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A new process reveals otherwise hidden patterns of individual giving to political parties.

Political giving by individuals is generally assumed to be ideologically motivated. Analysis generally supports this assumption. People give consistently to one political party or the other, typically in a manner that would be expected if they were following beliefs aligned with only one party.

What big data is revealing is that this is not always the case. In certain organizations, we find individuals switch parties consistently. Their reasons for doing so may be varied, but a hypothesis is that some donors are pragmatic rather than ideological. These pragmatic donors will give to anyone who aligns with their position on an issue or set of issues. In this sense, these individuals ignore the ideological platform of only one party, choosing different allies over time.

There are notable, if unsurprising tilts inside various organizations. Some organizations are partisan in the sense that most of their employees give to the same party. The *ACLU* employees tend to give to the Democratic candidates. People in the *Heritage Foundation* give primarily to Republicans. Other organizations are bi-partisan in that they employ both Democratic and Republican partisans. For example, *Harvard Business School* employees, faculty and students give to both parties. The number of individuals on each side is bal-

anced, but few paths cross the center line.

In contrast with these typical patterns of giving, individuals in certain organizations tend to give to both sides. In particular, employees at *Goldman Sachs* often give to both parties over time. This is indicated by the large number of paths that criss-cross the center. At the organizational level, there is an overall bias towards the Democrats, and a shift toward Republicans starting after 2010. However, at the individual level people give to both sides during these phases. In contrast to giving to a party because of an ideological affinity, this suggests that these people give to recipients who might share their view or promote their interests on particular issues.



Method

The process measures six-month moving totals of each individual's monthly giving to the Republican or Democratic parties, where the amount is calculated as the Republican amount minus the Democratic amount. If a person has not made a donation in six months, the line recording their donation history ends. All amounts are inflation adjusted to be in 2012 dollars.

The *Political_Position* function describes the contributions of the individual i in the period of n months around time t :

$$\textit{Political_Position}(R,D,t,n,i) = \sum R_{i,t-n+1\dots t} - D_{i,t-n+1\dots t}$$

where R is a vector of contributions given by this individual to Republicans in this period, D is a vector of their contributions to Democrats. Vector D is subtracted from vector R and the coordinates of the resulting vectors are summed. A negative sum indicates an overall democratic leaning of the contributor.

The net tilt of the organization is the same general measure, but this time the organizational level. Instead of summing individual i , we sum organization i . This is amount for everyone in the company, represented by the line drawn over the other lines in the 'organizational aggregate' section of each visualization.

We use the primary source FEC data to calculate these amounts (http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/ftp_download.shtml). The technique currently involves processing over 16 million FEC transactions since 1979.

Because we use the primary source, this means we must identify individuals who were employed in the organization. Organization names and variations in spelling were identified with care because individuals sometimes use different spellings.

