# Visualizing Deanonymization

**Application of VAST Challenge to Data Breaches** 

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## Data Breaches: An Overview

- Illegal use or disclosure of confidential information
- 1,862 data breaches in 2021, surpassing 2020's total of 1,108
- 83% of these breaches included sensitive information such as Social Security Numbers











## Current Approaches

#### Academia

- Use complicated techniques that are effective but not easily understood by lay-people
- Utilizes real data without permission, possible ethical concerns\*

#### Media

- Text heavy articles repeating similar advice
- Often not sought out until a breach has occurred, yet often limited to preventative measures

## Goal

- Visualize and walk through a simple but believable deanonymization process in a way that allows users to understand the severity of data breaches even when less sensitive data is exposed
- Use a representative but artificial dataset to preserve privacy

## VAST 2021 Mini Challenge 2

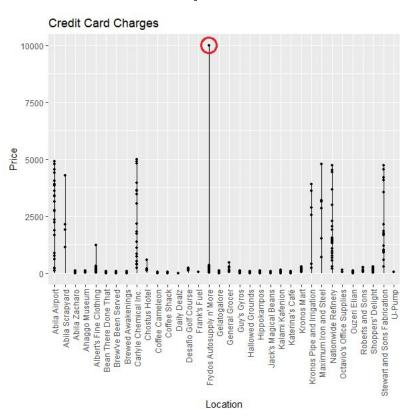
- Original challenge was "surveillance" themed
- Patterns of employee behaviour could be used as surrogate breach data

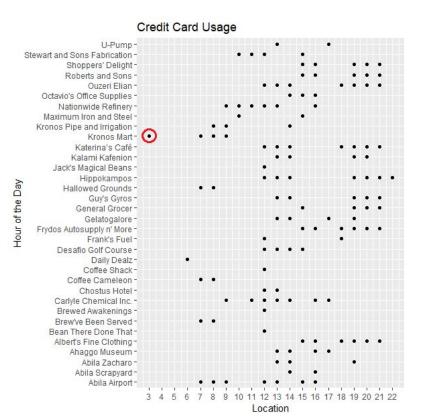


### Data

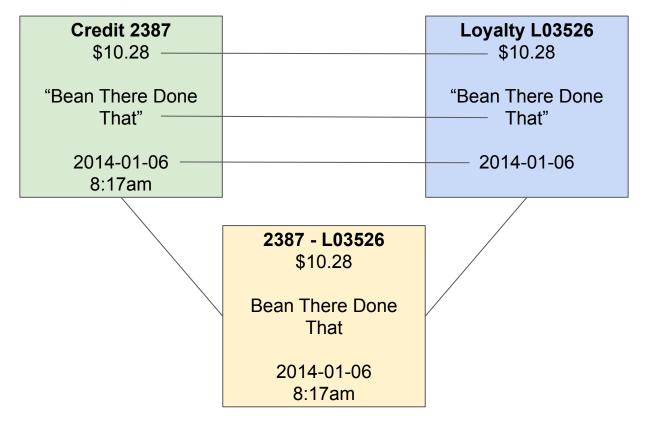
- Credit Card Log
  - Price, Time and Date, Credit Card Number, Business Name (Location)
- Loyalty Card Log
  - Price, Date, Loyalty Card Number, Business Name (Location)
- Car Assignments
  - o Car ID Number, Employee Name, Title and Job Classification
- GPS Log
  - Date and Time, Car ID Number, Latitude, Longitude
- Geospatial Maps
  - ESRI Shapefiles and Projects\*
- Tourist Map Image

