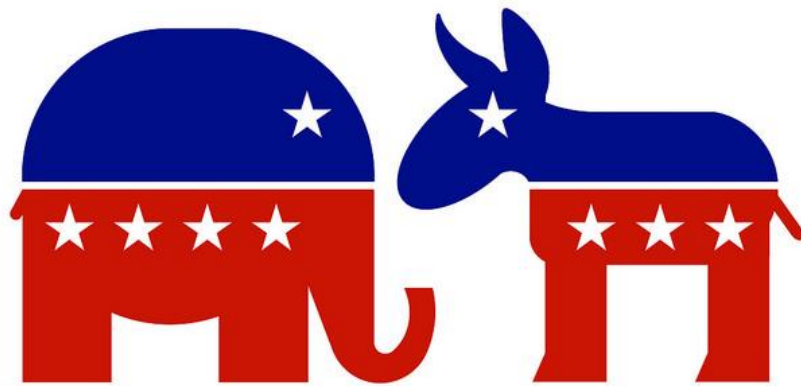# CIST 2742

Python – Pygame Project

Pick-a-Politician

Who do you side with?

By:
Christopher Grady

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CIST 2742 Python Project Proposal

Name: Chris Grady

Date: 4/1/2016

Industry Area: Gaming

Subject Area: Pick-a-Politician

Proposed Question: How to create a game that utilizes collision detection to allow the user to choose shoot at certain statements that they agree with, and using a proficient algorithm to determine which political candidate the user most agrees with

Description: Heavily inspired by http://isidewith.com, this purpose of this game is to allow the user to make certain selections based on their interests and beliefs. In the background of this GUI application, a score will be calculated after every selection. At the end of the game, the user will be presented with the political candidate that most closely represents their beliefs. Hopefully some results will be surprising to some! And just for fun – at the end of the game, the user has two additional choices besides quitting. The first would be to enter their name and save it to a file that stores all previous saved entries (that way users can see what other people have gotten). The other is a funny Donald Trump-Themed mini-game. My only concern is that by the time I turn this project in, there will only be two candidates left, but I supposed that'll just mean I need to keep updating the candidates.

This program will do the following:
- First, display detailed instructions to the user so they know what they are supposed to do.
- Next, they will select whichever statements that they strongly agree with.
- Then they will select a candidate that they know that strongly dislike.
- (Throughout these steps, an algorithm in the background is determining the user's political views).
- When the user is finished with his/her selections, they are to click the finish button.
- At that point, the respective candidate will be revealed to the user.
- If the user decides to quit, the game ends.
- If the user wants to save his results and view other results, he can click that section.
- If the user hits spacebar, an "Easter egg" mini-game involving a comical view of Donald Trump will begin; once that game is over, the game automatically quits.

