Big Data Computing

Master's Degree in Computer Science

2025-2026

Gabriele Tolomei

Department of Computer Science

Sapienza Università di Roma

tolomei@di.uniroma1.it

SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Information Overload

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  - Searching/Filtering
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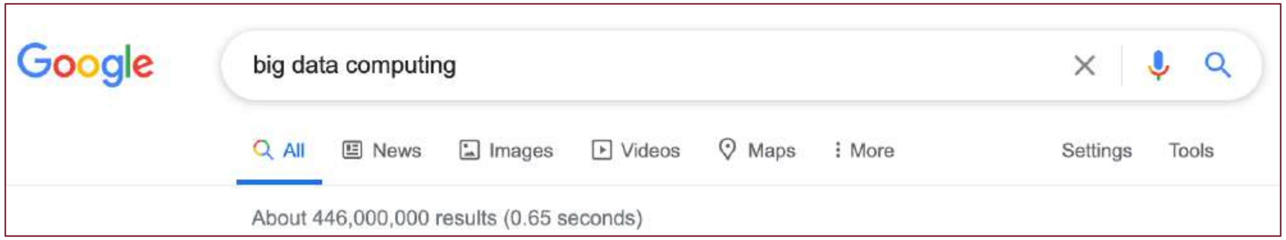

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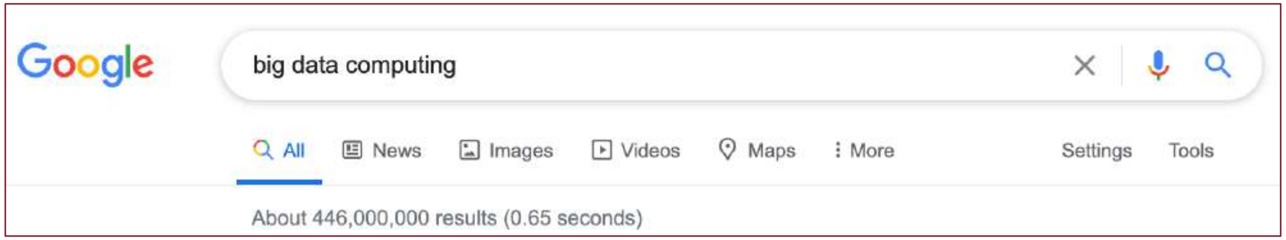

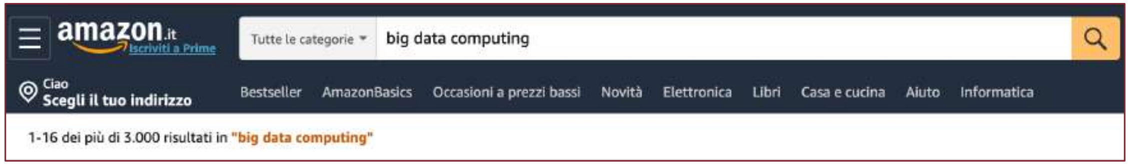

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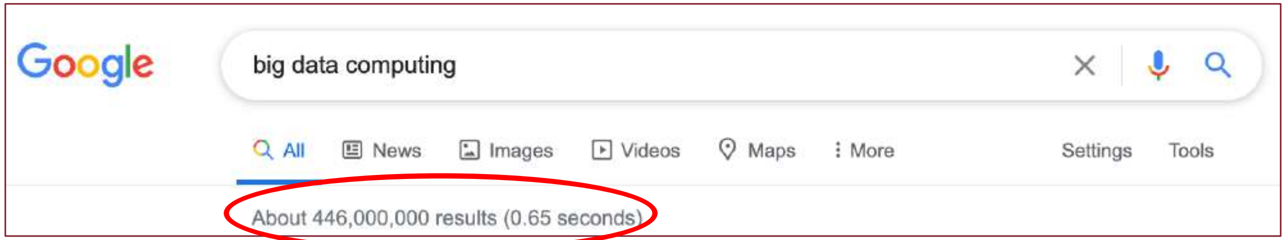

