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CS47300: Web Information Search and Management

Web Search

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16 September 2020

Some slides courtesy
Manning, Raghavan, and Schütze

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Challenge: "The need behind the query"

- Semantic analysis
  - Query language determination
    - Auto filtering
    - Different ranking (if query in Japanese do not return English)
  - Hard & soft (partial) matches
    - Personalities (triggered on names)
    - Cities (travel info, maps)
    - Medical info (triggered on names and/or results)
    - Stock quotes, news (triggered on stock symbol)
    - Company info
    - Etc.
  - Natural Language reformulation
  - Integration of Search and Text Analysis

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Answering "the need behind the query": Context

- Context determination
  - spatial (user location/target location)
  - query stream (previous queries)
  - personal (user profile)
  - explicit (user choice of a vertical search,)
  - implicit (use Google from France, use google.fr)
- Context use
  - Result restriction
    - Kill inappropriate results
  - Ranking modulation
    - Use a "rough" generic ranking, but personalize later

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The spatial context: Geo-search

- Two aspects
  - Geo-coding -- encode geographic coordinates to make search effective
  - Geo-parsing -- the process of identifying geographic context.
- Geo-coding
  - Geometrical hierarchy (squares)
  - Natural hierarchy (country, state, county, city, zip-codes, etc)
- Geo-parsing
  - Pages (infer from phone nos, zip, etc). About 10% can be parsed.
  - Queries (use dictionary of place names)
  - Users
    - Explicit (tell me your location -- used by NL, registration, from ISP)
    - From IP data
  - Mobile phones
    - Many sources of highly accurate location

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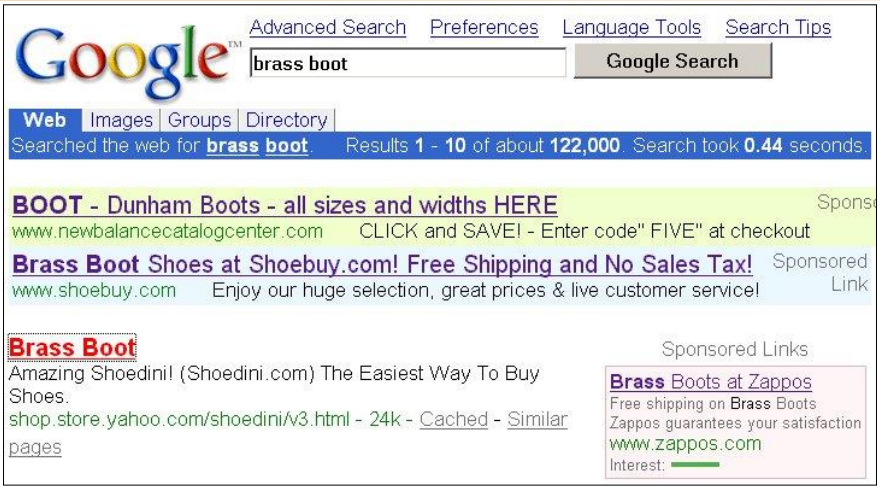
Context transfer



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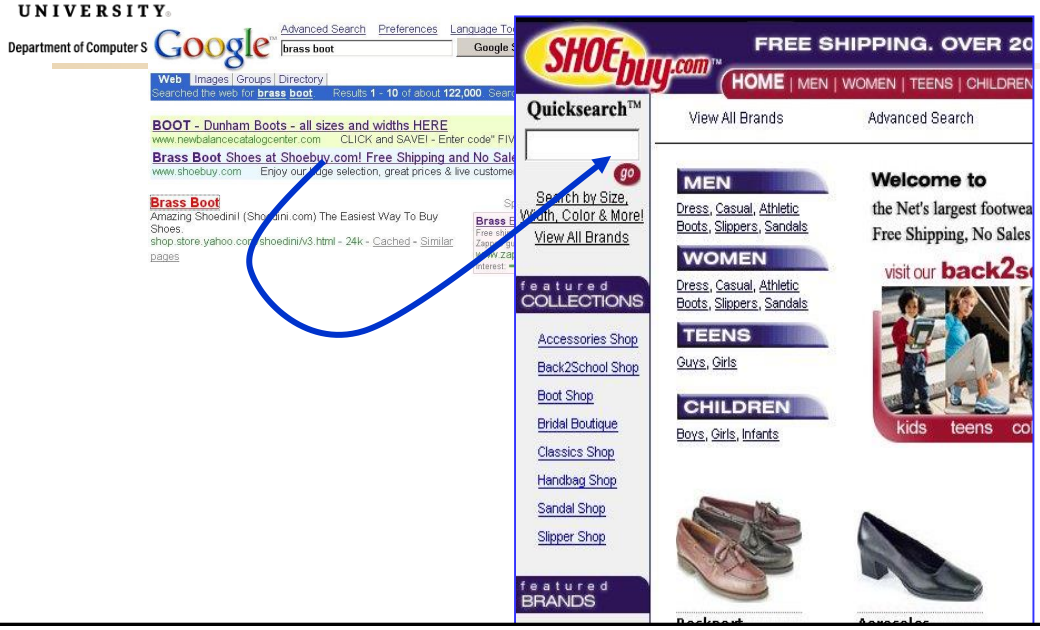
No transfer



