



Court Watch NOLA Docket Dashboard

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ABSTRACT

Court Watch NOLA recruits volunteers to observe Orleans Parish Court proceedings to collect data that supports their efforts fighting towards a more transparent and ethical justice system. Accessing the city's court docket data is fundamental in ensuring CWNola fulfills their mission of advocating for justice and accountability in the courts; however, the city's docket data is extremely disorganized, disconnected, and lacks sufficient search features.

We worked as a team to analyze and clean up the data while extracting additional information from the dockets and CWNola's charge categories. Our team created a web application using the enhanced data that includes authentication, search input, and search output pages, while also allowing the CWNola team to download the raw data output to be used in their own analyses. Finally, in order to ensure data freshness, we created a scraping schedule, which updates our dashboard daily.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Difficult to query Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO) Docket Master
- Disconnected data from the Criminal District Courts when cases had moved from one court to the other
- Tedious search and data download process to gain insight into trends in the court
- Difficult to obtain up-to-date data

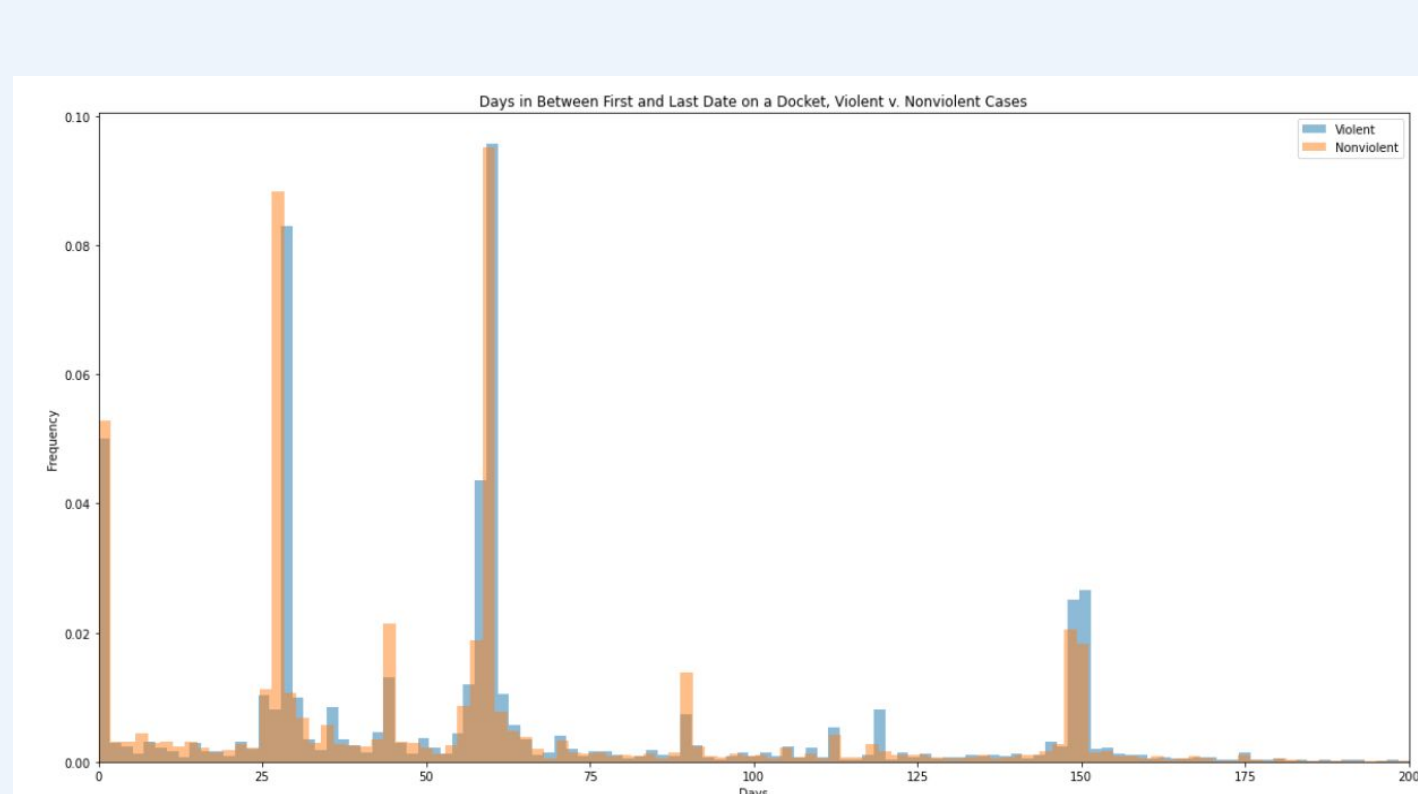
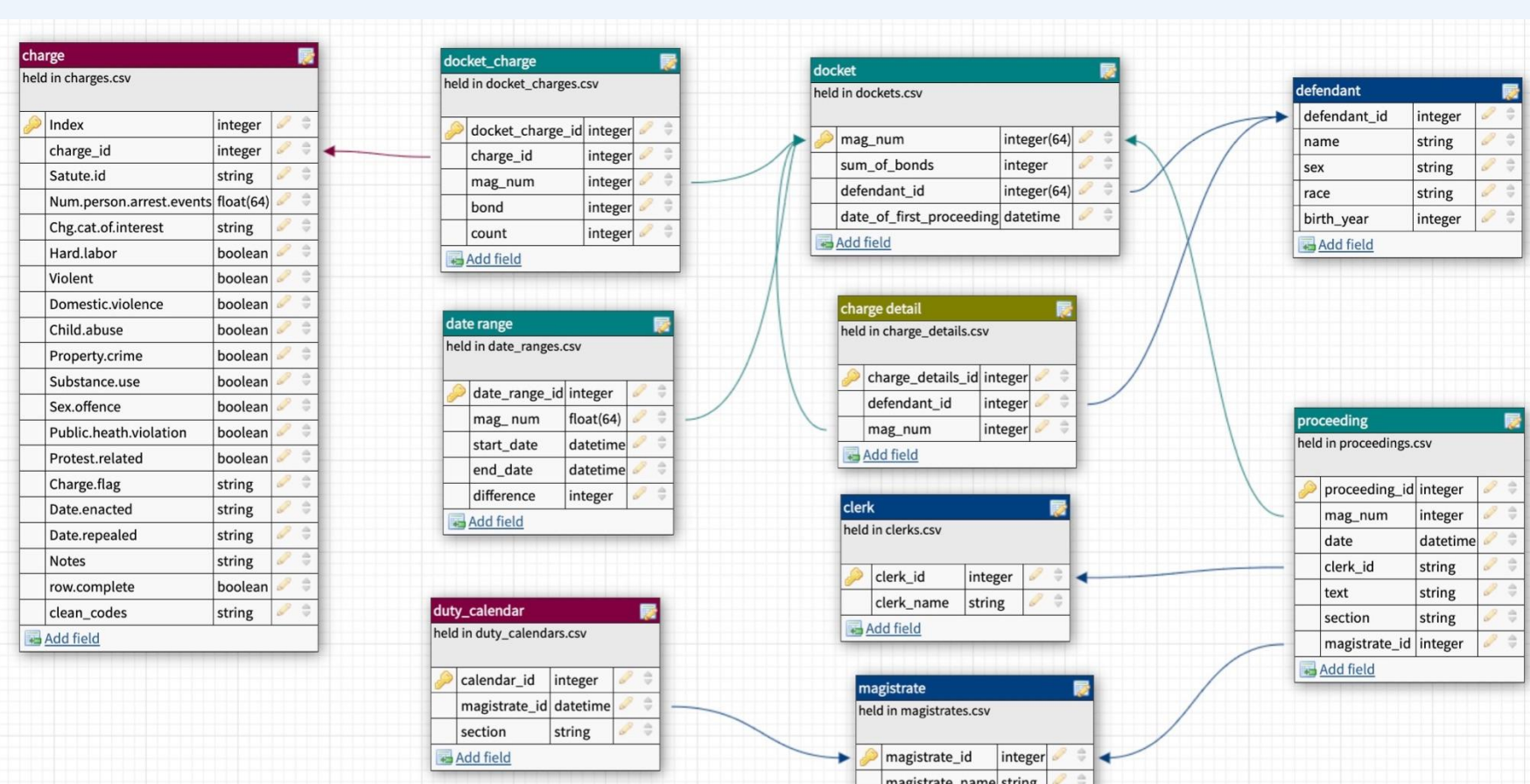
PROJECT GOALS