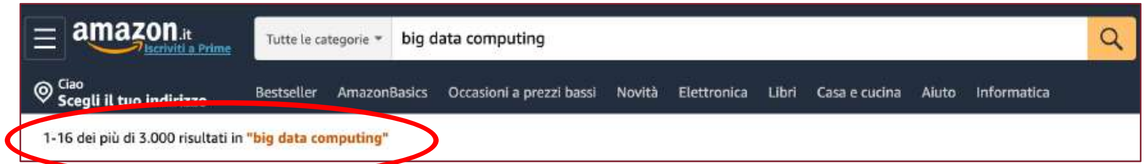

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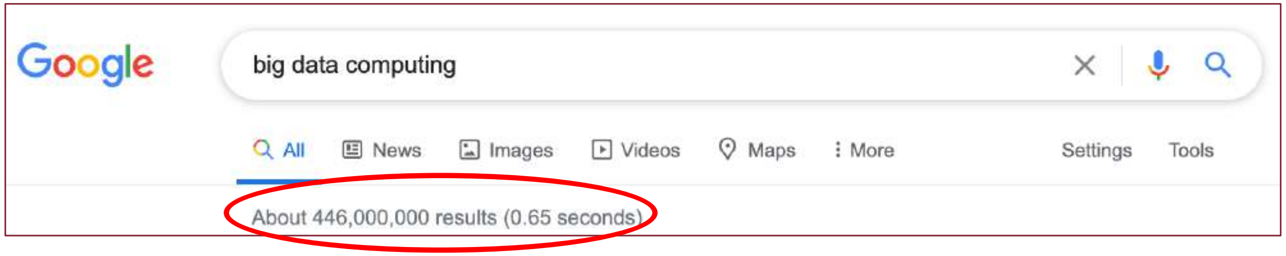

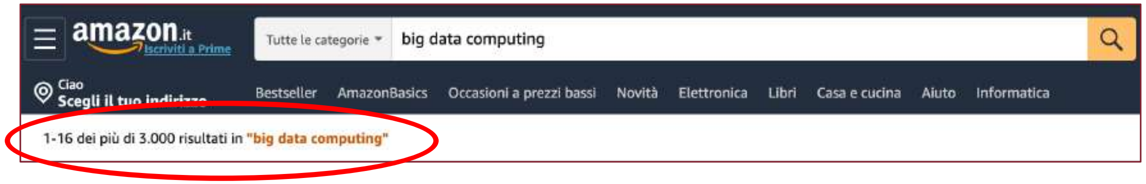

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How could we even think of exhaustively explore all of them?

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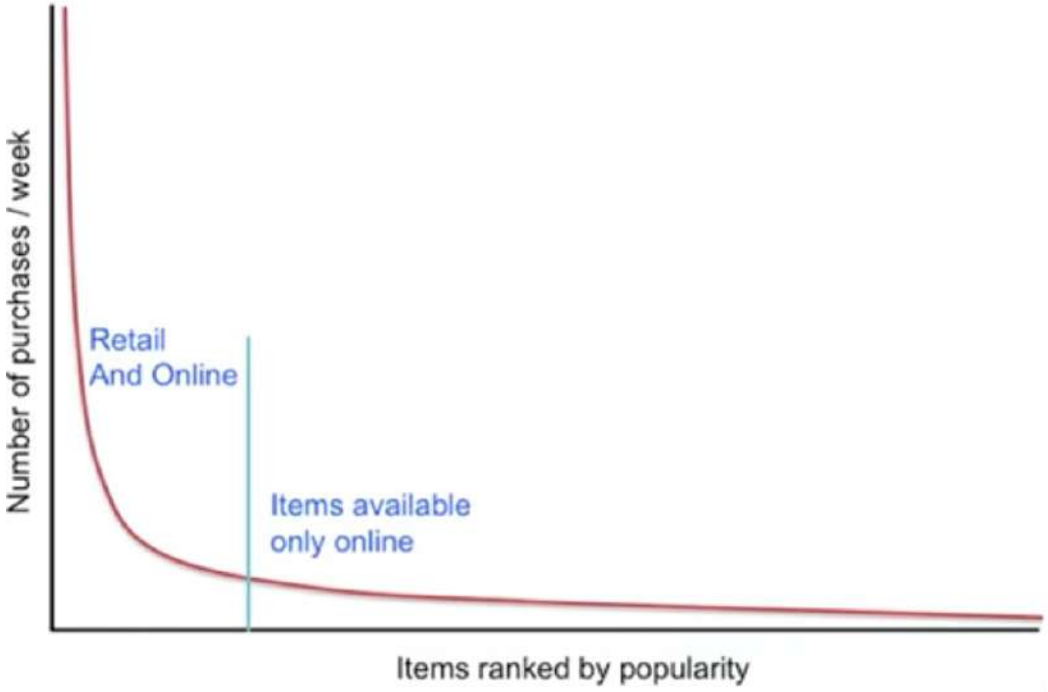
Recommender Systems

