# Mashup Tools for Big Data Analysis in Maritime Surveillance 

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#### Abstract

The growth of big data and its popularity in maritime surveillance has increased at an exponential rate. The amount of maritime information being collected every minute around the world exceeds the capacity of traditional databases. The development of real-time, Geospatial Web Applications e.g., MarineTraffic and VesselFinder AIS vessel tracking web sites, provide us with huge sets of structured and unstructured data that are too complex for traditional data-processing software. The aim of this paper is to exploit the benefits of query and mashup amounts of maritime data using mashup tools as a result to create a single, unique visualization. The results show that using mashup techniques in maritime surveillance could be used to monitor, compare, combine, manipulate and analyse Big Maritime data. Therefore, research on Maritime Data offers a huge potential and an opportunity to benefit from the advantages.


Keywords: Maritime surveillance, big data, mashup tools, python, web scraping, AIS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Big Data is a common concept to define datasets whose size exceeds the processing capacity of traditional database systems [1]. While this is not the commonly agreed definition, Big Data is generally characterized by three V's: volume, velocity, and variety [ $2,3,4,5$ ]. Volume dimension relates to the size of data from one or more data resources in tera-, peta-, or exabytes. The velocity dimension focuses on the data streams and how to store near real-time data, as well as handling the increasing rate of the data amount. The latter, namely, the variety dimension, is associated with the heterogeneity of data both at the schema-level and the instance-level [6].

Big Data brings innumerous challenges, commonly divided into four categories: (a) general dilemmas, such as the lack of consensus and rigor in the definition, models, architectures or benchmarks; (b) challenges related to the Big Data life cycle, from collection to analysis; (c) security, privacy and monitoring issues; and, finally, (d) organizational change, such as new required skills (e.g., data scientists) or changes in workflows to accommodate the data-driven mindset [7].

Working with Big Data implies knowledge from multiple disciplines; the term data science is frequently highlighted to designate the area responsible for dealing with Big Data throughout the stages of its life cycle, relying on the scientific method (defining hypothesis and validating conclusions) and on knowledge related to areas like machine learning, programming and databases, etc. [7].

Big Data is a research field involving a large number of collaborating disciplines [8]. The typical target group of Big Data solutions is knowledge able knowledgeable in different domains who are not familiar with the technical details of Big Data and data integration. As a result, there is a growing need to provide a solution with a smaller learning rate for such users.

We can consider mashup as an effective tool to support users in creating user-generated solutions based on available private/public resources and integrate several data sources with different formats easily [6]. As a result, both skilled programmers and non-skilled users are able to benefit from the large amounts of data [6] and solve any problems they may encounter.

The mashup approach allows users to build ad-hoc applications by combining several different data sources and services from across the web [6]. The aim is to combine these sources to create useful new applications or services. Content and presentation elements typically come in the form of RSS or Atom feeds, various XML formats, or as HTML or other graphical elements. Publicly available APIs (in JavaScript, for example) typically provide application functionality. Content, functionality, and presentation are then glued together in disparate ways: via JavaScript in the browser, server-side scripting languages such as Hypertext Preprocessor (PHP) or Ruby, or traditional languages such as Java or C\# [9].

There are three approaches for the development of mashup solutions. First, the manual approach, which requires programming or scripting skills of users to integrate the data sources, generate visualizations, and create new functionalities. Second, the semi-automatic, which assists the users to build a mashup application using provided tools. Third, the automatic approach which allows creation of mashups without user's involvement, as the resources (data, visualization, as well as functionality) are chosen and invoked automatically by the following tools [10]:

1. spreadsheet-based tools, in which the users provide the data directly into a spreadsheet; The examples of this category are AMICO:CALC and MashSheet [11].
2. widget-oriented tools, allow users to create the mashup through a visual editor. Yahoo Pipes and Intel Mash Maker are examples in this category of mashups [6].
3. demonstration-based tools, allow users to mash up their data by providing examples and completing the data integration task via a visual step-by-step process. The instances in this category are Dapper and Karma [12].

The aim of this paper is to extract and compare AIS data from various webs sources by exploiting the benefits of web scraping [13] and mashup tools using Python programming language. Specifically, web scraping is the practice of gathering data through any means other than a program interacting with an API (or, obviously, through a human using a web browser). This is most commonly accomplished by writing an automated program that queries a web server, requests data, and then parses process that data to extract needed necessary information [13] in order to create a single, unique visualization.

