Ranking Senators with Senator X’s Votes

Feb 10, 2015
ACT1-2, Task 2: Rank Each Senator by Bernie Sanders-ness
What We’ve Accomplished

Use Bernie Sanders’ votes to compare how liberal other senators are.

Vote on bills only!

CSCI 0931 - Intro. to Comp. for the Humanities and Social Sciences
New Problem

Redefine Problem

Use Senator X’s votes to compare how liberal other senators are

Modify existing instructions

Find Data

XML Format

CSV Format

Make a HUGE Spreadsheet table

Solution

Computer (spreadsheet)

Vote on bills only!

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In Activity 1-3, you’ll...

• Learn new spreadsheet techniques
• Rank relative to any senator, not just Bernie
• Task 2 will make a nice spreadsheet that can be used by others

• Start by doing Task 1 with a partner...
Reminder about OFFSET

OFFSET: Returns a reference to a range (or cell) that is a specified number of rows and columns from a base range (or cell).

OFFSET(reference, rows, cols)

• Go ahead and start on Part 1.
Let’s do Task 1
After task 1

• Any questions?
• Move on to Task 2: making a spreadsheet that shows comparison results vs ANY senator, not just Sanders.
Activity 1-3

• Task 2
  – We broke this task down into manageable pieces.
  – Nice formatting is useful
  – This spreadsheet is now useful for other people
  – It’s a *generalization* of the Sanders spreadsheet, and took almost no time to create!
    • If you’d done the Sanders work by hand, redoing it for a new senator would have taken just as long
Rankings

• Who is least like Bernie?
• What are the rankings relative to that person?
• How do they compare to the Bernie rankings?
  – Rank Bernie on your screen; get a friend to reverse-rank vs Bernie’s nemesis. Compare.
Discussion

• Is ranking relative to Sanders (or Coburn) really a measurement of liberalness? If so, why don’t they give exact opposite results?
• What if we had used Warren, or some other very liberal senator, instead of Sanders? Same results? Shuffled?
• Let’s look at all possible orderings!
Next time

• Build that similarity table
• Following HW, we’ll be able to build it with a much simpler method
• How can we make sense of the 10,000 items in it?