CS4051

Information Retrieval

Week 03

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Spelling & Phonetic Corrections

Spelling Corrections

- Two principal uses
  - Correcting document(s) being indexed
  - Correcting user queries to retrieve “right” answers
- Two main flavors:
  - Isolated word
    - Check each word on its own for misspelling
    - Will not catch typos resulting in correctly spelled words
    - e.g., ***from → form***
  - Context-sensitive
    - Look at surrounding words,
    - e.g., ***I flew <u>form</u> Heathrow to Narita.***

Spelling Corrections

Return to Google's jobs pages

488941 britney spears	29 britent spears	9 brinttany spears	5 brney spears	3 britiy spears	2 brirreny spears
40134 brittany spears	29 brittnany spears	9 britanay spears	5 broitney spears	3 britmeny spears	2 brirtany spears
36315 brittney spears	29 britttany spears	9 britinany spears	5 brotny spears	3 britneeey spears	2 brirttany spears
24342 britany spears	29 btiney spears	9 britn spears	5 bruteny spears	3 britnehy spears	2 brirttney spears
7331 britny spears	26 birrttney spears	9 britnew spears	5 btiyney spears	3 britnely spears	2 britain spears
6633 briteny spears	26 breitney spears	9 britneyn spears	5 brrittney spears	3 britnesy spears	2 britane spears
2696 britteny spears	26 brinity spears	9 britrney spears	5 gritney spears	3 britnetty spears	2 britaneny spears
1807 briney spears	26 britenay spears	9 brtiny spears	5 spritney spears	3 britnex spears	2 britania spears
1635 brittny spears	26 britneyt spears	9 brtittney spears	4 bittny spears	3 britneyxxx spears	2 britann spears
1479 brintey spears	26 brittan spears	9 brtny spears	4 bnritney spears	3 britnity spears	2 britanna spears
1479 britanny spears	26 brittne spears	9 brytny spears	4 brandy spears	3 britntey spears	2 britannie spears
1338 britiny spears	26 btittany spears	9 rbitney spears	4 brbritney spears	3 britnyey spears	2 britannt spears
1211 britnet spears	24 beitney spears	8 birtiny spears	4 breatiny spears	3 britterny spears	2 britannu spears
1096 britiney spears	24 birteny spears	8 bithney spears	4 breetney spears	3 brittneey spears	2 britanyl spears
991 britaney spears	24 brightney spears	8 brattany spears	4 bretiney spears	3 brittnney spears	2 britanyt spears
991 britnay spears	24 brintiny spears	8 breitny spears	4 brfitney spears	3 brittnyey spears	2 briteeny spears
811 brithney spears	24 britanty spears	8 breteny spears	4 briattany spears	3 brityen spears	2 britenany spears
811 brtiney spears	24 britenny spears	8 brightny spears	4 brieteny spears	3 briytney spears	2 britenet spears
664 birtney spears	24 britini spears	8 brintay spears	4 briety spears	3 brltney spears	2 briteniy spears
664 brintney spears	24 britnwy spears	8 brinttey spears	4 britny spears	3 broteny spears	2 britenys spears
664 briteney spears	24 brittni spears	8 briotney spears	4 briittany spears	3 brtaney spears	2 britianey spears
601 bitney spears	24 brittnie spears	8 britanys spears	4 brinie spears	3 brtiiany spears	2 britin spears
601 brinty spears	21 biritney spears	8 britley spears	4 brinteney spears	3 brtinay spears	2 britinary spears
544 brittaney spears	21 birtany spears	8 britneyb spears	4 brintne spears	3 brtinney spears	2 britmy spears
544 brittnay spears	21 biteny spears	8 britnrey spears	4 britaby spears	3 brtitany spears	2 britnaney spears
364 britey spears	21 bratney spears	8 britnty spears	4 britaey spears	3 brtiteny spears	2 britnat spears
364 brittiny spears	21 britani spears	8 brittner spears	4 britainey spears	3 brtnet spears	2 britnbey spears
329 brtney spears	21 britanie spears	8 brottany spears	4 britinie spears	3 brytiny spears	2 britndy spears
269 bretney spears	21 briteany spears	7 baritney spears	4 britinney spears	3 btney spears	2 britneh spears
269 britneys spears	21 brittay spears	7 birntey spears	4 britmney spears	3 drittney spears	2 britneney spears
244 britne spears	21 brittinay spears	7 biteney spears	4 britnear spears	3 pretney spears	2 britney6 spears
244 brytney spears	21 brtany spears	7 bitiny spears	4 britnel spears	3 rbritney spears	2 britneye spears
220 breatney spears	21 brtiany spears	7 breateny spears	4 britneuy spears	2 barittany spears	2 britneyh spears
220 britiany spears	19 birney spears	7 brianty spears	4 britnewy spears	2 bbbritney spears	2 britneym spears
199 britnney spears	19 brirtney spears	7 brintye spears	4 britnmey spears	2 bbitney spears	2 britneyyy spears
163 britnry spears	19 britnaey spears	7 britianny spears	4 brittaby spears	2 bbritny spears	2 britnhey spears
147 breatny spears	19 britnee spears	7 britly spears	4 brittery spears	2 bbrittany spears	2 britnjey spears
147 brittiney spears	19 britony spears	7 britnej spears	4 britthey spears	2 beitany spears	2 britnne spears
147 britty spears	19 brittanty spears	7 britneyu spears	4 brittnaey spears	2 beitny spears	2 britnu spears