The Economics of Abundance: The Long Tail



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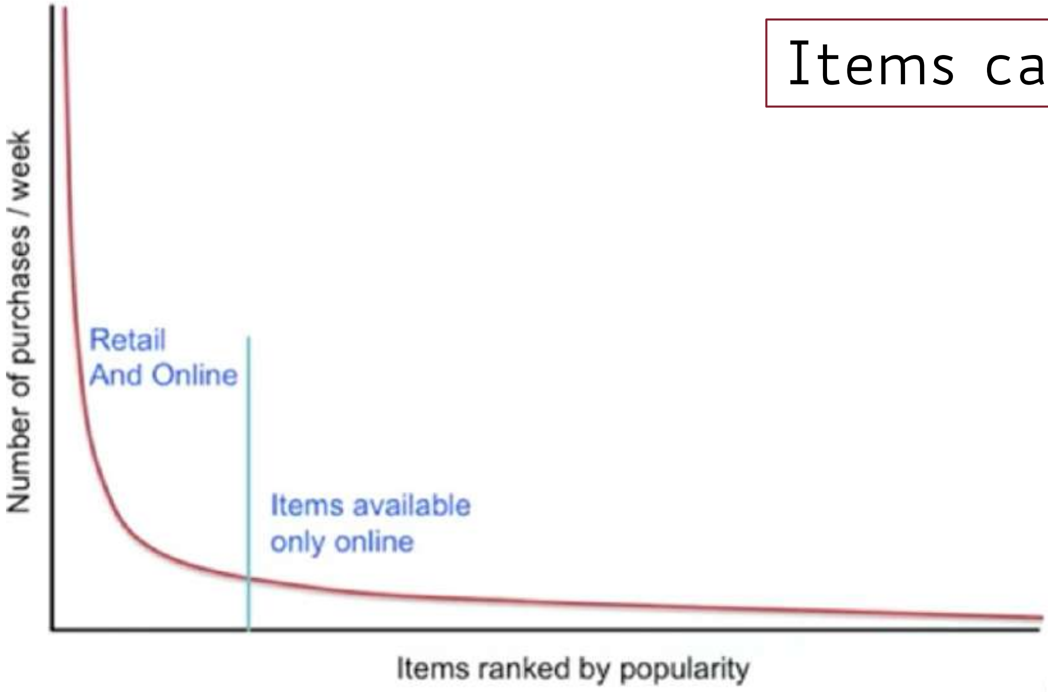

