Chapter 10

Politician Truth Ratings and the Political Persuasion Knowledge Base

A rating is a (hopefully) reliable, objective measure of something. Industrialized societies thrive on ratings because they allow people to make better decisions more efficiently. People love to compare things using one simple number.

I can walk down the street and, if I wish, see dozens of ratings in action. There on the window of that famous restaurant is its Michelin Guide rating. It’s three stars! If my friends and I dined there, we’d be guaranteed a meal fit for gastronomic royalty. As we entered, there on the wall, conspicuously posted, would be the restaurant’s health inspection rating. It would be a perfect 100%, of course. After being seated, the sommelier would bring the wine list. If I’d done my homework I would be up to date on the Wine Spectator’s ratings and might order their daily pick, the Australian Yellow Tail Moscato, said to be musky and floral, lingers on the finish. What I wouldn’t tell the wine steward, nor anyone else, was that I’d also used the Wine Spectator’s website to select the restaurant. After all, they had rated over thirty restaurants in my city on wine strength and cuisine. The one we were in now was the very best. How could we go wrong?

Ratings are everywhere. There are bond ratings, stock ratings, Neilson ratings, chess ranking ratings, school quality ratings, credit risk ratings, safety ratings for vehicles, hospital quality of care ratings, new car quality ratings, hiking trail difficulty ratings, mountain climb route difficulty ratings, FiveThirtyEight’s pollster reliability ratings, and many more. Consumer Reports alone rates thousands of products a year for quality, using their 50 testing labs and 327 acre automotive test track.

But when it comes to the ratings citizens need the most, there aren’t any.

The most important repeated decision you and I make is not which wine or car to buy. It’s who to elect to run our government. That decision defines our social world, its rules, its services for citizens, and all the little things that define our potential quality of life.

But as we discussed earlier when constructing The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace model, the winning strategy is political deception. Most politicians lie quite a bit, because it they didn’t they’d lose out to those who do. Sound decisions on who to vote for are anything but easy, because our world is awash in spin. Voters simply cannot trust what politicians say, especially during campaign season when competition for votes is a matter of political life or death. So how do voters make rational decisions and avoid being manipulated without ever even knowing it?
One way, presented in the previous chapter, is the Truth Test. But that only provides the fundamentals of truth literacy. A truth literate person can usually tell political truth from falsehood. But does the average voter have the time and ability to sample the speeches, ads, articles, and anything else a field of candidates has said or written to arrive at a reliable conclusion on their fitness for office, by applying the Truth Test to each candidate in a thorough manner? Some do, but most do not. It’s an impossible job to do as well as it should be done, just as it’s impossible for the average person to study all the wines or cars available, in order to arrive at a reasonably optimal choice. Only experts can perform that role.

This is why the Truth Test must be supplemented with Politician Truth Ratings.

**Politician Truth Ratings**

**Politician Truth Ratings** would provide an accurate measure of the truth of important statements made by politicians. First a government passes legislation creating Freedom from Falsehood. This makes lying by politicians to gain public support on elections or positions illegal. To efficiently implement the legislation, the government implements Politician Truth Ratings. All important elected officials then receive Truth Ratings, though it would take some time to ramp up the program. Campaign speeches, ads, articles, speeches once in office, and so on are rated for the truth of the arguments employed. This may seem like an expensive burden, but most arguments and facts are repeated. Only the first occurrence requires new work. In addition, everything need not be checked. A statistically valid sample will do.

It’s possible that fines for excessive lying by politicians will be required. However, the most efficient penalty is not a fine. It is public knowledge a politician broke trust with the citizens of his or her country and lied. Once voters can see who they can and can’t trust, that’s where their votes will go. Which positions a politician supports also matter, like sustainably, health care, gun control, tax reform, etc. But what matters more than any of these is trust. Can a voter trust a politician to do what they claim they will do during a campaign? Once in office, can a voter trust that what a politician is saying is the truth?

Truth Ratings need not affect all voters to make the critical difference—only the swing voters, who are normally just 10% to 30%. Fortunately it is this group who is most likely to be receptive to a tangible, sound reason to choose one politician over another.

