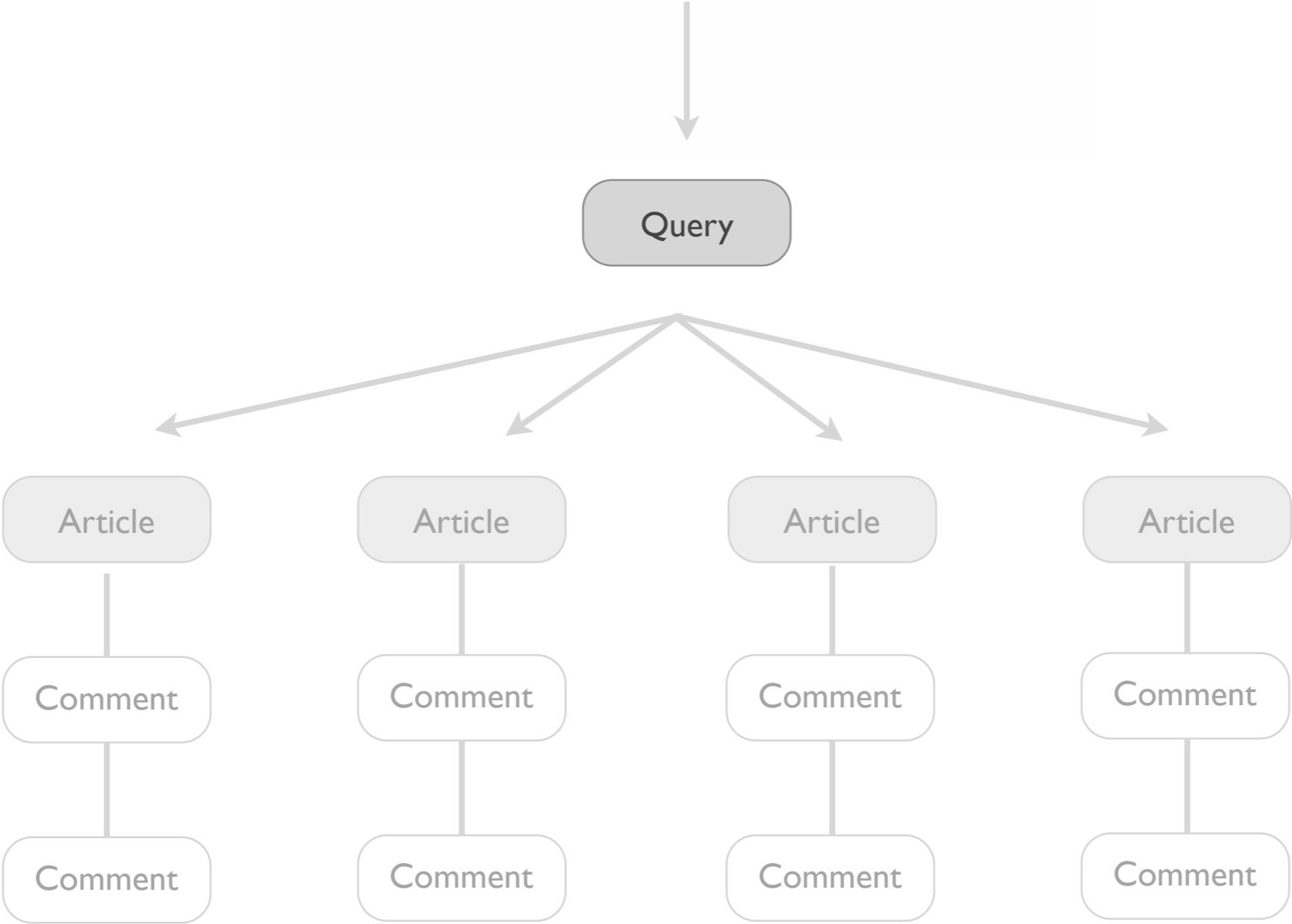


# *VoxPop*

emotively visualizing online discourse

Zeke Shore, Andrew Mahon

# The New York Times



query for "george bush"

returns 35,544 articles since 2001

**The Caucus**  
The Politics and Government Blog of The Times

October 16, 2009, 7:11 PM

**Bipartisan Spirit, at Least for a Moment, in Bush Country**  
By PETER BAKER

Doug Mills/The New York Times

President Obama appeared with former President George H.W. Bush, center, and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates at an event promoting community service at Texas A&M University on Friday.

