

My client is Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Maryland. EFC at the University of Maryland is one of ten University-based centers across the country providing communities with the tools and information necessary to manage change for a healthy environment and an enhanced quality of life. Based on my talk with my client representative Brandy Espinola, EFC is more like a hybrid organization. It will be functioned as a “non-profit, research-centered and extension-centered” organization. In terms of non-profit organization, the staff of EFC will launch some speeches to educate the public about the importance of protecting environment. As EFC locates at school and functions as part of the University of Maryland, it will do some research with professors and students to support their study. Extension-centered organization represents that EFC will also conduct some outreach project. For example, it will work with the Chesapeake Bay Program Office(CBPO) to help exam if the money of CBPO has been well used, which is what I am working on.

The data Brandy deals with are text information. The project she is doing is to help exam if the money given by CBPO has been well used by project implementers and to rate different project organizations to give feedback to CBPO so that people of CBPO can better allocate their money in the future. Text information is about each project and reports generated by project organizations. For example, there are data of project description and project starts and ends date. The biggest problem is about the reports data. Those reports are written by each project organization to present to the CBPO about what they have done using money given by CBPO. Since there are so many projects and every project organization wants to present well to get the opportunity to have more money in the future, they always end up with a documentation with more than 70 pages. Brandy needs to review them manually and rate each organization so that she can put those data into the database which they are trying to build now. In this case, she can filter data which satisfy her needs and get results quickly.

Projects can be roughly divided into three parts, which are infrastructure projects, educational projects, and policy paper projects. For the reports given by infrastructure projects, they are more clearly since they will give specific number about how much pollution they have solved and how much this project has costed. Based on those parameters, Brandy can easily tell if the project is doing well or not. Another kind of project is educational project. In educational projects, money will be used to improve students' awareness of some environmental problems. This kind of project is hard to rate because surveys provided are more like how many students they have involved in their project. However, it is difficult to examine if a project works. Policy paper projects are even harder to evaluate because it usually takes time for a policy or law to be enacted.

Questions:

Can you describe your work with the CBP?

How could you evaluate your data? Is that based on personal views?

Since your data are mostly text, how would you plan to do queries in your database?

What are your pain points when you are dealing with your data?

How do you generate data? If your data are given by others, how can you guarantee the data privacy problems?

Will you analyze your data? How to analyze?

Citations:

Who We Are. (n.d.). Retrieved February 13, 2017, from <https://efc.umd.edu/whoweare.html>