A Search Engine Based on Valuable Resources and Self-Improvement Network Education Related

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# **HIGHLIGHTS**

1. Search Engine Technology used in learning resources.
2. Definition of valuable learning resources, realized via computer technology.
3. Educational and learning resources collection.
4. Self-improvement network.
5. Verification method of high quality resources.
6. User behavior and big data analysis.

Keywords: Big data, search engine, self-improvement, valuable resources, education, learning resources

# **ABSTRACT**

Before reading this paper, think about a question, how to search for a piece of valuable and useful information that matches what you really want to learn from the internet?

You may say that we can use Google, Bing or Baidu to search the resources that we need by typing some keywords. These tools or websites that we call ‘search engine’, a search engine can use their web crawler technology to sniff the whole visible network and then provide users simple indexes and links as the results to help users find the source of useful resources. At present, the search engine on the internet has good performance and precise keyword search ability. Such a set of tools or websites have already covered most of our daily online searching life. So why does it need us to do the research on new search engines? These search engines have exposed more and more problems in some specific fields and groups. Let’s begin with these problems and then do the research on ‘search engines’ that developed in a special field, education and learning. This paper brings you a new set of search engine technologies and methods on searching valuable learning resources The research starts from the methods to define and normalize the quality and value of online learning resources through different key points. In order to prove such a theory, some experiments will be designed and done in a new resource search engine system.

# **GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT**

General framework of the whole research and the key technologies adopted by the search engine.



Note: 1. Normally, search engines are based on Web2.0 technology. 2. DLRV (Definition of learning resource value) is a method to define and improve the definition of resources value that will be explained in the following parts of the paper. 3. The whole system and research are divided into four parts, collecting data, resources recommendation, self-improvement and data analysis, verification of value data.

# **Background of Web Crawler**

It is a tool for the search engines and alternative information seekers to collect data for indexing and to enable them to keep their databases up to date.The result of crawling is a collection of websites at a central or distributed location.[[[1]](#endnote-0)]

Generally speaking, if we compare the whole Internet to a huge spider web, a web crawler is like a group of spiders. Each node of the spider web(Internet) contains a lot of information, which is generated in various servers around the world. These spiders’ work is to bring these information back to their home (a database).

# Resource Crawler

Different from the traditional search engine, the learning resource search engine does not use crawlers to obtain web pages, resources and other data. This search engine will be used for special and professional areas, the search engine only obtains and stores the information of learning related resources, and the system will not directly store resources, because it involves copyright issues and system storage performance problems. The so-called resource crawler is a more targeted resource collection container, which is also the central idea of this paper, to create a professional search engine to improve the search quality and user experience for learning resources.

# **Problems**

However, there are many problems in such a technology, which are caused by the quality and value of resources. These spiders are not something smart like human beings, the only thing they do is collecting and bringing the copies of the information back. Much meaningless and even fake or unhealthy information is obtained too.

The search engine can filter some bad information, of course, it can also recommend the content according to the user's interest, but it is still far from the definition of valuable resources.

In the next sections, I will show you how these problems will be magnified to different fields and user groups.

## Problems in specific areas

In the field of education, there are many problems exposed by traditional search engines. Problems of how much values the information contains, is this information relevant to users’ learning, is the information correct and new, how much content can be accepted by the learner. More details of problems to educational fields will be shown in the following list.

1. *Correct or incorrect information?*
2. *How relevant is the resource to the user's learning area or major?*
3. *Is the resource new or old, how is the updating rates?*
4. *Is information safe and healthy?*
5. *Is the information redundant?*
6. *Where are the resources from,how is the reliability and professionalism?*
7. *The cost of learning, how much time and money the users need to learn something?*
8. *How much effective learning percentage?*

## Problems to specific groups

In the field of education, groups of users can be divided by age, level of education or position, family background.

**According to age**, people of different ages have different learning abilities. For example, at present, the Internet learning population is mainly taken by people on average around 32 years old. So most resources will be searched by an adult who may have a family and work for a company. We need to think about whether these resources are practical to him or whether he is interested in them.

Problems list:

1. Whether the resources are healthy, suitable for minors, children?
2. Is it easy for children of different ages to understand?
3. Is it practical for adults?
4. Which age group is more attractive to which resources?

**According to the levels of education**, the algorithms need to take the difficulty level of the resources and users’ education background into consideration.

For the resources, resources need to be divided to different difficulty levels to fit the learners in different learning periods. The resources can be divided into, for example, entry level, junior level and senior level of difficulty.