- Efficient and robust search features
- Organized data schema
- Data freshness
- Downloadable output
- Enhanced output fields
- User-friendly, intuitive interface

APPROACH

Phase 1: Data Cleanup and Exploratory Data Analysis

- Familiarized ourselves with the data, working through data inconsistencies
- Cleaned the data to fit our data schema
- Created sample visualizations and summary statistics regarding the data



(Left) Our data schema, incorporating CWNola charge categories and additionally scraped fields
(Above) Example exploratory visualization, depicting the days in between the first and last docket proceeding for violent vs nonviolent crimes

Phase 2: Preliminary Docket Dashboard

- Imported our data to PostgreSQL and began to build out our initial Django web application using Python, HTML, JavaScript, and CSS
- Used regular expressions to ensure our charge codes were consistent
- Developed a functional search that returned a list of cases based on the input criteria

Phase 3: Enhanced Docket Dashboard

- Expanded search inputs and outputs, connecting Magistrate and Criminal District Court dockets
- Created downloadable raw data output

DOCKET DASHBOARD

Search Functionalities

- Expanded search inputs to follow specific cases or search cases by similar characteristics
- Sort results by date, bond, or magistrate number
- Download Excel raw data of all dockets associated with a specific search, broken up by our data schema
- Expand a specific docket's information

Docket Search

Please enter the information associated with the dockets you want to search. You may enter one or more fields.

Magistrate Number
Enter number

Defendant Name
Enter name

Section
Select section(s)

Charge Code
Select charge code(s)

Charge Name
Select charge name(s)

Bond Total
Min: Enter \$ amount Max: Enter \$ amount

Date of First Proceeding
Start: mm/dd/yyyy End: mm/dd/yyyy

Date of Any Proceeding
Start: mm/dd/yyyy End: mm/dd/yyyy

Keyword(s) from proceeding text
Enter keyword(s) separated by a comma

Only show records with ROR
 Only show records with stay away order

Search

Docket Search Results

Your query matches the following dockets in our database

Magistrate Number	Defendant	Sum of Bonds	Date of First Proceeding	Section(s)
603719	WILL, CHRISTOPHER	\$5,000	March 27, 2023	M2
603718	LEWIS, MICHAEL	\$5,000	March 27, 2023	M2
603722	PROBATIONAL, MARI J	\$5,000	March 27, 2023	M2
603721	WELLS, ROBERT	\$7,500	March 27, 2023	M2
603725	WELLS, ROBERT	\$7,500	March 27, 2023	M2 M3
603724	ALLEN, JAMES	\$10,000	March 27, 2023	M2
603723	ALLEN, JAMES	\$150,000	March 27, 2023	M2
603720	WELLS, ROBERT	\$152,500	March 27, 2023	M2
603704	FLYNN, CHRISTOPHER	\$3,000	March 25, 2023	M2 M5
603686	WELLS, ROBERT	\$0	March 24, 2023	M2 M5
603642	PROBATIONAL, MARI J	\$75,000	March 22, 2023	M1 M2 M4 M5
603619	WELLS, ROBERT	\$1,000	March 20, 2023	M2
603613	WELLS, ROBERT	\$2,500	March 20, 2023	M2
603614	WELLS, ROBERT	\$2,500	March 20, 2023	M2
603615	WELLS, ROBERT	\$3,000	March 20, 2023	M2
603608	WELLS, ROBERT	\$3,500	March 20, 2023	M2
603618	WELLS, ROBERT	\$3,500	March 20, 2023	M2
603380	WELLS, ROBERT	\$2,500	March 5, 2023	M2 D

Demographic Information

Place	B
Sex	M
Birth Year	1984

Charges

Charge Code	Charge Name	Count	Bond
RS 14 95	ILLEGAL CARRYING WEAPONS	1	\$0
RS 14 95 A 1	INTENTIONAL CONCEALMENT OF A WEAPON	1	\$2,500

