Investigating Corporate Lobbying & U.S. Government Spending

Team H, Session 2

Artem Dovzhenko | Jaisal Friedman | Ashley Tsoi | Komiljon Turdaliev

Goal:

To analyze the cash flow from corporate lobbyists to government representatives from different regions, with a focus on its related government spending.

Data:

1. U.S. Senate - Lobbying Records - Summaries
2. U.S. Senate Lobbying Disclosures Records
3. U.S. Government Spending - Contracts
4. Data on the Lobbyists' industry (possibly Fortune 500 data, other if not all firms covered)
5. NewsAPI

Approach:

1. Extract useful lobbying data from multiple sources for specific time period & locations into a CSV format
2. Extract the top company names from the Government spending data
3. Cross-reference the lobbying companies, amount contributed, and the top names from Government spending
4. Investigate causal links between contracts & lobbying companies: perhaps map these geographically.
5. Establish API / update CSV file system through cron & Google Cloud for automatic updating of data presentation
6. Develop map-based interaction with Data Set to explore links between lobbying companies & govt. Spending in the US.
7. Launch website & expose the lobbyists...get featured in the NYT.

Presentation ideas:

- Interactive Maps, which would reflect the industries' involvement in politics in the US either on state-by-state basis (requires state-specific data) or just for the Senate; and possibly link the actual laws passed and contracts issued to lobbying.
- 2 Bar charts -- 1 that ranks the highest lobbyist spending to the lowest by company, and another that ranks the highest amount received to the lowest by government representative.