

Introduction to **Information Retrieval**

Lecture 2: Preprocessing

Recap of the previous lecture

- Basic inverted indexes:

- Structure: Dictionary and Postings

BRUTUS →

1	2	4	11	31	45	173	174
---	---	---	----	----	----	-----	-----

CAESAR →

1	2	4	5	6	16	57	132	...
---	---	---	---	---	----	----	-----	-----

CALPURNIA →

2	31	54	101
---	----	----	-----

- Key step in construction: Sorting
- Boolean query processing
 - Intersection by linear time “merging”
 - Optimizations
 - Positional index

Plan for this lecture

Elaborate basic indexing

- Preprocessing to form the term vocabulary
 - Documents
 - Tokenization
 - What *terms* do we put in the index?

Recall the basic indexing pipeline

Documents to
be indexed.



Friends, Romans, countrymen.

⋮

Tokenizer

Token stream.

Friends

Romans

Countrymen

Linguistic
modules

Modified tokens.

friend

roman

countryman

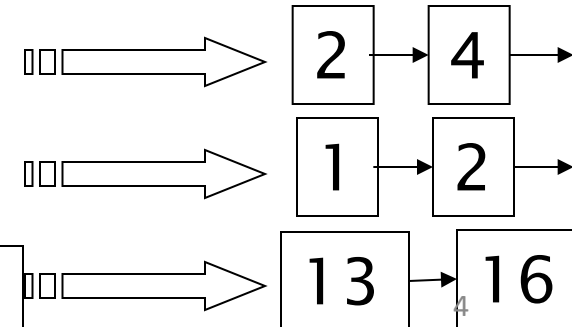
Indexer

Inverted index.

friend

roman

countryman



Parsing a document

- What format is it in?
 - pdf/word/excel/html?
- What language is it in?
- What character set is in use?

Each of these is a classification problem, which we will study later in the course.

But these tasks are often done heuristically ...

Complications: Format/language

- Documents being indexed can include docs from many different languages
 - A single index may have to contain terms of several languages.
- Sometimes a document or its components can contain multiple languages/formats
 - French email with a German pdf attachment.
- What is a unit document?
 - A file?
 - An email? (Perhaps one of many in an mbox.)
 - An email with 5 attachments?
 - A group of files (PPT or LaTeX as HTML pages)

TOKENS AND TERMS

Tokenization

- Input: “*Friends, Romans and Countrymen*”
- Output: Tokens
 - *Friends*
 - *Romans*
 - *Countrymen*
- A **token** is an instance of a sequence of characters
- Each such token is now a candidate for an index entry, after further processing
 - Described below
- But what are valid tokens to emit?

Tokenization

- Issues in tokenization:
 - ***Finland's capital*** →
Finland? Finlands? Finland's?
 - ***Hewlett-Packard*** → ***Hewlett*** and ***Packard*** as two tokens?
 - ***state-of-the-art***: break up hyphenated sequence.
 - ***co-education***
 - ***lowercase, lower-case, lower case*** ?
 - It can be effective to get the user to put in possible hyphens
 - ***San Francisco***: one token or two?
 - How do you decide it is one token?

Numbers

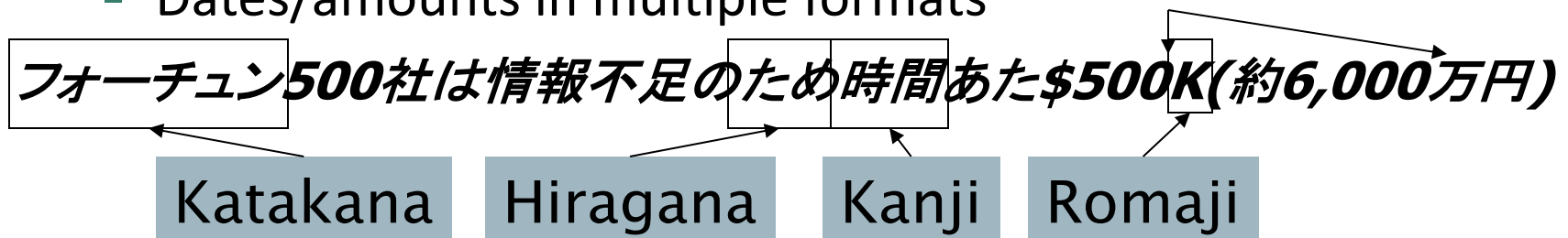
- *3/20/91* *Mar. 12, 1991* *20/3/91*
- *55 B.C.*
- *B-52*
- *My PGP key is 324a3df234cb23e*
- *(800) 234-2333*
 - Often have embedded spaces
 - Older IR systems may not index numbers
 - But often very useful: think about things like looking up error codes/stacktraces on the web
 - (One answer is using **n-grams**: Lecture 3)
 - Will often index “meta-data” separately
 - Creation date, format, etc.

Tokenization: language issues

- French
 - *L'ensemble* → one token or two?
 - *L ? L' ? Le ?*
 - Want *l'ensemble* to match with *un ensemble*
 - Until at least 2003, it didn't on Google
 - **Internationalization!**
- German noun compounds are not segmented
 - *Lebensversicherungsgesellschaftsangestellter*
 - 'life insurance company employee'
 - German retrieval systems benefit greatly from a **compound splitter** module
 - Can give a 15% performance boost for German

Tokenization: language issues

- Chinese and Japanese have no spaces between words:
 - 莎拉波娃现在居住在美国东南部的佛罗里达。
 - Not always guaranteed a unique tokenization
- Further complicated in Japanese, with multiple alphabets intermingled
 - Dates/amounts in multiple formats



End-user can express query entirely in hiragana!