The results show that using mashup techniques in the maritime surveillance could monitor, compare, combine, manipulate and analyse Big Maritime data. Maritime Data offers a huge potential, but further research is required in order to benefit from the advantages.

## METHODOLOGY

As mentioned above, Python Programming Language was used to web scraping. Some advantages of the Python Language are: simple and easy to learn, free and open source software, works on different platforms, Python supports both: process-oriented function programming and object-oriented abstract programming, scalability and embeddability [14].

The urllib module was used to fetching URLs (Uniform Resource Locators), as shown in Figure 1. Urllib is a Python standard web request library that contains functions for network data requests, handling cookies, changing request headers and user agents, redirects, authentication, etc. [14]. As shown in Figure 1, in the script some essential functions were included in order to retrieve the appropriate data. These blocks of code are the URL of the website that contains the port name (e.g., https://www.fleetmon.com/ports/piraeus-athens_grpir_7251/). Moreover, the titles of the Fields - Columns names and how many Records-Rows will be extracted. It should be noted that each Vessel Tracking Website has its own database structure so the script should be modified accordingly.

Accessing data is only half of the problem; the other half is to automate this process. Some URLs may change or depreciate over time, which makes Python scripts run to an error, when a command such as try or except is used to check if the URL is still valid. Currently, to keep all versions of downloaded files, we have used the datetime module to add a timestamp to the output filename, too.

Additionally, the xlwt module was used in the script to import the data into a single and unique visualization. Xlwt is a library for writing data and formatting information to Excel files (i.e., .xls) [15]. In order to force automatic refresh of any data connections when we open Excel workbooks, a short snippet VBA code was used. These lines of code used the ThisWorkbook Open event, which points to the currently active workbooks. Next, a simple one-line of code that uses the RefreshAll method to refresh all of the connections that are contained within your workbook or worksheet was used.

Comparison of data from different web sources was made by using Power Pivot which is an Excel add-in to perform powerful data analysis and create sophisticated data models. With Power Pivot, you can mashup large volumes of data from various sources, perform information analysis rapidly, and share insights easily [17].

In both Excel and in Power Pivot, you can create a Data Model, as a collection of tables with relationships. The data model we see in a workbook in Excel is the same data model we see in the Power Pivot window. Any data we import into Excel is available in Power Pivot, and vice versa [17].

The overall methodology adopted in this study consists of six (6) processing steps briefly described below (see Figure 2). It must be emphasized that the methodology can be applied for any website which contains structured data.

Step 1: Identify Vessel Tracking Websites: Marine-Traffic, FleetMon and VesselFinder,

Step 2: Installing Python and Python Packages

Step 3: Algorithm development and code writing.

Step 4: Running, Testing and Debugging the program.

Step 5: Data acquisition.

Step 6: Comparison of data from different data sources is performed using Power Pivot.

```
|import urllib.request
import urllib.error
url_dept = 'https://www.fleetmon.com/ports/piraeus-athens_grpir_7251/
* try:
    req = urllib.request.Request(url_dept)
    with urllib.request.urlopen(req) as response:
        char_set = response.headers.get_content_charset()
        html = response.read().decode(char_set)
* except urllib.error.HTTPError as e:
    print('Error HTTP:', e.code)
* except urllib.error.URLError as e:
    print('Server Error')
    print('Reasons: ', e.reason)
* else:
    h2_tags = re.findall( (r"<h2\b[^\rangle]*>(.*?)</h2\rangle", html)
    count = 0
    for tag in h2_tags:
        code = re.findall(r"\[(.*?)\]", tag)
        if len(code)> 0
        code = code[0].strip()
                name = re.findall(r']:(.*)', tag)
                if len(name) >0 : name = name[0].strip()
                else: name =
                print(code, name)
```

Figure 1. Part of Code for Data Extraction.


Figure 2. Methodology.

## 4. RESULTS

After running the code, the data were extracted in Microsoft Excel format, as shown in Figure 3. As mentioned above, the data were retrieved from Vessel Tracking Websites such as Marine-Traffic, FleetMon and VesselFinder, as shown in Figure 1. It is worth mentioning that the Area of Interest (AOI) is the Port of Piraeus, Greece. The extracted data lists the arrivals of ships in the port on 25 August 2020 from 01:00 am till 11:00 am.


