



Whisky Brands analysis

Introduction

For this piece of analysis we looked at trying to determine what was the best whisky, using online social media from around the world. Specifically, we identified a number of whisky forums based in a number of different countries, such as the UK, USA, and the far east.

We included forums from the far east as this is a growing market for whisky and could also be seen as a threat due to the explosion of whisky copycat companies in this part of the world.

Analysis

The question of what is the best whisky brand is not an easy question to answer. What makes the best whisky? This is evidently a very subjective question, and in order to answer it (from one particular point of view) we looked at the web pages of the whisky brands themselves in order to determine what language they used to describe their own product.

A number of words came through, such as: malty, golden, peaty, smooth. We used a list of these words and search in context against the data that we had downloaded. Notice that since we search in context this is not the same as searching directly for just these words. By searching in context we automatically include other words that are used in a similar context.

We conducted two sets of analysis, over two separate months worth of data. This gave sufficient time for there to be enough new data to analyse from the forums that we had selected.

As can be seen in both figure 1 and 2, the malts are predominantly at the upper end of the scale, showing that the analysis would seem to reflect the public's view that the malt whiskys most likely possess the characteristics that were listed above.

Note here that we have not used the word 'best' or other synonyms of it. We have searched the forum data in context, to find which brands are closest in context to the words listed above. This is an important distinction to make, and indicates which whisky brands are most successful in terms of public opinion of being: golden, malty, peaty, smooth and so on.



Figure 1: Best whisky brands according to analysis on Month 1 data



Figure 2: Best whisky brands according to analysis on Month 2 data



Conclusions

The two figures show a different top 10, although it can be seen that largely the same whisky brands appear. Over time, analysis conducted in this way could be used to identify new whisky brands that threaten the traditional malts, or how individual whisky brands are slipping up or down the list.

Further to this, the analysis would also give an insight into the reasons why, since the contextual analysis would automatically highlight the conversations that were taking place around each particular whisky brand and the changing language being used. In this way, trending of the whisky brands can be evaluated from a top level view (as in our figures), or from a lower level where a deeper understanding of the public's perception of each individual whisky brand can be made.

Using the contextual analysis tools we have developed, we could examine in more detail the concepts coming up in context with the various whisky brands. At first we were puzzled by a particular group of words coming up: tea and green. Our analysts at first thought that the analysis was wrong, and this led to a check and recheck of the program code. What on earth could be producing this strange bug?

It took us a little time and further research to realise that with some data coming from the far east, green tea is a staple part of their diet, and many forum discussions involved which whisky tasted best with it! This type of result only comes about when contextual analysis is undertaken, and highlights yet again the strength and power of the Brand Aura approach to analysing this type of data.