

# Information Retrieval (Part II)

[DAT640] Information Retrieval and Text Mining

Krisztian Balog

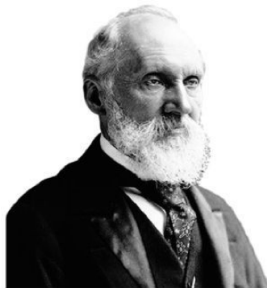
University of Stavanger

September 17, 2019

# Outline

- ~~Search engine architecture, indexing~~
- **Evaluation**  $\Leftarrow$  today
- Retrieval models
- Query modeling
- Learning-to-rank, Neural IR
- Semantic search

# Evaluation



“To measure is to know.  
If you can not measure it,  
you can not improve it.”

—Lord Kelvin

# What to measure?

- **Effectiveness**  $\Leftarrow$  our focus
  - How accurate are the search results?
  - I.e., the system's capability of ranking relevant documents ahead of non-relevant ones
- **Efficiency**
  - How quickly can a user get the results?
  - I.e., the response time of the system
- **Usability**
  - How useful is the system for real user tasks?

# Evaluation in IR

- Search engine evaluation must rely on users!
- Core question: How we can get users involved?

# Types of evaluation

- **Offline** (test collection based)  $\Leftarrow$  our focus
- **Online** (live evaluation)  $\Leftarrow$  our focus
- User studies
- Simulation of users
- ...

# Offline evaluation

# Test collection based evaluation

- *Cranfield evaluation methodology*
- Basic idea: Build reusable test collections
- Ingredients of an IR test collection
  - Dataset (corpus of documents or *information objects*)
  - Test queries (set of *information needs*)
  - Relevance assessments
  - Evaluation measures



# Relevance assessments

- Ground truth labels for query-item pairs
- **Binary**
  - 0: non-relevant
  - 1: relevant
- **Graded**, for example,
  - -1: spam / junk
  - 0: non-relevant
  - 1: somewhat relevant
  - 2: relevant
  - 3: highly relevant / perfect match

query 1	item 11	0
	item 12	1
	item 13	1
	item 14	0
	item 15	0
...		
query 2	item 21	1
	item 22	1
	item 23	0
...		

*ground truth with  
binary assessments*

# Obtaining relevance assessments

- Obtaining relevance judgments is an expensive, time-consuming process
  - Who does it?
  - What are the instructions?
  - What is the level of agreement?
- Two approaches
  - Expert judges
  - Crowdsourcing

# Text Retrieval Conference (TREC)

- Organized by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- Yearly benchmarking cycle
- Developing test collections for various information retrieval tasks
- Relevance judgments created by expert judges, i.e., retired information analysts (CIA)



## Examples of TREC document collections

Name	#Documents	Size
CACM	3k	2.2 MB
AP	242k	0.7 GB
GOV2	25M	426 GB
ClueWeb09	1B	25 TB

# TREC topic example

<top>

<num> Number: 794

<title> pet therapy

<desc> Description:

How are pets or animals used in therapy for humans and what are the benefits?

<narr> Narrative:

Relevant documents must include details of how pet- or animal-assisted therapy is or has been used. Relevant details include information about pet therapy programs, descriptions of the circumstances in which pet therapy is used, the benefits of this type of therapy, the degree of success of this therapy, and any laws or regulations governing it.

</top>

# Crowdsourcing

- Obtain relevance judgments on a crowdsourcing platform
  - Often branded as “human intelligence platforms”
- “Microtasks” are performed in parallel by large, paid crowds



Figure Eight | The Essential Hic x

https://www.figure-eight.com

Apps #Freq Dict DAT310 DAT630 UIS work Misc Python WebDev Dev ICheck Research Teaching Norsk RSS

figure eight  
an open company

Platform Success Stories Partners Resources Company

Start a trial Login

**Raw Data**

**The Figure Eight Platform**  
Human Intelligence + Machine Learning

**Annotated Data**

If you need labels and annotations for your machine learning project, we can help. You upload your unlabeled data, with the rules you need for your machine learning project, and launch. We use a distributed network of human annotators and cutting edge machine learning models to annotate that data at enterprise scale.

