Retrieving Semantically Similar Clinical Trials

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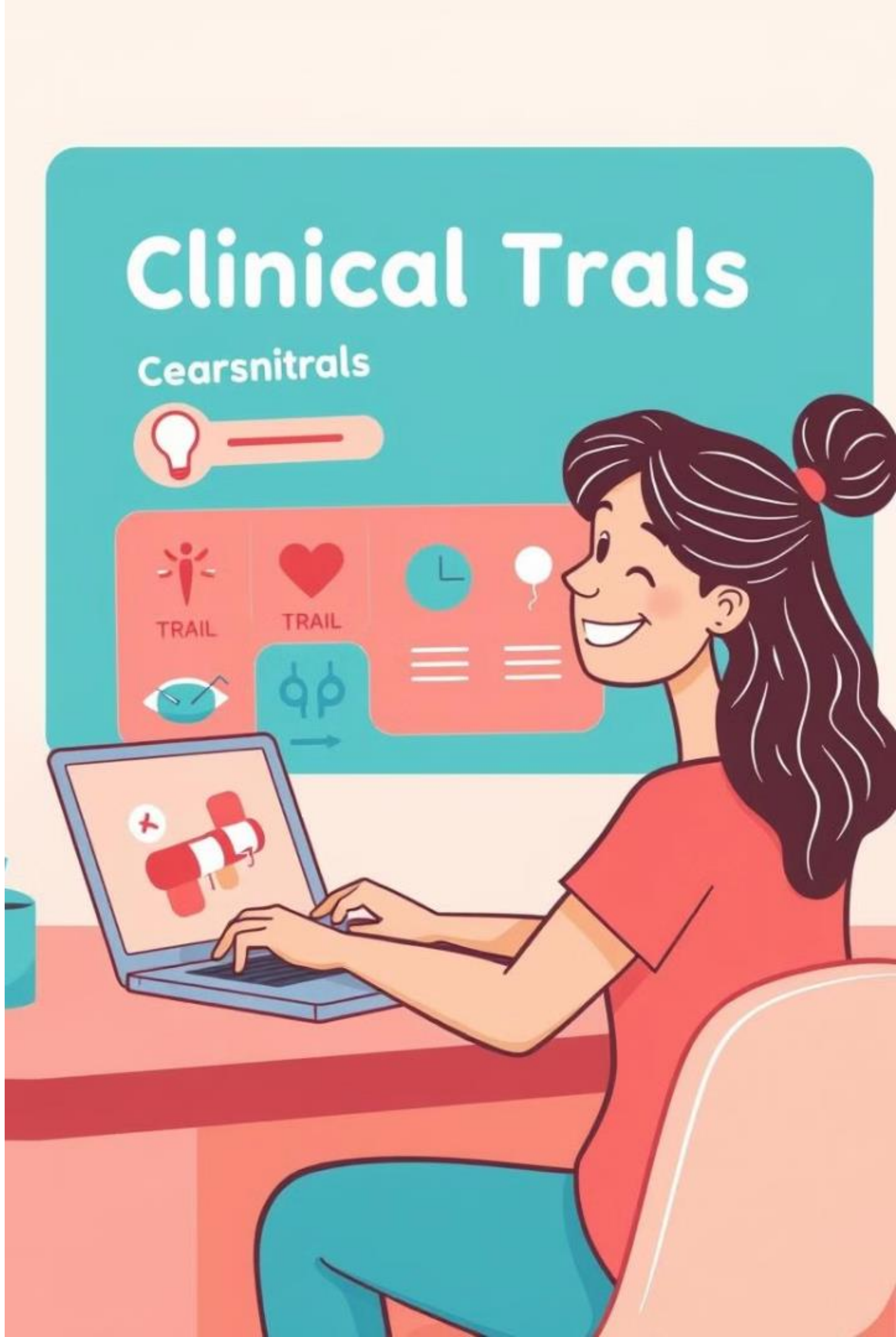


Problem Understanding

Objective

To efficiently retrieve semantically similar clinical trials using advanced natural language processing (NLP) and scalable search techniques.

Challenges

- **Data Heterogeneity:** Clinical trials contain diverse information across multiple fields (e.g.,study title,).
- **Semantic Understanding:** Need to capture meaning beyond keyword matching.
- **Scalability:** Efficient retrieval from a large dataset of trials.

Methodology

Data Preprocessing

- Source: Extracted data from eligibilities.txt to create a new column named "criteria."
- Dataset: Combined "criteria" with other trial fields (e.g., title, conditions, outcomes) to create a unified dataset for analysis.

Model Selection

Transformer Model: sentence-transformers/all-mpnet-base-v2

- Pre-trained for semantic similarity tasks.
- Encodes textual data into high-dimensional dense embeddings.

Retrieval Mechanism

FAISS (Facebook AI Similarity Search):

- Optimized for scalable and fast nearest-neighbor searches.
- Supports high-dimensional vector indexing and retrieval.

