

Introduction

VAST Challenge 2013 Mini-Challenge 1 concerns predictive visual analytics. It is decidedly different from previous VAST challenges — it will be continuous and iterative, it will have reviewing and recognition presented from now until the final judging session, contestants will be required to register to participate and login to this site to get data and make submissions. Results will be posted on this website as we go. Contestants can join at any time — there will be awards for long term successes at predictions, but there will also be plenty of interim recognition.

The theme is movie success at the box office and in viewer ratings. Participants will be asked to predict how well a set of movies will do at the box office in terms of box office "take" (ticket sales) and how well they will do in the eyes of the viewers (the movies' viewer ratings) for their opening weekend in the U.S. A key feature of the challenge, though, is that contestants will use visual analytics to support their movie analysis and show us how it was used in their analytic processes. So, while the two numeric predictions would be possible to provide by plugging lots of data into a model, we will ask some additional questions to go along with the predictions that will require a human-in-the-loop and hopefully some outstanding visualizations.

Data

Another new feature of this mini-challenge as compared to previous years is the data that contestants may use. The data will still be "closed world", that is, you must use the data we specify and no other. This data will not be provided all at once as in previous years. We will be using data from three sources: IMDb, Twitter, and bitly. When you register to participate, you will be required to confirm that you (and any teammates you have) will follow all the terms and conditions of this Challenge, plus also those of IMDb, Twitter, and bitly. More information on the data can be found on the Data webpage for this site. Each of these data sets will be periodically updated. The IMDb data will be updated each Friday. Twitter and bitly data concerning a movie will be updated each day from the day the movie is announced as being part of the Challenge, through the Thursday before the opening weekend.

Registration

All participants for VAST Mini-Challenge 1 this year must register. This includes providing your name and contact information, plus agreeing to the terms and conditions for the use of the data. Please see the registration page for details.

How the Challenge generally works

Movies in the U.S. typically open on a specific weekend. We will select one or more movies for certain opening weekends about two weeks in advance. Data will be made available on those movies for you to use in making predictions. You will use your interactive visual analytic system to make your assessment, and submit both the predictions and a snapshot or two showing how you arrived at them. Submissions are due the Thursday just before the opening weekend at 5PM Pacific time (Friday 1AM GMT). You may send a submission earlier; and at some point we will be giving credit for early submissions; however, postings after the submission date and time will not be scored.

Movie goers will then flock to the movies that weekend (or not).

On Monday after the opening weekend, we will post some preliminary figures on box office take and viewer rating. On the Friday following the opening, we will post official numbers as reported by IMDb. We will calculate how close your predictions came and also assess the visualizations you submit. Recognitions will be posted on the leaderboard.

Mini-Challenge 1 Phases

We will be running the VAST Mini-Challenge 1 in three phases. The first phase will essentially be a warm-up and preparation phase where you may experiment with the data and your visualizations to see what is needed for good predictions. This will last about 2 months (exact length and time will depend on our start date!). The second phase will have the mini-challenge in full swing, lasting for about 3 months in the Spring. The third phase will take us into the Summer blockbuster period right up through August. Each phase will end with additional questions that will challenge your visual analytic process a little more deeply.

By July 31, 2013, each participant must provide the VAST Challenge committee with a video illustrating how the team used their visual analytics toolsets in the challenge. The video will be posted on You Tube, and the contestant will provide a link to the challenge organizers. Participants will be allowed to submit two page papers for the Challenge portion of the VAST Conference.

Judging

The visualizations and questions will be reviewed by a guest reviewer that we will recruit for each week's entries. The guest reviewer may come from visualization, analysis, or other background, and will provide short feedback to the contestants. The predictions will be put through a mean relative error algorithm to determine how close they are to the real figures of box office take and viewer rating.

Awards and Recognition

The VAST Challenge committee will highlight outstanding achievements with recognition and awards as posted on this site as the Challenge proceeds through the year. Awards will be certificates that will be handed out at the 2013 VIS Conference in Atlanta in October. Contestants will also be allowed to submit 2 page papers about their submissions for inclusion in the conference proceedings. Contestants will also be allowed to exhibit a poster at the conference. Award winners may also be asked to present their work during the VAST Challenge workshop; details will be determined later in the year.