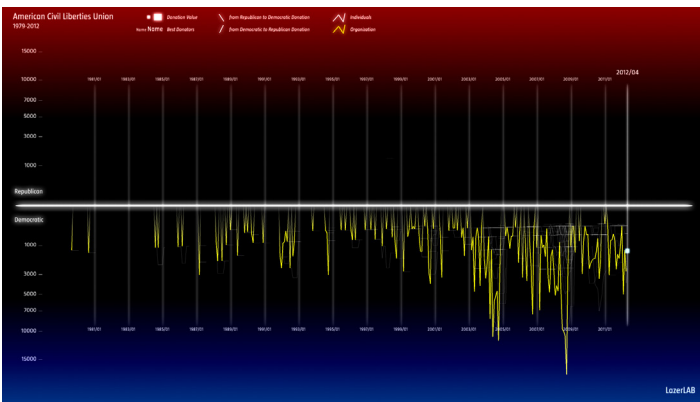
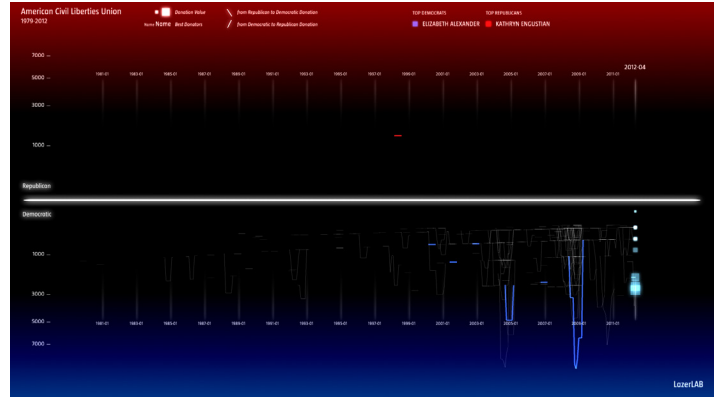
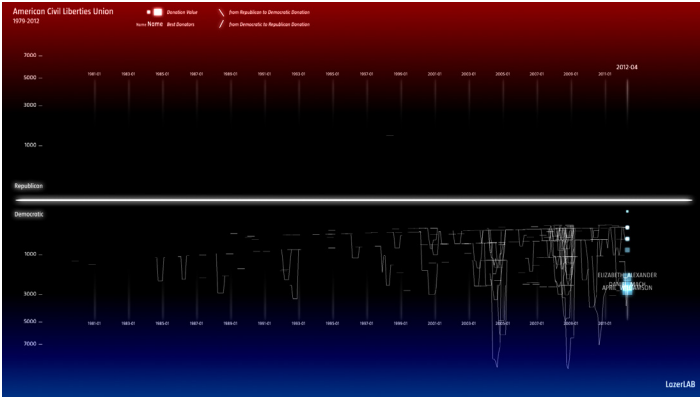
Further, FEC Campaign finance law does not unambiguously identify individual contributors. Identities are shrouded by typographical variation, migration, changes of address and employment. This method uses all the information available in records to infer individual identities.

We implement a carefully developed entity resolution procedure. It is automated, so it can keep up with the volume of campaign contributions being submitted. Identities are extracted through analysis of multiple variables provided from the primary source FEC records. The estimated probability of a mismatch between any two must be astronomically small for an identity to be established.



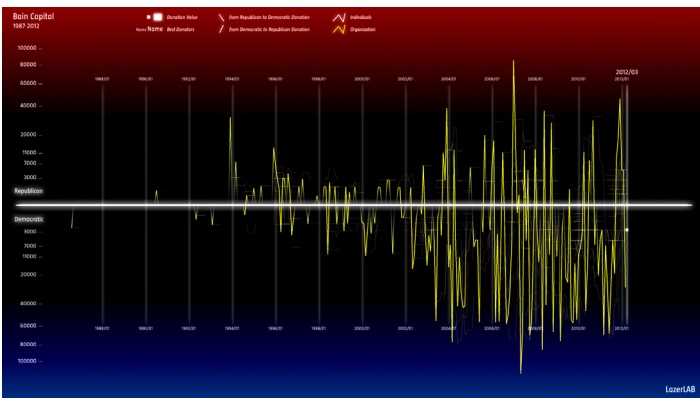
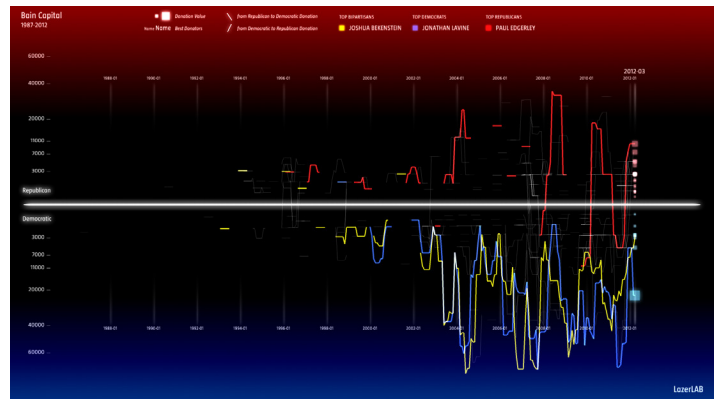
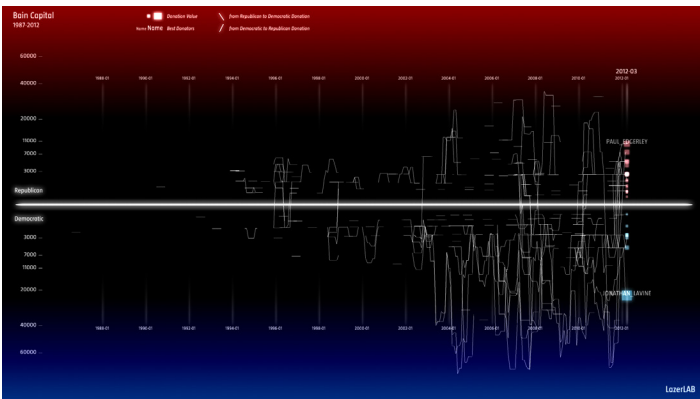
American Civil Liberties Union