Figure 3. Raw data in Microsoft Excel format.

Furthermore, the basic issues involved in the mashup creation process are data retrieval, source modeling, data cleaning, data integration, and data visualization. Each of these issues is an area of research in its own and our goal is to prevent the end-user from delving into these underlying complexities during the mashup building process [18]. An improper visualization of the data could result in users wasting precious time to understand the data [18]. The Mashup environment should be user friendly, so that the user can monitor, compare, combine, manipulate and analyse Big Maritime data. Accordingly, a comparison of data was made by using the Power Pivot add-in.

Figures 4 and 5 present a typical example of the data results using Power Pivot data modelling technology. The Slicer tool allows to filter the information in the pivot table, by using one or more fields and the ability to let slicers "Show items with no data last" filter pivot tables. Using this tool, you can manipulate Big Data.

|  | A | B | c | D | E | F | G | H | 1 | J |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Vessel Name | $\checkmark$ Port Call Type | $\checkmark$ Port Type | $\checkmark$ Port Atca | $\checkmark$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | AG NEKTARIOS AIGINAS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | ACHAEOS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | AEGEAN ACE | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | APOLLON HELLAS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | Vessel Name |  |  |  | T |
| 6 | ASTARTE | ARRIVAL | Port | piraeus | 25/08/2020 | ACHAEOS |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | blue star chios | ARRIVAL | Port | Piraeus | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Christal mio | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | AEGEAN ACE |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | CHRISTOS V | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | APOLLON HELLAS |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | CHRISTOS XIX | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | CHRISTOS XLI | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | ASTARTE |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | ECOSPIRIT | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | bLUE STAR CHIOS |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | EKTORAS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | CHRISTAL MIO |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | FLYING CAT5 | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | FLYING DOLPHIN XVII | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | CHRISTOS V |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | FLYING DOLPHIN XXIX | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | CHRISTOS XIX |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | KAPETAN MICHALIS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | M Y BILLA | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | CHRISTOS XLI |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | MAERSK AHRAM | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | ECOSPIRIT |  |  |  |  |
| 20 | NORDSUMMER | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | EKTORAS |  |  |  |  |
| 21 | NUMBER ONE | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22 | PERSEUS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | FLYING CAT 5 |  |  |  |  |
| 23 | POSEIDON | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | civinie noinuia vial |  |  |  |  |
| 24 | POSIDON HELLAS | ARRIVAL | Port | Piraeus | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25 | PSYTTALIA II | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26 | SCIIBulk | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27 | SEBECO | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28 | SVITZER MORAG | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29 | TTCB2 | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30 | TRITONASOil | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 31 | VERNICOS SIFNOS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 32 | ZAKROSOil | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |  |  |  |  |  |

Figure 4. Pivot Table: Extract data from FleetMon Vessel Tracking Website.


Figure 5. Pivot Table: Extract data from Marine-Traffic Vessel Tracking Website.

The Power Pivot can also establish, and graphically represent, relationships between the data included in the model. Figure 6 shows the Power Pivot window in Diagram view. The relationships are established between the three Vessel Tracking Website tables using the Vessel name. Relationships helped us to combine data from three different tables.


Figure 6. Relationships between the three tables in diagram view.
The results of comparing the data between the two Vessel Tracking Websites: Marine-Traffic and FleetMon after the above relationships are shown in Figure 7. Figure 8 depicts the results between the two Vessel Tracking Websites: Marine-Traffic and VesselFinder. The results (inside rectangular red boxes) show the differences between the two Vessel Traffic Websites. The following differences are due to the fact that are a result of data being gathered from different Automatic Identification System (AIS) equipped voluntarily by contributors in over 140 countries around the world [19].