For the users’ education background. People who receive online education can keep different degrees. The difficulty of the resources are going to fit the levels of the education background.

The difficulty level of these resources will have much impact on the recommendation algorithm of our search engine, because these search results should be close to the ability of different users.

**According to various occupations and their related skills**. The resource search engine requires the search results to fit the users from different posts. So the same keyword may produce different results, because each user’s field is different, that results in these different results.

**To the background of different families**. Internet Education hopes that resources are equal to everyone, so the value of resources should also be reflected in fairness. However, for resources with copyright, we should also follow the corresponding agreements and laws to protect intellectual property, because this is fair to creators. In all, equality will also become a value of the learning resources.

# **Solution**

To solve the above problems can be converted to solve the following two:

1. How to define a valuable learning resource?
2. implement point 1 to create a search engine specially made for searching learning resources.

## Value resource attributes

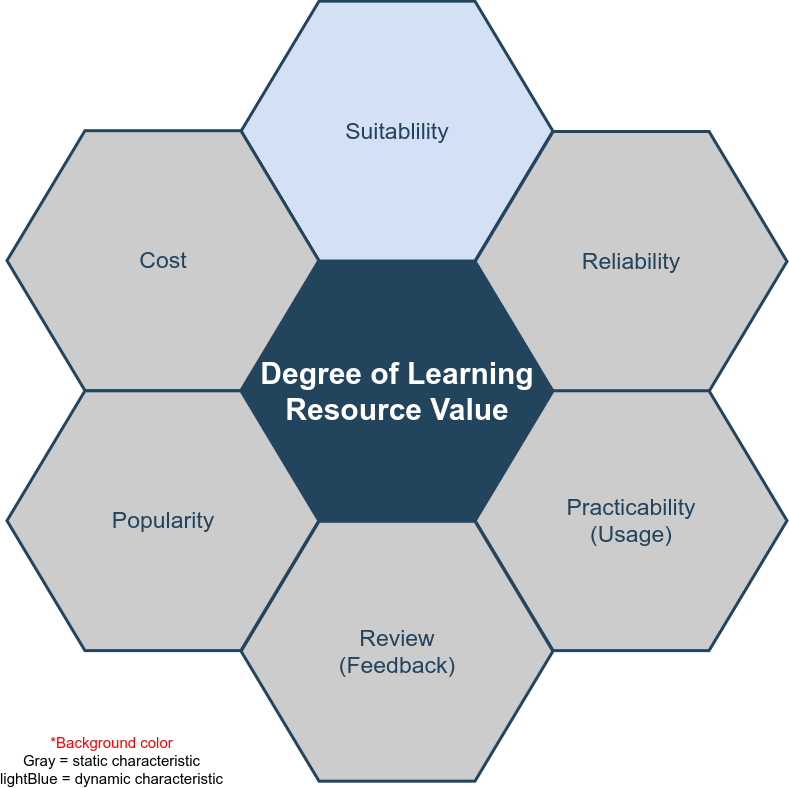
In particular it is difficult to identify resources within a firm if there is no agreed definition of what ‘valuable’ means.[[[2]](#endnote-1)]

Valuable resources can generate three types of competitive advantage: cost advantage, the ability to premium price, and volume-based advantage.[[[3]](#endnote-2)]The above three competitive advantages are used to demonstrate the valuable resources on business and management.

From the analysis of the above problems combined with the advantages that a valuable resource needs, a high-quality learning resource should keep the positive side of all the following characteristics.

1. Cost (both time and money).
2. Professionalism and reliability
3. Practicability
4. Suitability (dynamic, define when search)
5. Popularity
6. Feedback

The 6 characteristics can be used to define a valuable and high-quality learning resource.



Notes: These six attributes are used to judge the value of resources, of which light blue is the variable attribute and gray attribute is fixed. Fixed attribute does not mean that the property value is constant for a resource.

# Definitions

The following is a description of the common nouns in the full text, for reference.

**DLRV**: Degree/Definition of Learning Resource Value. This system measures the value of resources, and value is an index for search engines to use for providing ranking and recommending resources.

**Suitability**: Here, it means resource title, content and tags match search words.

**Cost**: all the cost of finding and using a resource, both time and money.

**Popularity**: Search, click, read and comment quotas

**Review**: User feedback quotas

**Practicability(Usage)**: Amount of a resource citations

### Reliability: Resource reliability refers to whether the source of resources is reliable and whether it has been certified or audited by authority, this quota is decided by the publisher, recommendation and organization/company.