1979 - 2012



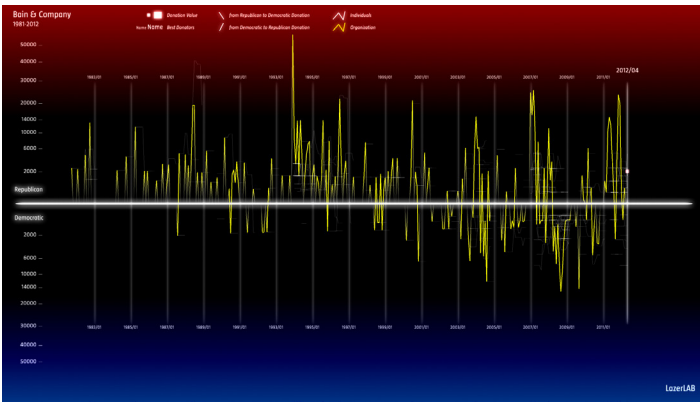
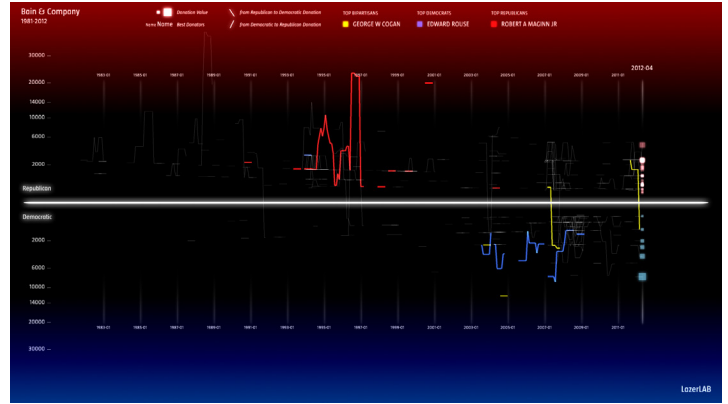
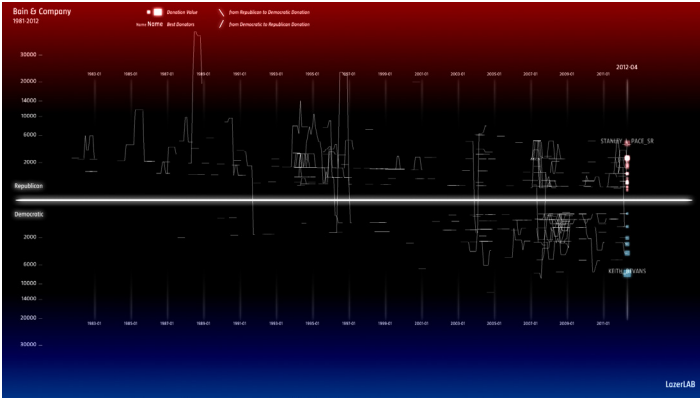
Bain Capital

