

Using Quantitative Analysis to Bridge Divides With The Ditchley Foundation

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The Ditchley Foundation is a charity focused on creating a space and time for reflection, sharing ideas, and making new connections, in order to overcome the challenges we are currently facing as a society. It was founded in 1958 by philanthropist Sir David Wills in order to support the Transatlantic Alliance between the United

States and Europe, by bringing decision makers and experts together in a unique and inspiring setting. They have held hundreds of conferences over the years, allowing people from different backgrounds to come together and discuss global issues.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of my research was to analyse the network of people connected to Ditchley and draw insights from this data. I highlighted areas where the Foundation could improve, by either trying to reach out to more people from a certain sector or understanding the effectiveness of some of their contacting strategies.

METHODS

Our data was stored in a graph database called Neo4j, a system that gathers information by constructing different network structures. This data contained key details about people connected to Ditchley, such as organisations and sectors they have worked for, and general information such as their location or online presence. But most interestingly, it contained their themes and subthemes, categories which refer to the type of work the person is involved in.

After identifying our desired dataset, we would use Python to further analyse this information and extract useful insights from it, mainly relying on charts or other visual resources to present it.

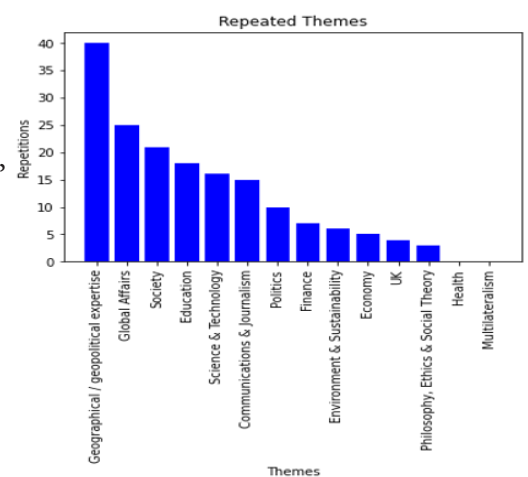
KEY SKILLS

- Neo4j: In my 8 weeks at Ditchley, I developed a deep understanding of how this graph database worked, thanks to the training provided by the Foundation and by studying in my own time. I have become very confident using Cypher, the language used to query this database.
- Python: Before starting my internship, I had a basic knowledge of Python that I had acquired on my own, by following tutorials and online classes. Thanks to this internship I was able to vastly improve my use of this language, understand how different packages worked and which were the most suited for the work I had to carry out.

KEY FINDINGS

I was assigned a specific subset of data relating to calls made from the Foundation to individuals, either asking for recommendations of people for other events or just engaging in general conversation.

I analysed this data by firstly looking at the relation between the themes of people that were called and the people they recon-



Picture 1

people they recommended. I found that for certain themes it was more common for the person called and for that recommended to share it (see Picture 1), whereas for others the recommendations made were always people outside of their sector (e.g. health).

The second main research project I did was a bit different, focusing on text analysis.

For this, I took all the notes connected to calls and first looked at the word frequency, identifying which were the most repeated ones and from here, creating a wordcloud to portray this (see Picture 2). This gave us an understanding of what were the main points of focus during these calls and the main issues that people were interested in.



Picture 2