

Hillary Clinton Emails

Leland Bybee, Roger Fan, Ryan Vaughn

April 13, 2016

Data

- From 2008 to 2013, Hillary Clinton and some of her staff used a private email server for much of their communication
- In response to FOIA requests, the State Department has released pdfs of roughly 30,000 of these emails, with roughly 8,000 sent by Clinton
- We mostly want to condense and explore the data
 - Break down a huge interpretation problem to a human-sized one
 - Find specific and relatable observations, not just statistical ones

Data

- We have a dataset of all these released emails, including sender and receiver information¹
- Bag-of-words model
 - Stemming: combining words with the same “root”
 - Remove extremely rare words and extremely common (stop) words
- After cleaning, roughly 28,000 emails and a total vocabulary of over 3,000 words

¹Thanks to Ben Hamner and the WSJ for making their code and data available, respectively.

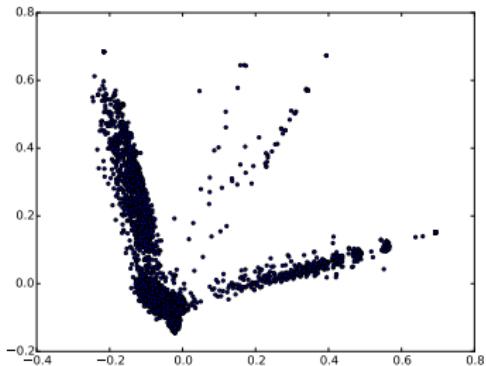
Visualization

- In order to visualize these emails, we first need a measure of distance
- Cosine similarity:

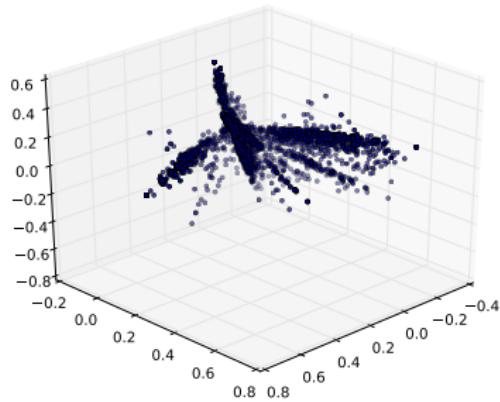
$$\cos(\phi) = \frac{\langle V, W \rangle}{\|V\|\|W\|}$$

- We can then use classical multi-dimensional scaling to visualize this data in lower dimensions

Visualization



(a) 2D



(b) 3D

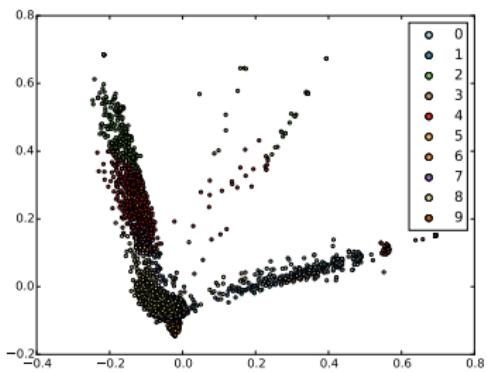
Spectral Clustering

- Cluster points using their pairwise similarity
- Computer the first K eigenvectors of the normalized Laplacian

