
Board games group recommendation using metadata

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Abstract

In this document we propose a group recommendation system for board games using data from the Board Game Geek website, which includes attributes such as the number of players, average playtime, complexity, and user ratings. The implementation employs Python and the scikit-learn library, offering an efficient and scalable solution for group-based game recommendations.

1. Motivation and state of the art

Board games have been a popular form of entertainment for centuries, and their popularity has only increased in recent years. Even as digital games have become more prevalent, board games have remained a favorite pastime for many people, and the market for board games has grown significantly giving rise to platforms such as Board Game Geek (BGG). This website is a popular platform for board game enthusiasts, where users can rate and review games, as well as access information about them.

This platform has a vast amount of data that has been used in the past to create recommendation systems. For example, proposed a recommendation system for board games based on user ratings, using a collaborative filtering approach. However, this approach does not take into account the characteristics of many of the games, that are supposed to be played in groups. As such, we propose a group recommendation system to make recommendations tailored to groups of players.

Another example of group recommendation systems is the work of , who proposed a group recommendation system for tourism and movies¹. This system uses regular clustering algorithms to group users based on their ratings, such as user k-nearest, item k-nearest and support vector decomposition,

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¹This work is hosted on a github repo and is intended to be used as a basic tutorial.

and then recommends movies and touristic locations based on the preferences of the group.

1.1. Proposal

We propose a refined version of that last system, using metadata-centric clustering to group board games based on their characteristics, and then recommending games to groups of players based on their summed preferences used the functions detailed on the previous work. This system is designed to be more accurate than the previous one, as it takes into account the characteristics of the games, and not just the ratings of the users.

2. Data analysis

The dataset that will be used for this project has 10 different files, each one with different information about board games. The main file is `user_ratings.csv`, which contains 19 million rows. Due to the limited processing power of Google Collab, we will use only 50,000 rows for the initial training. The other files are:

- `games.csv`: This file contains 22 attributes about the rated games and includes 22,000 different games. Among the attributes, we have aspects such as the game description, which could be evaluated using language models, the year of publication (which distributes as shown in figure 1), the average rating received, among others.
- `ratings_distribution.csv`: Contains the total ratings for each board game. In general, these ratings distribute as shown in figure 2.
- `temes.csv`: Contains the themes of each game as a binary flag. The 50 most common themes can be seen in the graph in figure 3.
- `mechanics.csv`: Contains the game mechanics as a binary flag. The 50 most common mechanics can be seen in the graph in figure 4.
- `subcategories.csv`: Contains the subcategories of each game in binary flag format.
- `artists_reduced.csv`: Contains information about which artist created a certain game in binary flag

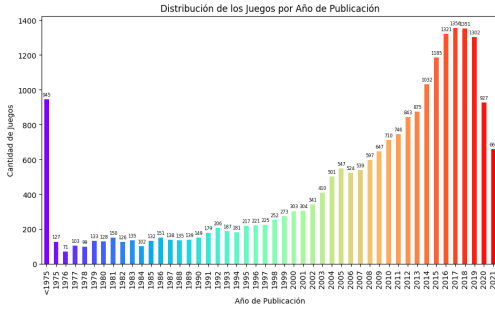


Figure 1. Juegos por año de publicación

format. Only artists with more than 3 games created are considered.

- `designer_reduced.csv`: Contains information about which designer designed a certain game in binary flag format. Only designers with more than 3 games created are considered.
- `publishers_reduced.csv`: Contains information about the companies that sell these games in binary flag format. Only companies that sell more than 3 games are considered.

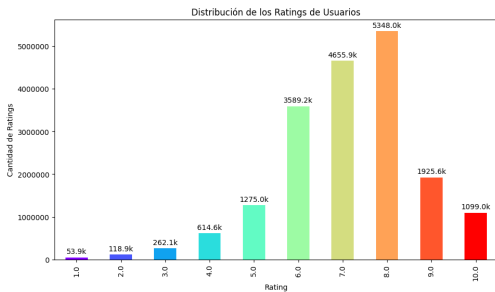


Figure 2. Distribución de ratings de juegos

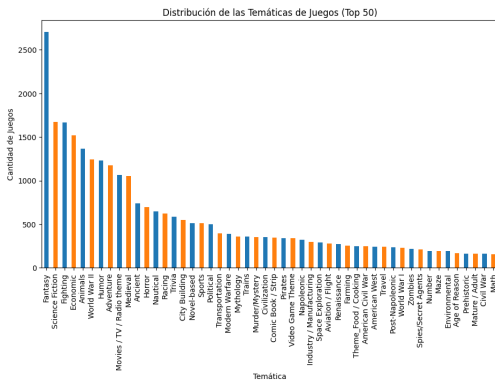


Figure 3. Temáticas más comunes en el dataset

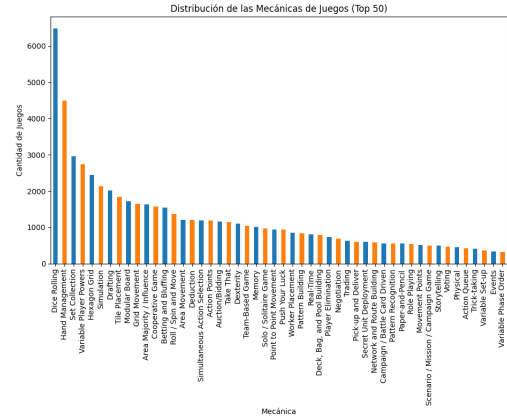


Figure 4. Mecánicas más comunes en el dataset

2.1. Figures

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Label all distinct components of each figure. If the figure takes the form of a graph, then give a name for each axis and include a legend that briefly describes each curve. Do not include a title inside the figure; instead, the caption should serve this function.

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