Proceedings

Date	Section	Clerk	Magistrate	Notes
March 5, 2023	M2	SCHAFFIN	No record.	FIRST APPEARANCE HEARING IN MAGISTRATE COURT SECTION M2 BOND SET FOR \$2,500.00 RESULT-RULE TO SHOW CAUSE FOR 4/04/2023 AT 3:00 PM SCHEDULED -RULE TO SHOW CAUSE ON 4/04/2023 AT 3:00 PM, SECT M3 COURT WAS HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE THE COURT APPOINTED THE OPD TO REPRESENT THE DEFENDANT IN THIS MATTER THE APPOINTMENT WILL LAST AS LONG AS THE DEFENDANT IS INCARCERATED IF THE DEFENDANT IS RELEASED THEY MUST OBTAIN PRIVATE COUNSEL OR APPLY FOR REPRESENTATION AT THE OPD OFFICE

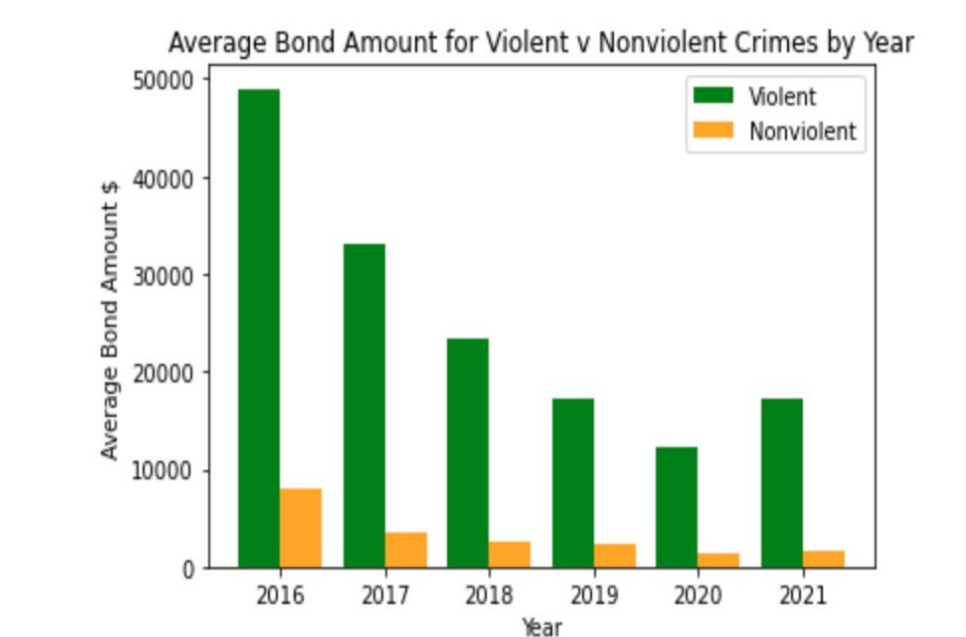
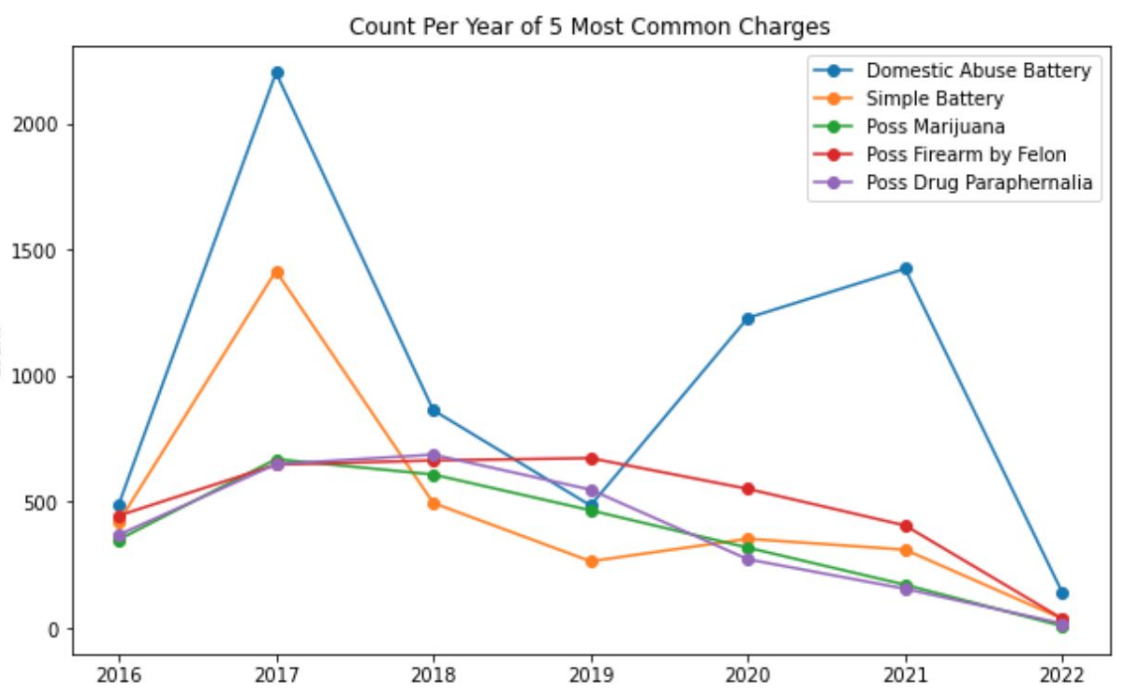
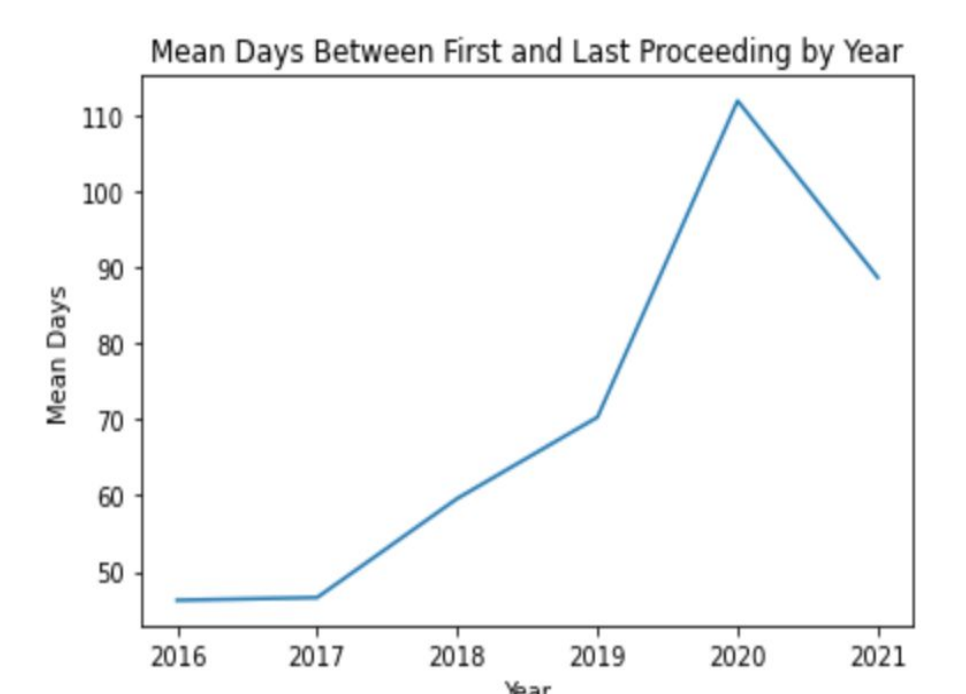
DCD Charges