Items can be anything

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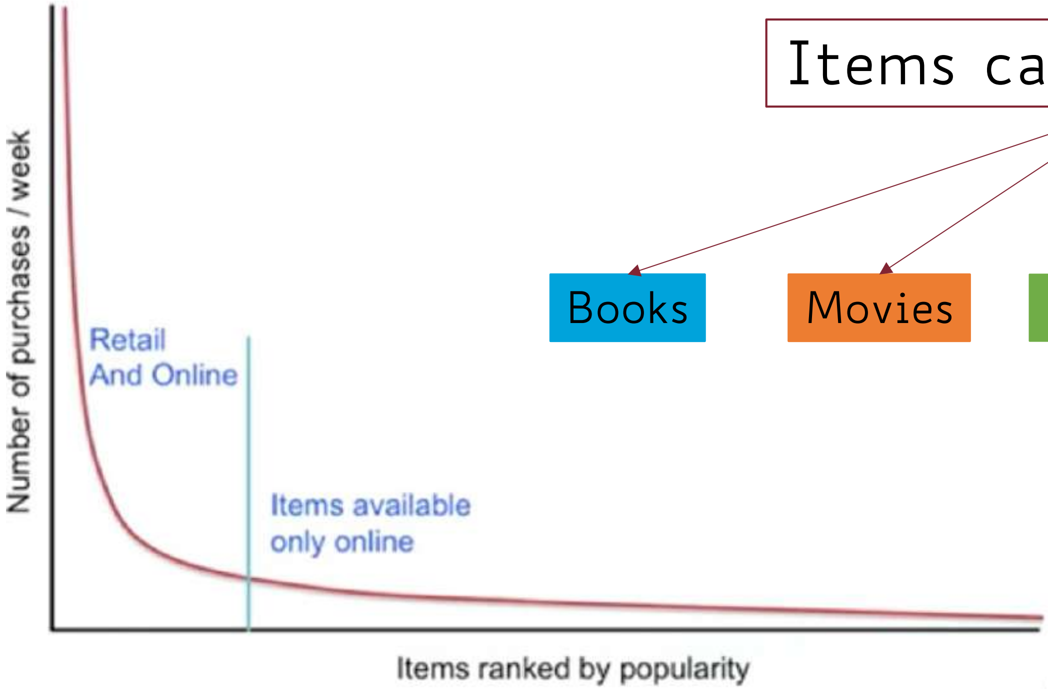
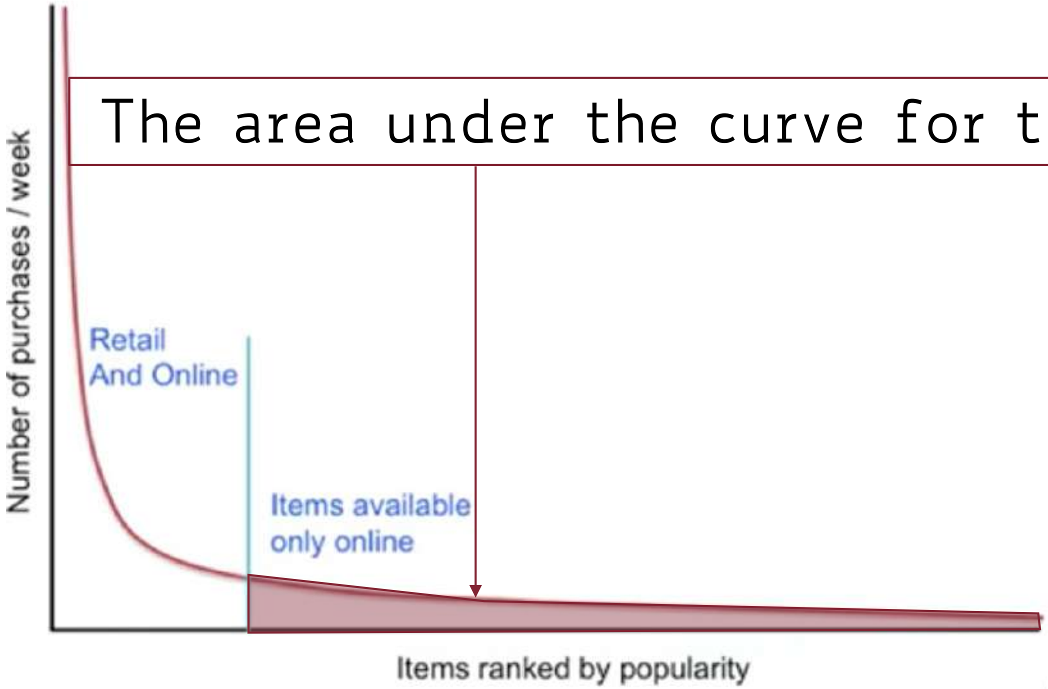


Items can be anything

Books | Movies | News Articles ... | Search Results

The Economics of Abundance: The Long Tail

The area under the curve for the long tail is quite large!



