Information Retrieval

Computer Science Tripos Part II

Models of Document Retrieval and Text Representation

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Document Retrieval

- Retrieve documents with **content** that is **relevant** to a user's **information need**

- Document set is fixed
  (size can vary from 10s of documents to billions)

- Information need is not fixed (ad-hoc retrieval)

Models of Retrieval

- A model is an abstraction of a process
- A retrieval model can be a description of the human process or the computational process of retrieval
  - the process by which information needs are articulated and refined
  - the process of choosing documents for retrieval
- Here we focus on the **description of the computational process**

Models of the Retrieval Process

- Boolean Model
  - simple, but common in commercial systems
- **Vector Space Model**
  - popular in research; becoming common in commercial systems
- Probabilistic Model
- Statistical language models
- Bayesian inference networks

Document Retrieval

- Retrieve documents with content that is relevant to a user's information need
- assume **content** can be represented by a **bag of terms**
- assume the **query** – representing the **information need** – is also a **bag of terms**
- How can we determine **relevance**?
  - what is the computational process?

Some Terminology

- **Document**: an item which may satisfy the user's information need
  - task specific: web pages, news reports, emails, ...
- **Query**: representation of user's information need
  - initial query formulated by user ...
  - transformed into final query used for search
- **Term**: any word or phrase that can serve as a link to a document

Boolean Model

- Boolean model is simple, but is popular in commercial systems (e.g. bibliographic databases)

- Queries consist of terms connected by:
  AND ($\wedge$), **OR** ($\vee$), **NOT** ($\neg$)

- Key assumptions (and weaknesses)
  - Terms are either present or absent in a document
    (frequency not taken into account)
  - Terms are all equally informative when determining relevance
  - A document is either relevant or not relevant
    (no partial matches)

Example Boolean Retrieval

- User need: I'm interested in learning about vitamins other than vitamin e that are anitoxidants

- User query:
  vitamin **AND** antioxidant **AND NOT** vitamin e

- Suppose there's a document which discusses the antioxidant properties of vitamin e and vitamin c
  - does the user want it?
  - does the user get it?

Advantages of the Boolean Model

- Simple framework
  - can be implemented efficiently
- Semantics of a Boolean query is well-defined
- Work well when the collection is known and the user has a good idea of what documents are required

Disadvantages of the Boolean Model

- Often difficult for user to formulate complex queries
  - may require trained intermediary
- Users may even have difficulty with simple queries
- Difficult to control volume of output
  - may require reformulation of query
- Documents either match query or do not
  - no ranking facility
- All query terms are considered equally important

Vector Space Model

- Documents, Queries, Terms are all vectors in some high-dimensional vector space

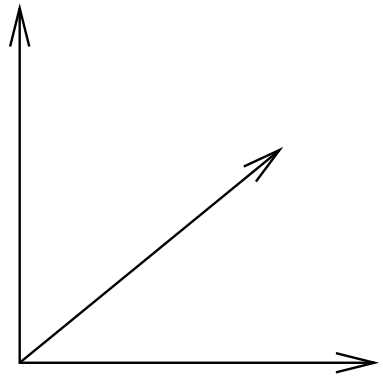
- Key questions:
  - What are the basis vectors (dimensions)?
  - What is magnitude along a dimension?
  - How can objects in the space be compared?

Basis Vectors

- A **Vector Space** is defined by a **linearly independent** set of **basis vectors**
  - A set of vectors $\{\overline{v}_1, \overline{v}_2, \ldots, \overline{v}_n\}$ is linearly independent if the only solution to the equation $\lambda_1\overline{v}_1 + \lambda_2\overline{v}_2 + \ldots + \lambda_n\overline{v}_n = 0$ is $\lambda_i = 0$ for all i
  - Each vector in the set cannot be expressed as a linear combination of the remaining vectors
- Any vector in the space can be expressed as a linear combination of the basis vectors
  - basis vectors determine what objects can be described in the space