| Marine Traffic Data |  |  |  |  |  |  | FleetMon Data |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Vessel Name | Port Call Type | Port Type | Port At Call | Ata/atd | Comparing Data |  | Vessel Name | Port Call Type | Port Type | Port At Call | Ata/atd |
| achaeos | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 | achaeos |  | AG Nektarios aiginas | ARrival | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| aEgato | DEPARTURE | Port | PIRAEUS | 26/08/2020 | Not Match |  | achaeos | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| AEGEAN ACE | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 27/08/2020 | atgean ace |  | AEGEAN ACE | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| aglos nektarios aiginas | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 28/08/2020 | Not Match |  | APOLLON HELLAS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| Alexander 3 | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 29/08/2020 | Not Match |  | ASTARTE | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| APOLLON | DEPARTURE | Port | PIRAEUS | 30/08/2020 | Not Match |  | BLUE STAR CHIOS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| APOLLON HELLAS | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 31/08/2020 | APOLLON HELLAS |  | CHRISTAL MIO | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| AQUA JEWEL | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 01/09/2020 | Not Match |  | CHRISTOS V | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| ARCHON MICHAIL | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 02/09/2020 | Not Match |  | CHRISTOS XIX | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| as carouina | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 03/09/2020 | Not Match |  | CHRISTOS XLI | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| blue Carkier 1 | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 04/09/2020 | Not Match |  | ECOSPIRIT | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| BLUE HORIZON | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 05/09/2020 | Not Match |  | EKTORAS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| bluestar 1 | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 06/09/2020 | Not Match |  | flıing Cat 5 | ARrival | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| blue star chios | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 07/09/2020 | BLUE STAR CHIOS |  | FLYING DOLPHIN XVIII | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| blue star delos | ARRIVAL | Port | piraeus | 08/09/2020 | Not Match |  | FLYING DOLPHIN XXIX | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| blue star naxos | ARRIVAL | Port | piraeus | 09/09/2020 | Not Match |  | Kapetan michalis | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| blue star paros | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 10/09/2020 | Not Match |  | MYBILLA | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| ch.gemitzoglou | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 11/09/2020 | Not Match |  | MAERSK AHRAM | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| CHRISTOS V | ARRIVAL | Port | piraeus | 12/09/2020 | CHRISTOS V |  | NORDSUMMER | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/88/2020 |
| CHRISTOS XIX | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 13/09/2020 | CHRISTOS XIX |  | Number one | ARrival | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| CHRISTOS XLI | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 14/09/2020 | CHRISTOS XLI |  | PERSEUS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| CHRISTOS XXXIII | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 15/09/2020 | Not Match |  | POSEIDON | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| cosco glory | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 16/09/2020 | Not Match |  | POSIDON HELLAS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| DIONIIIOS SOLOMOS | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 17/09/2020 | Not Match |  | PSYTALAIII | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| ECOKEEPER | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 18/09/2020 | Not Match |  | SCIIBulk | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| ECOSPIRIT | DEPARTURE | Port | PIRAEUS | 19/09/2020 | ECOSPIRIT |  | sebeco | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| EkToras | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 20/09/2020 | EKTORAS |  | SVITZER MORAG | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| Elyros | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 21/09/2020 | Not Match |  | TTCB2 | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| FLYING DOLPHIN ATHINA | departure | Port | PIRAEUS | 22/09/2020 | Not Match |  | Tritonasoil | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| FLYING DOLPHIN XIX | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 23/09/2020 | Not Match |  | VERNICOS SIFNOS | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| FLYING DOLPHIN XVII | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 24/09/2020 | FLYING DOLPHIN XVII |  | zAKROSOil | ARRIVAL | Port | PIRAEUS | 25/08/2020 |
| FLYING DOLPHIN XXIX | ARRIVAL | Port | piraeus | 25/09/2020 | FLYING DOLPHIN XXIX |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Figure 7. Comparison of Data between Marine-Traffic and FleetMon.


Figure 8. Comparison of Data between FleetMon and Vesselfinder.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper presents a methodology for using web scraping to mashup maritime data using Python Programming Language and Microsoft Excel as a tool to import, combine and compare data. Mashup is an application development method which can be done be applied in a lightweight manner to mix information and automate processes. There has been a plethora of mashup tools in many shapes and forms [20]. In this paper, we analyzse a spreadsheet-based mashup tool with application to AIS data extracted from various web sources. We believe the spreadsheet environment has inherent advantages over other mashup environment due to its popularity and familiarity with the users [20].

The results of the study confirmed that the above software can help mashup programmers create mashups more efficiently and effectively [16]. We also see indications that it can improve reusability of code. In addition, the results show that using mashup techniques in the maritime surveillance could be adopted in monitoring, comparing, combining, manipulating and analysing Big Maritime data.

Other methods are planned in the near future for web scraping larger amounts of maritime data using Python Programming Language and Web tools to combine and compare big data.

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