Course Overview

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Course Objectives

- How do search engines work?
  - effectiveness and efficiency
- How do users behave with them?
  - how do users determine usefulness of information?
  - how can a search engine mimic this process?
- Why do search engines fail?
  - the user? the corpus? the system? something else?
- How can they be evaluated (off-line)?
- How can they be monitored and tuned (on-line)?
Why are these important questions?

• Most of the world’s information is in natural language text
  ‣ the world wide web
  ‣ scientific publications
  ‣ books
  ‣ social media interactions

• The amount of this information is growing quickly; human capacity is not (evolution doesn’t move that fast)

• We need smarter tools

• IR provides tools for analyzing and organizing content to facilitate search, discovery, and learning
Course Structure

- Information retrieval is an interdisciplinary problem

We need to understand both ends of the spectrum:

- People who want to understand how computers can solve problems
- People who care about information retrieval
- People who want to understand how people behave with computers

- We need to understand both ends of the spectrum
Course Structure

- IR: computer-based solutions to a human problem

- Understanding IR systems requires math!

Diagram:
- The system
- The user

First-ish half of the semester:
- The system

Second-ish half of the semester:
- The user
Road Map

- Introduction to ad-hoc retrieval
  - controlled vocabularies
  - full-text indexing
- Boolean retrieval
- Indexing and query processing
- Statistical Properties of Text
- Document Representation
- Retrieval Models
  - vector space model
  - language modeling
  - others (depending on how quickly we progress)
Road Map

• Evaluation
  ‣ test-collection construction
  ‣ evaluation metrics
  ‣ experimentation
  ‣ user studies
  ‣ search-log analysis
  ‣ A/B testing

• Studies of search behavior

• Federated Search (?)

• Clustering (?)

• Text Classification (??)
Grading

• 30% homework
  ‣ 10% each

• 15% midterm

• 15% final exam

• 30% literature review
  ‣ 5% proposal
  ‣ 10% presentation
  ‣ 15% paper

• 10% participation
Grading for Graduate Students

- H: 95-100%
- P: 80-94%
- L: 60-79%
- F: 0-59%
Grading for Undergraduate Students

• A+: 97-100%
• A: 94-96%
• A-: 90-93%
• B+: 87-89%
• B: 84-86%
• B-: 80-83%
• C+: 77-79%
• C: 74-76%
• C-: 70-73%
• D+: 67-69%
• D: 64-66%
• D-: 60-63%
• F: <= 59%
Literature Review

- See description on the syllabus
- Form groups of 3 or 4
- Choose an IR task (next slide)
- Write a short proposal (mostly for feedback)
- Review the literature
  - not just the different solutions to the problem
  - the best solutions to the problem!
- Write a paper (~30 pages double-spaced)
- Make a presentation
  - 10 minute presentation + 5 minutes Q&A
Literature Review

example tasks

- Personalized information retrieval
- Session-based information retrieval
- Clustering of search results
- Book search
- Image
- Video search
- Social-media data for event-detection and forecasting
- Faceted search
- Federated search
- Snippet generation
Literature Review tips

- Be thorough
- Be scientific
  ‣ don’t focus on the writing of the papers you review
  ‣ focus on the science (the method and the evaluation)
- Be constructive
- Contribute new insight and structure
  ‣ your literature review shouldn’t read like a “list”
  ‣ connect dots that haven’t been connected
- Say what you think!
Course Tips

- Work hard
- Do the assigned readings
- Do other readings
- Be patient and have reasonable expectations
  - you’re not supposed to understand everything we cover in class during class
- Seek help sooner rather than later
  - office hours: by appointment
  - questions via email
- Keep laptop usage to a minimum (live in the present)
Course Tips

- You are the most important part of the course!
- You are only competing against yourself (not me and not your fellow classmates)
- Teaching is not all I do ;-)!
Questions?