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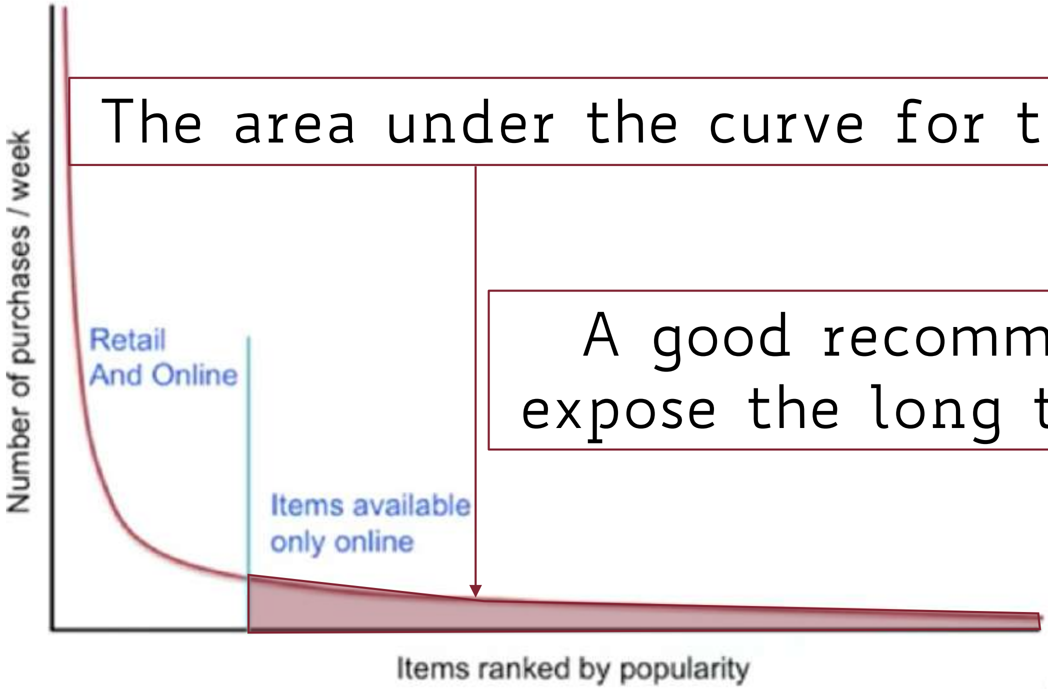

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A good recommendation system should expose the long tail/hidden items to users

Recommender Systems: Formalism

$\mathcal{U} = \{u_1, \ldots, u_m\}$ Set of users

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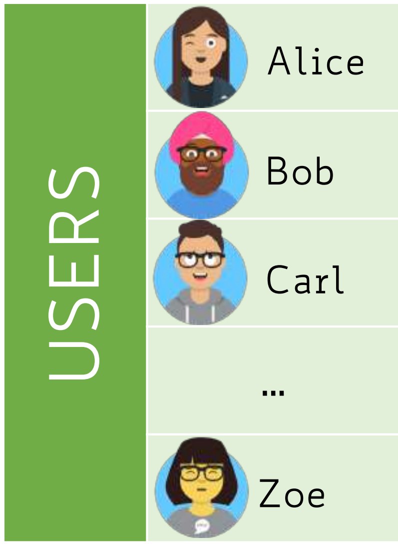
$\mathcal{R} \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ Set of ratings (totally ordered)

$\mathcal{R} = \{0, 1, \ldots, v-1\}$ Discrete ratings (e.g., 0-5 stars)

$\mathcal{R} = [0, 1]$ Continuous ratings

The Utility Function (User-Item Matrix)



The Utility Function (User-Item Matrix)

MOVIES

USERS

Alice

Bob

Carl

...

Zoe

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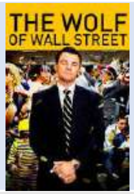
USERS	MOVIES							
								
 Alice	2		5	4	5	4		4
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3 key problems for a recommender system

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Recommendation Evaluation

Measure the performance of recommender methods

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Implicit

Learn ratings from user actions

Click/purchases implies positive feedback
What about negative ones?

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The utility matrix R is sparse!

Most people have not rated most items

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Cold Start

New users/items have no history

Recommendation Evaluation

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Measure the performance of recommender methods

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RMSE

Serendipity

Personalization

Mean Average Precision/Recall at K (MAP@K/MAR@K)

Recommendation Strategies

3 approaches to recommender systems

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Content-based filtering

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Collaborative filtering

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Recommendation Strategies

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- Content-based filtering
- Collaborative filtering
  - Neighborhood-based (a.k.a. memory-based)
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  - Hybrid (memory-model-based)

Recommendation Strategies

3 approaches to recommender systems

- Content-based filtering
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CONTENT-BASED FILTERING

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Steps

1. Build item profiles (i.e., a description of items using metadata)

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3. Match the user profile with the item catalog

Building Item Profiles

Goal

For each item i create a profile, i.e., a set of features

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Movies

- Author
- Title
- Director
- Genre

…

Images/Videos

- Width
- Height
- Framerate
- Tags

…

…

People

- Age
- Sex
- Job
- Friends

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Think of each profile as a vector of numerical/categorical features