Pick-A-Politician

A humorous, yet informative take on modern politics
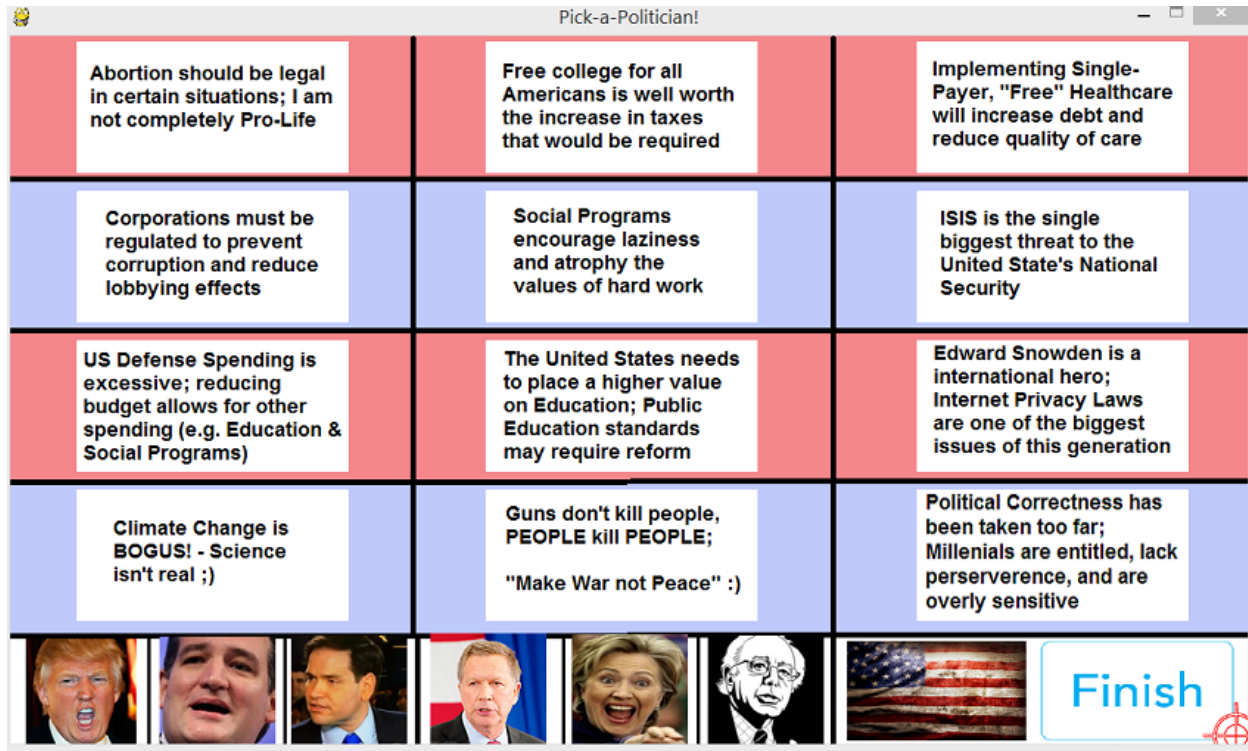
Brief Description:

This game will allow the user to answer a series of questions and ultimately will determine who their ideal political candidate is. Hidden within the game is a Donald Trump themed mini-game.

- Integration of both Pygame and Tkinter modules.
- Creative and original use of images and sound effects.
- Unconventional theme and setting for a video game, but the whole idea is to make the political thought process more interesting and entertaining.

Purpose:

More during this election than ever before (at least in my lifetime), we are living in a deeply divided nation. (Black vs White, Rich vs Poor, Gay vs Straight, etc.). Amidst this discord, candidates have a tendency to "mud-sling" the competition or disingenuously appeal to voters. This is all part of the game, so to speak, but the goal of this game is to make political education a bit more fun, and a lot less dry. Sure, we all have our political party that we typically agree with. But whether our party allegiance is due to upbringing or just lack of original thought can be a troubling question to some. What this game strives to do is separate the political identities, and just ask policy questions.

For Example: Instead of simply asking if you are Pro-Life or Pro-Choice (Which is political framing, by the way), we ask specific questions about abortion that you may not have really thought about in depth. So far, out of all my friends that have played the game, about half of them are really surprised at how moderate (or at least unexpected) their views really were.

Premise / High Concept:

It's election season, and you've been trying your best to keep up with the day-to-day of all your favorite candidates. Good news – It just got easier. In Pick-a-Politician, you'll discover who you really side with.

Genre:

Political Strategy Game

Platform:

Primary: PC (Windows 7, 8, 10)
Secondary: Mac, Web Browser Application coming soon

Audience / Market:

Target Audience: All Adults (Ages 18-100)

We encourage all ages to play our game. It's never too early to start learning about what you believe in - Although we focus on marketing to young adults.

Rating:

Rated T for Teen – Suggestive but no Explicit Content

Player Mode:

This is only a one-player game. However, there are some multiplayer features. For example, individual users can save their results and view other people's results.

Time Interval:

Pick-a-Politician is a real-time game in the sense that there aren't really any player turns or time limitations. The player is supposed to just make selections and navigate through the screens.

