Investigate

Activity #1
WordCounter

Purpose

WordCounter invites participants to build their data literacy by finding and visualizing a story about what words are found in local news stories.

Learning Goals

- Increased ability to analyze and reason about text data
- Understanding that one data set can contain many stories
- Ability to quickly communicate a data-driven story to others

Time

30 to 45 Minutes

Supplies

- Large tables or floor, or tape to stick paper to walls so participants can draw
- Large pieces of paper *roughly 2 feet x 3 feet*
- Thick crayons or markers
- Projector
- Computers *1 for every 3 participants*
- Copies of the WTFcsv question handout https://databasic.io/wtfcsv/handout.pdf

Introductory Activity Questions

- **HOW CAN THE SAME IDEA BE COMMUNICATED AND FRAMED IN DIFFERENT WAYS?**

- **WHAT CAN PATTERNS IN TEXTUAL DATA COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE WORLD?**

Instructions

Introduce the Tool

Open up WordCounter (https://databasic.io/wordcounter) and paste a link to a recent local news article using the "paste a link" tab. Press "Count" to show an analysis of the words written in the selected article. Looking at words that were used many times, versus words only used once, could reveal a story to sketch. Mention that you can download CSVs of the results for further analysis.

Launch the Activity

1 Participants have 15 minutes to complete the activity.
2 Participants work in teams of three.
3 Each team uses WordCounter to analyze the words in a local news article and finds a story to tell. (https://databasic.io/wordcounter)
4 Using crayons and paper, each team draws a picture that represents their data story. For example, with Hillary Clinton's speeches, each participant would draw a picture that rep-

resents the word cloud as they interpret it.

Reminders

For participant drawings:
- Stick figures are fine
- Don't worry about being perfect, just sketch something, for example: the word cloud of Hillary Clinton's speeches that is preloaded onto the WordCounter website may be a drawing of confused looking people based on the most popular words "people don't know" in the cloud.
- Data stories can be as simple as "this article used one word more than another"

For the WordCounter tool:
- The "stopwords" checkbox gives the option to ignore or include common words like "the" or "and"

Debrief

Allow each team of participants to have one minute to share the source content they chose and the way they chose to visualize their dataset. While participants are sharing, use the following points to guide the discussion:

- Visualizing data by drawing it out can help participants to recognize patterns we otherwise may have missed
- One dataset can be accurately visualized in a number of different ways
- Working with data can be creative and fun

After participants share their work, end the facilitation by demonstrating that CSV files of their data can be downloaded and they can do further analysis in Excel if they wish.