Charge Code	Charge Name	Count	Bond
RS 14 95 A 1	INTENTIONAL CONCEALMENT OF A WEAPON	1	\$2,500

DCD Proceedings

Date	Section	Clerk	Notes
March 22, 2023	D	WILLIAMSRE	FILED BILL OF INFORMATION CAPIAS ISSUED BOND SET 2,500.00 MAGISTRATE PAPERWORK FILED IN 603380 DOB 8/23/84 F# 25212993

Sample Trend Visualizations



CONCLUSIONS

Project Impacts

- CWNola is able to efficiently search and download this data to use in generating reports regarding the health of the justice system according to various metrics
- The scale of the dashboard is notable - including over 100,000 unique cases and their associated proceedings spanning over a decade
- The docket dashboard updates daily, ensuring data reflects the current state of the courts

This dashboard grants CWNola immediate access to data to support their work promoting accountability in the courts while also contributing to broader data accessibility initiatives in the justice system.

FUTURE WORK

To enhance this work further, the following areas could be explored:

- A scheduler that sends the scraped dockets for the current day to the volunteers
- A mobile application that could be used by CWNola and volunteers during Zoom court sessions
- Connecting the data scraped from the Docket Master with data collected by the CWNola volunteers

REFERENCES

Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office. Susan Hutson. New Orleans, LA: 2023. www.opso.us