Backstory / Synopsis:

Due to the unorthodox nature of this game, a backstory doesn't really apply. The real backstory is modern politics. We are nearing the end of the primaries, and it is looking more and more like

a Trump vs Hilary showdown. We the people have the power to vote, but will we vote intelligently?

Character Descriptions:

Again, the unorthodox nature of this game doesn't allow for traditional characters, so instead I'll do a profile on 3 candidates:

Donald Trump – Donald Trump is all about #Winning. He has built very successful companies, has purchased many beautiful wives, and even possesses abnormally large hands. He is always looking sharp, and is never caught not wearing a suite. He is self-funded (aside from personal donations), and is all about breaking up the corruption in the establishment.

Hillary Clinton - Hilary is the veteran. She's been in the game a long time, has a deep understanding of the woman's power-suit, and can even rock the pixie haircut. She is seeking to become the first ever woman president, and is projected to beat any other candidate in a general election. She's got sueprdelegate and special interest group support, but she also faces criminal charges. To say the least, things should get interesting.

Bernie Sanders - Is he a grumpy old man or a silver fox? Bernie has the most experience working in the government "establishment," although he is very anti-establishment. He has been on the right side of civil rights issues for 40 years, and is running a grassroots campaign that has picked up more steam than any pundits expected. He doesn't receive any special interest group or Super-PAC funding, and seems to march to the beat of his own drum.

Competitive Analysis:

iSideWith - This game was originally what inspired the conception of Pick-a-Politician. It basically asks questions about political positions and provides information for each question. Admittedly, ISideWith is more informative (Web Apps allow for more interactive UX). We hope to distinguish ourselves by not only being informative, but also providing mild humor as well.

Election Special - This game is virtually the polar opposite of iSideWith. They trade seriousness and information for humor. And let me tell you, it's a very funny game. The purpose is to choose a candidate and campaign staff, and then take over the most amount of land basically. The way that Pick-a-Politician will attract audiences over this game is by providing more information and insight to the users, at the expense of some of the humor.

Politifact - This is hardly a game, but still seemed worth mentioning. Politifact.com could still be a competitor of Pick-a-Politician due to their vast database of information and user-friendly Truth-O-Meter sections. Our competitive advantage over Politifact is the simple fact that we make learning fun. Sadly, people don't always want to read dry text, they want interactive games with sound and video.

Rules:

Number of Players - Single Player

Age Range - For all ages; Rated T for Teen

Length of time (Gameplay) - Varies depending on user but ~5 Minutes

Political Scoring - Calculated on the fly as user is making decisions throughout the game

Challenges:

The biggest challenge the user will have is not "Christmas Treeing" the selection portion of the game. For some players, they will be asked questions they have never thought about or haven't thought much about. This can be frustrating, but we encourage user to utilize our Help page, as well as reading the instructions. Doing prior research is always a great strategy.

Perspective / Game View:

The game environment is largely menu and selection based (aside from the Trump Mini-Game), so I suppose it would technically be considered 1st person. The game view is Menu/Selection-Driven, also known as a Static Game View.

Chris Grady
Python Project Design Document
4/6/2016

User Interface:

Again, the Static Game View Design is really centered on animation and audio effects combined with interactive user selections. This inherently makes the gameplay/UX much more straightforward. Aside from the main game engine, there is a mini-game:

This game involved random sprite positioning on the Pygame screen surface, and collisions between sprites are detected when the user hovers over the Donald Trump Sprite. A running tally for each collision is running in the background, and once the user collides with all the sprites, the game is over.

Audio:

This game includes a myriad of audio effects (Including songs, sound effects, sound bites, etc.). There is minimal use of looping, and since Pygame allows 8 concurrent audio channels to be played at once – I took an adaptive approach. There are triggers nested throughout the game code that will play certain sound effects or sound bites under certain event conditions. For example, the intro "Here Comes the Chief" song plays upon execution no matter what; But when the candidate is finally displayed to the user, a unique sound effect for each candidate will be played (e.g. If you get Donald Trump, you don't want the Hillary Clinton audio file to play).