# Example microtask

Query: button down shirt

[Click here to search on Google](#)

Result Title: Men's Essential Poplin Button-down Shirt

Result Image:



[Click here to look at the result page](#)

Rate how well 'Men's Essential Poplin Button-down Shirt' matches the query (required)

Irrelevant

Somewhat relevant

Relevant

Perfect Match





## Other search related annotation tasks

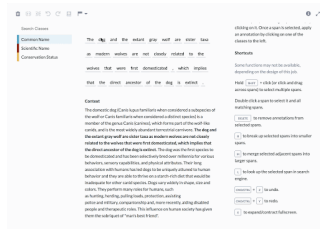
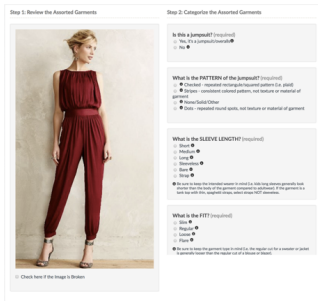
Read the text below. Pay close attention to detail.

I am trying to upgrade my old phone to an iPhone 6s and I noticed the deal on pre-owned iPhone 6s for \$72 off.

Which attribute is the text about? (re

- ☐ Account
- ☐ Billing
- ☐ Equipment
- ☐ Payment
- ☐ Network
- ☐ Plan
- ☐ Purchase
- ☐ Support and Escalation
- ☐ Web Assistance
- ☐ Other

② Please pick the category that relates to the best of the sentence!



## Intent classification

## Content categorization

## Text annotation

# Expert judges vs. crowdsourcing

- Expert judges
  - Each query-item pair is commonly assessed by a single person
  - Agreement is good because of “narrative”
- Crowdsourcing
  - Assessments are more noisy
  - Commonly, majority vote is taken
    - The number of labels collected for an item may be adjusted dynamically such that a majority decision is reached
- **Data is only as good as the guidelines!**

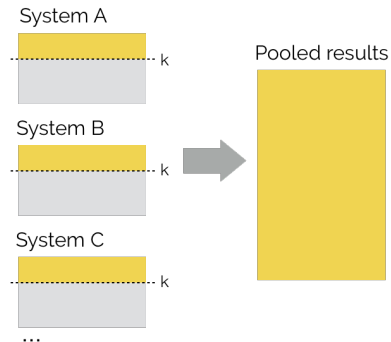
# Discussion

## Question

How can the relevance of all items be assessed in a large dataset for a given query?

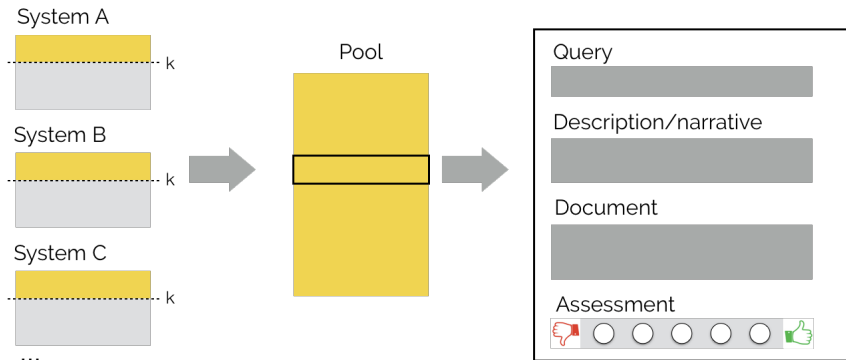
# Pooling

- Exhaustive judgments for all documents in a collection is not practical
- Top- $k$  results from different systems (algorithms) are merged into a pool
  - Duplicates are removed
  - Item order is randomized
- Produces a large number of relevance judgments for each query, although still incomplete
  - Not assessed items are assumed to be non-relevant



# Pooling

- Relevance assessments are collected for all document in the pool
  - Either using expert judges or crowd workers



# Test collection based evaluation

- Ingredients of an IR test collection
  - Dataset (~~corpus of documents or information objects~~)
  - Test queries (~~set of information needs~~)
  - Relevance assessments
  - **Evaluation measures**

# IR evaluation measures

- Assessing the quality of a ranked list against the ground truth relevance labels
  - Commonly, a real number between 0 and 1
- **Important:** All measures are based on a (simplified) model of user needs and behavior
  - That is, the right measure depends on the particular task

# Effectiveness measures

- $A$  is the set of **relevant** documents
- $B$  is the set of **retrieved** documents

	Relevant	Non-relevant
Retrieved	$ A \cap B $	$ \bar{A} \cap B $
Not retrieved	$ A \cap \bar{B} $	$ \bar{A} \cap \bar{B} $

Precision and recall analogously to before:

$$P = \frac{|A \cap B|}{|B|}$$

$$R = \frac{|A \cap B|}{|A|}$$



# Discussion

## Question

Precision and Recall are set-based metrics. How can we use them to evaluate ranked lists?