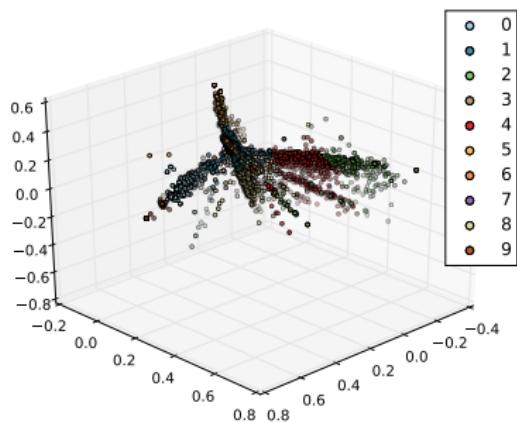
$$L = I - D^{-1/2} S D^{-1/2}$$

- Perform k -means clustering on the resulting eigenvectors

Spectral Clustering

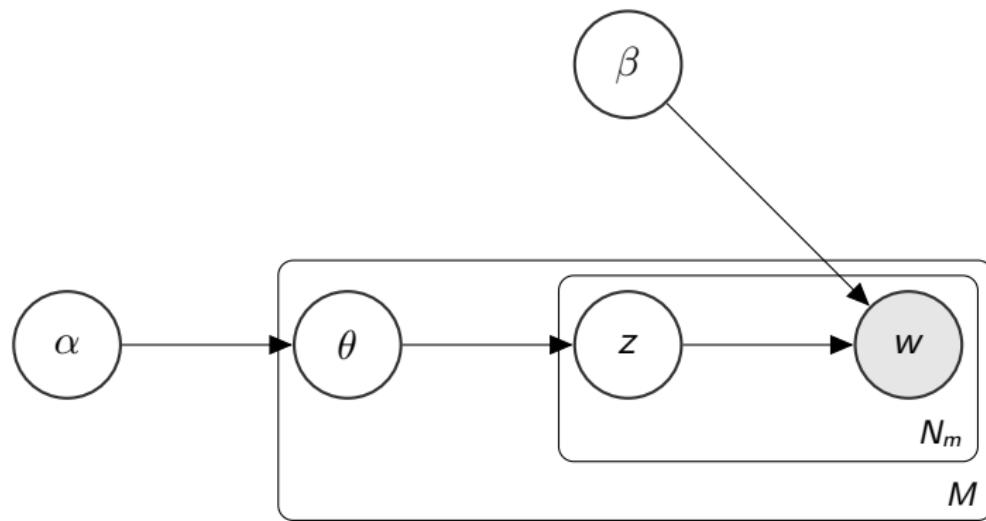


(c) 2D



(d) 3D

Latent Dirichlet Allocation



Latent Dirichlet Allocation: Some Details

- We use $K = 30$ topics for our resulting model.
- What we ultimately care about are θ and β .
- θ corresponds to how likely a topic is to appear in a document.
- β corresponds to how likely each word is to be associated with each topic.

Latent Dirichlet Allocation: Some Details

- Some questions we want to answer with LDA
 - Can we see sensible topics in the LDA output?
 - What are the most common topics of the emails?
 - Who is associated most with each issue?
 - Do the topics proportions for each email line up with real world events?
 - Can we predict the source of a given email?

Exploring Topics

Common	UK	Press	Israel	XXXXXX	Meetings (General)	US Politics (Elections)	XXXXXX	Hillary and Staff	US Politics (Governing)	Syrian Civil War/ Conflict With Russia	Obama Administration	International Economic Policy	Middle East (Afghanistan Pakistan) Military	
Military/War				XXXXXX										
Middle East				XXXXXX										
Africa/Middle East	minist	see	israel	think	meet	democrat	make	secretari	iran	presid	china	afghanistan		
Isreal/Palestine	last	report	isra	like	reuters	republican	well	depart	syria	obama	econom	pakistan		
Foreign Affrs (General)	said	haiti	peac	good	follow	american	take	office	nuclear	said	chines	militari		
Terrorism	parti	news	palestinian	say	update	polit	way	room	syrian	hous	year	afghan		
UK/EU	david	great	netanyahu	dont	list	parti	point	state	turkey	white	job	general		
Russia	prime	read	east	look	happi	elect	hope	arriv	russia	administr	million	karzai		
Asia	deal	media	negoti	gor	monday	obama	time	rout	hous	polici	country	offici		
North/South America	leader	event	arab	tell	schedule	percent	move	privat	john	iranian	aid	bank	war	
United States	govern	post	state	thing	set	candid	possibl	offic	committe	intern	advis	polici	forc	
Sec of State Affairs	ireland	connect	middl	idea	mtg	poll	one	departmen	republican	opposit	former	economi	nato	
Obama Admin	brown	plec	jewish	anyth	friday	new	that	meet	said	arm	chief	state	diplomat	
Economy	two	articl	settlement	much	tom	campaign	end	white	sen	arab	first	fund	american	
Diplomacy	gordon	interview	land	love	followup	public	help	confer	reform	forc	washington	problem	taliban	
Women's Issues	cameron	stori	jerusalem	didnt	weekend	voter	might	residence	kerr	weapon	clinton	financi	troop	
Press	northern	africa	gaza	cant	add	group	know	meeting	boehner	assad	approv	market	strategi	
Politics/Politicians	per	help	process	realli	thursday	support	happen	daili	hold	militari	offici	billion	defens	
Government	support	januari	bibi	still	tuesday	vote	alreadi	time	legisl	support	havent	also	oper	
Meetings/Scheduling	labour	suggest	west	hes	wrote	presid	made	staff	congress	unit	nation	trade	petraeus	
(National) Security	polit	june	minist	your	return	nation	better	house	amend	resolut	enough	money	command	
Intelligence	vote	page	parti	someth	afternoon	conserv	even	outer	democrat	war	senior	govern	civilian	
Aid/Cooperation	time	hit	envoy	lot	lunch	like	matter	hous	member	leagu	biden	cut	pakistani	
Domestic Issues	tori	gave	bank	day	wednesday	run	clear	photo	reid	council	barack	growth	iraq	
Islam	hagu	cover	american	ive	bob	major	case	floor	leader	sanction	favor	deal	gate	
justic	cnn	prime	friend	saturday	among	long	mini	hill	russian	staff	need	secur		
day	offer	unit	heard	wed	win	believe	airport	mccain	zone	jone	aid	kabul		
first	ope	abba	what	cell	year	sinc	press	debat	lebanon	campaign	mean	said		
british	highlight	secur	big	fine	tea	rais	senior	floor	govern	state	unit	mission		
say	article	quartet	feel	item	romney	need	presidenti	nomin	intervent	team	energi	armi		