# Requirements

## Hardware requirements

The whole search engine platform requires several high-performance servers which can undertake billions of requests from users. Users will search useful learning results listed in the browser. We call these web applications or B/S architecture. Generally speaking, the performance of the server and the configuration of hardware devices in the cluster are determined by the number of users and the number of visits. Therefore, in the early stage, there is no detailed requirement report for the whole set of server-side hardware, but we have given some basic requirements.

* The dual core processor E3 based on X86 system
* More than 16GB RAM
* 80GB disk storage
* Independent database server
* The distributed deployment server based on Linux is prepared with container and virtualization technology, but will not be used in the experimental time
* Data analysis server and other micro services

User-end or test-end, we require PC and mobile devices to test all the web pages and functions in various browsers

## Software requirements

The complexity of software requirements is much higher than that of hardware. All algorithms, technical details and functional requirements are implemented and verified by software programming. We can use the normal web development environment, tools, languages and related SDK.

### MVC Design pattern

MVC pattern is a very classic design pattern in software engineering. MVC pattern was first proposed by Trygve Reenskaug in 1978[[[4]](#endnote-3)],which is widely used in web development. The framework based on this design pattern can be called MVC framework. All the development and implementation described in this paper are based on this design pattern. This set of search engine system adopts MVC framework. MVC is a design pattern that separates model, view and controller. In actual development, model is data level, view is front-end, and controller is part of business logic. MVC design pattern can achieve high cohesion and low coupling, and separate data, view and business. MVC improves the development efficiency, code cleanliness, and has higher scalability. The purpose of using this mode is to make the search engine easy to optimize and expand the function in the experiment.

### Related application software

* MVC framework based on Node and express
* The view layer is based on vue, also called front end, which is used by users
* Reverse proxy server and http server are based on Nginx
* MySQL database, a kind of relational database, stores a large number of data generated by the search engine system

## Non-functional requirements

### Performance

Google answers 100 billion searches per month[[[5]](#endnote-4)], that means the average of a day is at least 3 billion and this is the statistics in 2012. Our learning resource search engine doesn’t need such huge search performance because we are targeting at a special area instead of all the users on the internet. Around 2017, there are more than 30 million children use Google education apps[[[6]](#endnote-5)], and adults and college students are not included in 30 million, so our system needs at least double of this amount(children) for users’ requests so that it needs to accommodate 60 million users per day. In computer terms, it means DAU(Daily Active User) is at least 60 million. To ensure the smooth requests from the increasing DAU, we raise the performance bottleneck to 100 million DAU.

### Reliability

The operation of all the services are 24 hours, Users get the results within 1 second after starting the search that is to say, the response speed is less than 1 second for each research

### Security

**System layer security:**

1. Firewall between server nodes, access control on blacklist, white-list and iptables technologies.
2. Data backup to prevent the data loss disaster.
3. When main servers crash, use the reserve servers instead.
4. Quick recovery plan for crashed servers.

**Business layer security:**

1. User verification
2. API requests security
3. User behaviour logs
4. Cookie or cache security
5. User privacy
6. Encrypt and decrypt data

# Design

This part is the system design description, including engineering design, system architecture deployment design, unified modeling language.The final implementation, online system and theoretical verification of the system will follow all of the following design principle.

## Software Engineering Process

The design of software process follows the life cycle of software engineering and adopts agile model.



I divide the whole implementation process into 6 parts. The concept of the system is described in the background and problems above parts of the paper. Software requirements will not be described in the paper, there are other requirements documents. Framework design, UML will be described in the next parts of this chapter, development and implementation will not be described, only display through algorithms and methods research, for detail please refer to development documents and code. Testing and verification will be presented in the last part of the paper.

## System deployment structure design

The following is the simulation deployment picture of the search engine system, which follows the normal web deployment mode.



Server deployment is distributed, running multiple servers in the same intranet or multiple networks, and each server has its own work task and provides API or open port to other connections. This is a very popular deployment method of Web services, which can handle large concurrent requests, reduce the coupling between services and improve security. Multiple servers can be managed by different teams or individuals, making it easier and more efficient to work. From top to bottom, from left to right, there are user clients(PC or mobile with browsers), CDN, reverse proxy server, firewall, business logic server group, business server and database connection. There is firewall in the middle to control access. Part of database server data is stored in high-speed non relational database, such as Redis or MongoDB, to deal with some hight-frequecny search engine requests.

The purpose of CDN is to speed up the existence of static files. The full name of CDN is: a content delivery network, or content distribution network[[[7]](#endnote-6)], static files can be distributed on multiple nodes of the Internet. When users access, they request the nearest fastest server, which improves the user experience.