1987 - 2012



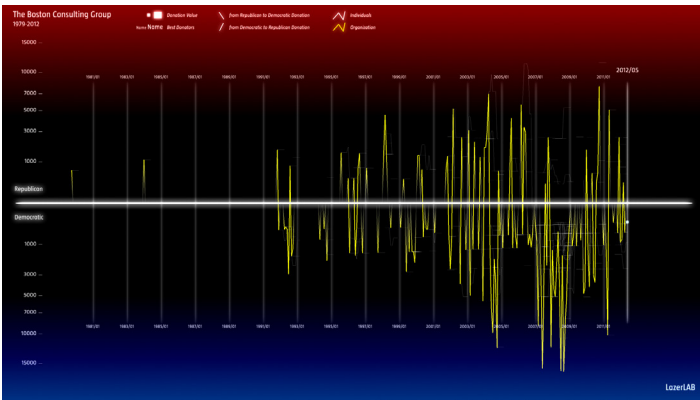
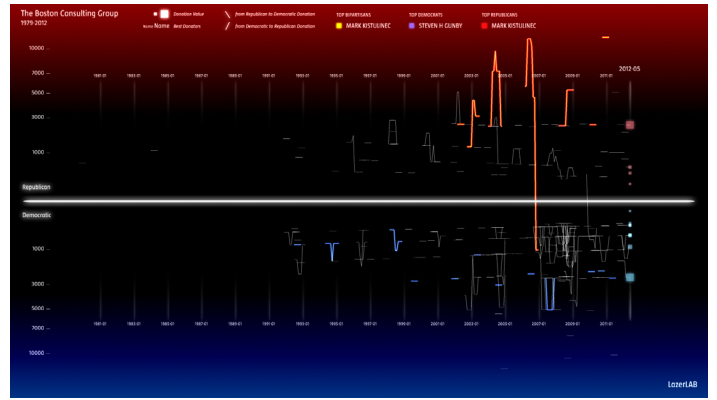
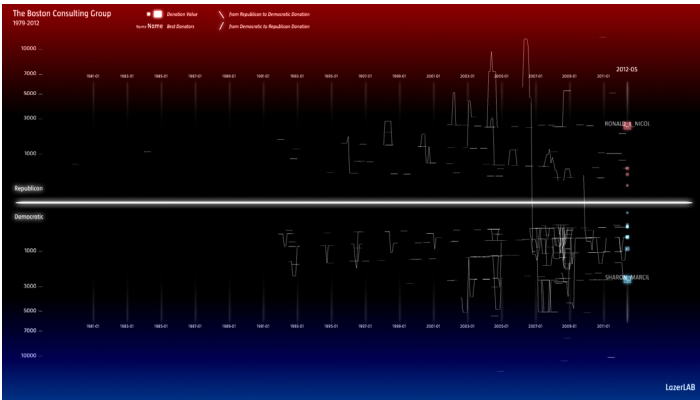
Bain & Company

