Data Journalism Final Project Pitches

Kaitlyn Mitchell

Pitch #1:

I’m very interested in the rates of number of pedestrian deaths by car versus cyclist in New York City, inspired by recent news events, like the death of Jil Tarlov (<http://nypost.com/2014/09/22/new-yorks-cycles-of-death-our-arrogant-biker-nightmare/>). The street art to commemorate pedestrian deaths, one of which is in my Queens neighborhood, also inspired me to look into the issue (<http://gothamist.com/2014/08/05/nyc_vision_zero_art.php#photo-1>). Potential human sources would be contacts that I look up through the families of pedestrians who were killed and memorialized through this street art statement.

The NYC DOT has bicycle crash data statistics for as recently as the year 2013, separated by borough. The NYPD has data on pedestrian injuries and deaths by motor vehicle in the year 2013. The data sets do not line up nicely – they would definitely need some cleaning before being presented alongside each other in any fashion.

Another aspect of pedestrian cycling and motor vehicle collisions is the law surrounding the fault of the driver or cyclist, as well as the health care provided (and for how long after the accident) to the injured party. For instance, by Michigan Auto Law, motor vehicle collision pedestrian victims are only allowed 3 years of income replacement to recover from the accident. While this aspect is interesting, adding it to my project could potentially be more work than I have time to devote to in this final semester of grad school.

To complete the project, I would have to become far more proficient at EXCEL VLOOKUP, Pivot Tables, and merging data in order to compare two very different and incompatible data sets.

I’d pitch the completed piece to DNAinfo New York, who I’ve freelanced for before. They cover all neighborhoods of NYC on a hyper-local level. I think they would be very interested in my findings. This project would have a news article layout in its final format.

Pitch #2:

I’d like to research sexually transmitted infection rates in NYC contrasted with the NYC condom campaign’s distribution areas. Locations are searchable by zip code on the NYC.gov website: <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/DispensingSiteLocator/mainView.do>.

They also have a list of all locations here: <http://www.findnyccondoms.com/#?p=list>. The New York State Department of Health provides data and statistics for STI rates, separated by infection type.

I’d like to compare the differences between STI rates since the wrapper redesign in 2010 and the beginning of the social media campaign through Facebook in 2008. A report on “soaring” STD rates in NYC was done by CBS in 2010, and I wonder if that’s still the case (<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2012/12/10/study-shows-soaring-std-rates-in-many-areas-of-new-york-city/>).

Human sources could include employees of condom distribution locations, city officials working on the NYC Condom program, as well as consumers of the free condoms, especially sex industry workers (though of course these sources are more likely to request anonymity). The No Condoms as Evidence bill passed the New York State Assembly on June 21st, 2014. This ended the hypocritical practice of the city distributing free condoms, all the while allowing NYPD officers to use condoms of evidence for participation in prostitution during stop-and-frisk-searches of suspects (<http://www.nocondomsasevidence.org/>).

Similarly to my first project pitch, I would have to become far more proficient at EXCEL VLOOKUP, Pivot Tables, and merging data in order to compare two very different and incompatible data sets.

A publication like Time Out New York would be interested in publishing findings from this data set - they have an annual sex issue, after all. I’ve also freelanced for TONY in the past. This project would be compatible with a blog-post layout for its final format, similar to the OKCupid example listed on the syllabus.

Pitch #3:

I’d like to research deaths and injuries that involve drinking in New York City, which relies so heavily on public transport, versus a metropolis where people are much more likely to own a car and drive to the bar.

This story on worst states for drunk driving posted on Forbes in 2008 was interesting, but could’ve benefitted greatly from the use of a map or some kind of visual indicator to complement the text (<http://www.forbes.com/2008/11/20/driving-drunk-highway-forbeslife-cx_sw_1120drunk.html>).

I’ve found statewide statistics, but would have to do some digging to find city-specific rates of drunk driving deaths or accidents: <http://responsibility.org/state-facts/new-york>. Ideally, I’d compare major metropolises, like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Denver, Miami, Boston, St. Louis, Portland, and Seattle.

Another effect of non-driving related accidents is the number of people that die from falling off roofs while intoxicated in NYC, like this incident reported by Gothamist last summer: <http://gothamist.com/2014/08/26/23-year-old_who_fell_off_greenwich.php>. My own roommate fell from a fire escape while intoxicated in August, which is why I have a personal interest in investigating the drunken accidents that don’t involve motor vehicles in NYC.

Again for this project pitch, skills that would be required for me to improve upon in order to complete this project include EXCEL VLOOKUP, Pivot Tables, and merging data in order to compare two very different and incompatible data sets.

This project could be potentially pitched to a local publication like DNAinfo New York, but the findings of this data analysis would also be at home in the New York Times or Wall Street Journal, if I am able to execute it sufficiently.