COLLEGE STATION, Tex. – President Obama has spent much of his nine months in office blaming the nation’s troubles on his predecessor, George W. Bush – most recently on [Thursday in New Orleans](#) as he deflected criticism over Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts by noting he inherited the backlog of problems.

articles typically have between 10 and 50 comments



From 1 to 25 of 38 Comments

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- October 16, 2009 8:37 pm  
[Link](#)

They're the same. Owned by the corporations. Carrying out wars in the middle east. Let's face it. These guys are cut from the same cloth.

— *steve pesce*
- October 16, 2009 11:13 pm  
[Link](#)

Disagree with the 1st comment to a certain extent.

We've had time to reflect on the ignorance of GHW and GW, but only 9 months for O. Lets give it time and stop searching for instant gratification.

— *Tim Exeritt*
- October 16, 2009 11:15 pm  
[Link](#)

"He said "the way they treat my son and anyone who's opposed to their point of view is just horrible. When our son was president, they just hammered him mercilessly and I think obscenely a lot of the time and now it's moved to a new president."

Well his son did start 2 wars, doubled the national debt, authorized the CIA to torture and hold terrorism suspects indefinitely without charges, signed off on the Patriot Act to allow spying on citizens, wiretapped "suspects" without a warrant and was a huge moron in general. I guess everyone should have just watched these events unfold and cheered and applauded like Fox News did, right?

— *Brett*
- October 16, 2009 11:55 pm  
[Link](#)

the old man is right. i prefer our wrongheaded leaders being questioned earnestly and seriously, because REMEMBER: any other kind DOES NOT WORK. Idiots like Maddow and Olbermann may have come after FOX's disgraceful appearance, and in response to the right wing "shouters", but are they changing anyone's mind? no. are they getting people more pissed off, and not constructively? yes. remember the 20-yr veteran of the CIA who confronted Rumsfeld, remember the college professor who confronted Bush, not with stupid rage but with the kind of genuine seriousness that quiets a room and focuses the mind. old man Bush is right. yes. Obama is a politician, a very good one. i personally still think he will prove to be a great president.

— *Emil Bogdan*
- October 17, 2009 12:16 am  
[Link](#)

The first Bush wasn't cut from the same cloth as his son.

— *Robert Weymouth*
- October 17, 2009 12:38 am  
[Link](#)

It was noble and kind for President Obama to show respect and honor for a man, 85 years old, who spent his entire life serving his country in the many ways that George H.W. Bush has done...aside from being president.

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— *Mada*
- October 17, 2009 12:40 am  
[Link](#)

#3 – Brett

My wife lost her job after Obama was inaugurated...I don't think we are the only family blaming Obama for much, much higher than expected job losses. Meanwhile, he is going out of his way to push for policies that harm our interests including affirmative action, cuts to Medicare, and movement toward a single-payer health care system that would limit our choices and undermine our existing medical coverage. We were much better off before Democrats took total control of Congress...

— *John C. Drew, Ph.D.*

- October 17, 2009 1:09 am  
[Link](#)

Nice parry, Tim #2.

These two have very different ideals, but at least they both acknowledge the importance of bipartisanship. I can't stand becoming obsolete when a Republican is President, and I am sure the same goes for conservatives when a Democrat is elected. If we could only realize that 53% of the vote is not a mandate, we might be able to organize a more unified country. We could at least ease the tension. In that spirit, I appreciate this bipartisan effort to encourage service for our country. It would be nice to have conservatives and liberals working productively together in the field, as volunteers sharing their passion for our country.

— *J*
- October 17, 2009 2:35 am  
[Link](#)

I agree with GHB that civility and assisting Obama to succeed for all America is what policy and debates should be about. We are all being ill served by all the partisanship.