# Evaluating rankings

Calculate recall and precision values at every rank position



Ranking #1



Recall	0.17	0.17	0.33	0.5	0.67	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	1.0
Precision	1.0	0.5	0.67	0.75	0.8	0.83	0.71	0.63	0.56	0.6

Ranking #2



Recall	0.0	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.33	0.5	0.67	0.67	0.83	1.0
Precision	0.0	0.5	0.33	0.25	0.4	0.5	0.57	0.5	0.56	0.6

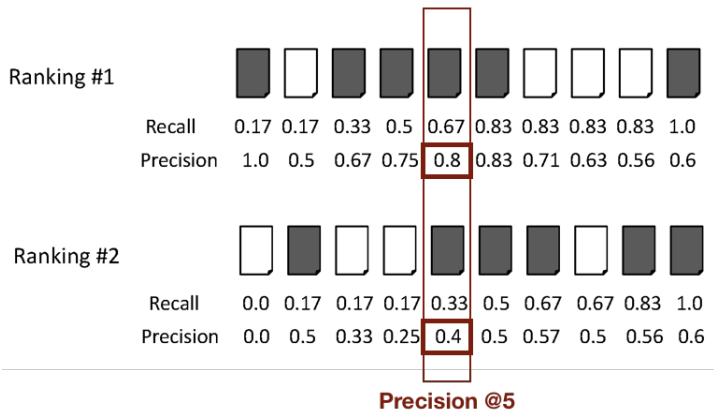
# Evaluating rankings

- Calculating recall and precision values at every rank position produces a long list of numbers (see previous slide)
- Need to **summarize** the effectiveness of a ranking
- Various alternatives
  - Calculate recall and precision at fixed rank positions ( $P@k$ ,  $R@k$ )
  - Calculate precision at standard recall levels, from 0.0 to 1.0 (requires interpolation)
  - Averaging the precision values from the rank positions where a relevant document was retrieved (AP)

# Fixed rank positions

Compute precision/recall at a given rank position  $k$  ( $P@k$ ,  $R@k$ )


- This measure does not distinguish between differences in the rankings at positions 1 to  $k$



# Standard recall levels

Calculate precision at standard recall levels, from 0.0 to 1.0

- Each ranking is then represented using 11 numbers
- Values of precision at these standard recall levels are often not available, for example:



Recall	0.17	0.17	0.33	0.5	0.67	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.83	1.0
Precision	1.0	0.5	0.67	0.75	0.8	0.83	0.71	0.63	0.56	0.6

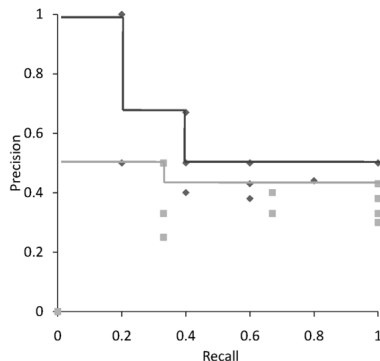
- *Interpolation* is needed

# Interpolation

- To average graphs, calculate precision at standard recall levels:

$$P(R) = \max\{P' : R' \geq R \wedge (R', P') \in S\}$$

- where  $S$  is the set of observed  $(R, P)$  points
- Defines precision at any recall level as the maximum precision observed in any recall-precision point at a higher recall level
- Produces a step function



# Average Precision

- Average the precision values from the rank positions where a relevant document was retrieved

