Methodology

Document Processing Pipeline

The implementation is designed to process documents using a multi-stage MapReduce pipeline, primarily focusing on text data extraction, organization, and aggregation to facilitate document-centric analysis. Initially, the first mapper extracts key metadata and terms from documents by parsing document IDs and titles from filenames. It tokenizes the text using a regex pattern to delineate word boundaries and filters out single-character words to minimize noise. The output from this stage consists of tuples of the form (term, docID, title, count) for each word in the document.

The subsequent intermediary mapping stage reorganizes these tuples to create records centered around each document, altering them to (docID, term, title, count). This restructuring lays the groundwork for subsequent aggregation during the reduction phases. The first reducer focuses on aggregating term statistics by compiling occurrences of the same term within a document to maintain a record of term frequencies. The final reducer then generates extensive document statistics by calculating each document's length, documenting term frequencies, and tracking document frequency for each term, necessary for inverse document frequency (IDF) calculations. The final outputs from the reducer include document metadata records, term frequency records, and term document count records, providing a comprehensive dataset for further analysis.

Data Storage Approach

The implementation leverages Cassandra as the storage backend for the search index, optimized for scalability and efficient read operations. This setup involves storing document metadata (such as ID, title, and length) in a documents table, term frequencies in a term_frequencies table indexed by term and document ID, and document frequencies in a term_document_count table. This schema is designed to facilitate efficient retrieval of necessary statistics for BM25 calculations during query processing, supporting rapid and scalable access to the stored data.

Query Processing Implementation

For query processing, Apache Spark is employed to enable distributed processing. The process begins with query analysis, where user queries are parsed using the same tokenization method employed in document processing and converted to lowercase to ensure consistent matching. The retrieval model implements the BM25 ranking function with parameters k1=1.2 and b=0.75, which are standard starting points for BM25; these parameters control term frequency saturation and document length normalization. Using Spark, the score calculation is distributed across worker nodes, with each node independently calculating the BM25 score for documents by utilizing term frequency from the term_frequencies table, document frequency from the term_document_count table, and document length statistics from the documents table. The standard BM25 formula is used to compute the scores. Finally, results are filtered to include only documents

with positive scores, sorted in descending order to prioritize relevance, and the top 10 documents, along with their titles and scores, are returned to the user.

Demo

https://github.com/EninDmitriy96/search-hdfs

The implementation expects to be run inside the docker container. First, one has to build it using docker compose up -d. After that, enter the container with docker exec -it cluster-master bash -c. Within the container, application may be run via ./app.sh. This will start the services up, upload data from /data folder to HDFS (expected format <doc_id>_<doc_title>.txt), run the index procedure and upload to cassandra. In the end, the app.sh will run a sample search. Further search may be performed via ./search.sh "search query", top results will be displayed (among the logs, can be found closer to the end of the output).

Document size can significantly impact search relevance, even when searching for exact phrases. This counterintuitive behavior occurs because most modern search engines employ length normalization in their ranking algorithms (like BM25), which penalizes term matches in longer documents to prevent them from dominating results solely due to their higher term frequency potential. When a document is substantially longer, your exact phrase represents a smaller percentage of the overall content, resulting in a lower normalized relevance score despite being a perfect match. Additionally, longer documents may have more competing matches for partial terms from query, and the exact phrase might appear in a less prominent section (like deep in the body text rather than in headings or introductory paragraphs). Search engines also consider term proximity, so if your phrase appears once in a short document versus once in a lengthy document with thousands of other words, the shorter document might rank higher because the matched terms represent a more significant proportion of its content. See the example with search on phrase from Xubuntu file. The screenshots are attached below.