Primary Topic Frequency

Meetings	9,10,24,28,30
Middle East	6,18,19,27,29
Staff	16,20
Domestic Politics	11,17,25
Terrorism	5,22
Foreign Policy	2,7,13,21,23,26
Press	4
Women's Issues	12

21
28
30
9
10
4
24
29
18
20
16
12
13
17
19
27
23
6
22
2
25
26
7
11
5

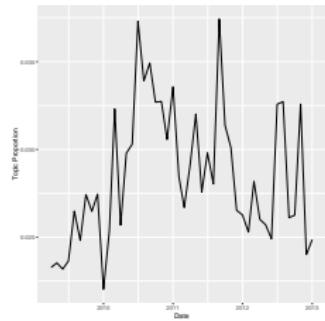
Some “Not” Interesting Topics

Common 1	Common 2	Common 3	Logistics	Meeting	Communication
know	think	will	secretari	meet	call
just	like	work	depart	reuters	huma
want	good	week	office	follow	abedin
let	say	need	room	update	schedul
ask	dont	next	state	list	sheet
come	look	also	arriv	happi	request
tri	got	plan	rout	monday	speak
sure	tell	start	privat	schedule	readout
thx	thing	issu	office	set	calls

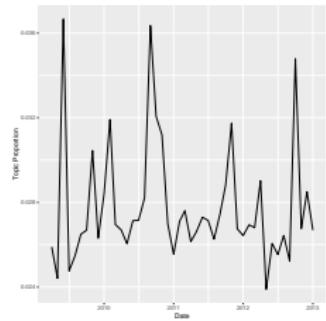
Some Interesting Topics

Israel	Elections	Libya	Afghanistan	Int. Dev.	Obama
israel	democrat	libya	afghanistan	develop	presid
isra	republican	secur	pakistan	state	obama
peace	american	travel	afghan	support	said
palestinian	polit	libyan	militari	global	hous
netanyahu	parti	iraq	general	program	white
east	elect	embassi	karzai	effort	administr
negoti	obama	attack	offici	intern	polici
arab	percent	kill	war	work	aid
state	candid	march	forc	includ	advis

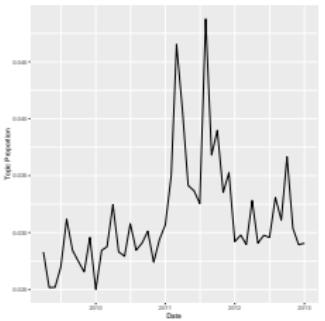
Topic Importance Over Time



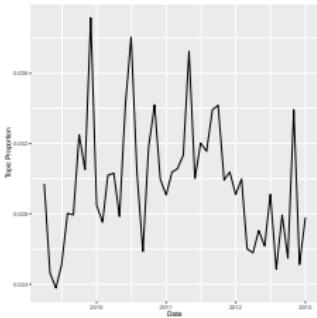
(e) Israel



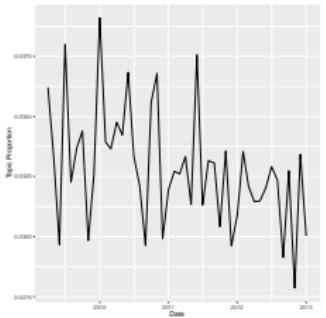
(f) Elections



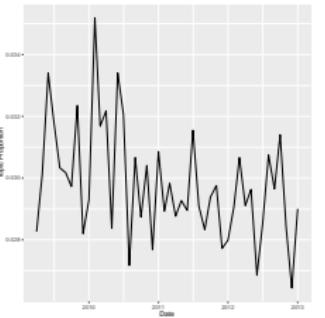
(g) Libya



(h) Afghanistan



(i) Int. Dev.



(j) Obama

Who Says What?

Israel	Elections	Libya	Afghanistan	Int. Dev.	Obama
Sidney Blumenthal (SB)	SB	Huma Abedin (HA)	Judith McHale (JM)	JM	SB
HA	Philippe Reines (PR)	Wendy Sherman (WS)	HA	Melanee Verveer (MV)	PR
Jake Sullivan (JS)	JM	JS	MV	Anne-Marie Slaughter (AMS)	Cherly Mills (CM)
AMS	CM	Monica Hanley (MH)	JS	CM	HA
Hillary Clinton (HC)	HA	SB	Richard Verma (RV)	JS	HC

Conclusion

- We've broken the corpus down to a level where we can effectively analyze it and draw conclusions using both human and statistical analysis
- This has only been a sample of the many questions we could address using the LDA output
- Possible future directions
 - Some emails are redacted, how do email topics relate to this
 - Correlation between topics, what topics appear together
 - Predicting senders or receivers based on email text
- If this data intrigues you, all the code we used to download, process, and analyze the data is (will be) available at
[https://github.com/lbybee/601_Final_Project.](https://github.com/lbybee/601_Final_Project)