1981 - 2012



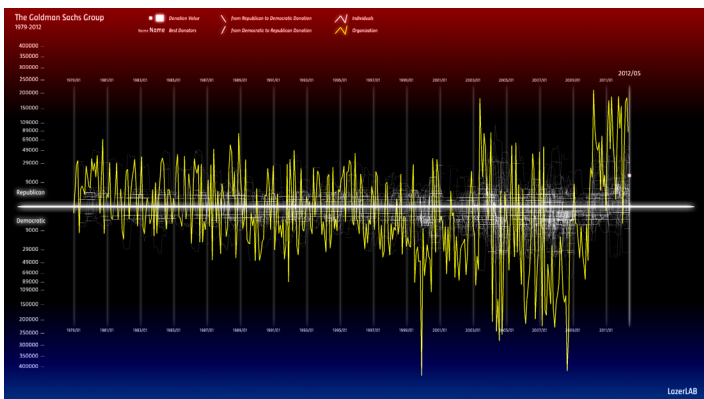
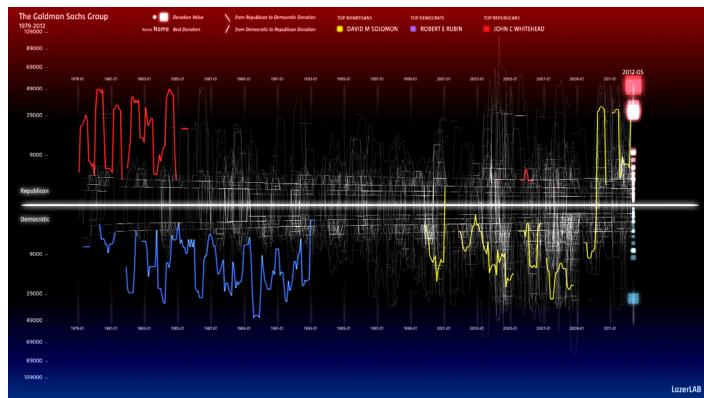
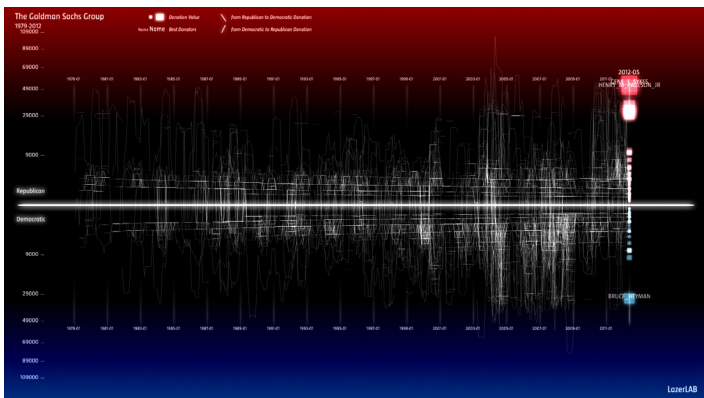
The Boston Consulting Group

1979 - 2012



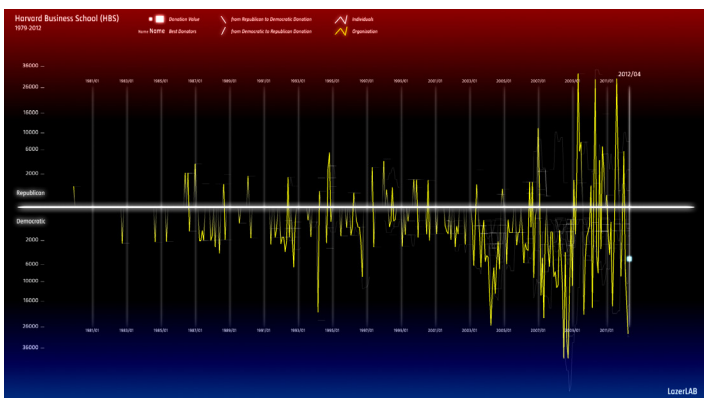
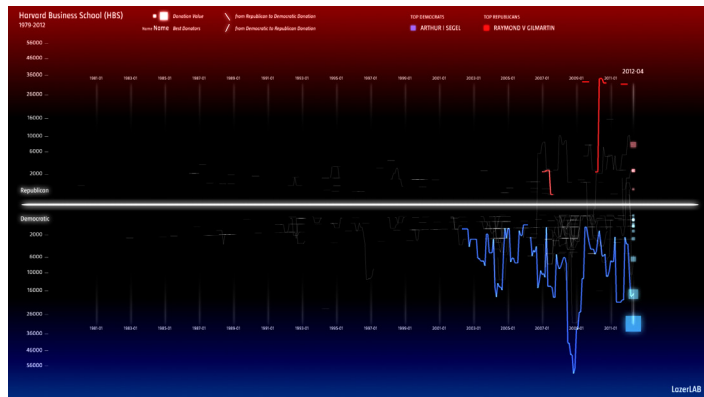
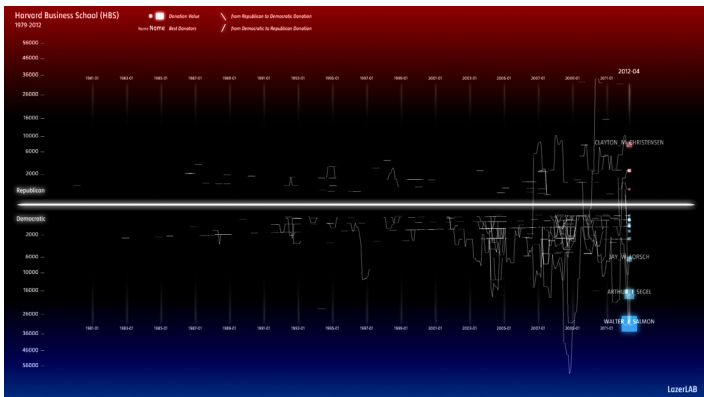
The Goldman Sachs Group

