Analysing and Visualising Parliamentary Questions: a Linked Data approach

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Overview

- Problem
- Challenges
- PQViz
Parliamentary Questions (PQs) are intended to scrutinise the respective governments and keep them accountable.

Individual Members of Parliament (MPs) table questions to the executive members of Government to scrutinise the Government’s operative and financial administration.

The number of PQs can become staggeringly high over time causing a number of challenges:

- How to keep track of information encapsulated within the PQs?
- How to effectively search for information?
Current Scenario

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MALTA

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

This site provides a searching tool for Parliamentary Questions submitted by Members of Parliament during the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Legislatures.

Submission of these Questions is regulated by the Standing Orders of the House which mainly state that:

- No Member may submit more than 6 PQs for one sitting;
- Ministries have 3 working days by which to reply;
- The proper object of a question shall be to obtain information on a matter of fact within the special cognizance of the Member to whom it is addressed.

The right to ask questions shall be governed by the following rules:

1. A question shall not publish any name or statement not strictly necessary to make the question intelligible;
2. If a question contains a statement, the Member asking it shall make himself responsible for the accuracy of the statement;
3. A question shall not contain any argument, opinion, inference, imputation, epithet or ironical expression;
4. A question shall not be asked about proceedings in a Committee which have not been placed before the House by a Report from the Committee;
5. A question shall not ask for an expression of opinion or for the solution of an abstract legal question or of a hypothetical proposition;
6. A question shall not be asked as to the character or conduct of any person except in his official or public capacity;
7. A question reflecting on the character or conduct of any person whose conduct can only be challenged on a substantive motion shall not be asked;
8. A question making or implying a charge of a personal character shall be disallowed;
9. A question fully answered cannot be asked again
Current Scenario

Search on Parliamentary Questions & Answers for [All] of the following conditions:

Legislature:
- (None)
- IX
- X
- XI

Category:
- ORAL
- WRITTEN

Raised

By:
- ABELA ANTHONY
- ABELA CARMELO
- ABELA JOSEPH

For Ministry:
- (None)
- Deputat Prim Ministru u Ministru ghall-Affarijiet Ewropj u t-Twettiq tal-Manifet Elettoralji
- Ministrer għall-Infrastruttura, Trasport u Komunikazzjonij
- Ministrer għad-Djalougħu Socjali, Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur u Libertajiet Ċivilij

PQ Number:

Sitting Date (dd/mm/yyyy):
- equal to
- not equal to
- held on
- not held on
- from
- to

Date Raised (dd/mm/yyyy):
- equal to
- not equal to
- held on
- not held on
- from
- to

Results per page:
- 100

Sort Results By:
- PQ Number

Words:
- Я
- Ġ
- Ħ
- Ħ
- Ξ

(Use ^ to match a single character e.g. c? will find cat and cot, use * to match one or more characters e.g. mail* will find Malta, maltese, etc.)

Kindly note that Results per page settings will be IGNORED if you choose PQ Number in 'Sort Results By'

Search Clear
Data Issues

- **Duplicated and unlinked data**
  - Multiple MP entries for the same MP
  - Non-existing link to the MP’s political profile
Search Issues

▪ Issues with current search facility
  ▪ Not User Friendly
  ▪ Difficult and time-consuming to search, especially for non-technical persons.
  ▪ One cannot 'visualise' the collection to view the prevalent terms/concepts in a period.

▪ Apart from the standard keyword search, a user would wish to view how other concepts are related to the concept of interest.
What We are Working On

- Making Parliamentary data more accessible
  - Web / Mobile App (PQViz)
  - Enriched Search and Visualisation
    - graph-based search in context over linked data
    - different visualisation techniques and integrated views over the data
PQViz: Linking PQs

- PQ data is formatted in XML and is received via a web service.
- MP profile data is extracted using dedicated wrappers.
- PQ data is stored in MongoDB.
- RDF Translator is used to convert data from JSON to RDF/XML.
- Data is persisted in Apache Fuseki Server.
PQViz: PQ data model
PQViz: Visualisation

- MPs with the highest activity.
- Possible Sorting by Party.
- Who asked most?
- Who answered most?
PQViz: Visualisation

- Activity by each MP.
- MP Photo, Affiliation and Roles.
- Questions Asked
- Questions Answered.
PQViz: Visualisation

- Interactions between Individual MPs.
- Profile of Each MP.
- PQs asked/answered
- Date Answered.
- Interim/Final Indication.
PQViz: work in progress

- Extraction of PQ Key Words / Concepts.
- Search based on Keywords / Concepts.
- Which MP asked about the same topic (e.g. “health” or a particular locality)
- Which are the most popular topics?
Future Work

- Harmonisation of PQ data entry
- Providing context (from news reports) to PQs
Questions

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