A **truth rating** is the probability a politician’s important arguments are true. For example a few days after a debate, its Truth Ratings would come out. They might say that candidate A averaged 45% true, while candidate B averaged 70%. Guess which candidate would probably win the debate in the public’s mind? Or suppose the two candidates averaged only a five point difference in ratings. Then issue differences would determine who won. Or suppose one candidate said she had a plan for accom-
plishing something and the opposing candidate claimed the plan was faulty and would not work. The truth raters would examine the plan and rate it for probable effectiveness. That would enter the politician’s Truth Ratings. Voters could look up the details behind the ratings if interested, and find out why the plan would or would not work, or why a particular statement was false.

Those doing the ratings would probably be certified rating organizations, ones with no conflict of interest and therefore non-profit. If an organization doing a series of ratings was credible and the public trusted the ratings, The Public Loves Those They Can Trust feedback loop (described later in this chapter) would begin. Politicians would compete to see who could be the most trustworthy and therefore the most helpful. While things would not be perfect, campaigns would become based on reason and truth rather than deception. As politicians began competing on the basis of the truth about what they can do for the common good, the Race to the Top Among Politicians feedback loop would go dominant and the health of democracy would be restored.

Here’s an example of how Politician Truth Ratings could look:

It’s a Close Race. Here are the Ratings:

**Politician A**

**Politician B**

Analysis findings: Ratings were prepared using PPKB argument analysis. A total of 370 important arguments (claims) were randomly selected for each candidate for the last five years. Since each politician made no more than 10,000 important statements during that period this gives a margin of error of plus or minus five percent. This is smaller than the 30% gap between the two politicians, so the rating difference is significant at the 95% level of confidence.
The fact checkers arrive!

Efforts to provide the beginnings of Politician Truth Ratings are springing up spontaneously. For example, in October of 2006 Eric Schmidt, chairman and CEO of Google predicted: 85

…that, within five years, ‘truth predictor’ software would ‘hold politicians to account.’ Voters would be able to check the probability that apparently factual statements by politicians were actually correct, using programs that automatically compared claims with historic data.

Organizations like FactCheck.org, PolitiFact, Africa Check, FactCheckEU, Full Fact, TruthOrFiction.com, Vote Smart, Facts Fight Back, and Chequeado offer a variety of forms of fact checking. However, design of their product is not based on root cause analysis. There’s no analysis of how to raise general ability to detect political deception in an efficient, prolonged manner with a tightly focused mechanism like Truth Ratings. Fact checking has had only modest impact. Important elections and decisions continue to be controlled by crafty deception.

A popular fact checking site is FactCheck.org, the pioneer in the field. Visiting their website just now on July 8, 2016, on the home page are articles on Clinton’s Handling of Classified Information, Trump’s Fanciful Iran Negotiation, and Suspected Terrorists and Guns. Reading the last one, it introduces the topic, then lists “some of the claims made by both sides in the debate.” This is followed by a long thoughtful discussion of each claim and its truthfulness. But how many citizens are going to take the time to study these articles, which are not written for popular consumption, but for highly educated readers who love poring over the facts and logic behind a claim? This is not to fault FactCheck.org, which is making a difference.

What could make much more of a difference is Truth Ratings for each politician. These do not appear to be available. Clicking on 2016 Elections and then the first item, Hillary Clinton, brings up a page of articles about her. The first is Revisiting Clinton and Classified Information. This reads like the article described above. It’s well written and researched, but who is going to read such a long technical article, with no clear concise conclusions? Some, but not many.

PolitiFact provides something closer to a Truth Rating. Going to Hillary Clinton’s page on July 8, 2016, I found the image shown: 86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinton’s statements by ruling</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Click on the ruling to see all of Clinton’s statements for that ruling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True</td>
<td>51 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly True</td>
<td>62 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half True</td>
<td>47 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly False</td>
<td>33 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False</td>
<td>25 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pants on Fire</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is getting wonderfully close to Truth Ratings. At a glance you can see the approximate pattern of truth. But is there one number summarizing the data? No. This gives you no easy way to compare candidates. It’s also impossible to accurately remember the truth level of a candidate. Instead you are forced to remember something like “clumped in mostly true.”