1979 - 2012



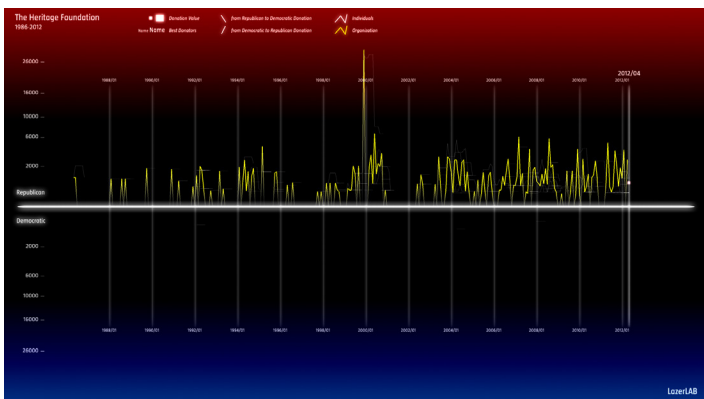
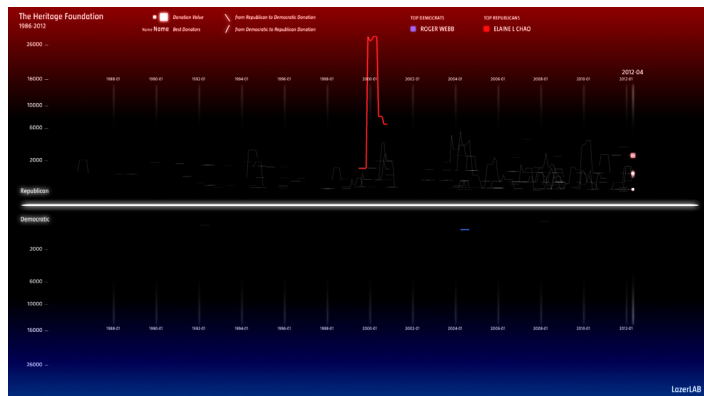
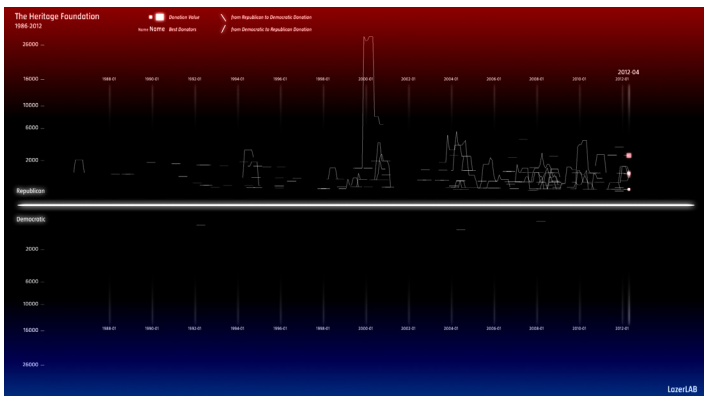
Harvard Business School (HBS)

1979 - 2012



The Heritage Foundation

1986 - 2012



McKinsey & Company

1979 - 2012