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Context transfer

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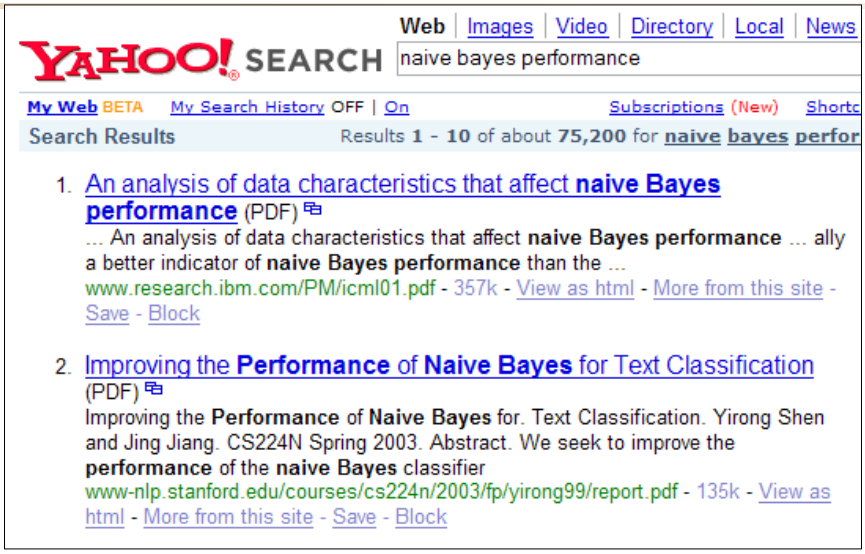
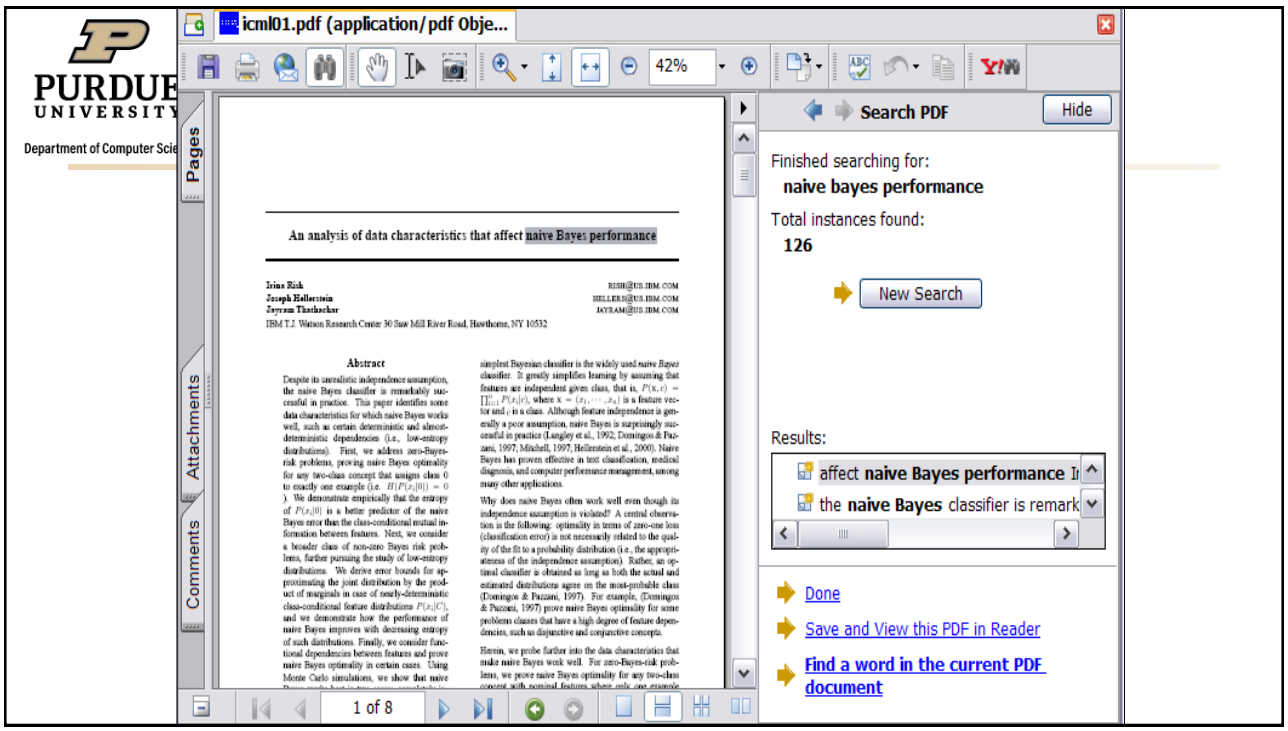
Transfer from search results