Document Correction

- Especially needed for OCR'ed documents
  - Correction algorithms are tuned for this: "rn" / "m"
  - Can use domain-specific knowledge
    - E.g., OCR can confuse O and D more often than it would confuse O and I (adjacent on the QWERTY keyboard, so more likely interchanged in typing).
- But also: web pages and even printed material has typos
- Goal: the dictionary contains fewer misspellings

Isolated Word Correction

- Fundamental premise – there is a lexicon from which the correct spellings come
- Two basic choices for this
  - A standard lexicon such as
    - Webster's English Dictionary
    - An "industry-specific" lexicon – hand-maintained
  - The lexicon of the indexed corpus
    - E.g., all words on the web
    - All names, acronyms etc.
    - (Including the mis-spellings)

Isolated Word Correction

- Given a lexicon and a character sequence Q, return the words in the lexicon closest to Q
- What's "closest"?
- We'll study several alternatives
  - Edit distance (Levenshtein distance)
  - Weighted edit distance
  - *n*-gram overlap

Edit Distance

- Given two strings S_1 and S_2, the minimum number of operations to convert one to the other
- Operations are typically character-level
  - Insert, Delete, Replace, (Transposition)
- E.g., the edit distance from ***dof*** to ***dog*** is 1
  - From ***cat*** to ***act*** is 2 (Just 1 with transpose.)
  - from ***cat*** to ***dog*** is 3.

Edit Distance – Levenshtein

```
EDITDISTANCE(s1, s2)
 1  int m[i, j] = 0
 2  for i ← 1 to |s1|
 3  do m[i, 0] = i
 4  for j ← 1 to |s2|
 5  do m[0, j] = j
 6  for i ← 1 to |s1|
 7  do for j ← 1 to |s2|
 8     do m[i, j] = min{m[i − 1, j − 1] + if (s1[i] = s2[j]) then 0 else 1fi,
 9                      m[i − 1, j] + 1,
10                      m[i, j − 1] + 1}
11  return m[|s1|, |s2|]
```

► **Figure 3.5** Dynamic programming algorithm for computing the edit distance between strings s_1 and s_2.

Edit Distance – Levenshtein

			f		a		s		t	
		0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4
c	1	1	*1*	*2*	2	3	3	4	4	5
	1		*2*	*1*	2	2	3	3	4	4
a	2	2	2	2	*1*	*3*	*3*	*4*	4	5
	2		3	2	*3*	*1*	*2*	*2*	3	3
t	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	4
	3		4	3	4	2	3	2	3	2
s	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	*3*	*3*
	4		5	4	5	3	4	2	*3*	*3*

► **Figure 3.6** Example Levenshtein distance computation. The 2×2 cell in the $[i, j]$ entry of the table shows the three numbers whose minimum yields the fourth. The cells in italics determine the edit distance in this example.

