

# W2

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## W2L1

### Approximate String Search and Matching

Hard

Because need to define the closest or best match

2 main app

Spelling correction

Need the notion of a dict

Entry

Substring

Item

Given some item of interest — which does not appear in our dictionary — which entry from the dictionary was truly intended?

Computational Genomics

-> Given a substring, find whether the sequence occurs within a larger string, possibly with "errors"  
(but much larger)

Some

Name matching

Query repair

Phonetic matching

Data cleaning

...

### Common Applications

Methods:

Neighbourhood Search

Insert Delete Replace(Substitute) transpose

Efficiency

alphabet size is  $\Sigma$ , length of string is  $|w|$ ,  $k$  edits:

$O(\Sigma^k \cdot |w|^k)$  neighbours

$O(|w|^k \log D)$  string comparison

Edit Distance

Not really a "distance"

operations

Insert delete replace match

Global

Needleman-Wunsch algorithm

Local

Substring (particularly suitable for diff len)

Smith-Waterman

Match must have different +/—sign to Insert/Delete/Replace

Efficiency

Given string  $f$ , entry string  $t$

1 turn

$O(|f| |t|)$  in space and time

Each  $t$  in  $D$

$O(|f| \sum_{t \in D} |t|)$

N-Gram Distance

Phonetic methods

Evaluation

## W2L2

Ssh @dimefox.eng.unimelb.edu.au

Agrep -1 "^ther\$"

n-gram distance

Same goal as Edit Distance

Compare two strings to determine "best" match

n-gram

Sub-string of length  $n$

a true "distance"

n-gram dist

N-Gram Distance between  $n$ -grams of string  $s$  ( $G_n(s)$ ) and  $t$  ( $G_n(t)$ ):

$|G_n(s)| + |G_n(t)| - 2 \times |G_n(s) \cap G_n(t)|$

The smaller the better (more common parts)

Efficiency

Much simpler

Occasionally useful as a simpler variant of Edit Distance

More sensitive to long substring matches, less sensitive to relative ordering of strings (matches can be anywhere!)

Quite useless for very long strings and/or very small alphabets (Why?)

Why

For example, Computational Genomics

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Why

For example, Computational Genomics

Neighbourhood search

Too many possible neighbours (string too long)

Global Edit Distance

Too many insertions (string too long)

Local Edit Distance

cannot fit table into mem(string too long)

N-Gram Distance

With huge n (e.g. 80% of length of shorter string) can (almost) work!

Though tends to prefer shorter chromosomes like Global Edit Distance

But not faster: Despite its simplicity, takes roughly the same time to compare entire dictionary

Orthography(spelling) and phonetics(sound)  
soundex

One mechanism: Soundex

aehiouwy	→	0 (vowels)
bpfv	→	1 (labials)
cgjkqszx	→	2 (misc: fricatives, velars, etc.)
dt	→	3 (dentals)
l	→	4 (lateral)
mn	→	5 (nasals)
r	→	6 (rhotic)

Four step process:

- 1 Except for initial character, translate string characters according to table
- 2 Remove duplicates (e.g. 4444 → 4)
- 3 Remove 0s
- 4 Truncate to four symbols

example

king	kyngge
k052	k05220
k052	k0520
k52	k52

Not good enough

knight	night		
k50203	n0203		
k50203	n0203		
k523	n23		
loan	loew	lough	lewicks
1005	1000	10020	1000222
105	10	1020	102
15	1	12	12

Evaluation

whether the system is effective at solving the user's problem  
for a misspelled word, does the system identify the correct word?

Need

A number of cases of misspelled words

The intended (correct) word for each case

An evaluation metric

To compare sys

Accuracy

Precision

Recall