

IS 620  
Final Project Proposal  
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For the final project, I would like to revisit the 2016 Presidential Election data I began to explore in projects 1 and 2. In these assignments, I examined the structure of the networks formed between candidates based on their shared relationships with contributors. By projecting a bipartite graph onto the candidate nodes, we were able to identify bipartisan links between candidates as well as a core of “establishment” keys and a few “fringe” candidates with few (or zero) links to other candidates in the network.

My objective for the final project is to perform a similar analysis using “linkage” data between candidates and committees. I will be accessing recent data posted on the Federal Elections Commission website:

<http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/ftpdet.shtml>

Committees are broadly defined and, “includes federal political action committees and party committees, campaign committees for presidential, house and senate candidates, as well as groups or organizations who are spending money for or against candidates for federal office.” The FEC website conveniently has separate datasets (as txt files) for each node (committee and candidate) as well as a dataset for the edges (“linkages”). Reading these files will include some text processing. The edge dataset, for instance, has each record in the following format:

H0AL06088|2010|2016|C00464222|HIP|201865

This text includes 7 fields of information delimited by “|”. The first is a 9-character unique candidate ID, followed by the candidate’s election year, the current election year, the unique committee ID, a single character for the committee type ([codes here](#)), the committee designation, and the unique edge ID.

More details here:

<http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/metadata/DataDictionaryCandCmteLinkage.shtml>

The candidates and committees can be identified by their proper names by linking the edge files to the node files by IDs. In conducting this network analysis, I hope to examine which committees are the biggest supporters of individual candidates, and also which candidates are connected by the same committees.