Using Edit Distance

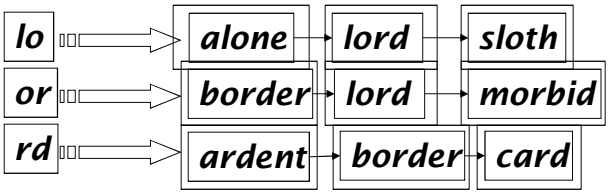
- Given query, first enumerate all character sequences within a preset (weighted) edit distance (e.g., 2)
- Intersect this set with list of "correct" words
- Show terms you found to user as suggestions
- Alternatively,
  - We can look up all possible corrections in our inverted index and return all docs … slow
  - We can run with a single most likely correction

n-gram Overlaps

- Enumerate all the *n*-grams in the query string as well as in the lexicon
- Use the *n*-gram index (recall wild-card search) to retrieve all lexicon terms matching any of the query *n*-grams
- Threshold by number of matching *n*-grams
  - Variants – weight by keyboard layout, etc.

2-grams for match

- Consider the query ***lord*** – we wish to identify words matching 2 of its 3 bigrams (***lo, or, rd***)



Standard postings "merge" will enumerate …

Context-Sensitive Spelling Corrections

- Text: ***I flew <u>from</u> Heathrow to Narita.***
- Consider the phrase query ***"flew <u>form</u> Heathrow"***
- We'd like to respond

Did you mean "***flew from Heathrow***"?

because no docs matched the query phrase.

Context-Sensitive Spelling Corrections

- Need surrounding context to catch this.
- First idea: retrieve dictionary terms close (in weighted edit distance) to each query term
- Now try all possible resulting phrases with one word "fixed" at a time
  - ***flew from heathrow***
  - ***fled form heathrow***
  - ***flea form heathrow***
- **Hit-based spelling correction:** Suggest the alternative that has lots of hits.

Issues in Spelling Corrections

- We enumerate multiple alternatives for "Did you mean?"
- Need to figure out which to present to the user
- Use heuristics
  - The alternative hitting most docs
  - Query log analysis + tweaking
    - For especially popular, topical queries
- Spell-correction is computationally expensive
  - Avoid running routinely on every query?
  - Run only on queries that matched few docs

Soundex

- Class of heuristics to expand a query into phonetic equivalents
  - Language specific – mainly for names
  - E.g., ***chebyshev*** → ***tchebycheff***
- Invented for the U.S. census … in 1918

Soundex Algorithm

1. Retain the first letter of the word.
2. Change all occurrences of the following letters to '0' (zero):
   'A', E', 'I', 'O', 'U', 'H', 'W', 'Y'.
3. Change letters to digits as follows:
   - B, F, P, V → 1
   - C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z → 2
   - D,T → 3
   - L → 4
   - M, N → 5
   - R → 6

Soundex Algorithm

4. Remove all pairs of consecutive digits.
5. Remove all zeros from the resulting string.
6. Pad the resulting string with trailing zeros and return the first four positions, which will be of the form <uppercase letter> <digit> <digit> <digit>.

E.g., ***Herman*** becomes H655.

Soundex

- Soundex is the classic algorithm, provided by most databases (Oracle, Microsoft, …)
- How useful is soundex?
  - Not very – for information retrieval
- Zobel and Dart (1996) show that other algorithms for phonetic matching perform much better in the context of IR

Soundex Exercise

- Find two differently spelled proper nouns (different to the course example) whose soundex codes are the same and give their soundex code.
  - Mary, Nira (Soundex code = 5600).
- Find two phonetically similar proper nouns whose soundex codes are different.
  - Chebyshev, Tchebycheff
  - Rafi, Rafee