Tokenization: language issues

- Arabic (or Hebrew) is basically written right to left, but with certain items like numbers written left to right
- Words are separated, but letter forms within a word form complex **ligatures**
استقلت الجزائر في سنة 1962 بعد 132 عام من الاحتلال الفرنسي.
- ← → ← → ← start
- 'Algeria achieved its independence in 1962 after 132 years of French occupation.'
- With Unicode, the surface presentation is complex, but the stored form is straightforward

Stop words

- With a stop list, you exclude from the dictionary entirely the commonest words. Intuition:
 - They have little semantic content: *the, a, and, to, be*
 - There are a lot of them: ~30% of postings for top 30 words
- But the trend is away from doing this:
 - Good compression techniques (lecture 5) means the space for including stopwords in a system is very small
 - Good query optimization techniques (lecture 7) mean you pay little at query time for including stop words.
 - You need them for:
 - Phrase queries: “King of Denmark”
 - Various song titles, etc.: “Let it be”, “To be or not to be”
 - “Relational” queries: “flights to London” vs. “flights from London”

Normalization to terms

- We need to “normalize” words in indexed text as well as query words into the same form
 - We want to match ***U.S.A.*** and ***USA***
- Result is terms: a **term** is a (normalized) word type, which is an entry in our IR system dictionary
- We most commonly implicitly define equivalence classes of terms by, e.g.,
 - deleting periods to form a term
 - *U.S.A., USA* → *USA*
 - deleting hyphens to form a term
 - *anti-discriminatory, antidiscriminatory* → *antidiscriminatory*

Normalization: other languages

- Accents: e.g., French *résumé* vs. *resume*.
- Umlauts: e.g., German: *Tuebingen* vs. *Tübingen*
 - Should be equivalent
- Most important criterion:
 - How are your users like to write their queries for these words?
- Even in languages that standardly have accents, users often may not type them
 - Often best to normalize to a de-accented term
 - *Tuebingen, Tübingen, Tubingen* \ *Tubingen*

Normalization: other languages

- Normalization of things like date forms
 - *7月30日 vs. 7/30*
 - *Japanese use of kana vs. Chinese characters*
- Tokenization and normalization may depend on the language and so is intertwined with language detection

Morgen will ich in MIT...

Is this
German “mit”?

- Crucial: Need to “normalize” indexed text as well as query terms into the same form

Case folding

- Reduce all letters to lower case
 - exception: upper case in mid-sentence?
 - e.g., *General Motors*
 - *Fed* vs. *fed*
 - *SAIL* vs. *sail*
 - Often best to lower case everything, since users will use lowercase regardless of ‘correct’ capitalization...
- Google example:
 - Query **C.A.T.**
 - #1 result is for “cat” (well, Lolcats) *not* Caterpillar Inc.



Normalization to terms

- An alternative to equivalence classing is to do asymmetric expansion
- An example of where this may be useful
 - Enter: ***window*** Search: ***window, windows***
 - Enter: ***windows*** Search: ***Windows, windows, window***
 - Enter: ***Windows*** Search: ***Windows***
- Potentially more powerful, but less efficient

Thesauri and soundex

- Do we handle synonyms and homonyms?
 - E.g., by hand-constructed equivalence classes
 - *car* = *automobile* *color* = *colour*
 - We can rewrite to form equivalence-class terms
 - When the document contains *automobile*, index it under *car-automobile* (and vice-versa)
 - Or we can expand a query
 - When the query contains *automobile*, look under *car* as well
- What about spelling mistakes?
 - One approach is soundex, which forms equivalence classes of words based on phonetic heuristics
- More in lectures 3 and 9

Lemmatization

- Reduce inflectional/variant forms to base form
- E.g.,
 - *am, are, is* → *be*
 - *car, cars, car's, cars'* → *car*
- *the boy's cars are different colors* → *the boy car be different color*
- Lemmatization implies doing “proper” reduction to dictionary headword form

Stemming

- Reduce terms to their “roots” before indexing
- “Stemming” suggest crude affix chopping
 - language dependent
 - e.g., *automate(s)*, *automatic*, *automation* all reduced to *automat*.

for example compressed and compression are both accepted as equivalent to compress.



for exampl compress and
compress ar both accept
as equival to compress

Other stemmers

- Other stemmers exist, e.g., Lovins stemmer
 - <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/computing/research/stemming/general/lovins.htm>
 - Single-pass, longest suffix removal (about 250 rules)
- Full morphological analysis – at most modest benefits for retrieval
- Do stemming and other normalizations help?
 - English: very mixed results. Helps recall for some queries but harms precision on others
 - E.g., operative (dentistry) \Rightarrow oper
 - Definitely useful for Spanish, German, Finnish, ...
 - 30% performance gains for Finnish!

Language-specificity

- Many of the above features embody transformations that are
 - Language-specific and
 - Often, application-specific
- These are “plug-in” addenda to the indexing process
- Both open source and commercial plug-ins are available for handling these

Dictionary entries – first cut

ensemble.french

時間.japanese

MIT.english

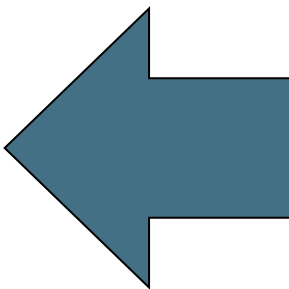
mit.german

guaranteed.english

entries.english

sometimes.english

tokenization.english



These may be grouped by language (or not...). More on this in ranking/query processing.

Resources for today's lecture

- IIR 2
- MG 3.6, 4.3; MIR 7.2
- Porter's stemmer:
<http://www.tartarus.org/~martin/PorterStemmer/>