— *dbg25*
- October 17, 2009 6:40 am  
[Link](#)

I guess the elder Bush deserves some credit for standing above the norm for the GOP these days. But he would have been far more credible if he had apologized for his blatantly racist Willie Horton ad which arguably was the beginning of the condition he now criticizes. And his credibility is further eroded by the silly name-calling attack on Maddow and Olbermann, who may have an ideological point of view but possess knowledge and intelligence that place them in a realm that the likes of O'Reilly, Beck and Limbaugh can't. begin to approximate. Bush didn't have the courage to criticize anyone on the right by name.

— *T Mex*
- October 17, 2009 7:43 am  
[Link](#)

Poppa Bush trying to make Amends for the terrible, devastating sins of the Son! Thanks for trying but it will take much more than that, although that is a help.

The reason that GOP always say Gov't is the problem is because when you have men in power who do Nothing but say no or complain, like the GOP – it's a problem! And so it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. As long as the GOP are in power or in control, the government will be a do nothing, problematic government, which will do nothing for Average Americans. Like Pres. Obama has stated, stop complaining, grab a mop and help clean up the place.

— *angellight*
- October 17, 2009 7:54 am  
[Link](#)

America's real president is evidently the Secretary of Defense.

The right wing can't take the fact that it is a joke that brings on all what it fears most.

— *Steve Bolger*
- October 17, 2009 8:31 am  
[Link](#)

"Well his son did start 2 wars"

One of which removed a dictator from power, the other removed a repressive Taliban government that routinely stoned women for showing too much ankle. Should we have appeased this wholesale oppression in the name of "peace"

"...doubled the national debt"

Leverage is the key to prosperity. The ability to take on debt creates wealth and improves standards of living. Obama knows this (aka \$1.07 deficit this year which is all his and Pelosi's). Read LeClaire.

"authorized the CIA to torture and hold terrorism suspects indefinitely without charges"

Consider that terrorists offer no rights or freedoms to their captors. Our indiscretions pale in comparison.

"signed off on the Patriot Act to allow spying on citizens"

So did 60 Democrats in the House.

"wiretapped "suspects" without a warrant"

Since when does personal right to privacy trump collective right to security?

"was a huge moron in general"

No dispute here, but his policies did not seem to suffer as a result.

— *Luis*
- October 17, 2009 9:18 am  
[Link](#)

With regards to Mr. Bush's comment that Maddow and Olberman say things that are "just horrible", does the former President watch Fox News? Has he never met Karl Rove? Does he not remember that he and Lee Atwater started all of this with the "horrible" things they did and said in their disgraceful 1988 campaign, followed by their untruthful portrayal of Bill Clinton as an American professor in Russia during their 1992 campaign? Has he never heard of Willie Horton? The Bushes are the daddies of the divisive, mean, hyperbolic political environment we find ourselves in today. As a life long Republican, I began to notice this nastiness in 1988 during Daddy Bush's campaign, and it bothered me. After enduring Junior's presidency, I vowed to never vote Republican again.

— *Russ*

- October 17, 2009 9:39 am  
[Link](#)

Yeah Steve,

Obama just needs more time to think about how to expand the war. Oh and then next year he will start running for re-election so he'll be busy then too, you know, appearing on talk shows, raising money, and making commercials. So he probably won't get around to doing anything for the next 5 years. Why are you so impatient? It's just billions of dollars and thousands of American lives were losing. No big deal!

— *pha*
- October 17, 2009 10:03 am  
[Link](#)

Keith Oberman can be over the top but I get his points.

Rachel Maddow on the other hand usually has her facts right on the desk in front of her...and she is the rare tv reporter that actually refers to those facts as she is on camera. She brings her homework with her...So she will often look down at her notes and not just into the camera all the time...

And GeorgeW Bush? The worst president ever for so many reasons-many detailed by Brett but I will add this one Brett...He let his campaign people run the show...including letting them run the justice department-nothing makes me sicker than that-that is real 4rth world banana republic stuff.

— *rmc*
- October 17, 2009 10:13 am  
[Link](#)

No. They are not.

Obama may not be all you want—or I want. He may not yet have the guts or have yet despaired over the failure of his wished for "bi-partisanship".

