

Revitalizing Solar Insights: A Dashboard for West Tennessee Solar Farm

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ABSTRACT

UPDATED—September 18, 2023. This project will focus on creating an interactive dashboard for displaying solar irradiance data collected at a photovoltaic power station. Given a recent push by the University of Tennessee Research Foundation toward revitalizing its use, the West Tennessee Solar Farm will serve as a template. This location is of particular interest due to its proximity to Blue Oval City (the site of the new Ford manufacturing plant, near Stanton, TN). With the farm’s existing dashboard being non-functional, there is a demand for a solution, which we will achieve through MySQL, Python, Google Drive API, R-Shiny, Shinyapps.io, and Google Cloud Console. MySQL serves as our data hub, efficiently organizing solar energy data by sensor location. Python, coupled with the Google Drive API, simulates real-time data collection. The core of the project is an R-Shiny dashboard offering real-time data visualization, interactive maps, detailed sensor information, and access to historical data and analysis. Users can select their desired time frames, making it user-friendly. Shinyapps.io hosts the dashboard, ensuring broad accessibility. To further fortify data security and enhance user convenience, Google Cloud Console safeguards our API information. Our dashboard incorporates an export function, enabling users to extract data. We aspire to craft an easy-to-use webpage that is accessible across various major operating systems. This approach ensures that our project is widely available and caters to a diverse audience; thus, making valuable solar irradiance data easily accessible to all. This project aims to provide researchers, policymakers, and the public with real-time insights into solar irradiance data at the West Tennessee Solar Farm, supporting sustainable energy solutions. We are committed to innovation, data accessibility, and practical technology application to address real-world challenges.

Author Keywords

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the pursuit of sustainable energy solutions, our project ventures to unlock the vast potential of solar irradiance data. Our focus is on the West Tennessee Solar Farm, situated near Stanton, TN, its strategic proximity to Blue Oval City adding notable importance. The critical challenge we address is the current, non-functional existing dashboard for the solar farm, which has left vital solar irradiance data inaccessible for potential users. The West Tennessee Solar Farm offers the potential for abundant clean energy, but its potential remains unrealized due to the limitations of the existing dashboard. In this endeavor, we aspire to bridge this data accessibility gap and pave the way for the realization of the farm’s renewable energy potential.

In response to this urgent need, our project emerges as a symbol of innovation and accessibility, seamlessly integrating an

array of cutting-edge technologies. With MySQL as our data hub, we thoroughly organize solar energy data by sensor location. Python, in collaboration with the Google Drive API, takes on the role of capturing and decoding real-time data with unwavering precision. Yet, the significance of our initiative is the R-Shiny dashboard—a dynamic interface that transcends the conventional realms of data visualization. It not only brings solar irradiance data to life in real-time but also empowers users with interactive maps, intricate sensor insights, and a comprehensive historical archive.

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