

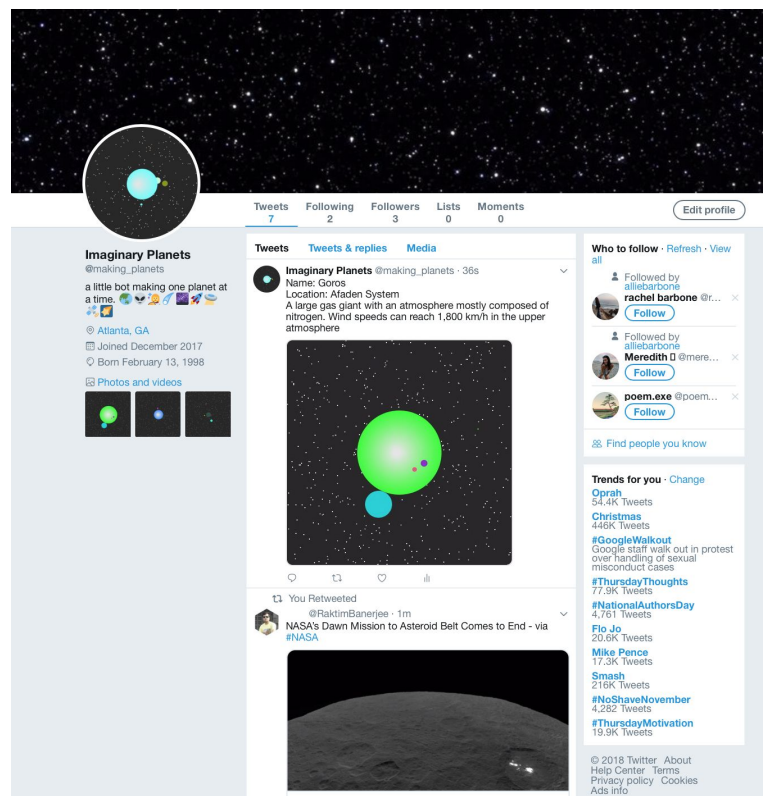
Imaginary Planets

@making_planets

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As someone who's always been interested in space, I decided to create a twitter bot that would interact with users who also had a passion for space exploration. I created Imaginary Planets, a twitter bot that tweets an imaginary planet's name, location, and description, along with an accompanying image of the created planet.

To create the name, location, and description of the planet, I learned how to web-scrape using Cheerio, an HTML parsing library that mirrors the jQuery library API. Using Cheerio, I was able to parse through a website that generates random planet information and store it into variables that would then be placed into a tweet. At first, this seemed like it would be an easy enough task, but since the website sometimes creates descriptions that are over Twitter's character limit, I had to parse through the description, checking if the length, name, and location were under or over the character limit. If over, I had to trace through the description and cut off the last sentence so that it would fit within the tweet character limit.



For the image of the generated planet, I used javascript's canvas tool to create a .png image that could be uploaded with the tweet. I created a



background of randomly dispersed small white circles to represent stars, then created the planet with a random amount of accompanying moons. To try to connect the descriptions of the planet to the image, I parsed through the description looking for “large”, “small”, or “blue” to help modify the size of the planets and color. However, this would cause issues from time to time as since I was unable to get context from the description, so in sentences such as “a large amount of Nitrogen” would generate a larger planet because it contained the word “large”.

I wanted the bot to engage with part of Twitter community who loves space and exploration as much as I do, so along with generating random planets, Imaginary Planets also retweets information posted with a hashtag of “#NASA”. This was able to generate a lot more relevant retweeted information relating to space instead of using the hashtag, “#space” or “#planet”.

I’ve received some involvement from the community, so far having seventeen followers. Hopefully as the account posts more, more people will interact with the account.

Link to Twitter:

https://twitter.com/making_planets

To use the bot from the terminal, you may have to install Canvas and Cheerio

Cheerio: npm install cheerio

Canvas: npm install canvas