The data is there to calculate a Truth Rating for Hillary. First we have to set the scale. Let’s set True = 100%, Mostly True = 75%, Half True = 50%, Mostly False = 30%, False = 15%, and Pants on Fire = 0%. A total of 221 statements were checked. The Truth Rating would be \( \frac{51 \times 1.00 + 62 \times 0.75 + 47 \times 0.50 + 33 \times 0.30 + 25 \times 0.15 + 3 \times 0.00}{221} = 61\% \). That’s all you need to know most of the time, though you can dig deeper for more detail. At this point in the presidential race, Hillary Clinton had a Truth Rating of 61%.

Or did she? All statements are not checked, so a question arises: Is the sample unbiased? That requires a random sample. PolitiFact doesn’t take that approach. Here’s what they do: 87

Choosing claims to check – Every day, PolitiFact and PunditFact staffers look for statements that can be checked. We comb through speeches, news stories, press releases, campaign brochures, TV ads, Facebook postings and transcripts of TV and radio interviews. Because we can’t possibly check all claims, we select the most newsworthy and significant ones. In deciding which statements to check, we ask ourselves these questions:

1. Is the statement rooted in a fact that is verifiable? We don’t check opinions, and we recognize that in the world of speechmaking and political rhetoric, there is license for hyperbole.

2. Is the statement leaving a particular impression that may be misleading?

3. Is the statement significant? We avoid minor "gotchas" on claims that obviously represent a slip of the tongue.

4. Is the statement likely to be passed on and repeated by others?

5. Would a typical person hear or read the statement and wonder: Is that true?

While the procedure is documented and thoughtful, it’s not a rigorously systematic, reproducible, unbiased procedure. In fact, large selection bias could creep in due to competing with other news sources to have “the most newsworthy and significant” checked claims. If it bleeds it leads. The screening questions also allow bias, though they adroitly eliminate non-arguments or irrelevant arguments.
PolitiFact acknowledges this: “Our ratings are also not intended to be statistically representative but to show trends over time.” Overall, PolitiFact’s work is a terrific start. I expect that unbiased, accurate, affordable Truth Ratings for all politicians will not fully arrive until they can be computer analyzed and calculated. This requires advanced AI (artificial intelligence). Meanwhile we can do what PolitiFact is doing, with improvement as needed.

Fact checking organizations are breaking new ground. Step by courageous step they are bringing truth checking to the forefront of journalism. The best overall example I found was a graphic in a New York Times article, All Politicians Lie. Some Lie More Than Others. The article discussed PolitiFact’s findings on the 2016 US presidential election race so far, highlighting the role of journalists in making voters more truth literate.

Today’s TV journalists — anchors like Chuck Todd, Jake Tapper and George Stephanopoulos — have picked up the torch of fact-checking and now grill candidates on issues of accuracy during live interviews. Most voters don’t think it’s biased to question people about whether their seemingly fact-based statements are accurate. Research published earlier this year by the American Press Institute showed that more than eight in 10 Americans have a positive view of political fact-checking.

In fact, journalists regularly tell me their media organizations have started highlighting fact-checking in their reporting because so many people click on fact-checking stories after a debate or high-profile news event. Many readers now want fact-checking as part of traditional news stories as well; they will vocally complain to ombudsmen and readers’ representatives when they see news stories repeating discredited factual claims.

On the next page is the amazing graphic presented in the article.
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Statements since 2007 by presidential candidates (and some current and former officeholders) ranked from most dishonest over all to least dishonest, as fact-checked by PolitiFact. ‘Pants on Fire’ refers to the most egregious falsehoods. Too few statements have been fact-checked to include Jim Gilmore, George E. Pataki and George W. Bush. The number of statements analyzed varies for each person. Some bars total more or less than 100% because of rounding. Source: PolitiFact. [Graphic] By Bill Marsh/The New York Times

“Falsehood Face-Off” – Statements since 2007 by presidential candidates (and some current and former officeholders) ranked from most dishonest over all to least dishonest, as fact-checked by PolitiFact. ‘Pants on Fire’ refers to the most egregious falsehoods. Too few statements have been fact-checked to include Jim Gilmore, George E. Pataki and George W. Bush. The number of statements analyzed varies for each person. Some bars total more or less than 100% because of rounding. Source: PolitiFact. [Graphic] By Bill Marsh/The New York Times