NOTE: Initially I was using .mp3 files and had all sorts of bugs; then I realize that the standard format in Pygame is .ogg – Audio has worked great ever since!

Summary / Future Updates:

Overall, I am very pleased with the way Pick-a-Politician is coming together. Even though it is being launched now, there is much evolving for the game to do. There were two main features that I'd like to implement in future updates:

1) Refine Political Scoring algorithm – As stated in the presentation, I would have like to have taken a different approach to scoring the user's political allegiance. Instead of simply adding or subtracting based on user selection, a tally should be created for each candidate. This would give a much more accurate reflection of the user's beliefs.

2) Evolve from the menu-driven user selection – I'd like to dabble in a 2D or even 3D environment where the user is still making essentially the same decisions, but in a much more entertaining way. For example, instead of a screen with questions blitted to the surface, what if the user navigated through an open world and had to find clues that gave him more information on the questions.

Chris Grady
CIST 2742
Final Project

Pick-a-Politician How To Guide:

Although there is an instructions screen within the program itself, this guide serves as a step-by-step tutorial on how to play the game. Each step is broken down by the different menus that appear / different screens.

SCREEN 1:

- Splash Screen - No need for user input

SCREEN 2:

- Instruction Screen - Press any button to continue

SCREEN 3:

- Main Screen – User will move the mouse and make selections
- User selects the statements he/she agrees with (Shown by BLACK arrow).
- User selects the candidate that they like least (Shown by RED arrow).
- When user is complete, select Finish (Shown by GREEN arrow).
- If you have any additional questions, click on the American flag to view the Help Page.
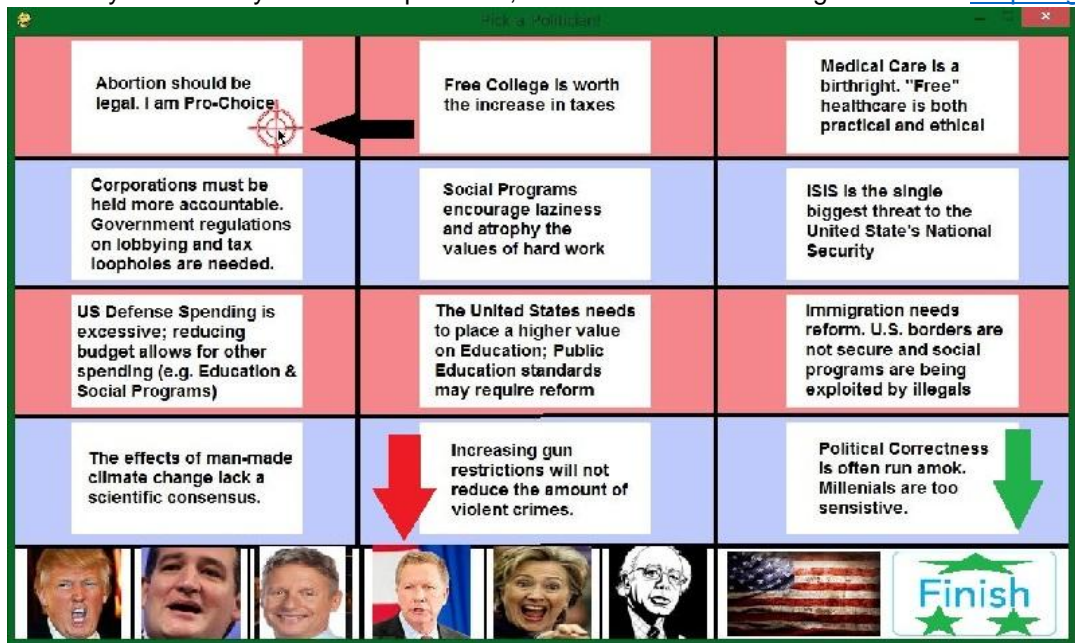
SCREEN 4:

- User is now shown his/her candidate (Based on previous selections).

