Fast Search for NER
Basic Algorithms for Computational Linguistics Project

Sibel Ciddi[*] Noushin Fadaie[†] David Przybilla[‡]

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1 Introduction

NERSimString is a Java library based on SimString [1] paper for doing fast approximate String retrieval.

The main idea of*NERSimString* is to provide a library for creating Name Entitiy dictionaries and a fast NE annotation tool given the generated entities dictionaries.

Gathering Name entities has been a popular tasks during the past years, there are both statistical methods and rule based methods which are good at the task of extracting Name Entities(NE) from raw text.
By Using this tools long list of NE can be created and stored in dictionaries, so that later can be used as a fixed list.

However the following problems arise:

- Even in a restricted domain, the number of NE in a dictionary can be overwhelming.
- Given fixed dictionaries the final goal of finding all the entities contained in a corpus can be a hard task given the size of the corpus.
- Even semi-supervised methods for learning to recognize NE require fast search tools, since learning requires for example to find where a given set of NE are located in a corpus.

So a way for looking for words quickly in a huge dictionary is necessary in order to make the annotation task of NE a tractable problem, this is the aim of NERSimString.

[*]sciddi@coli.uni-saarland.de
[†]fadaei.noushin@gmail.com
[‡]dav.alejandro@gmail.com

Why not exact lookups?

Exact lookups are ok for some tasks, how ever not for NE recognition and specially when dealing with user-generated data (i.e: social networks) why? because there can be variations or miss spelled words, that's why $NERSImString$ offers fast-Approxiamte String Retireval

What does NERSimString offer?

It offers a quick way to make search on the cost of space.

Basically $NERSimString$ receives a dictionary with a NE entry per line(this entry can be multiword) as a result it creates a $NerSimString$ dictionary in which fast queries can be done. Those dictionaries come in different flavors, according to different low-level-implementation

- **SuffixTree:** it is a dictionary based on a suffixTree hold in memory
- **Naive-HashTable:** it is a dictionary based on hashTabes hold in memory
- **MemoryMapped Hashtable:**it is a dictionary based on hashmaps,it is meant to be for huge amoutns of data since it is stored dinamically in the disk in order to avoid being loaded completely into memory.

What kind of similarities?

In order to provide approximate String retrieval the following similarity measures are supported:

- Jaccard
- Dice
- Cosine

As a result this tool can be used either to annotate or to extend current systems that learn to predict NE.

Why is it fast?

$NERSimString$ works creating an inverted list of ngrams-size. Basically given a similarity measure, and a threshold it measures how many ngrams of which size should for sure match the given query in order to accomplish the minimum given threshold. by doing this many possible alternatives are discarded and thus fast search is possible.

Where is the code available?

the repository is hosted at github : https://github.com/dav009/NERSimString

The Benchmarking

We

Future work relating this can involved:

* adding support for more memoryMapped structures * building a bootstrapper (for learning NE) based on NERSimString * adding extra similarity Measures alternatives

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Sections of possible document: Introduction Problem Description Solution (Description of SimString algorithm) Implementation Results Conclusions

[1] http://www.chokkan.org/software/simstring/

2 Implementation

The chosen language for the implementation was Java.

2.1 Packages

This is a description of the most important packages and classes related to the implementation:

IO

The classes in this package have the responsability of dealing with the input/output files.
The class DictionaryReader.java is incharged of reading a raw dictionary file (one entry per line).

Measures

This package is composed of all classes relating the different similarity measures. The SimString algorithm is independant of the chosen similarity, for doing this an interface called *Similarity* exists within the package, in order to extend the system to provide new similarities measures this interface has to be implemented.

Aditionally this package has a class name MeasureFactory, which is incharged of constructing similarities's objects.

Dictionary

This package contains all the classes which have a responsability related to dictionaries.

Among the most important ones are *LowLevelDictionaryImplementation* this is an interface which allows the tool to implement differnt kinds of Dictionary Implementations, for example one dictionary can be represented either as a hashtable or as suffixtree, while those data structures are different by implementing *LowLevelDictionaryImplementation* they become transparent to the simString algorithm.

Additionally this package contains all the classes related to the different offered implementations of dictionaries.

SimString

This package contains the class *SimString* which given a dictionary,a similarity configuration and a query is able to search in the dictionary and retrieve all the similar NE given the value of the parameters.

Util

This package is composed of different classes with different responsabilities. The *NGram* class is incharged of splitting words into ngrams and dealing with any specific functionality related to ngrams.

Examples

This package contains classes (each one is an example) for the potential users.

Test

This package contains classes which allow team to asses the time performance of the tool and make comparisons among the different implementations.

The memory mapped hashtable comes with a memory cost, that is since the speed of a hashtable is to be kept but it will be stored in different files, then a lot of markers and a fix offset of bytes has to be used in order to assure what is in each slot, this means extra memory will be necessary when compared ot the other dictionaries implementations.

To developers NerSimString was implemented in such way so that adding a new dictionary implementation is ndependant of the simString algorithm, in such way new experiments and datastructures can be added.

3 Testing and Results

4 Conclusion and Future Work