This is an excellent graphic based on excellent data. It was slightly modified. “Half False, Half True” was moved from the top to the bottom to allow “Percent True or Mostly True” to be a column head. The line between Rand Paul and Joseph Biden was added to mark a strong pattern. Except for Jeb Bush, all Republicans are above the line and all Democrats are below it. The data show that for US presidential candidates since 2007, Republicans employ a much higher amount of political deception than Democrats, about double.
This pattern confirms several hypotheses in The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace model: (1) Over time, politicians will evolve into two main groups: those in the Race to the Top and the Race to the Bottom, the left and the right, due to the inherent advantage of the Race to the Bottom. (2) Those in the Race to the Bottom will tend to support issues and ideologies favorable to powerful special interests, notably *Corporatis profitis* and the rich. (3) Since special interests are a minority, the only way to convince a majority to vote for them and support their positions is deception. Reliance on political deception is thus the principle strategy of the Race to the Bottom. (4) In contrast, the Race to the Top will tend to support issues and ideologies favorable to the common good, which is the majority. (5) This is best done by reliance on the truth.

The PolitiFact data strongly confirms all five hypotheses. In the US, Republicans align with large for-profit corporations and the rich. Democrats align with the middle class and the poor, and common good causes like progressive taxation, racial equality, universal health care, unions, minority rights, gun control, environmental sustainability, etc. Republicans rely on a high rate of deception, while Democrats rely on a high rate of the truth.

However, we need to be cautious. The graphic data was not collected using a random sample and could be biased. Thus we only have tentative confirmation of the hypotheses. Still, the confirmation is dramatic.

The graphic almost has a measure of Truth Ratings. The far right column of numbers is percent true or mostly true. That’s a rough Truth Rating. However, as discussed it’s not as accurate as it needs to be if voters are to rely on it as a major decision making tool. Deceptive politicians must be prevented from gaming the system and achieving unwarranted higher ratings. Any significant bias can be manipulated. If arguments are not weighted for importance in terms of future impact then a deceptive politician can utter lots of unimportant claims that are true, a few important ones that are false, and end up with an unjustified high rating. The ratings should be the running average of a period of time, such as the last five or ten years. The previous election campaign should always be included. Experimentation will determine what works best.

**A Politician Truth Ratings example**

The fact-checking industry is tantalizingly close to producing Politician Truth Ratings so that politicians can be quickly compared. For example, consider this graphic, which uses a scale of zero to four Pinocchios:
Except for the fact (pun intended) that the claims were not randomly sampled, all the data we need to calculate a Truth Rating for both candidates is there. First we translate the scale from zero to four Pinocchios to a zero to 100% confidence level of truthfulness. Zero Pinocchios = 100% true, 1 Pinocchio = 75%, 2 Pinocchios = 50%, 3 Pinocchios = 25%, and 4 Pinocchios = 0%. For Clinton, the rating would be \((7 \times 1.00 = 7) + (3 \times 0.75 = 2.25) + (15 \times 0.5 = 7.5) + (15 \times 0.25 = 3.75) + (6 \times 0 = 0) = 20.5\). That’s for 46 statements. Converting to 100 statements, 20.5 \times (100/46) = 44.56. For Trump, \((3 \times 1.00 = 3) + (1 \times 0.75 = 0.75) + (6 \times 0.5 = 3) + (17 \times 0.25 = 4.25) + (50 \times 0 = 0) = 11\). That’s for 77 statements. Converting to 100 statements, 11 \times (100/77) = 14.29. Clinton’s rating is three times as high as Trumps, an enormous difference.

Now suppose the article had used the calculations to produce this graphic:

What’s the real story here? The gigantic difference between the two ratings. Of the two graphics, which one tells that story better? Which story is easier to remember many months later, which you are standing in the voting booth?

Next let’s examine a mature rating to see what can be learned from it.
The analogy of credit ratings

Politician Truth Ratings are analogous to credit ratings. To demonstrate how important credit ratings have become in just one area, the corporate bond market, here is an excerpt from testimony presented to the US Senate on March 20, 2002, to the Committee on Governmental Affairs, chaired by Senator Joe Lieberman: 90 (Italics added)

Simply put, a credit rating is an assessment of a company’s credit worthiness or its likelihood of repaying its debt.

John Moody, the founder of what is now Moody’s Investors Service, is recognized for devising credit ratings in 1908 for public debt issues, mostly railroad bond issues. Moody’s credit ratings, first published in 1909, met a need for accurate, impartial, and independent information.

