Project Reflection

The specification of the project was about Audience Insights from Livestream chat data. There were many different approaches that I could take. I chose the approach of seeing how audiences of different streamers engaged with the livestream chat because this seemed the most interesting to me. Initially I had a few ideas for defining different streamers, most notably I thought I could separate them by audience size or the genre of game they were playing. After conducting research, I discovered that the angle of audience size had been researched relatively extensively, but couldn't find much research on genre of game. I therefore took this angle to fill the gap. I decided to split the games up into two broad genres, 'shooter' games and 'non-shooter' games.

This brief stayed fairly consistent throughout the project, and I didn't make any major changes to the question once I had started. I did however adapt my approach by making a change in my implementation. Initially I trained two topic models, one for each genre. However, I changed this to be four topic models for four selected games, two from each genre, and I decreased the number of topics from 10 to 5. I did this to make the topic model outputs more interpretable and to open up analysis of models between games of the same genre as well as games of different genres.

I'd say the results I achieved were fairly successful. I was able to measure chat engagement in two ways, topic distribution and topic nature. Then I could make comparisons between the two genres based on these metrics. I utilised knowledge I had learned during my research like topic modelling and the Gini coefficient. However there are definitely improvements that I could make. I believe that the genre "non-shooter" is probably too broad, and if I could start again, I would divide this into a number of different genres like sports games, battle arena games and survival games. This would allow me to get more specific results and test a lot more games, which would make a much wider use of the data set provided. If I had better hardware I would fit a lot more tokens to the topic models, as training time wouldn't be an issue. Furthermore, I could take a different angle to define "different streamers" like whether the game they are playing is ESports (competitive) oriented or not

Problem solving and communication

A problem I faced came after I first trained my two initial models. I didn't know what to do next. I struggled to interpret what the topics meant because there was so many of them with lots of overlapping words. I used communication to try and overcome this problem, something which I never shied away from throughout the project. I often sent emails to my supervisors when I needed clarification on something related to the project and got better at this throughout the project duration. After discussion with my supervisors, I came up with a new plan of training four models on four separate games and reduced the number of topics down to five. This made the results much easier to interpret and analyse. Initially I felt a bit confused and deflated because I faced a brick wall in my progress. However, once I talked about it and came up with a solution, I felt motivated to continue with the project and the results started flowing from there. This issue probably arose from a lack of planning. I didn't really plan how I would interpret the models until I trained them, only having a few non-concrete ideas at the time. I should've made a plan instead of rushing in and hoping the ideas would come when I needed them. These skills will be very useful in the workplace, there is bound to be a lot of team working and now I know that communicating within this group will help overcome any potential barriers that arise in the project. I also now understand that making a more extensive plan could work to avoid any roadblocks happening in the first place.

Responsibility

I knew that the workload was heavy for the project and at first, I was stressed about timings and getting everything done and submitted on time, especially because I had other modules to do as well. As advised by my supervisors I stuck to the soft deadlines set in advance in order to make the most of the time I had. This was particularly useful when I had to spend a lot of time on another assessment, because I could afford to put the project aside for a couple weeks to get this finished. I found myself having written a large section of my report before a lot of other people had even started, which made the last few weeks before submission a little less stressful because I had completed the bulk of the work long in advance. This skill will be very useful in the workplace. Sticking to soft deadlines will help me keep on track in any future projects I have to complete, especially when there may be numerous parts to the project that have to be completed at the same time. Furthermore, managing my workload and getting things done early will be very useful In the workplace so I have more time to check my work and make sure it meets the standards required.