The reverse proxy server distributes user requests to upstream servers, which can effectively reduce the possibility of congestion.

There must be a firewall between the reverse proxy server and the cluster server to control the access list, which can be a white list and prohibit illegal users from directly accessing the cluster.

There are many servers in the server cluster, most of them are controllers dealing with business logic, and there are also some servers specialized in processing big data. DLRV’s calculation is included. These servers, which are responsible for data processing, work without rest, sort and classify the resources and tags from the database, score the resources based on DLRV algorithms and provide the core business for users to search the accurate resources.

Non-relational database, such as Redis and MongoDB, these are very important parts of the whole system. Search engines have high requirements for the speed of search and data acquisition, and the structure of relational database is too complex. For some simple tag search, non relational database and even cache database based on memory can provide search engine with more efficient results. Redis can save high-frequency search keywords in memory based on some page switching algorithms, which can effectively improve the search speed. This will be described and tested in the methodology of the second half of the paper.

## UML

### Database and E-R diagrams.

1. R diagram is a kind of diagrams to display the entity and relations between different data structures, in database, we call them tables. Attention: non-relational database is not included in the diagram.

Any modern web development is based on database driven, and the design of relational database follows E-R diagram. The following is the complete database design diagram of search engine system.



Note: each table(entity) has its own primary key which is named id. ‘is\_effect’ is used to mark a row of data as available or non-available status. It is not safe to completely delete information or to display uncontrollable data, by using ‘is\_effect’ attribute, the system can control the validity of data, hide or display data flexibly.

User table is used to store user’s information, resources table stores resources from the internet, users are the owners the resources, one user to many resources, users use resources to organize a course, one course to many resources.

‘Users are the owners of the resources’, this become a extremely important point which makes this search engine different from others. Users have the right to monitor the quality of the resources. This is the key point of reliability evaluation in DLRV system.

### Use Cases



This is the use case diagram of the search engine system which covers 7 main use cases. These are just the most basic just needed functions, and the core use case is the search function. A large number of functional details are not covered here. Users are learners. They can search resources, upload resources manually, set up courses by adding resources as a set, and evaluate other courses or resources.

Note: these use cases: review resources, reference resources, review course and upload will affect the DLRV system define the value of resources. They are called as user behaviour or callback effects.

### Package Diagram & Class Diagram

Package is a [namespace](https://www.uml-diagrams.org/namespace.html) used to group together elements that are semantically related and might change together. It is a general purpose mechanism to organize elements into groups to provide better structure for system model.[[[8]](#endnote-7)] For the server side of the search engine system, the following figure shows the packages, the system is developed based on object-oriented language. Packages are mapped to different folders or collections. Different packages have dependencies on other packages.

1. Controller, this is a package includes all the controllers, we have talked that the system is designed on MVC mode. Controllers deal with all the business logic, take responsibilities for connecting data and views, accept users’ requests and responses. Controller depends on private libs and public modules.
2. Server, the entrance of the whole system, this package manage the files to work as a web server. The data from user-side enter this package first. It depends on controller because the request and data from user-side need controller to serve them. It depends on public modules too.
3. Config, a package mange the connection configuration of various servers. Mail server, database server, OSS server and all other servers needed in this search engine system. At the same time, this package contains some configuration of the system itself. Config package doesn’t depend on any other packages.
4. Private libs, the package contains all the private modules, plugins which used only in this system. It needs to depend on public modules and Model package.
5. Model, the central component of the pattern. It is the application's dynamic data structure, independent of the user interface.[[[9]](#endnote-8)] It can manage the data, logic and rules in the system.
6. Modules, public modules are used by the system



Note: in this diagram, Config and Modules two package have the most dependence by other resources, Config contains all the configuration of the system. ‘Modules’ is a class library referenced from public libs and used by the system in many places.

**Controller Package**



The controller package is the core package of the whole system. It contains classes which are used to deal with the user's business logic, and the search class solves all the user's search requests. The Config class returns the configuration of the site to the front end. Resource will be responsible for data collection, resource classification, deletion and other functions. Through the Resource class, users can also edit courses and get course categories and lists.

**Private Package**



The core class of private package is the class Public, which means private public library. It is a public library specially developed for only this system, it includes functions such as get random numbers, format date, check user info and etc which are used with high frequency. It can be imported and used by controllers to reduce code redundancy and coupling. It is a very common design idea in software engineering. High cohesion, loose coupling[[10]](#endnote-9). Class DB provides a set of methods to operate database like inset, query and delete.

