The United States Supreme Court: Visualizations and Metrics (60 Years of Data)

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Abstract

This presentation discusses insights garnered from a data set consisting of bibliographic information for all United States Supreme Court opinions issued since the 1944-45 term. Data elements include the name of the case, date of issue, Chief Justice at date of issuance, and topics assigned to the opinions by West Publishing. Visualization methods are used to examine how the workload of the court has shifted in the last half century, the timing of case issuance, and what topics were popular with which courts. The co-occurrence of top level West Topics is used to suggest the landscape of Supreme Court opinions. Also discussed will be how visualization methods have a pedagogical benefit of quickly informing users about the workload and history of the Court.