We hope he will get some backbone, and see that the wish for bipartisanship is not shared on the repub side.

But, even now, he is quite different from the shrubbery.

We are better off—but things are not yet as they should be.

We should press him, push him, shove him, yell at him. He can do better.

But when a woman complained, at a public event, to FDR that he was not going far enough to effect change and to help the majority at the expense of the plutocrats, he challenged her, explained to her, "You have to make me."

With public clamor, demands, the President can do some things that he can not do otherwise.

Let's make him!

— *mike*
- October 17, 2009 10:21 am  
[Link](#)

I hate that it's a newsworthy event when our politicians come together to promote policy as unquestionably good as expanding volunteerism.

— *Jeremy*
- October 17, 2009 10:26 am  
[Link](#)

There's no collective right to health or financial security in Reagan America. It only invests in weapons and soldiers.

— *Steve Bolger*
- October 17, 2009 10:36 am  
[Link](#)

Even though I am a registered Democrat, I do vote for the candidate and not just the party. I did vote for President Bush, #1 as I had great admiration for his life of public service and basic decency.

Coming from Connecticut and having met his Dad, Prescott Bush, the U.S. from Connecticut, as a child, I followed the family and was impressed by their call to serve their country.

The first President Bush was born to wealth, made in the oil business by his father. He could have lived a rich man's life but chose to serve the country and served well as the U.N. representative and the Ambassador to China along with his other elected posts. I do believe there was an altruistic thrust to his political career aside from any mission for personal gain.

Over the years, however, I began to realize that many political decisions the Bush family made related to their connections to oil and the Saudis. I am now convinced that second President Bush invaded Iraq based on oil and his cowboy mentality. However, I still have a great deal of respect for the President Bush I voted for. Am I wrong?

— *Mimi Breslow*
- October 17, 2009 10:44 am  
[Link](#)

John Drew @ #7....I bet President Obama was personally responsible for your wife losing her job since he waited until after the Inauguration to dismiss her. Who would be responsible for the job loss if it would have come before Nov. 4, 2008, or between election day and the Inauguration - Bush, Obama, or both? Those jobs you harp about were gone before President Obama won.

— *John*

## Charles E. Osgood's Theory of Semantic Differentiation

*semantic differential technique is using several pairs of bipolar adjectives to scale the responses of subjects to words, short phrases, or texts. That is, subjects are asked to rate their meaning on scales like active–passive; good–bad; optimistic–pessimistic; positive–negative; strong–weak; serious–humorous; and ugly–beautifully*