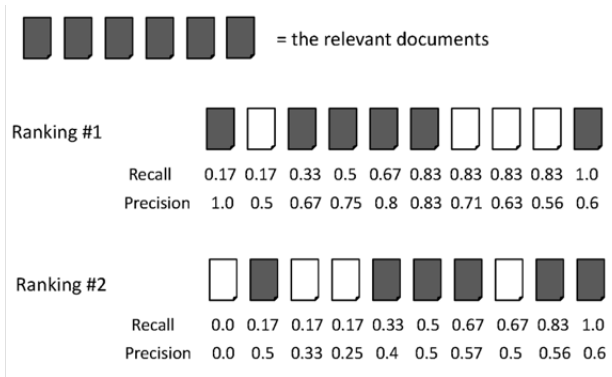
$$AP = \frac{1}{|Rel|} \sum_{\substack{i=1, \dots, n \\ d_i \in Rel}} P(i) \rightarrow \text{Precision at rank } i$$

**Total number of relevant documents**  
According to the ground truth

**Only relevant documents contribute to the sum**

- If a relevant document is not retrieved (in the top  $k$  ranks, e.g,  $k = 1000$ ) then its contribution is 0.0
- AP is single number that is based on the ranking of all the relevant documents
- The value depends heavily on the highly ranked relevant documents

# Average Precision



$$\text{Ranking \#1: } (1.0 + 0.67 + 0.75 + 0.8 + 0.83 + 0.6) / 6 = 0.78$$

$$\text{Ranking \#2: } (0.5 + 0.4 + 0.5 + 0.57 + 0.56 + 0.6) / 6 = 0.52$$



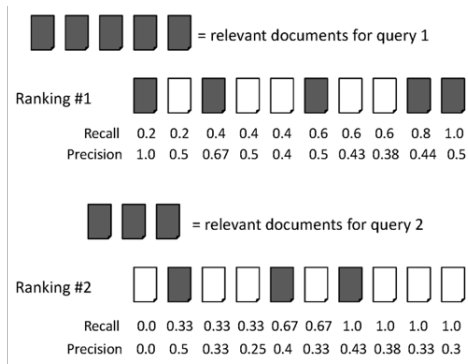
# Averaging across queries

- So far: measuring ranking effectiveness on a **single query**
- Need: measure ranking effectiveness on a **set of queries**
- Average is computed over the set of queries

# Mean Average Precision (MAP)

- Summarize rankings from multiple queries by averaging Average Precision
- Very succinct summary
- Most commonly used measure in research papers
- Assumes user is interested in finding many relevant documents for each query
- Requires many relevance judgments

# Mean Average Precision



$$\text{average precision query 1} = (1.0 + 0.67 + 0.5 + 0.44 + 0.5)/5 = 0.62$$

$$\text{average precision query 2} = (0.5 + 0.4 + 0.43)/3 = 0.44$$

$$\text{mean average precision} = (0.62 + 0.44)/2 = 0.53$$

# Focusing on top documents

- Users tend to look at only the top part of the ranked result list to find relevant documents
- Some search tasks have only one relevant document
  - E.g., navigational search, question answering
- Recall in those cases is not appropriate
  - Instead need to measure how well the search engine does at retrieving relevant documents at very high ranks

# Focusing on top documents

- Precision at rank  $k$  ( $P@k$ )
  - $k$  is typically 5, 10, 20
  - Easy to compute, average, understand
  - Not sensitive to rank positions less than  $k$
- Reciprocal Rank (RR)
  - Reciprocal of the rank at which the first relevant document is retrieved
  - Mean Reciprocal Rank (MRR) is the average of the reciprocal ranks over a set of queries
  - Very sensitive to rank position

# Mean Reciprocal Rank

 = the relevant documents

Ranking #1



$$\text{Reciprocal rank (RR)} = 1/1 = 1.0$$

Ranking #2



$$\text{Reciprocal rank (RR)} = 1/2 = 0.5$$

$$\text{Mean reciprocal rank (MRR)} = (1.0 + 0.5) / 2 = 0.75$$

## Exercise #1 (paper-based)

**Compare the retrieval effectiveness of two systems in terms of P@5, P@10, Average Precision, and Reciprocal Rank.**

## Exercise #2 (coding)

- Implement the computation of P@5, P@10, Average Precision, and Reciprocal Rank
- Code skeleton on GitHub: `exercises/lecture_08/exercise_2.ipynb`  
(make a local copy)



# Graded relevance

- So far: relevance in binary
- What about graded relevance levels?