EXTRAS (On Screen 4):

➢ Click to see other people's results
- If you select the bottom portion of the screen (Below candidates name), it will open a pop up that looks like the picture below.
  - Enter your name and select SAVE ENTRY.
  - Select CLICK TO SEE WHAT OTHERS GOT to view other results
  - When finished, select Quit and you will go back to Screen 4.

➢ Learn more about the candidate:
- If you select LEARN MORE at the top-right of the screen, it will open up a web browser to that respective candidate's website.
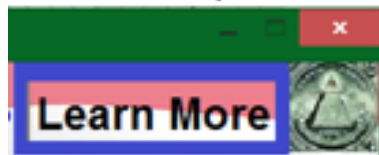
➢ Funny Mini-Game
- If the user presses Space Bar or clicks the Donald Trump Icon on the top-left, a mini-game opens up in the same window/screen.
- The object of the game is to erase all the pictures of Trump, and once you do the game is over and the display returns to Screen 4.
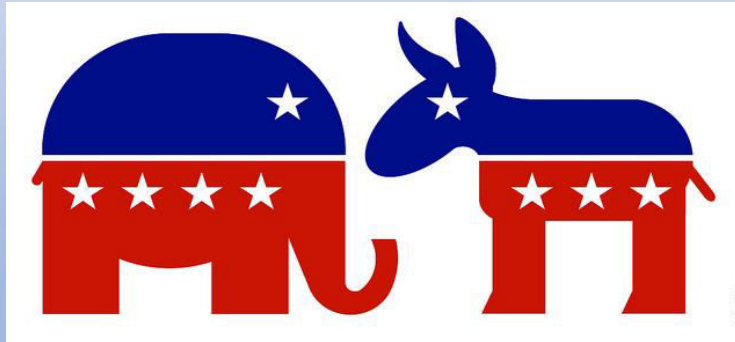
# Pick-a-Politician

Who do you side with?

Chris Grady

# What is Pick-a-Politician ?

In the modern world, everyone wants to appear politically engaged, but the reality is few of us are. We don't have just ourselves to blame, but all that we can do is try to educate ourselves with the least amount of bias as possible. Pick-A-Politician is very similar to isidewith.com - Our goal is to use technology and information to engage young voters and increase voter turnout!

