New England Blacks in Philanthropy

Financial Support Given to Black Non-Profits

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Data Collection

990 Forms

Plan A: Guidestar API (started ~10/5)

We made accounts with Guidestar through BU to obtain a Premium account; however, we weren't automatically given API keys so we each filled out a form to be put into contact with someone that could help us. Only one of us was put into contact with a developer on October 21st, who was only able to provide us with an API key that would allow us to make 500 API calls whether they were successful or not. We were also told that we could only obtain information on financials using EIN numbers which we had to collect manually.
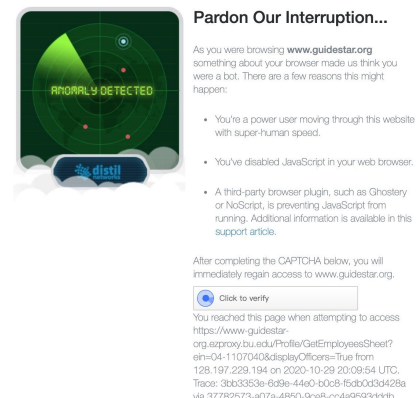
Plan B: BU Libraries Downloads

BU Libraries had instructions with access to one of their Premium accounts that would help us download data, but when we tried following their instructions their account said that they had no more downloads left available so we couldn't obtain anything through that process.

Plan C: Web-scraping

Web-scraping the Guidestar website for information wasn't possible since we got an error checking to see if we were bots when we were just initially trying to figure out the information available on Guidestar.

*After a talk with Professor Galletti we're going to revisit this plan to test ways to work around CAPTCHA

Pardon Our Interruption...

As you were browsing **www.guidestar.org** something about your browser made us think you were a bot. There are a few reasons this might happen:

- You're a power user moving through this website with super-human speed.
- You've disabled JavaScript in your web browser.
- A third-party browser plugin, such as Ghostery or NoScript, is preventing JavaScript from running. Additional information is available in this support article.

After completing the CAPTCHA below, you will immediately regain access to www.guidestar.org.

Click to verify

You reached this page when attempting to access https://www-guidestar-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/Profile/GetEmployeesSheet?ein=04-1107040&displayOfficers=True from 128.197.229.194 on 2020-10-29 20:09:54 UTC. Trace: 3bb3353e-6d9e-44e0-b0c8-f5db0d3d428a via 37782573-a07a-4850-9ce8-cc4a9593dddb

Plan D: Manually Collect Data

Since none of the above plans worked, we just tried manually collecting data from Guidestar. We collected a sample of 500 organizations since the API key mentioned above would have been able to give us 500 results max, assuming every call was successful. The data we collected manually from the website was the following:

- Organization Name
- 990 Form Year

- EIN Number
- Board of Directors Names
- Board of Directors Positions
- Board of Directors Compensations

After we figured out how to successfully obtain information using the API key, we tried running a bulk of the EIN numbers; however, there was an error since they thought we were bots, so the majority of them didn't go through, even though they were still counted towards the 500 call limit. Because of this, we were not able to get all of the financial information using the API. When we tried contacting the developer for another key in hopes of getting access to more calls, we unfortunately got an email back saying that he was on vacation until next week.

Obtain Photos for Board of Directors (Purpose: Demographics)
Plan A: LinkedIn API
Once we got the names from the 990 forms, we were told to obtain profile pictures or general information using the LinkedIn APIs. After discussion with our Spark PM early on, we were told that obtaining keys and interacting with the API would take too long so this plan was quickly weeded out.

Plan B: RocketReach API*
RocketReach would allow us to obtain profile pictures when given the inputs for names and current employer; however, paid subscriptions would be needed to obtain this information (Pro: 4,500 lookups for $99 or Ultimate: 12,000 lookups for $249), and based on the fact that we have around 4,000 names for just 500 organizations, an Ultimate subscription would have to work best.

*Our Spark PM mentioned that he would talk to Spark to see if we can get funding for one of the subscriptions.

Project Description Revisited
As stated in our proposal, our clients said that this project would most likely go beyond this semester and that we were first and foremost tasked with obtaining the necessary information from Guidestar and then getting photos using either the LinkedIn API or the RocketReach API. While the project has questions to answer in the end, we are unable to answer any of them now simply based on the fact that we don't know which organizations have mission statements connected to helping Black communities or are run by Black individuals. Because of this, even though we will have financial data by the end of the semester, we probably will not be equipped to do any analysis since it would be on all of these 500 organizations as a whole, not showing any true comparisons for what our clients are looking for. Furthermore, while the proposal and information they provided us with for this project includes sections for answering questions and

analysis, going back to our first point, we were told that we may only make it halfway through Step 3 in the six step process*.

*Summarization of the Six Step Process:
- Step 1: Collect data from Guidestar for ALL nonprofits and foundations in Massachusetts
- Step 2: Compile a list of the leaders and board members from each nonprofit
- Step 3: Identify race/ethnicity of the leaders and board members from each nonprofit
- Step 4: Classify organizations based on type of leadership
- Step 5: Conduct analysis based on strategic questions
- Step 6: Create visualizations and charts based on input from client

We understand that part of the first deliverable is to answer one of the questions; however, we were unfortunately not able to find a question we would be able to answer based on the data we have collected.

Next Steps

As mentioned above, we're going to research more into web-scraping techniques to get more data from Guidestar. Additionally, we are in contact with developers that Guidestar so we will potentially also have 3-4 API trial keys (500 calls each). We will also ask our clients during our bi-weekly meeting on Wednesday if they have a list of organizations that have mission statements connected to helping Black communities or are run by Black individuals. Once we can locate those organizations, we will hopefully be able to do more analysis regarding their financials since everything regarding demographics is mainly data collection for now.