# Discounted Cumulative Gain

- Popular measure for evaluating web search and related tasks
- Two assumptions:
  - Highly relevant documents are more useful than marginally relevant document
  - The lower the ranked position of a relevant document, the less useful it is for the user, since it is less likely to be examined

# Discounted Cumulative Gain (DCG)

- DCG is the total gain accumulated at a particular rank  $p$ :

$$DCG_p = rel_1 + \sum_{i=1}^p \frac{rel_i}{\log_2 i}$$

- $rel_i$  is the graded relevance level of the item retrieved at rank  $i$
- Gain is accumulated starting at the top of the ranking and discounted by  $1/\log$  (rank)
  - E.g., discount at rank 4 is  $1/2$ , and at rank 8 it is  $1/3$
- Average over the set of test queries
- Note: search engine companies have their own (secret) variants

# Discounted Cumulative Gain



Rank (i)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gain	3	2	3	0	0	1	2	2	3	0
Discounted gain	3	2/1	3/1.59	0	0	1/2.59	2/2.81	2/3	3/3.17	0
Discounted cumulative gain (DCG@i)	3	5	6.89	6.89	6.89	7.28	7.99	8.66	9.61	9.61

**How good is a DCG@10 value of 9.61?**

# Normalized Discounted Cumulative Gain (NDCG)

- DCG values are often normalized by comparing the DCG at each rank with the DCG value for the perfect (ideal) ranking
  - I.e., divide DCG@ $i$  value with the ideal DCG value at rank  $i$
  - Yields value between 0 and 1

*Ideal ranking*



Rank (i)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gain	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	0	0	0
Discounted cumulative gain (DCG@i)	3	6	7.89	8.89	9.75	10.52	10.88	10.88	10.88	10.88

## Exercise #3 (paper-based)

**Evaluate the retrieval effectiveness of a systems in terms of NDCG@5 and NDCG@10.**

## Exercise #4 (coding)

- Implement the computation of NDCG
- Code skeleton on GitHub: `exercises/lecture_08/exercise_4.ipynb`  
(make a local copy)

# Online evaluation

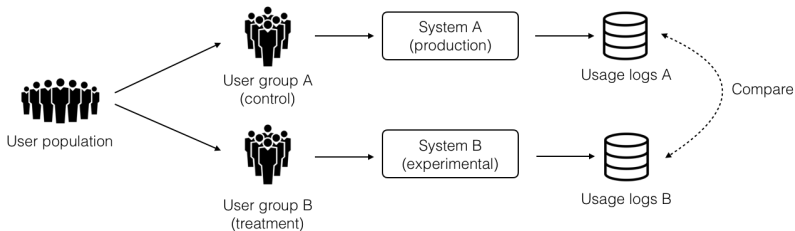


# Online evaluation

- **Idea:** See how normal users interact with a live retrieval system (“living lab”) when just using it
- Observe implicit behavior
  - Clicks, skips, saves, forwards, bookmarks, likes, etc.
- Try to infer differences in behavior from different flavors of the live system
  - A/B testing, interleaving

# A/B testing

- Users are divided into two control (**A**) and treatment (**B**) groups
  - **A** uses the production system
  - **B** uses an experimental system
- Measure relative system performance based on usage logs



# Interleaving

- Combine two rankings (A and B) into a single list
- Determine a winner on each query impression
  - Can be a draw too
- Aggregate wins on a large number of impressions to determine which ranker is better



# A/B testing vs. interleaving

- A/B testing
  - Between subject design
  - Can be used for evaluating any feature (new ranking algorithms, new features, UI design changes, etc.)
- Interleaving
  - Within subject design
  - Reduces variance (same users/queries for both A and B)
  - Needs 1 to 2 orders of magnitude less data
    - ~100K queries for interleaving in a mature web search engine ( $\gg$ 1M for A/B testing)
  - Limited to evaluating ranked lists

# Measures in online evaluation

- Inferred from observable user behavior

- Clicks

- Mouse movement

- Browser action

- Bookmark, save, print, ...

- Time

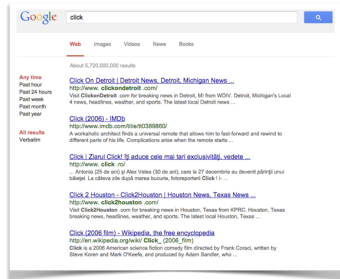
- Dwell time, time on SERP, ...

