

Markov Chain Text Generators and Blackout Poetry - CS Students

Markovify Tutorial

To get a basic idea of how to harness Markov Chains in Python to create simple text generators, visit the tutorial below.

https://colab.research.google.com/drive/11dpw0-hZEq0fGagrnA7_DGdnt7c2ztVb?usp=sharing

Programming Challenge

With a basic understanding of Markov Chains, and with the tutorial above as a motivating example, create your own Markov Chain text generation model in a Python notebook without the help of libraries such as Markovify.

Play around with the model and the text used to train it.

Harness the Generated Text

When you're satisfied with your model, generate some text and copy/paste it into a word document. Use the highlight tool in the word processor to create your own blackout poem.

If you're stuck, it may be helpful to start by highlighting some of your favorite words or phrases from the text. From there, you can string together those ideas to create a cohesive poem.

Reflection Questions

1. While writing your poems, how did you feel about the text generator? Did it feel like a teammate? Did it help inspire you or limit your creativity? Why?
2. AI involvement in art is a hot ethics topic in recent years. After reflecting on the exercise, do you think there is a place for artificially intelligent programs to assist artists? If so, to what degree is it acceptable for an artist to use these programs?
3. Philosophically and ethically speaking, can AI create its own work that can be considered art?
4. Travis Macdonald's *The O Mission Repo* is a book of blackout poetry written atop the 9-11 Commission Report. Evocative and daring, it displays the power of writing blackout poetry

and importance of choosing a source. If you were to create your own blackout poetry collection, is there a particular source or theme you would want to use?