Orthogonal Basis Vectors

- If $\overline{v} \cdot \overline{w} = 0$ then $\overline{v}$ and $\overline{w}$ are **orthogonal**
  - $\overline{v} \cdot \overline{w} = \sum_i v_i.w_i$
  - $\overline{v} \cdot \overline{w} = |\overline{v}||\overline{w}| \cos\theta$
- If a set of vectors is pairwise orthogonal then it is linearly independent

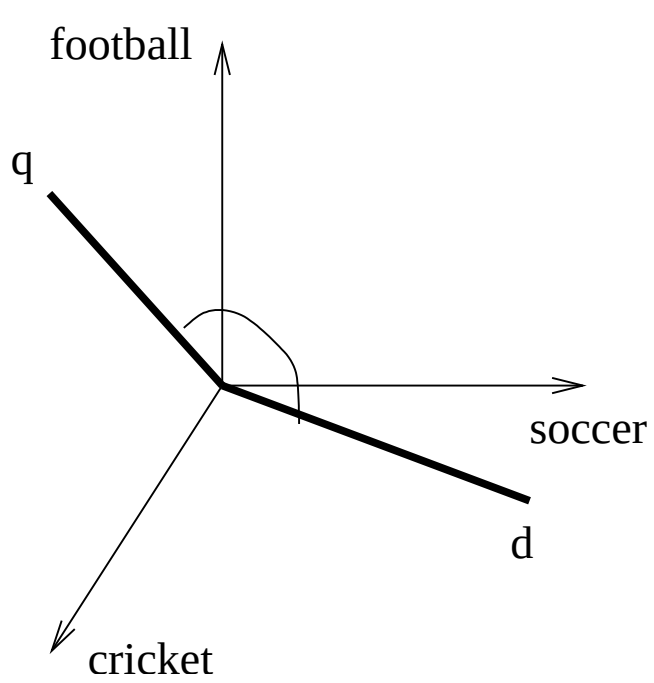


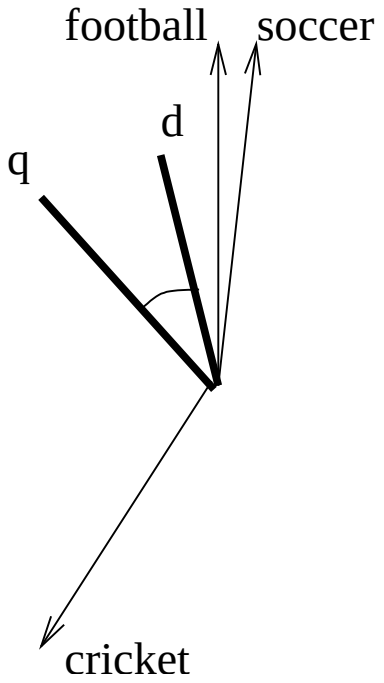
Basis vectors for 3 dimensions

Terms as Basis Vectors

- Typically terms from the document set are chosen as orthogonal basis vectors
- But terms are clearly not orthogonal (?)
- If we believe terms are "not orthogonal", we must have some pre-defined notion of a space in which terms exist
- What are the basis vectors of this space?
  - concepts?
    - documents, queries, terms are linear combinations of concepts?
  - **Latent Semantic Indexing** is an example of a technique which considers this question

