On “Content-Based Recommendation Systems”

This chapter encapsulates content-based recommendation systems. The authors begin by establishing commonalities of every content-based system. These are:

1. A way to describe items
2. A way to create a user profile
3. A way to associate the items’ descriptions with the users’ profiles

Then, they review past and current methods of content-based recommendation, including nearest neighbour methods and linear classifiers. Finally, they discuss briefly about the state of the art and about the advantages and pitfalls in this matter.

I honestly found the paper to be informative and broad (within content-based recommendation), which is not bad, but I find myself struggling to come up with a critique towards it because its nature is one of a systematic review and it is, as far as I can tell, just a presentation of existing work.

However, given that I must summon a critique or commentary about this chapter, I would orient it to the global topic of content-based recommendation rather than to the specific methods presented. Of particular interest to me is how the nature of content-based recommendation systems competes with and complements other methods of recommendation. Regarding that, I believe the authors mention a condition necessary to provide good recommendation:

> *[N]o content-based recommendation system can give good recommendations if the content does not contain enough information to distinguish items the user likes from items the user doesn’t like.*

This condition, in my view, should drive the decision of utilizing or not a content-based system. Choosing to use one type of recommender system does not rule out the other types, so if you have enough information about the items, use content-based recommendation. However, an open question remains: how much information about the content is enough?