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Answering "the need behind the query": Context

- Context determination
  - spatial (user location/target location)
  - query stream (previous queries)
  - personal (user profile)
  - explicit (user choice of a vertical search, e.g., Amazon or eBay)
  - implicit (use Google from France, use google.fr)
- Context use
  - Result restriction
    - Kill inappropriate results
  - Ranking modulation
    - Use a "rough" generic ranking, but personalize later

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Result Restriction

- Geographic restrictions
  - Holocaust denial in Germany
  - Imagery that may be illegal in some jurisdictions, accepted in others
- Age restrictions
  - COPPA


"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

51

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Web Crawler

- Finds and downloads web pages automatically
  - provides the collection for searching
- Web is huge and constantly growing
- Web is not under the control of search engine providers
- Web pages are constantly changing
- Crawlers also used for other types of data

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Retrieving Web Pages

- Web crawler client program connects to a *domain name system* (DNS) server
- DNS server translates the hostname into an *internet protocol* (IP) address
- Crawler then attempts to connect to server host using specific *port*
- After connection, crawler sends an HTTP request to the web server to request a page
  - usually a GET request

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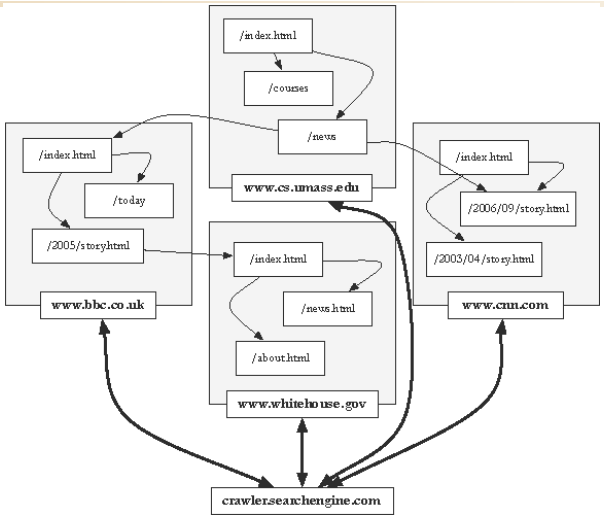
Crawling the Web



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Web Crawler

- Starts with a set of *seeds*, which are a set of URLs given to it as parameters
- Seeds are added to a URL request queue
- Crawler starts fetching pages from the request queue
- Downloaded pages are parsed to find link tags that might contain other useful URLs to fetch
- New URLs added to the crawler's request queue, or *frontier*

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Processing steps in crawling

- Pick a URL from the frontier
- Fetch the document at the URL
- Parse the URL
  - Extract links from it to other docs (URLs)
- Check if URL has content already seen
  - If not, add to indexes
- For each extracted URL
  - Ensure it passes certain URL filter tests
  - Check if it is already in the frontier (duplicate URL elimination)

Which one?

E.g., only crawl .edu, obey robots.txt, etc.

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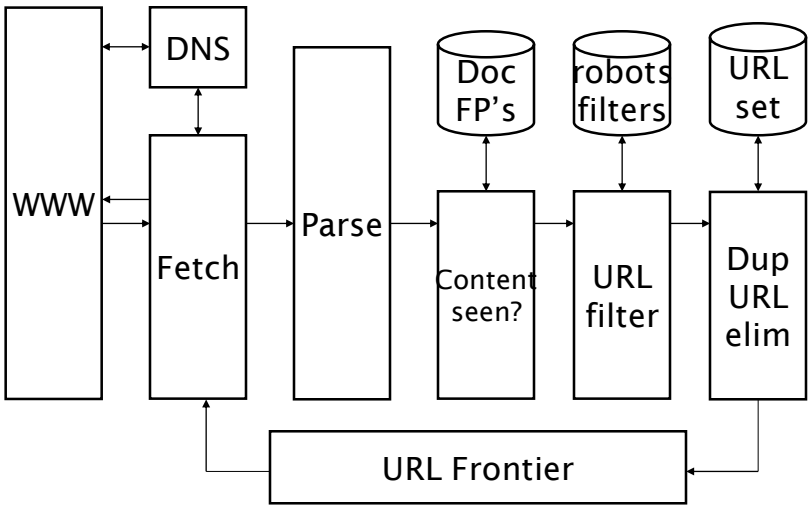
Basic crawl architecture



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What any crawler *must* do

- Be Robust: Be immune to spider traps and other malicious behavior from web servers
- Be Polite: Respect implicit and explicit politeness considerations

77

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What any crawler *should* do

- Be capable of distributed operation: designed to run on multiple distributed machines
- Be scalable: designed to increase the crawl rate by adding more machines
- Performance/efficiency: permit full use of available processing and network resources

79