The Problem with Orthogonal Terms



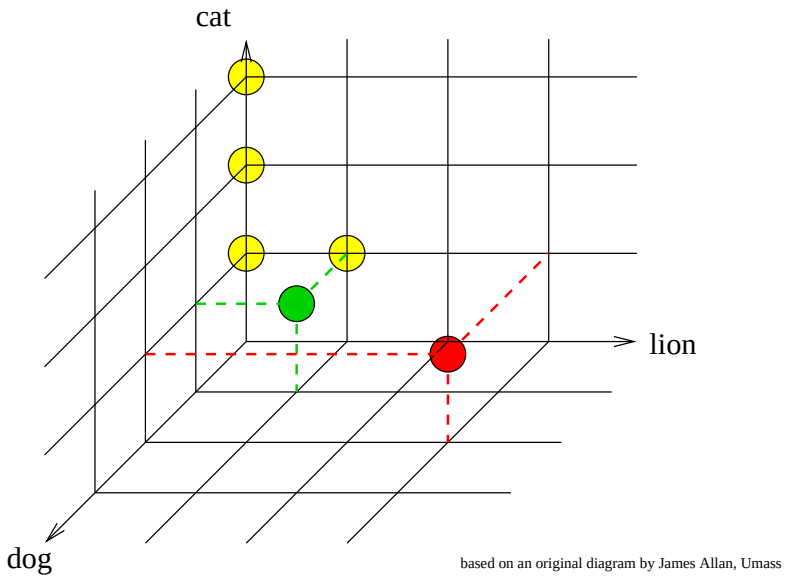


- Document d mentions soccer and cricket; query q mentions football and cricket
- Relaxing the orthogonality assumption brings d closer to q in the space

The Problem with Orthogonal Terms

- **Synonymy**: two documents with similar content can contain different words and be far apart in the space
  - problem of synonymy may adversely affect recall
- **Polysemy**: two documents can share many words, and hence be close in the space, but have very different content
  - problem of polysemy may adversely affect precision
- However, despite many attempts to improve upon the orthogonality assumption, systems which make this assumption are hard to beat

Document Representation using Term Frequency



- yellow: {cat}, {cat cat}, {cat cat cat}, {cat lion}
- green: {cat lion dog}
- red: {cat dog dog lion lion lion}

Weighting Schemes

- Weighting scheme determines position of documents and queries in the space
  - ideally we want similar objects clustered together, and dissimilar objects far apart
- Individual vector components for an object determine:
  - the degree to which the object embodies that dimension
  - possibly the usefulness of that dimension in distinguishing the object

e.g. **TF** $\times$ **IDF**

- Small IDF for a term effectively shrinks the space in that dimension, making it less important

$TF \times IDF$

- **Term frequency**: (monotonic function of) the number of times a term appears in a document
  - can be thought of as a **recall** enhancing device
- **Inverse document frequency**: (monotonic function of) the number of documents in which a term appears
  - can be thought of as a **precision** enhancing device
- Why not use **inverse collection frequency**: the total number of occurrences of a term across all documents?
  - a term may have a high collection frequency but still be concentrated in a small set of documents

A Possible TF $\times$ IDF Scheme

- $\text{TF}_{i,j} = 1 + \log(tf_{i,j})$ $(tf_{i,j} > 0)$
  - $tf_{i,j}$ is frequency of ith term in jth document
- $\text{IDF}_i = \log \frac{N}{df_i}$
  - N is number of documents in collection
  - df_i is the number of documents in which ith term appears
- Many variations of TF $\times$ IDF exist
  - How can we search the possibilities systematically?
    - with difficulty
  - Some general conclusions about effective weighting schemes appear in Salton and Buckley (1988)

Query Representation

- Queries are also vectors in the space, based on the terms in the query
- Query term weights need not be the same as document term weights
- A possible query-term weighting scheme (Salton and Buckley, 1998):
  - TF $\times$ IDF $= (0.5 + \frac{0.5tf}{\max tf}) \log \frac{N}{n}$
    - *tf* is the number of times term appears in query
    - max tf is the highest number of occurrences for any term in the query
    - N is the total number of documents
    - n is number of documents in which query term appears

Similarity Measures

- How similar are the query and document vectors?
- Inner product
  - D $\cdot$ Q $= \sum_i d_i.q_i$
  - documents containing many instances of informative query terms score highly
- Cosine
  - cosine(D,Q) $= \frac{D \cdot Q}{|D||Q|}$
  - length normalised inner product
    - measures angle between vectors
  - prevents longer documents scoring highly simply because of length
- There are alternative similarity measures

Summary of Vector Space Model

- Simple model
  - map documents and queries to vectors
  - compare using angle between the vectors
  - intuitive geometric interpretation is appealing
- Main challenge is finding a good weighting scheme
  - model provides no guidance
  - TF $\times$ IDF schemes have been found to work well empirically

(Extra) References

- Relevant sections from the course textbook
- Sparck Jones and Willett, eds., Introduction to Chapter 5
- Baeza-Yates & Ribeiro-Neto, Chapter 2
- Term-Weighting Approaches in Automatic Text Retrieval, Salton and Buckley, Ch.6 in Sparck Jones and Willett