Item Profile: Example

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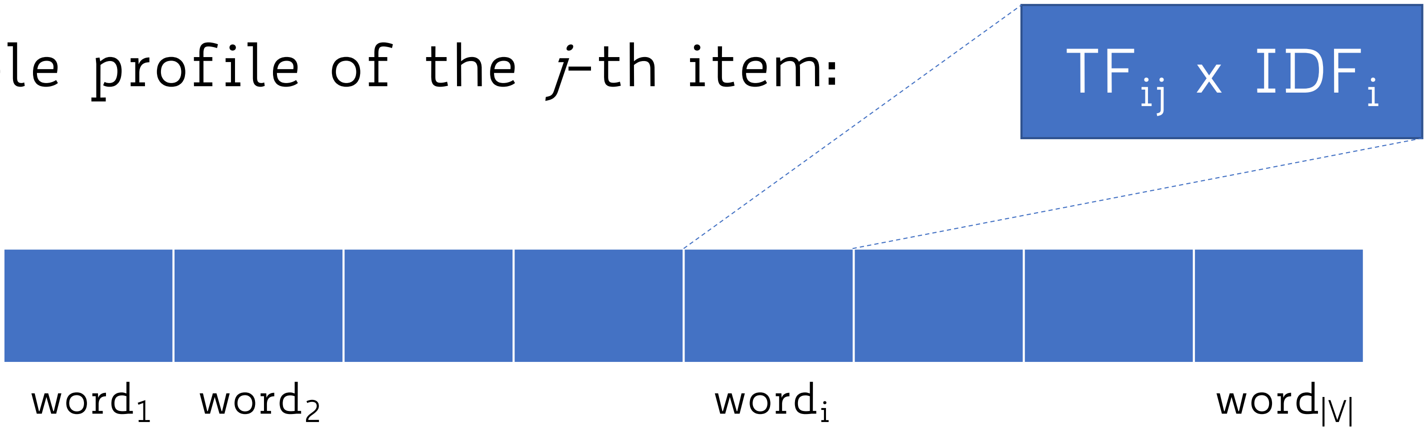

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The simplest solution to build the user profile is to take the average of item profiles rated

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All the items are treated equally, independently of the rating

Simple User Profile: Example

Items = Movies

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Movie Profile = List of Actors

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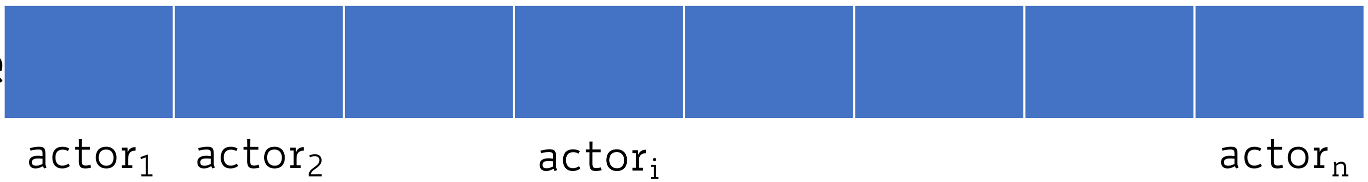
j-th movie



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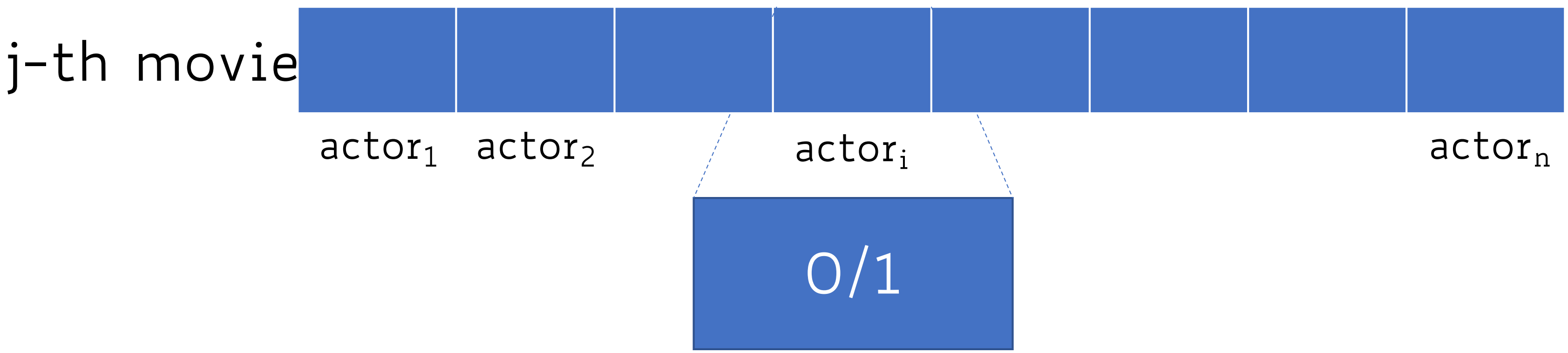

