Final Project Report

Introduction

Our project centers on the Campaign Finance Expenditures dataset, which offers detailed insights into the financial transactions within political campaigns. The dataset includes records on donation sources, amounts contributed, and specifics on expenditures, such as where and when funds are spent. This comprehensive data helps understand the financial operations that drive political campaigns, making it a relevant resource for analyzing campaign strategies and financial management practices.

The dataset was curated from publicly available campaign finance records, ensuring that it is both accurate and comprehensive. It provides a robust foundation for exploring financial patterns and behaviors. This project not only allows us to gain practical experience in managing and analyzing financial data but also equips us with skills transferable across various industries like finance, non-profits, and corporate budgeting.

Target Audience

This dataset is essential for various audiences, including private organizations, government bodies, activists, media, and the general public.

Private organizations, especially in a capitalist society, manage finances constantly. For instance, educational institutions handle money from student payments, donations, and more, while spending on salaries and maintenance.

Government and regulatory bodies need this data to monitor compliance with campaign finance laws and detect violations, ensuring transparency in political financing.

Political activists can use the data to advocate for transparency and fairness in campaign finance, identifying spending patterns and promoting policy changes.

Journalists rely on this information to investigate campaign finance activities, helping to uncover fund allocations, major donors, and any irregularities.

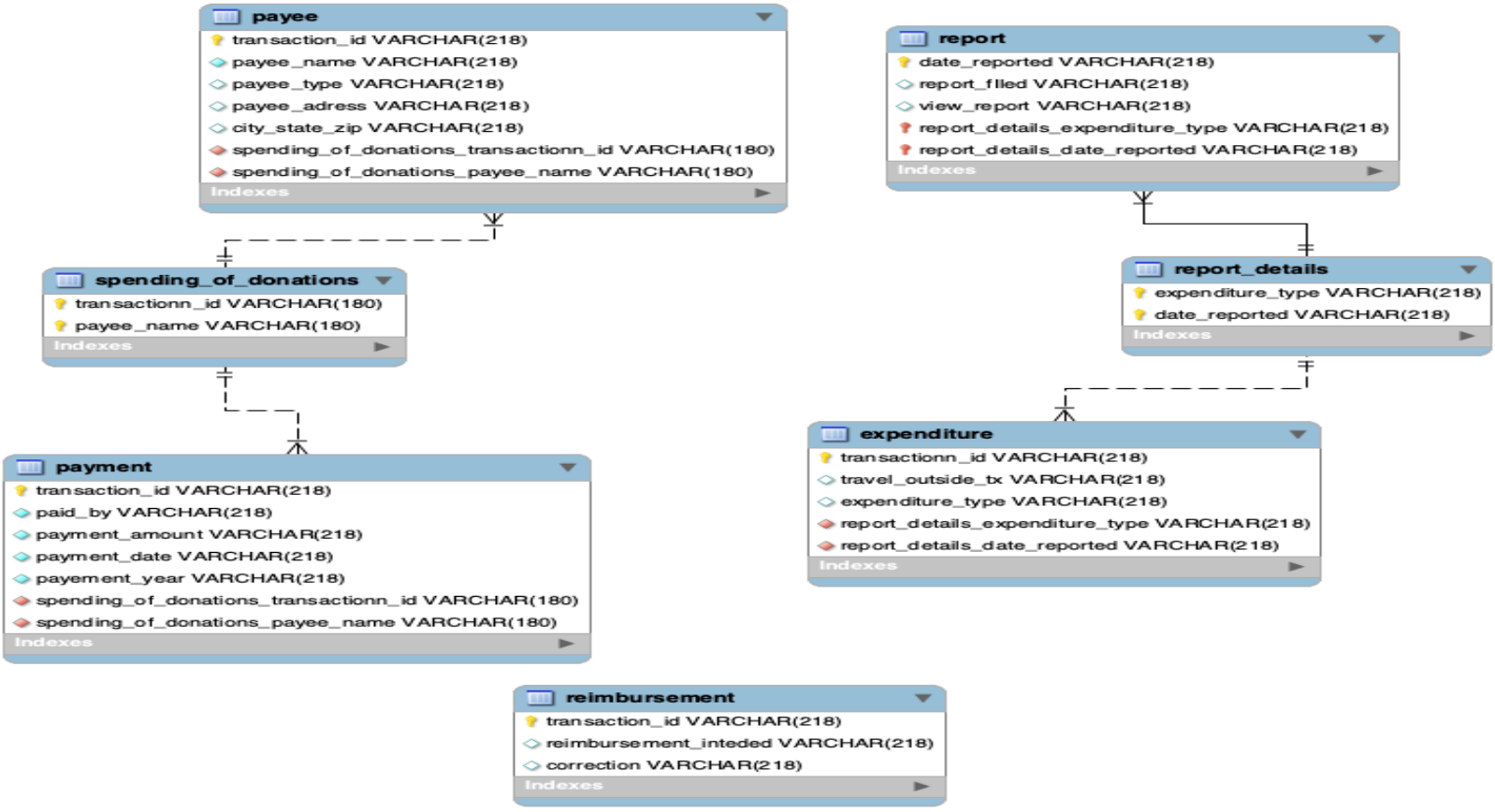
Lastly, the general public benefits from this data by gaining insights into how candidates and political committees spend their money, empowering voters to make informed decisions and hold candidates accountable.

