



Macaulay Honors College
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For Immediate Release

Who's the Most Wired?—Macaulay Honors College Student Ranks 207 Nations

(September 29, 2015, New York, NY) – Students at Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York, working with the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and CUNY's Graduate School of Journalism, unveiled projects on various global issues of humanitarian concern. Their findings were part of the Introduction to Data Science/Visualization course where Macaulay students analyzed a range of topics, including a global comparison of [access to digital communications](#); a comparison of [life expectancy](#) and educational attainment by country and region; and the change in the [global gender gap](#) index from 2006 to 2013 for multiple countries. These projects designed to teach Macaulay students how to use big data to solve real-world problems were made possible through a generous gift from Norton Garfinkle, founder of Princeton SciTech.

“Macaulay students demonstrated exceptional creativity and thoughtfulness in their analysis and presentation of data from the UN OCHA,” said Russell Chun, a CUNY Journalism School professor who taught the course. “I'm proud of their smart comparisons and insights they revealed in our very short timeframe we had together. Data and visual literacy are not just valuable, but essential, and the more we can teach these skills, the more informed and engaged we can expect our citizenry to be.”

The data journalism course was the result of a partnership with Macaulay and CUNY's Graduate School of Journalism. All projects took their data from the UN Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), a new open platform for sharing humanitarian data. The goal of one project, student Brian Wang's, was to create an index that would quantify and score the electronic communication capabilities of countries around the world. The index was developed based on a number of datasets provided by the United Nations including access to internet and mobile cellular subscriptions. Wang found that the highest-scoring countries were all developed countries: Luxemburg ranked number 1 and the U.S ranked number 25; and that the lowest scoring countries were in developing nations, with North Korea and Burundi ranked at the bottom.

“I felt that I walked away from the course with a solid, well-rounded foundation in data science and a new appreciation for the effort that data scientists put into their work in order to present their information accurately and engagingly,” said Brian. “If I'm able to continue this project in the future, I'd like to explore the relationship between the index I developed and factors of a country such as GDP and literacy rate.”

Support from Norton Garfinkle for the course and other projects will teach students how to mine the trove of big data worldwide to illuminate trends, make predictions and solve issues that confront society locally and globally. All students, in collaboration with faculty members with expertise in data scraping and big data analysis, test hypotheses, analyze data, research and incorporate additional relevant data, and develop and communicate a fact-based, research-tested narrative.

The students findings have been posted online: <http://docs.hdx.rwllabs.org/macaulay-honors-college-visualizations/>

About Macaulay Honors College

Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York offers exceptional students a uniquely personalized education with access to the vast resources of the nation's largest urban university and the largest city, New York City. Selected for their top high school records and leadership potential, Macaulay students receive a full tuition scholarship, a laptop and technology support, and an Opportunities Fund to pursue global learning and service opportunities. Macaulay students enroll in one of eight CUNY senior colleges: Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter, John Jay, Lehman, and Queens Colleges and the College of Staten Island. For more information, see macaulay.cuny.edu.

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