Document and Text Representation: the Index

- Manually searching a book for a desired topic is possible, but tedious and time-consuming
  - indexes help a reader quickly locate a topic
- Exhaustive automatic search of very large document collections is expensive
  - indexes greatly speed-up the search process
- **Indexing:**
  - the process of building the index
    - inverted file, signature file, ...
  - deciding what will be used to represent the documents
    - need to facilitate good matching of queries and relevant documents

Manual Indexing

- **Controlled vocabularies** can be used to determine index terms
- e.g. Decubitus Ulcer could also be referred to using *Bedsore, Pressure Ulcer, Pressure Sore* ...
  - TI: Bacterial colonization/infection and the surgical management of pressure ulcers.
    MeSH: Bacterial Infections -surgery; Cross Infection -surgery; Decubitus Ulcer -complications; ...
- Single term can describe an ambiguous concept
- Human indexers determine what the important concepts are, and what terms can denote those concepts
- Examples: MeSH, Library of Congress, Gene Ontology, ...

Manual Indexing

- **Ontologies** organise concepts hierarchically
  - e.g. MeSH, GO
  - Ontologies can contain many relations between concepts, e.g. hyponymy, meronymy
- Structure of ontology can be used to aid search
  - e.g. search for all children (more specific concepts) of a query term

Automatic Indexing

- Manual creation of controlled vocabulary, and maintenance of associated document collection, is very expensive
- Automatic indexing program decides which words or phrases to use as terms **from the documents themselves**
- Hybrid approaches, e.g. combining free-text indexing and manually constructed resources, are possible
- Program may even determine concepts and synonymous terms automatically
  - automatic thesaurus construction

Automatic Indexing

- Experiments indicate automatic indexing can be at least as effective as manual indexing with controlled vocabularies
  - Cranfield experiments in the 60s (Cleverdon papers in Sparck Jones and Willett)
  - perhaps counter-intuitive
  - general message from text-processing fields: much can be achieved with "shallow" content representations

Document Representation

- Represent a document using **index terms**
- What should the terms be? ...
  - so that documents relevant to query are returned
  - documents not relevant to query are not returned
- Example: "The colinearity of genes in Hox clusters suggests a role for chromosome structure in gene regulation."
  - should "gene" and "genes" be separate terms?
  - should "the", "of", "in", "a", 'for", "in" be terms?
  - should "chromosome structure", "gene regulation", "Hox clusters" be single terms?

Document Representation

- Example 2:
  "By using retinoic acid (RA) to induce regulated expression of Hoxb genes in mouse embryonic stem (ES) cells, ..."
  - should "regulation" and "regulated" be separate terms?
  - should "retinoic acid" and "RA" be terms?
  - should "embryonic stem (ES) cells", 'embryonic stem cells", "stem cells", "ES cells" be single terms?

Tokenisation

- **Tokenisation**: dividing a character stream into a sequence of distinct word forms (**tokens**)

- Just separate on white-space?
  - end-of-sentence punctuation:
    "role for chromosome structure in gene **regulation.**"
    "Apple Computer, **Inc.**"
  - bracketing: "By using retinoic acid **(RA)** ..."
  - hyphenation: "By using this **state-of-the-art** technique ..."
  - apostrophes: "The **biologist's** hypothesis **doesn't** imply ..."
  - slashes: "The body has a **potassium/sodium** mixture ..."
  - ...

- Languages other than English may need additional processing, e.g. segmentation for Chinese

Stop Words

- A **stop word** is a high-frequency word which is not useful for distinguishing between documents

- Some of the PubMed stop words:
  a, *did*, *it*, *perhaps*, *these*, *about*, *do*, *its*, *quite*, *they*, *again*, *does*, *itself*, *rather*, *this*, *all*, *done*, *just*

- Substantially reduces the size of an inverted file index
  - Statistics for TREC documents: (Witten et al.)
    * 33 terms appear in more than 38% of documents
    * 33 terms account for 30% of all term appearances
    * and acount for 11% of pointers in inverted file