Now, almost a century later, an ‘investment grade’ credit rating has become an absolute necessity for any company that wants to tap the resources of the capital markets. The credit raters hold the key to capital and liquidity, the lifeblood of corporate America and of our capitalist economy. The rating affects a company’s ability to borrow money; it affects whether a pension fund or a money market fund can invest in a company’s bonds; and it affects stock price. The difference between a good rating and a poor rating can be the difference between success and failure, prosperity and bad fortune.

In a similar manner, the difference between a good politician rating and a poor one would be the difference between success and failure for politicians, and prosperity and bad fortune for the public.

But even more interesting is the testimony went on to say:

The government—through hundreds of laws and regulations—requires corporate bonds to be rated if they’re to be considered appropriate investments for many institutional investors.

So too would the government require politicians to be rated if they were to be considered appropriate choices for many citizens. Credit ratings greatly lower the risk of financial loss. Truth Ratings would greatly lower the risk of a dominant Race to the Bottom among Politicians. If they proved as successful as credit ratings, they would lower it by somewhere around 99%, which would make sizeable cases of a dominant Race to the Bottom about as frequent as Halley’s Comet.

Presently Truth Ratings are not required but corporate bond ratings are. This is one more example of how, over the centuries, Corporatis profitis has silently defined the rules of the game to be in its favor. The reason we don’t already have something like Politician Truth Ratings is that would prevent exploitation of the inherent weakness in the Race to the Bottom by Corporatis profitis.
How Truth Ratings work dynamically

Like all deep structural change, Truth Ratings would cause important new feedback loops to become dominant, as modeled below.

The Dynamic Structure of Politician Truth Ratings

Once the goal of Freedom from Falsehood exists, the two loops are activated. The two loops work together to cause Truth Ratings to soar from low to high.

The key loop is **The Drive for Rating Excellence**. This is probably the most important feedback loop in the entire effort to push on the high leverage point of raise general ability to detect political deception. If it works the whole solution will probably work. The loop works like this:

At first Truth Ratings are low. The goal of Freedom from Falsehood requires high ratings, so the ratings gap starts out high. The gap equals the goal minus Truth Ratings. Because the gap is high so is the incentive to get higher ratings, since the public uses ratings as a prime criteria for decisions on which politicians to support. The way to get higher ratings is to tell and implement more of the truth, which increases quality of politician work and level of truth. This causes Truth Ratings to increase, which causes the ratings gap to decrease. The loop goes round and round, as it homes in on its goal.

Politicians drive the loop on the right. The public drives the loop on the left, named **The Public Loves Those They Can Trust**. The loop works like this:

At first Truth Ratings are low. They vary from politician to politician and would be embarrassingly bad for some. Those with higher ratings, especially in aspects important to particular voters, have a relative advantage of a politician in the eyes of the public. This causes public support of politicians with higher ratings to increase. That in turn increases their election and reelection advantage. That causes the quality of politicians elected to go up. After a delay, that will cause quality of politician work and level of the truth to also go up. That causes Truth Ratings to rise, and we’re back where we started.
The two loops drive the level of truth up until it’s high. At some point that causes the desired mode change in The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace. The Dueling Loops flip from a dominant Race to the Bottom to a dominant Race to the Top, because politicians are telling the truth more and more of the time. Once Truth Ratings goes high, the Race to the Top becomes totally dominant as modeled in simulation Run 14 on page 115, also shown below. (Run 22 also shows the problem solved, but that graph is not as clear as Run 14. The two graphs have identical outcomes.)

In this run general ability to detect deception is 80%, a fairly high level. 80% of false memes are detected. A significantly higher level is probably not be possible, due to the sophistication of some falsehoods and the fact that it’s simply not possible to inoculate the entire population against deception. But that’s okay. The graph shows how even with only 80% general ability to detect political deception, percent rationalists rises to 100%. It’s essentially a perfect solution.

The root cause of change resistance, the inherent advantage of the Race to the Bottom, has been resolved. The Race to the Bottom no longer enjoys an advantage because the solution has caused general ability to detect political deception to change from low to high. Instead, it’s the Race to the Top that now enjoys an inherent advantage. That advantage comes from the newly introduced feedback loops.

This is deep, lasting, social system engineering change, and is the perfect example of the potential of analytical activism.

