TR vs. Database Retrieval

- Information
  - Unstructured/free text vs. structured data
  - Ambiguous vs. well-defined semantics
- Query
  - Ambiguous vs. well-defined semantics
  - Incomplete vs. complete specification
- Answers
  - Relevant documents vs. matched records
- TR is an empirically defined problem
  - Can't mathematically prove one method is better than another
  - Must rely on **empirical evaluation** involving users!