- Explicit judgment

- Likes, favorites, ...

- Query reformulations

- ...



# Challenges in online evaluation

- Simple measures break!

A screenshot of a search engine result for "weather san francisco". The search bar shows "weather san francisco" with a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, it says "49,000,000 RESULTS" and "Any time". The main content area displays "Weather in San Francisco, California" with a link to "bing.com/Weather - Data from AccuWeather". The current weather is "56°F Cloudy" with a small cloud icon. Below this, there is a 5-day forecast: Sun (58°/49°), Mon (57°/47°), Tue (62°/48°), Wed (63°/47°), and Thu (66°/47°). At the bottom, there are three links for "10 Day Weather Forecast for San Francisco" from weather.com, wunderground.com, and accuweather.com.

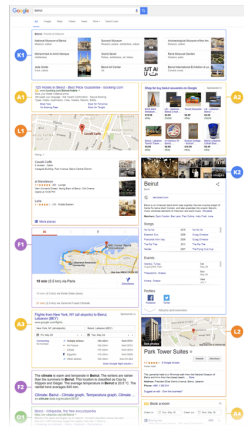
Instant answers  
(satisfaction not observable)

A screenshot of a search engine result for "Tom Hanks". The top section features a photo of Tom Hanks and a brief biography: "Thomas Jeffrey 'Tom' Hanks is an American actor, producer, writer, and director. Hanks is best known for his roles in Big, A League of Their Own, Sleepless in Seattle, Forrest Gump, Apollo 13, Saving Private Ryan, You've Got Mail, The Green Mile, Cast Away, and The Da Vinci Code, as ...". Below the biography are social media links for Twitter, Facebook, and Google+, along with a "KLOUT" score of 91. The "Born" section lists "Jul 9, 1956 (age 57) - Concord" and "Net worth: \$350 million USD (2012)". The "Spouses" section lists "Rita Wilson (1988) - Samantha Lewes (1978 - 1987)". The "Children" section lists "Colin Hanks - Elizabeth Hanks - Chet Hanks - Truman Theodore Hanks". The "Upcoming movies" section lists "Saving Mr. Banks". The "Siblings" section lists "Jim Hanks - Sandra Hanks - Larry Hanks". Below this, there is a "Movies and TV shows" section with a grid of images and titles: "Captain Phillips 2013", "Cloud Atlas 2012", "Forrest Gump 1994", "Cast Away 2000", and "The Green Mile 1999". At the bottom, there is a "People also search for" section with a grid of images and names: "Rita Wilson Spouse", "Tom Cruise", "Leonardo DiCaprio", "Colin Hanks Son", and "Sandra Bullock".

Exploration  
(more time/queries is not necessarily bad effort)

# Challenges in online evaluation

- **Whole page relevance**
- Page is composed by a layered stack of modules
  - Web result ranking
  - $\Rightarrow$  Result caption generation
  - $\Rightarrow$  Answer triggering/ranking
  - $\Rightarrow$  Knowledge panel composition
  - $\Rightarrow$  Whole page composition
- Changes in modules lower in the stack have upstream effects



# Pros and cons of online evaluation

- Advantages
  - No need for expensive dataset creation
  - Perfectly realistic setting: (most) users are not even aware that they are guinea pigs
  - Scales very well: can include millions of users
- Disadvantages
  - Requires a service with lots of users
  - Can be highly nontrivial how to interpret implicit feedback signals
  - Experiments are difficult to repeat



# Offline vs. online evaluation

	Offline	Online
<b>Basic assumption</b>	Assessors tell you what is relevant	Observable user behavior can tell you what is relevant
<b>Quality</b>	Data is only as good as the guidelines	Real user data, real and representative information needs
<b>Realisticity</b>	Simplified scenario, cannot go beyond a certain level of complexity	Perfectly realistic setting (users are not aware that they are guinea pigs)
<b>Assessment cost</b>	Expensive	Cheap
<b>Scalability</b>	Doesn't scale	Scales very well
<b>Repeatability</b>	Repeatable	Not repeatable
<b>Throughput</b>	High	Low
<b>Risk</b>	None	High

# Assignment 2A

# Reading

- Text Data Management and Analysis (Zhai&Massung), Chapter 9