Binary feature indicating if actor$_i$ appears in movie$_j$

Simple User Profile: Example

Suppose user u has watched 5 movies, each movie represented by 2 actors

1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$

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2 movies feature actor 1

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3 movies feature actor 2

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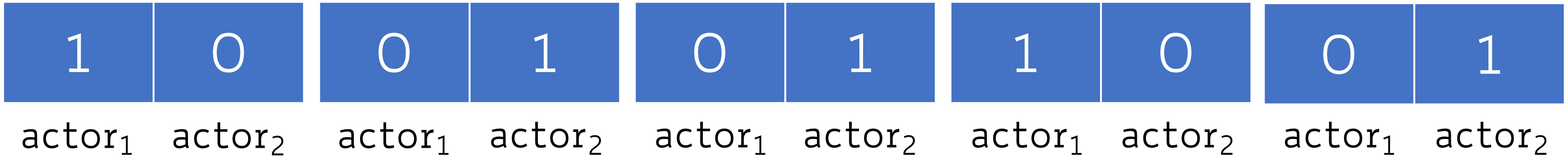

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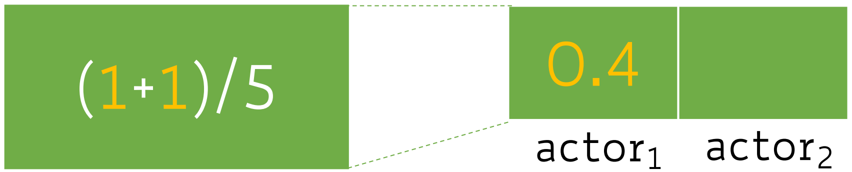

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User profile is the mean of item profiles

$(1+1)/5$

0.4	0.6
$actor_1$	$actor_2$

$(1+1+1)/5$

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Suppose user u has watched (and rated) 5 movies

Normalize ratings by subtracting user's mean rating before

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Avg. User Rating = (3 + 1 + 2 + 5 + 4)/5 = 3

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Suppose user u has watched (and rated) 5 movies

3-3 = 0		1-3 = -2		2-3 = -1		5-3 = 2		4-3 = 1	
1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	$actor_1$	$actor_2$

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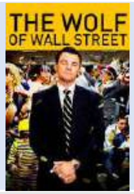
Normalize ratings by subtracting user's mean rating before

(0+2)/2			[-2+(-1)+1]/3
	1	-2/3	
	$actor_1$	$actor_2$	

Building Predictions (from Item/User Profiles)

		MOVIES							
									
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How to fill the "?"?

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							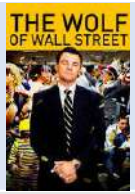	
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- For each item unrated by *u*, compute the cosine similarity (or Pearson's correlation) between *u* and the corresponding item profile vectors
- Finally, we pick the top-*k* items with the **highest** similarity score, and we recommend those to *u*

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$$\boxed{R_{u,k} = \bigcup_{j=1}^{k} A^j = \bigcup_{j=1}^{k} \text{argmax}_i \left\{\text{sim}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{i}) : i \in \mathcal{I} - \mathcal{I}_u - \{\cup_{l=0}^{j-1} A^l\}\right\}}$$

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- No item cold start problem: when the item is new or unpopular (i.e., no one has rated yet) it can still be recommended to users with highest profile similarity
- Explainable recommendations using content features that caused an item to be recommended

Content-based Filtering: CONs

- Finding the appropriate item features is hard

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- May need to create average profiles and gradually improve them overtime

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- The main goal of recommender systems is to select items that are likely of interest to users
- They make use of either explicit (e.g., ratings) or implicit (e.g., clicks) feedback to build a user-item utility matrix
- Content-based recommender systems make use of item and user profiles (built in the item space) to come up with top-k suggestions