**The Political Persuasion Knowledge Base (PPKB)**

The PPKB is a tool for analyzing the truth of persuasive texts. A text is a speech, article, debate, ad, or anything that can be converted into text. While it can be used on any kind of text, the PPKB was designed for analyzing the truth of political texts. The results can be used for Politician Truth Ratings.

The PPKB was designed as an example of how the grunt work of Truth Ratings, analyzing the truth of what a politician said, can be done in an efficient large-scale manner. If Truth Ratings are to become widely used, such a tool is required. The PPKB runs on a relational database and is scalable to hundreds of thousands of texts, though only a few have been entered. The project has reached the proof of concept.
stage. The next step would be pilot testing. The PPKB is freely available at Thwink.org.

Analyzing arguments in a high quality manner is hard work. What I discovered as I designed and built the PPKB was that argument analysis was so excruciatingly complex that the analyst needs a surprisingly complex tool. To accommodate these needs the PPKB has these features:

1. The argument is the unit of analysis, not the fact.
2. Each argument has one or more facts, one or more rules, and a single main conclusion. It may also have premises and intermediate conclusions.
3. Facts and rules are reusable, so they are stored separately from arguments. A fact is some discrete piece of knowledge that we know with some level of confidence. A rule of inference is used to persuade people they can be confident that premises, if true, lead to a conclusion. Each fact and rule has a confidence level of zero to 100%.
4. Facts and rules are organized into hierarchical trees. These may be searched.
5. Arguments are organized into a hierarchy of groups, texts, arguments. A group contains texts. A text contains arguments. If a group is a politician, then that politician’s Truth Rating is always current. This is a simple approach and will need to be improved.
6. An argument that appears more than once can be reused by entering it as a fact. Presently the fact’s confidence level must be manually updated if the confidence level changes in the argument.
7. Argument elements may be weighted for importance.
8. The confidence level (truth) of an argument is automatically calculated.
9. As an argument is built it is automatically diagramed.

Presently the PPKB has 53 rules and 41 facts. More are added as needed as arguments are analyzed. 3 groups containing a total of 8 texts have been entered as sample material. To get a feel for how the PPKB works, let’s look at some of the data that has been entered.

Below is a group for democratic US presidential campaigns. A group has a description, media type, and one or more texts. This one has three texts. Each text has a confidence level. The average of these is shown in the upper right.
Subproblem A – Without Truth Literacy, Democracy Cannot Survive

Clicking on the third Text button leads to this screen:
There’s a lot of information here. This text is a TV ad. The Original tab lists the text. Marked and Structured tabs are used for marking up and structuring texts. Despite the small amount of text, it contains 4 arguments. The PPKB operates on the philosophy that no arguments in a text should be ignored. All must be analyzed. If one argument is less relevant or not relevant at all, that’s handled by giving it a low or zero weight. The first argument has a zero weight since it’s the standard disclaimer that begins legitimate TV ads from candidates.

Each of the 4 arguments has an automatically calculated confidence level (CL), as shown. These levels and their weights are used to calculate the Weighted Confidence Level. This text has a level of 69%, which is its Truth Rating.

The hardest part, at least for me, is marking up and structuring a text so it can be entered into the PPKB. Below is the original text:

Text like this contains a swirl of explicit and implied arguments. All must be analyzed. The first step is to marking up the areas of the text. I copied the text, clicked on the Marked Text tab, and then pasted the text. Then I marked it up. Here are the results:
As in PolitiFact’s procedure, anything that’s not part of a bona fide argument is tossed out. The notes in bold describe the analyst’s reasoning. The Summary and Comments are helpful for recording more of that reasoning as you go.

Note how we have smoothly moved from Original Text to Marked Text. The PPKP tries to make the analyst’s work as pleasurable, efficient, and accurate as possible. Every little step happens in the tool. There is no need for hand notes, word processors, spreadsheets, calculators, diagramming by hand, and so on. It’s a fully integrated tool.

Fact checking is not the same as Truth Ratings. While the PPKB supports fact checking, it was designed to produce high quality Truth Ratings.

The next step is to structure the marked up text. I copied the Marked Text, clicked on the Structured Arguments tab, and then pasted. Then I spent several hours fully structuring it, the hardest and most important step in the analysis. The results are on the next page.
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The next step is to enter the 4 arguments. Let's look at just one. Going back to the Text screen, it has the 4 arguments already entered. Clicking on the first Argument button takes you to this screen:

|------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|

[Same as argument in video 1, so the conclusion from that argument is reused here.]