Database Description

Our proposed database is designed to manage financial transactions, expenditures, reports, reimbursements, and the spending of donations for an organization. This comprehensive system aims to streamline financial operations, ensuring data integrity, reducing redundancy, and facilitating efficient data retrieval. The database will support various stakeholders, including finance managers, auditors, and administrative personnel, by providing a robust structure for recording and reporting financial activities.

Logical Design Description

Entity-Relationship Diagram (ERD)



Description

1. Payee
    a. Payee_Name (PK)
    b. Payee_Type
    c. Payee_Address
    d. City_State_Zip

Relations: The payee table has a one-to-one relationship with spending_of_donation.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table which stores information about the entities receiving payee.

2. Payment
    a. TRANSACTION_ID (PK)
    b. Payment_Amount
    c. Payment_Date
    d. Payment_Year
    e. Paid_By

Relations: The Payment table has a one-to-many relationship with spending_of_donation, payeement_expenditure, and reimbursement_details.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table which records details of financial transactions made to payees.

3. Expenditure
    a. Expenditure_ Type(PK)
    b. Travel_Outside _Texas

Relations: The Expenditure table has a one-to-many relationship with report_details and payement_expenditure.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table that captures various types of expenditures incurred by the organization.

4. Report

a. Date_Reported(PK)

b. Report_Filed

c. View_Report

Relations: The report table has a one-to-one relationship with report_details.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table that tracks reports filed regarding financial activities and expenditures.

5. Reimbursement

    a. Transaction_ID(PK)

    b. Reimbursement_Intended

    c. Correction

Relations: The reimbursement table has a one-to-one relationship with reimbursement_details.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table that manages information about reimbursements intended for specific purposes

6. Spending_Donations

    a. Payee_Name (PK)(FK)

    b. transaction_ID(PK)(FK)

    c. Payee_Name (PK)

    d. Payee_Type

    e. Payee_Address

    f. City_State_Zip

g. Payment_Amount

h. Payment_Date

i. Payment_Year

j. Paid_By

Relations: The reimbursement table has a one-to-many relationship with the payee and payment.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table which shares the spending of donations information.

7. Reports_Details

a. Expenditure_Type(PK)(FK)

b. date_reported(PK)(FK)

c. Expenditure_Description

d. Travel_Outside _Texas

e. Report_Filed

f. View_Report

Relations: The Reports_Details table has a one-to-many relationship with expenditure and report.

Purpose: It would be useful to have a table that shares the details of a report.

View

Based on the assignment requirement we created a total of six views where each view answers one question.

1. Highest_Paid View
    - This view answers the question of which donors are the highest paying of them all.
2. Yearly_expenditures View
    - This view answers the question of the total expenditure made each year
3. Expenditures_by_type
    - This view answers the question of what is the highest-paying expenditure.
4. Top_cities_expenditures View
    - This view answers the question of what city is the highest-paying
5. obligations_total
    - This view answers the question of the total political obligations
6. payee_type view
    - This view answers the question of how many donations the campaign receives which is individual or an entity/organization.

Changes Since the Project Proposal

Since the initial project proposal, the project has undergone several significant changes. These include reducing the number of research questions we initially planned to address, updating table names for clarity, removing certain data (due to discovering that it never actually existed),

adjusting data types, and introducing a new primary key. These changes were made to ensure the project's focus and accuracy as we moved closer to completion.

Database Ethical Consideration

When our team Santiago assessed the envisioned database, it was crucial to identify any potential privacy, copyright, fair use, or other ethical or legal concerns.

For privacy, we must consider if any data elements might lead to compromised privacy in case of a flawed user access policy or a potential database breach. Sensitive information such as card numbers or addresses is only collected on a secure payment screen and is not displayed publicly. Both payers and payees are required to list their names for transaction purposes, but payees can choose an address they are comfortable making visible for physical payments. This minimizes the risk of exposing sensitive information.

From a copyright and fair use perspective, the data we collect poses no risks since all information is provided voluntarily by the users. Our data collection policy ensures that we have clear consent from users, mitigating legal risks. Additionally, we do not involve acquiring data from proprietary or closed sources, so there is no legal liability in this aspect. Our commitment to keeping all personal and sensitive data confidential, and transparently informing users about which information will be made public, further strengthens our ethical and legal standing.