Approach

1

Preprocessing

Unified fields into a single textual representation for each trial. Normalized and cleaned text to improve model performance.

2

Embedding Generation

Used sentence-transformers/all-mpnet-base-v2 to encode text into semantic embeddings. Captured the meaning of each trial in a dense numerical vector.

3

FAISS Indexing

Indexed embeddings using FAISS for cosine similarity-based retrieval. Normalized embeddings to ensure consistent similarity calculations.

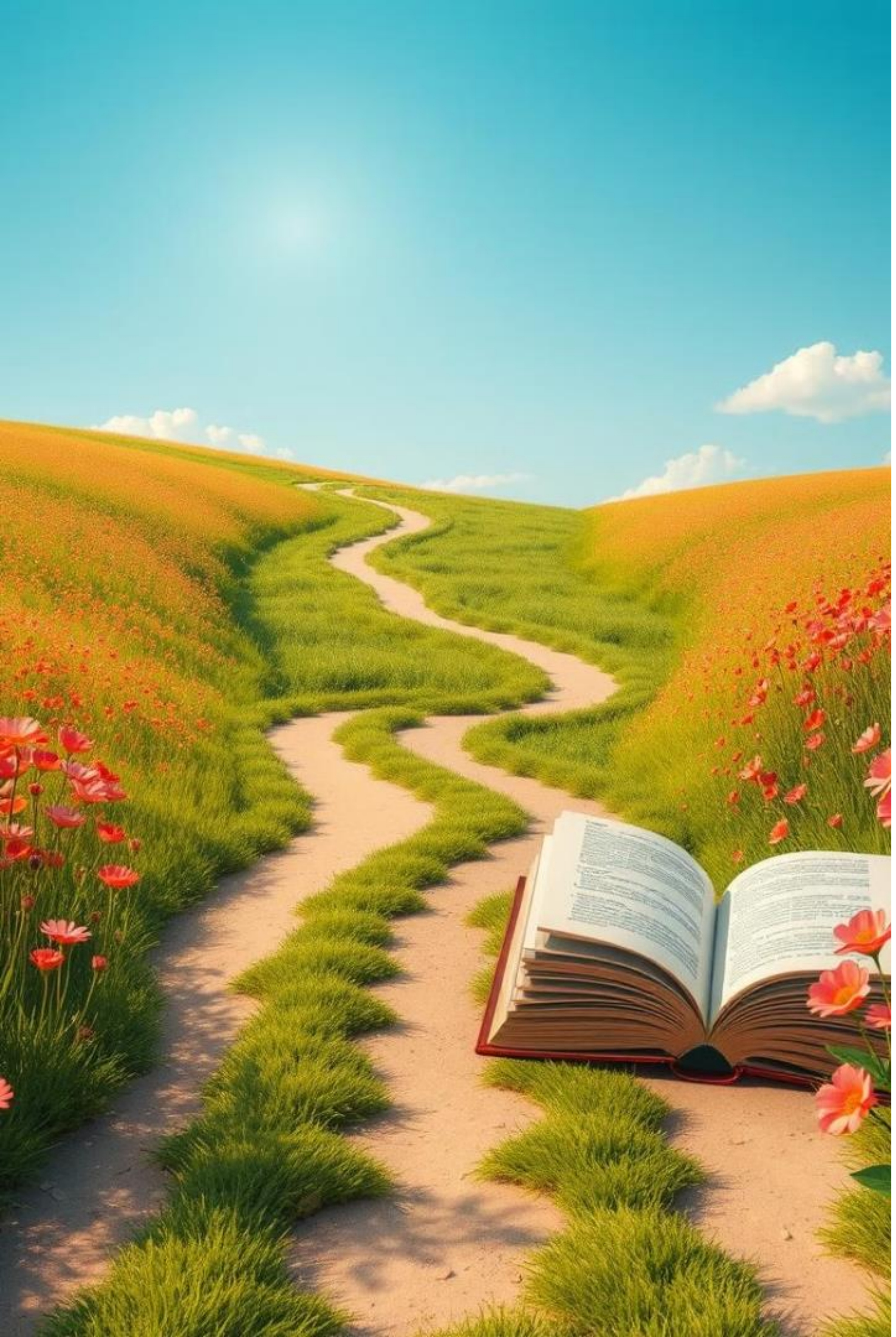
4

Query Handling

Input query text is encoded using the same transformer model. Normalized query embedding is searched in the FAISS index to retrieve the top k similar trials.

Results

- **Similarity Score:** Achieved a similarity score between 0.8 and 0.9, indicating strong semantic relevance.
- **Performance:** Achieved rapid retrieval times, even for large datasets.



Conclusion

1 Key Takeaways

Combined state-of-the-art NLP with scalable search for efficient trial retrieval. Achieved meaningful semantic understanding of diverse clinical trial data. Demonstrated the effectiveness of FAISS for handling large datasets.

2 Future Work

Integrate user feedback to refine query relevance. Expand preprocessing to include additional metadata fields. Explore real-time updates to the FAISS index for dynamic datasets.