Stop Words

- Use of stop words can be problematic
  - Stop words sometimes important, e.g. "The Who"
  - Frequent words with other meanings; e.g. *may*, *can*, *will* also act as nouns

Terms and Equivalence Classes

- Can be useful to put tokens into equivalance classes, and treat a group of terms as the same term
  - reduces size of index
  - may lead to improved retrieval; e.g. if query is {*gene*, *regulation*} may help to retrieve pages containing *regulate, regulated, regulates*, ...
  - the combined frequencies of class terms may better reflect the content than the individual frequencies

Morphology and Stemming

- **Stem**: the core of a word (its main morpheme) to which **inflectional** and **derivational morphology** applies
  - inflectional morphology deals with such things as plurality and tense: *employ* $\rightarrow$ *employed, employs, employing*, ...
  - derivational morphology deals with obtaining nouns from verbs, adjectives and verbs from nouns, etc.:
    fool $\rightarrow$ *foolish*, *advert* $\rightarrow$ *advertise*, ...
- **Stemming** attempts to remove inflectional (and some) derivational morphology
- **Lemmatisation** just attempts to remove inflectional morphology
- Morphology is a serious issue for e.g. Arabic, Turkish

Porter Stemmer

- Well known **rule-based** stemmer

- Example original sentence: Document will describe marketing stategies carried out by U.S. companies for their agricultural chemicals, report predictions for market share of such chemicals, or report market statistics for agrochemicals, pesticide, herbicide, fungicide, insecticide, fertilizer, perdicted sales, market share, stimulate demand, price cut, volume of sales

- Porter-stemmed (minus stop words): market strateg carr compan agricultur chemic report predict market share chemic report market statist agrochem pesticid herbicid fungicid insecticid fertil predict sale stimul demand price cut volum sale
  (Example from James Allan, Umass)

Porter Stemmer

- Output appears non-sensical – why does it work?
  - representation of root word only needs to be unique for the relevant class of words
  - and transformation needs to be repeatable
- Porter stemmer is sometimes too agressive
  - e.g. *policy/police*, *execute/executive*, *organize/organic*
- Porter stemmer sometimes misses good conflations
  - e.g. *European/Europe*, *matrices/matrix*, *machine/machinery*
- Literature gives contrasting evidence about whether stemming helps
  - but improving stemmers still an active research area

Term Similarity Metrics

- Terms can be compared using a **string similarity** metric, e.g. edit distance
  - More general way to obtain morphological variants
  - Also deals with other variations, e.g. typos/mis-spellings
  - Variants of *Britney Spears* entered as Google queries over a 3-month period:
    488941 britney spears 40134 brittany spears 36315 brittney spears 24342 britany spears 7331 britny spears 6633 briteny spears 2696 britteny spears 1807 briney spears 1635 brittny spears 1479 brintey spears 1479 britanny spears 1338 britiny spears 1211 britnet spears 1096 britiney spears 991 britaney spears 991 britnay spears 811 brithney spears 811 brtiney spears 664 birtney spears

Phrases, Multi-Word Terms

- Why use multi-word phrases as index terms?
  - search for *New York* may be improved if *New York* is in the index ...
  - since we don't want documents about York and New Jersey, for example
- How do we determine the multi-word terms?
  - could do it manually, but expensive
  - automatically:
    - observe word combinations in a large corpus of text
    - extract multi-word terms on the basis of some statistic, e.g. frequency
    - accounting for syntax may help, e.g. looking for consecutive nouns in a complex noun phrase
- Why not just use quotes?

Multi-Word Terms from TREC Data

65824 United States	5778 long time
61327 Article Type	5776 Armed Forces
33864 Los Angeles	5636 Santa Ana
17788 North Korea	5527 Bosnia-Herzegovnia
17308 New York	5458 words indistinct
15513 San Diego	5452 international community
15009 Orange County	5443 vice president
12869 prime minister	5247 Security Council
12799 first time	5098 North Korean
12067 Soviet Union	5023 Long Beach
...	...

Data from James Allan, Umass

References for Today

- Relevant parts of the course textbook
- Ch. 7, Modern Information Retrieval
- Introduction to Ch. 6, Readings in Information Retrieval
- Managing Gigabytes, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6