Introduction / Splash Screen
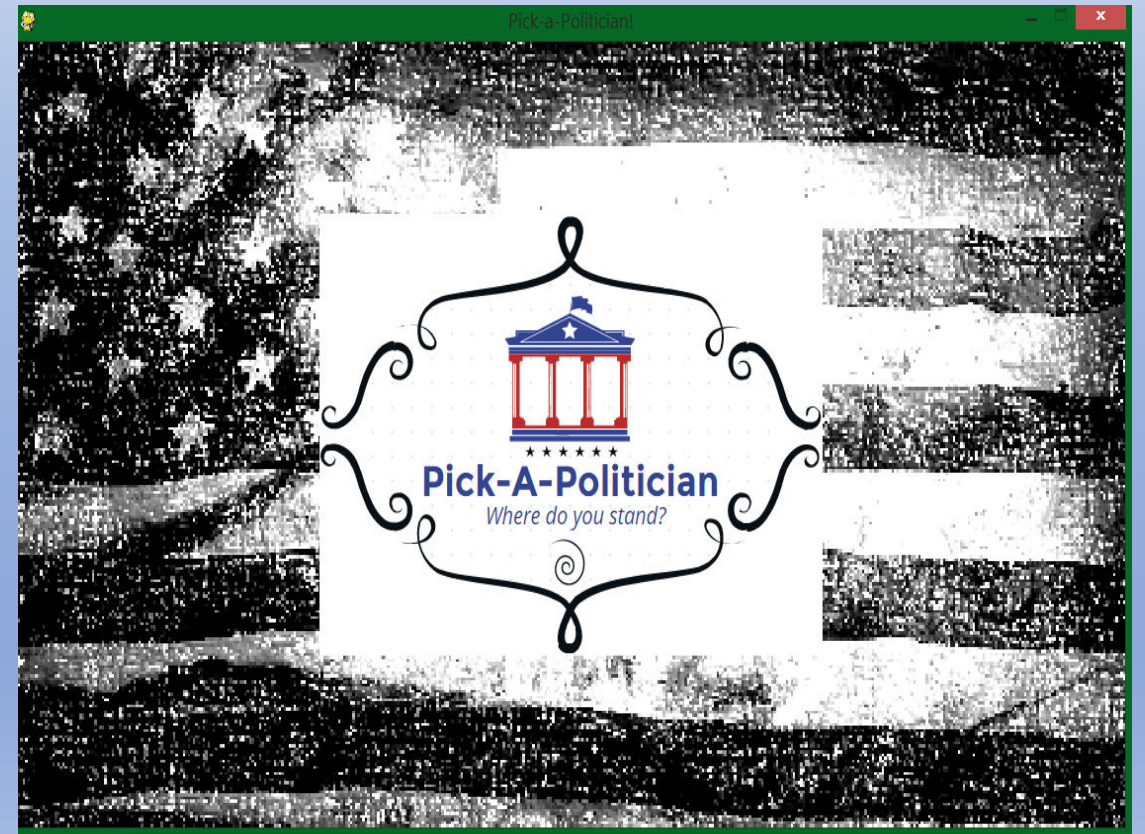
Core of the game
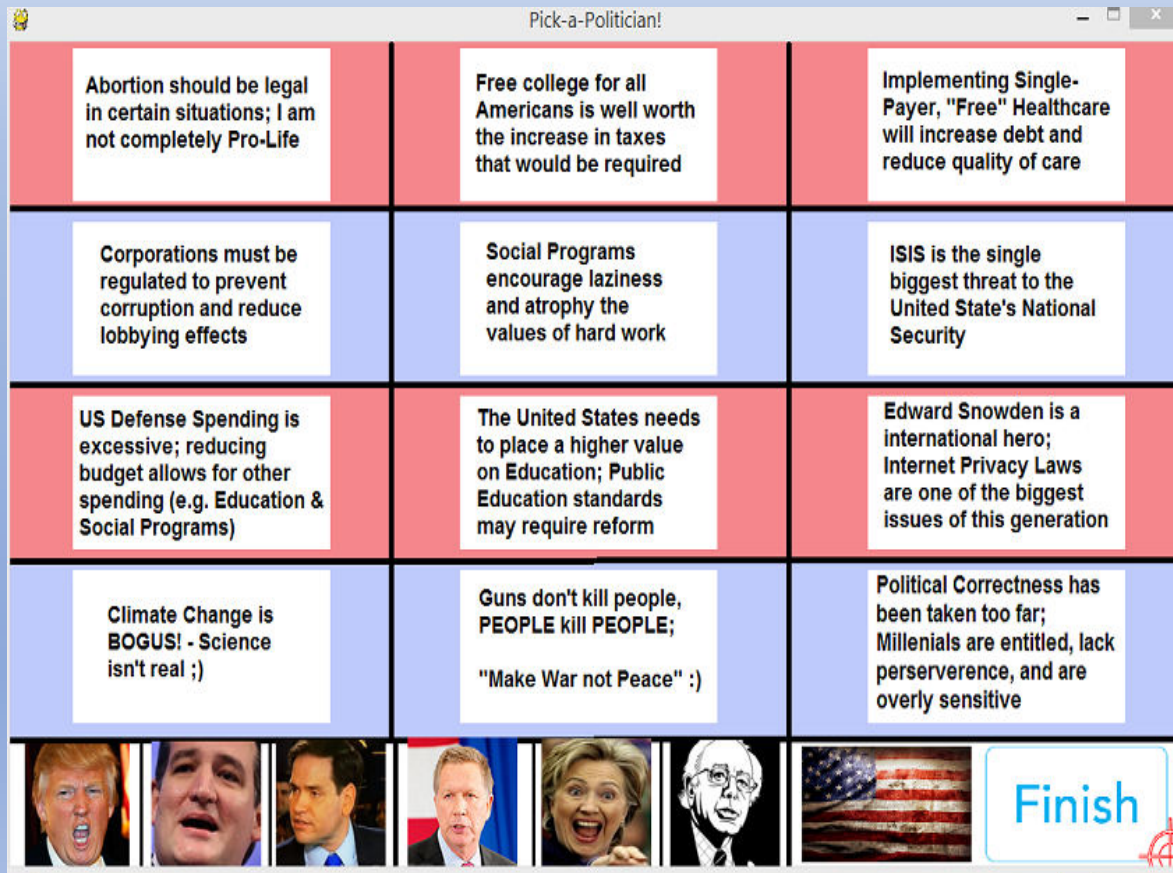
- (x,y) coordinates of mouse position are stored as variables
- If user clicks in certain 2D position, score is changed
- In the background, algorithm is determining political score
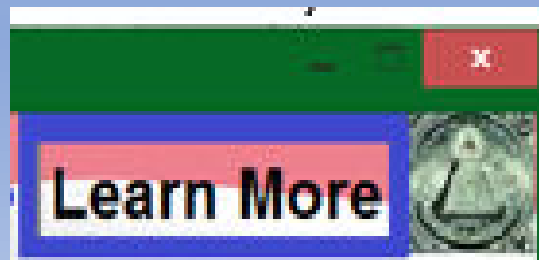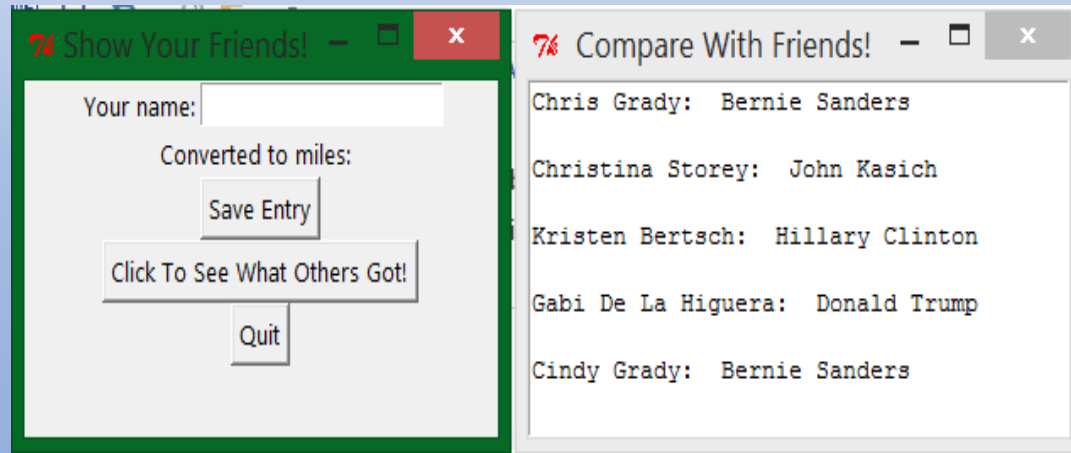- Help Page
- Finish Button

Determining / Displaying Candidate

Topics:

ABORTION
CORPORATE REGULATIONS
DEFENSE SPENDING
COLLEGE TUITION
WELFARE/SOCIAL PROGRAMS
EDUCATION STANDARDS
HEALTHCARE
TERRORISM/ISIS
IMMIGRATION
GLOBAL WARMING
GUN CONTROL
POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Extra Goodies

What I could have done better

- Political Scores – Instead of just simply adding or subtracting based on user input, I should have created a separate tally (variable) for each candidate and updated each one for each user selection. This would make it much more accurate.

- More in-depth questions – Some of the questions the user is presented are quite broad. Should have feature that allow user to "Learn More" or read a more detailed question for each topic. Again, this would increase accuracy of determining candidates.