**Server Package**



The server package is the web server start-up entry. It listens and distributes the user's request to the controllers. The mapping mode used between the server package and the controllers is called **Convention Routing**. The figure below explains what is the convention routing mode.



The solution is to automatically map the user's router to the same class name and action name under the controller. The characteristic and advantage of the convention routing is that it does not need to configure the route files, which reduces the development time and the writing of method documents. It can reduce the possible misunderstanding between the front-end and back-end communication.

In this system, the static file has its own unique mapping way, which is different from the controller, so it can isolate the access of code and media file, which is a guarantee for security.

### Sequence Diagram

The main function of search engine system is to search valuable resources, so in many sequences series, this part mainly studies the logic of search sequence. The following is the UML design of search sequence.



The whole search process of the system is that after getting the user's request from the server, the keywords are sent to the Search controller to screen the data in resource database. When the matching and approximate data results are found, the Search controller calculates and verifies the value of the resources through the DLRV module service, and finally returns the organized results to the controller. Finally, the controller returns a sorted list of results to the user browser through the HTTP server. Users get valuable resources that match their request.

# Algorithms and Methods

This chapter describes the algorithm and some methods in learning resource search engine in order to let users get a good experience. ‘Good User Experience’ means 1. Fast access to search results and 2. Valuable learning resources, which is in line with the theme of the paper. We can simplify these two points to ‘search efficiency’ and ‘resource sorting and filtering’.

Let's first do some research on definitions and methods in traditional search engines. Then it will explain the improved or innovative algorithms used in the learning resource search engine system. The algorithm and methodology discussed are also based on the above two points, ‘Good User Experience’. The first section reviews the traditional search engine methods to speed up queries and rank valuable resources. The second section will put out the weakness of traditional general search engine. Finally, based on the traditional algorithms and methods, aiming at the field of Internet learning resources search, we improve and enhance the ranking algorithm, storage-read algorithm for search engine.

## Introduction of traditional way

RD(Resource Discovery), this is a process of searching valuable information on the web.[[11]](#endnote-10) The IETF-RD argues that resource discovery should provide the user consistent, organized view of information.[[12]](#endnote-11) It is like DLRV server but it provides traditional resource discovery service. RDS(Resource Discovery Server) can return a set of resources, these resources are links or indexes of web pages from the internet. Various of search engines support RD such as: Google, Bing, Baidu, etc. In particular one keyword or topic can typically contain from thousands to millions resources. When you type ‘English Learning’ keywords on Google, it returns 10,010,000,000 results within only 0.48 seconds.

### Quick Matching

How does search engine do such a fast query?

Google uses its own file system named GFS(Google file system)[[13]](#endnote-12)

### Rank of Results

Users are only concern with a few of which are the useful results they need of all the resources results, how does search engine rank them and give a suitable list of valuable results?

An algorithm can help user quickly find useful resources through effective filtering and sorting. The rank principle follows a score of significance. First give the main function, *Rank()*.

Function *Rank()* includes a set of algorithms(will be discussed in detail below), it will return a list of sorted valuable resources after measuring the different aspects of resources. In this method, the search keywords of users’ query(Queries) are essential in this function which are used to match the resources.

Traditional search engine uses Vector-Space model to compute the results of rank function. In *Rank()* function, there are two main parameters, ‘Queries’ and ‘Resources’. Let’s simplify the two parameters to Q and R in the following context. Q is a vector, in computer language, it can be an array like *[ Q(1), Q(2) ... Q(i) ]* and R is another array *[ R(1), R(2) ... R(j) ]*. It comes to ‘many Q to many R’, the *Rank()* function needs to calculate the count of Q(1) appears in R(1), the count of Q(2) appears in R(1), to summarize as the following formula.

*SR(j)* is the score of *R(j)*, *count()* is another function which is used to count the number of times that Q(i) appears in *R(j)*.

V is the final value of a resource, SR has been explained, Freq is the frequency of the resource shows in the whole internet(in the range of search engine statistics). In the example, there are *j* resources that the search engine need to sort. When the SR(score of a resource) is higher, the more valuable of the resource(here is web page) for the user is. The more frequency of the resource appearing on the network, the more multiples, leading to higher value, finally the more ahead the resources are ranked in the final resthe ults. In order to compare and sort all the resources, we have to calculate from *V(1)* to *V(j)* which means to calculate all the values of resources.

The final V is used to rank the resource list and display to the users. The order is as follows.

The first parameter is all the final values of all the resources, second parameter means it uses descending sort.

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