# Solution: Explainer Article

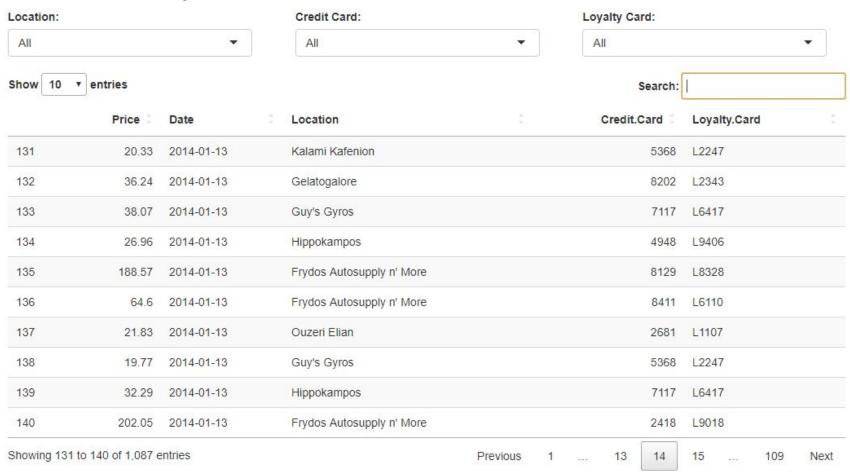




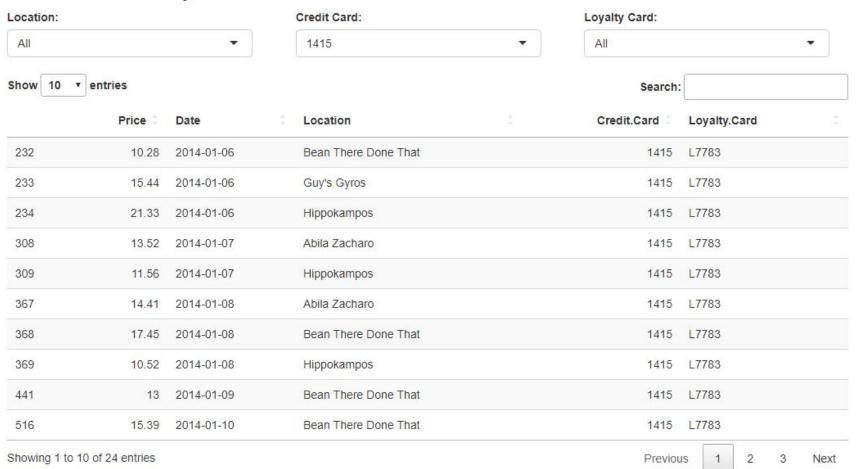
## Task 1: Matching Credit and Loyalty Cards



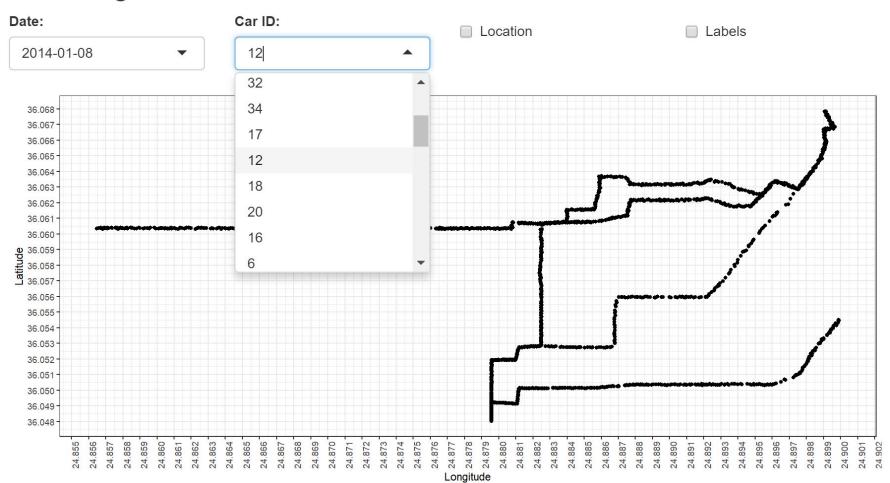
#### Purchase History



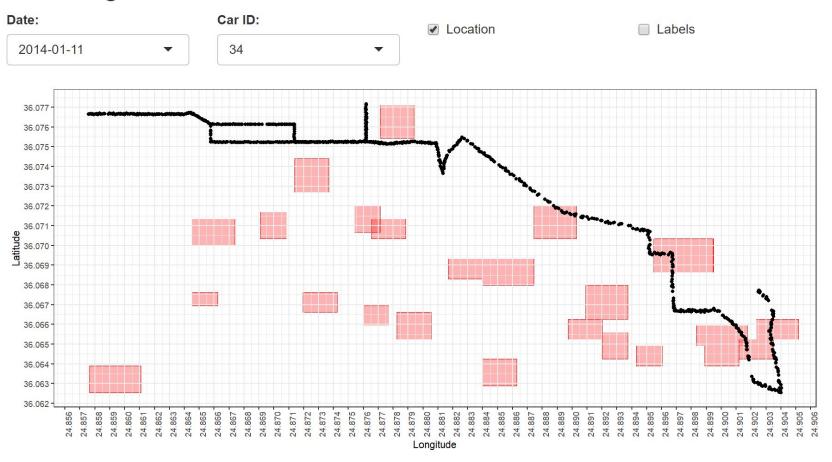
### Purchase History



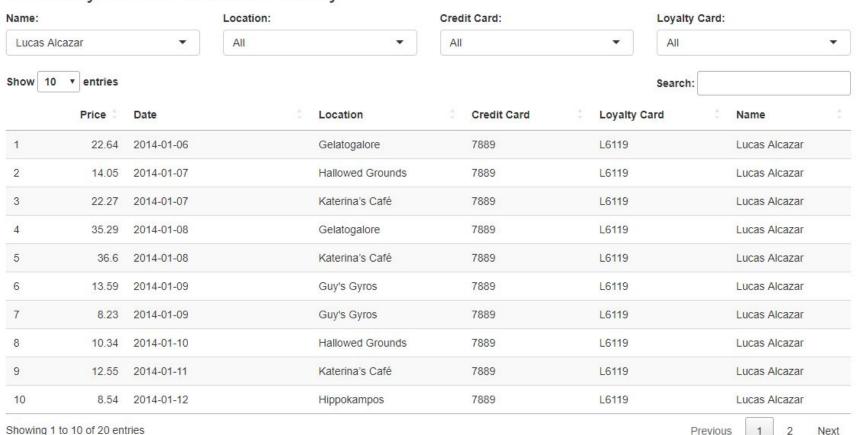
## **GPS** Logs



## **GPS** Logs



#### Deanonymized Purchase History



#### **Lessons Learned**

- What is conceptually simple can be computationally tedious
  - Data linking can become very complicated when introducing margins
- The tool you use matters
  - R Shiny doesn't deal with missing values very well
- Artificial data can create huge problems
  - ESRI no longer offers student licenses, so the geospatial data files were almost completely unworkable and required majority manual intervention
  - Data was designed for a specific challenge, and trying to expand on an already difficult set of tasks was a bit ambitious