bans, limits imposed on academic research based on content and subject matter, and how the network of government websites has shifted with the Trump administration.

#### Types of Visualizations:

1. Network Analysis/Graph, showing change in links over time through the Trump presidency. Interactive w/ time slider.
2. Interactive bar chart or line chart showing the nature of the changes to environmental federal websites—e.g., climate, governance, equity, etc. Should dovetail with the network analysis.
3. Stacked, interactive bar chart showing types of words that have been scrutinized in government websites and research topics/funding, grouped by category and frequency
4. An audio representation using the first data source showing how quickly we would reach silence if the current rate of removal of information/books were to continue
5. Global bubble map showing how the US stacks up vs other countries concerning information removal
6. Dendrogram to demonstrate the differences and similarities between banned books in each of the states.

#### Description of Visualizations:

1. The Network Visualization will help visualize the networks formed by each of the chosen federal government agency websites. The hypothesis is that climate-related agencies will show a decrease in the number of links and a more sparse network structure in general. An interactive slider will show changes in the network over time and allow users to explore at their own pace.
2. The network visualization will be complemented by the chart showing what types of changes are occurring—what types of information is being removed or added, etc.
3. This visualization will help us compare what types of research are being defunded at the highest rates and perhaps also biggest loss in US dollars. Given current media trends, we expect to see research for LGBTQ+ equity and certain gender-based research specifically targeted.
4. Not quite a visualization - but this audio representation will highlight the severity of the current censorship issue, showing how rapidly information can be lost.
5. The bubble map visualization will allow users to interact with different locales and see what types of, how much, and when information is being requested for removal by

various countries, allowing people to understand where the US falls in comparison to other government structures.

6. Still workshopping the idea, but the dendrogram—or whatever visualization may be appropriate—aims to highlight the characteristics pertinent to each book that make them more likely to be the target of censorship.

#### Links to Data Sources:

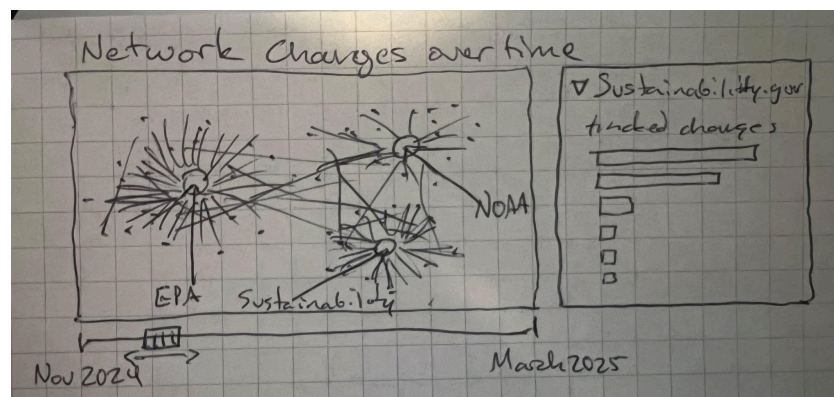
1. [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eqZA-LDMRyoRLSRh\\_S\\_4MQuX6YXhDeOLgKMEzMLP-2Y/edit?gid=1720528264#gid=1720528264](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eqZA-LDMRyoRLSRh_S_4MQuX6YXhDeOLgKMEzMLP-2Y/edit?gid=1720528264#gid=1720528264) – this is a dataset that contains links to government websites and changes to these links. They are climate-related, which is relevant given the position of the current administration. The Wayback machine API will be used to create a network dataset for use in the network graph.
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/03/07/us/trump-federal-agencies-websites-words-dei.html> - this link contains a list of words that have been expunged from research papers and online government websites
3. <https://transparencyreport.google.com/government-removals/overview> - dataset showing how often governments request information to be removed from the internet
4. <https://pen.org/report/beyond-the-shelves/> - dataset highlighting instances of book bans in the united states.

#### Significant Hurdles:

1. The Website Links data source is specific to the Trump presidency and does not provide an excellent benchmark with other administrations, which does limit the takeaways that are available. It may be possible to get data for other time periods, but it would have to be self-collected.
2. To detect how much funding is being lost for particular types of research is difficult to pinpoint in one dataset; rather, we may have to focus on general trends and examples aggregated from different reports.

#### Sketches:

1. Network visualization and associated bar chart:



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