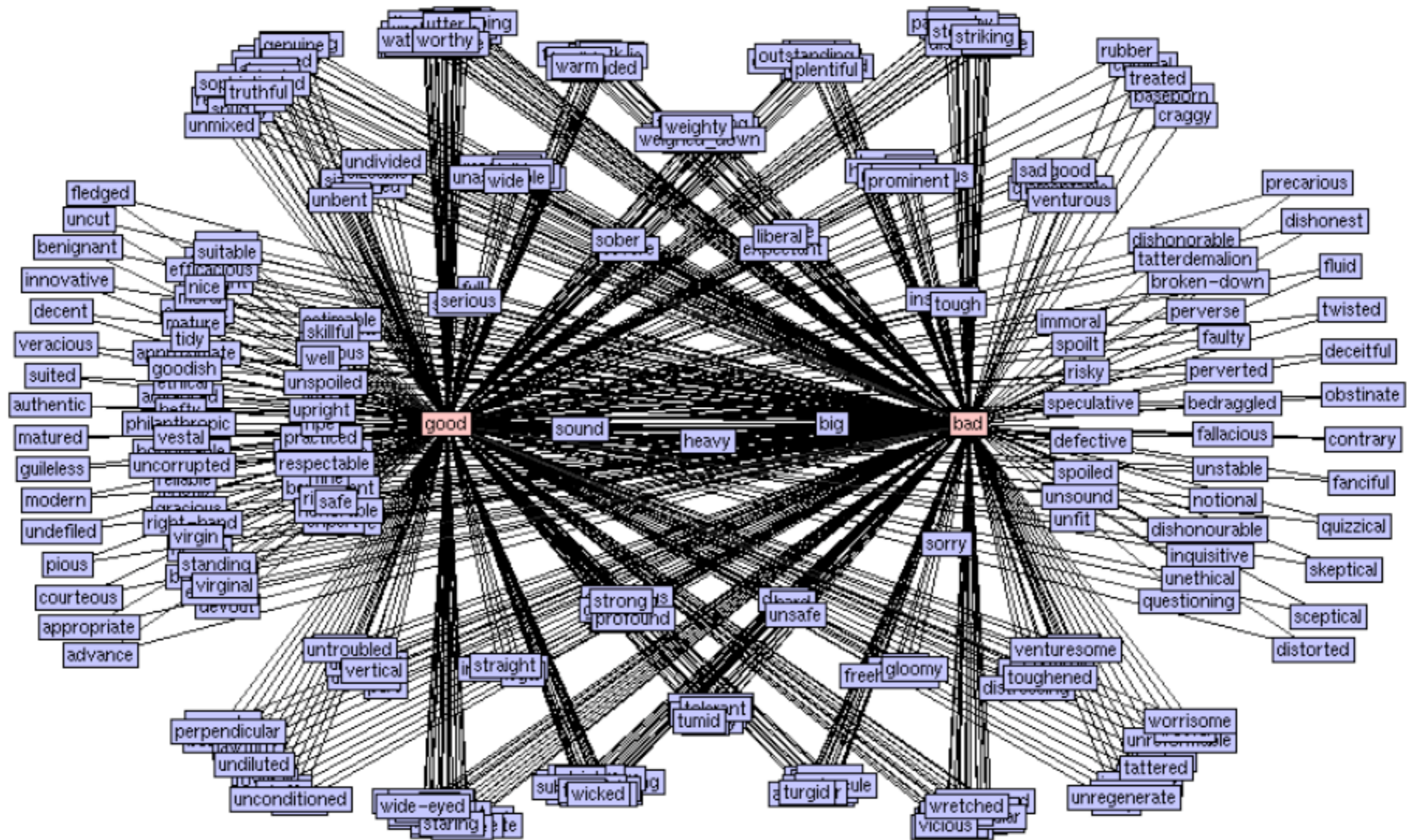
## Charles E. Osgood's Theory of Semantic Differentiation

*“These three factors of the affective or emotive meaning are the **evaluative** factor (e.g., good–bad); the **potency** factor (e.g., strong–weak); and the **activity** factor (e.g., active–passive). Among these three factors, the evaluative factor has the strongest relative weight.”*

## WordNet Lexical Database

*WordNet is a large lexical database of English, developed under the direction of cognitive psychologist George A. Miller at Princeton University. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are grouped into sets of cognitive synonyms (synsets), each expressing a distinct concept. Synsets are interlinked by means of conceptual-semantic and lexical relations*





using WordNet for evaluative classification

$$\text{EVA}(w) = \frac{d(w, \text{bad}) - d(w, \text{good})}{d(\text{good}, \text{bad})}$$

where

$w$  = word to be emotively classified

$d$  = WordNet shortest path distance

EVA = returns a value between 1 (aligned with 'good') and -1 (aligned with 'bad')

$$\begin{aligned} \text{EVA}(\text{honest}) &= \frac{d(\text{honest}, \text{bad}) - d(\text{honest}, \text{good})}{d(\text{good}, \text{bad})} \\ &= \frac{6 - 2}{4} = 1. \end{aligned}$$

## General Inquirer Dictionary

*General Inquirer Dictionary consists of the Harvard IV-4 Dictionary and the Lasswell Value Dictionary, identifying additional words beyond what the WordNet minimal path length method can evaluate, which can be applied across Osgood's three axis emotive evaluation methodology: Positive/Negative, Strong/Weak, and Active/Passive*

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6. October 17, 2009  
12:36 am

[Link](#)

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It is a wise man who would humble himself to the likes of others.

— Mada

6. October 17, 2009  
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[Link](#)

 subject  
 positive  
 negative

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