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Final Project Narrative

From the beginning, I struggled with deciding which final project I wanted to do. At first, I thought about just doing the annotated bibliography. However, I felt very uncomfortable about doing an annotated bibliography as my final project for a programming class. I really wanted to do a programming project, but was unsure of the purpose of my program since I didn’t have real data readily available for me to manipulate. After meeting with you, I was able to start thinking about what interests me and how I wanted to utilize available data to inform a question. It’s pretty amazing how often you forget about what actually interests you until someone asks you. I decided to feed into my music interests.

As someone who attends a lot of concerts, I rely on Ticketmaster as my primary ticket vendor. One aspect of the website that I didn’t pay attention to previously is their rating and review system. It is very Yelp-esque. I never thought to look at that part of the site because I already have my own solid opinions about the artists I see and that’s why I’m willing to pay money to see them. No ratings or reviews were going to sway my motives. However, it is an obvious data source that could be extracted and manipulated using Python. But, I felt that there needed to be another layer to this program other than simply analyzing Ticketmaster rating and review information.

Enter, the American Music Awards (AMAs). I am a sucker for awards shows even though lately they’ve been sucking as far as production value and even how they determine who wins awards. As the show was nearing the end, I started to wonder how the AMAs in particular determined the winners. Lo and behold, at the end of the show they told me and one aspect of their criteria is the artist’s interaction with their fans. I thought this was interesting since many awards shows have a committee. Since concerts are probably the best way artists can directly interact with their fans, I made an immediate connection. Utilizing the information available from Ticketmaster on the artists that won the “Artist of the Year” and “New Artist of the Year” awards at the AMAs, I plan on creating a program that will try to accurately guess the winner of these award categories. I will also be taking into consideration social media interaction, namely Instagram and Twitter. This combination of multiple sources of information suggests an artist’s interaction with their fans and would provide a good base for an educated guess from the program on which artist won in each category.

Upon starting to develop my program, I realized very quickly that my research question demanded some new concepts that weren’t covered in class. One main concept that I’ve had to explore was web scraping. After some research I found Beautiful Soup, a Python library that specializes specifically for web scraping.