

LEAP Database: Local elections in America Project

OTT ID #1366

TECHNOLOGY

The LEAP database is the only comprehensive repository in the nation of local elections and related data that are routinely gathered from publicly available sources, organized by geographic location and date, and stored in relational schemas. LEAP has developed a suite of software application tools to systematically collect, digitize and disseminate data on elections across the United States. LEAP's innovation is in creating a digital archive of past election results, as well as automating data collection for current and future elections.

In the United States, local governments make up over 99% of all governments: There are nearly 90,000 local governments and more than a half million local elected officials in the United States (96% of all elected officials are local officials). Every year, hundreds of thousands of candidates run for local office. LEAP is the only enterprise that systematically collects and compiles data on these elections. LEAP will enable social scientists to investigate research questions that have heretofore been little studied in the context of local politics. It will also provide educators, practitioners, policymakers and government officials with the ability to query the database, examine trends and patterns, and develop a better understanding of local politics and elections in the U.S.

FEATURES/BENEFITS

- **Specialized** – Census indicators have been added to these data allowing customers to ask for more specific data based on time, location, and particular population sizes.
- **Faster** – Local elections have been well-categorized for easy access and these data provide a critical resource for scholars, practitioners and educators, and allow researchers, educators, governments and organizations to learn about, analyze, and make informed decisions about local politics and policy.
- **Teaching Tool** - Through LEAP, undergraduate and graduate students have an opportunity to gain experience and expertise in elections research and analysis
- **Consulting** – The LEAP staff is well versed in local elections, voting behavior, and electoral structures, and is able to provide consulting services to individuals and organizations interested in customized reports or spatial analysis.

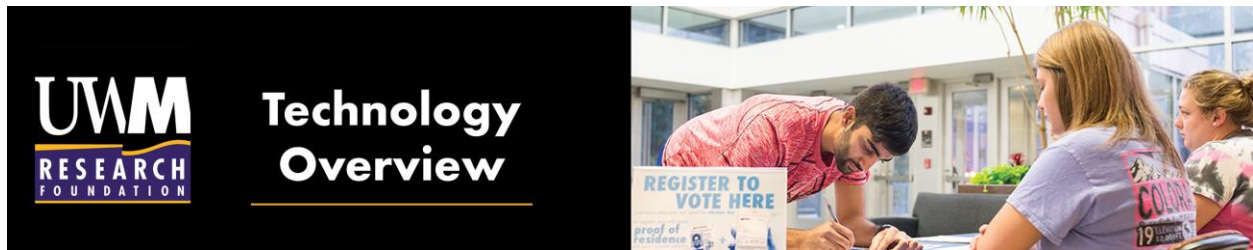
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Copyrighted Work

This software is part of an active and ongoing research program and is seeking partners for development of the final product. It is available for licensing under either exclusive or non-exclusive terms.

MARKETS

Local election data offers an important complement to survey data, which tend to dominate the study of local political behavior. Many surveys provide information about potential voters' behavior, information levels, and attitudes but they are not ideal for understanding either electoral behavior per se or the effects



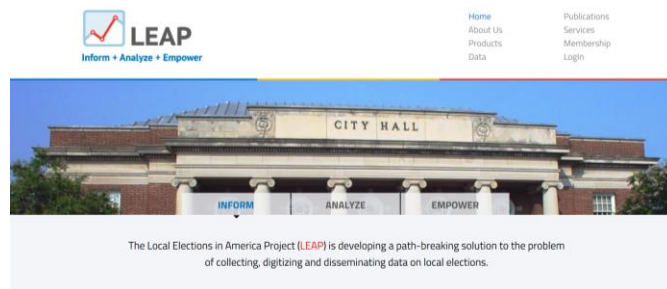
of institutional or contextual variables on political behavior. The Local Elections in America Project has led to the creation of a software infrastructure for a centralized, comprehensive, and cost-effective local elections database for past and future elections. This data will be useful in the creation of customized reports or spatial analysis.

INVENTORS

Paru Shah and Melissa Marschall

Dr. Paru Shah is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She obtained her Ph.D. in Political Science at Rice University and her M.P.H. in Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research focuses on American politics with an emphasis on race, ethnicity and politics, urban politics, and public policy analysis. Dr. Melissa Marschall is a Professor in the Department of Political Science at Rice University. She obtained her Ph.D. in Political Science at SUNY at Stony Brook and an M.A. in international relations and political science at Bogazici University in Istanbul, Turkey. Dr. Marschall's research focuses on local politics, educational policy, participation, and issues of race and ethnicity.

LEAP WEBSITE



<http://www.leap-elections.org>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- [1] Shah, Paru. 2014. ["It Takes a Black Candidate: A Supply-Side Theory of Representation."](#) Political Research Quarterly, 67(2): 266-279.
- [2] Marschall, Melissa, Paru Shah and Anirudh Ruhil. 2011. ["Symposium: The Study of Local Elections: A Looking Glass into the Future."](#) PS: Political Science and Politics, January: 97-100.
- [2] Marschall, Melissa. 2010. ["The Study of Local Election in American Politics."](#) In Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior, ed. by Jan Leighley. Oxford University Press.
- Additional publications and reports can be found at <http://www.leap-elections.org/Publication>

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