Obama: I'm Barack Obama and I approve this message.

1. New Fact: The video said "I am Barack Obama and I approve this message." This applies to the "2012 Obama vs Romney - Democrat - Video 3 - Firms" TV ad. (A)
2. New Fact: List of pattern attributes for where the above fact matches its argument context. (B)
3. New Fact: The Main Conclusion from the video 1 argument. Custom CL. (C)
4. New Rule: If statement A matches the attributes of pattern B, then reusable conclusion C follows. This is induction by analogy.
5. Main Conclusion: This is a legitimate political ad rather than one from an unknown source with usually devious intentions. (C reused)

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[This argument implies Romney should be condemned because his firms routinely outsourced US jobs.]

Caption: In business, Mitt Romney's firms shipped jobs to Mexico and China. (Los Angeles Times)

Fact: Job offshoring is bad for a nation's economy. (If P then Q)
Fact: "Romney's firms [offshored US] jobs to Mexico and China." (P)
Fact: "As Governor, Romney outsourced jobs to India. The Boston Globe 5/1/12" (P)
Rule: Modus ponens. (If P then Q; P; Therefore Q.)
Main Conclusion: In the past, Romney regularly behaved in a manner that was seriously detrimental to the health of the US economy, by offshoring US jobs.

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[This argument implies Romney should be condemned because he's rich.]

Caption: He had millions in a Swiss bank account. ABC News 1/26/12

Fact: Being rich is irrelevant. Being rich would be relevant if it was shown that a politician's money was being used in a manner that would hurt an electorate. However, this is not shown. Therefore this is an ad hominem attack.
Fact: "He [Mitt Romney] had millions in a Swiss bank account. ABC News 1/26/12" (P2, CL irrelevant)
Rule: Ad hominem attack. If a character trait does not affect a person's job performance (P1) and the claim is made that that trait is relevant (P2), then the claim is false (Q).
Main Conclusion: Romney would not make a good president because he's rich. (CL 0%)
At this point your work speeds up. Using the Structured Arguments information, the elements of an argument are entered. This one has 5 elements, one row per element. The second fact has a zero weight because it’s unimportant. The default weight is medium.

As the rows are entered, you can click on Calculate or Build Diagram anytime. Calculate produces the Weighted Confidence Level of the argument. Build Diagram does exactly that, as shown. I found that anything but a very simple argument was impossible to clearly conceptualize without a visual diagram, so I spent lots of time with the diagram feature. Diagram layout can be adjusted with the < and > buttons.

This is a simple argument, with 3 facts and 1 rule. To do a high quality job of analysis, even this simple argument requires lots of complex decision making and data entry, plus calculation and diagramming. Imagine how hard this becomes as argument complexity increases. Highly complex arguments, with over 20 elements or so, are impossible to analyze efficiently and correctly without a sophisticated tool like the PPKB.

The PPKB was designed to handle potentially fallacious arguments in a methodical, air-tight manner. This is done with a collection of reusable rules. A portion of these are shown on the next page.
On the left, rules are organized into a tree of categories. The Fallacies of induction category is selected. It contains 7 rules. On the right, the Gambler’s fallacy is selected. This shows a summary of the rule. The large box contains more detail for the rule: “P has not occurred recently. Therefore P will happen soon. If occurrences of P are independent then this is a fallacy.

Example: It hasn’t rained in awhile, so it will rain soon.” Clicking on Factor for a rule lets you edit the rule.

Loose reasoning leads to sloppy analysis, so the PPKB encourages (but does not require) use of formal syllogisms. Aristotle is our friend. To illustrate how these can be used, 53 rules have been entered.

This completes a brief introduction to the Political Persuasion Knowledge Base. The tool is young. Its purpose is to demonstrate that efficient, accurate, unbiased, replicable analysis of political arguments is possible and thereby encourage further research in this area.

Imagine a long debate occurred last night and your staff has hundreds of complex arguments to analyze correctly. The results will lead to Truth Ratings for each candidate in the debate, and will be scrutinized by millions of voters once published. A tool something like the PPKB is indispensable for tasks like this. Fortunately the technology for building such a tool is now available.

I’d like to think that since that technology is now available, the complete sustainability problem is now solvable.