

Homework 2: Annotation

TASK2 – OPEN ENDED DISCUSSION

1. Is it difficult to annotate relevance of a result?

I feel that it is generally easy to identify how relevant a result is, unless the query and its intent is not clear.

For instance, one query was 'buy computer screen' – I wasn't sure if the user was looking for a computer monitor? Looking for prices? Looking for different online platforms selling computer monitors? What sort of monitors?

I felt that 'best lasagna recipes how to make' was also rather ambiguous, the user's intent was to make delicious lasagna, but didn't really specify the type of lasagna. Meat or vegan? Complex or easy?

However, when the query was 'benefits of running regularly', it was quite clear that the user was seeking just knowledge based information on the benefits, and hence it was easy to annotate relevance.

2. Is relevance annotation subjective or objective?

I feel that in the case of this homework, annotation is very subjective because we do not have fixed guidelines to assess the relevance, but use our own judgment. If we were given more specific criteria for relevance, then the whole annotation process would be more objective. Furthermore, when the query and the user intent are unclear, the annotation becomes even more subjective as the annotator tries to make an assumption on user intent which might be wrong.

3. What are the factors that affect your relevance annotation for a page?

Generally, I put myself into the shoes of the user making the query and check if the search result answers my query – in terms of whether it is specific to what I was asking, for instance if I'm asking for 'benefits of running regularly', I don't want to see articles about how to run and train and stretch. Also I check if the search result is too specific – for instance, for 'buy computer screen', I find the result less relevant if it is purely for Apple monitors rather than computer monitors in general. When the search query is more ambiguous, like 'best lasagna recipe how to make', I give more benefit of the doubt to search results that don't really emphasise on the 'best' part, but offers some sort of recipe, because it can be hard to define best, and I don't imagine to user intending the search result to justify why their recipe was best.

4. What are the differences when you annotate relevance of a result based on snippet or landing page?

With the snippet, we have less information, and mostly focus on the title of the search result, while the landing page provides all the information. Most of the time, the relevance result for the snippet and its correspond page is consistent, because generally the authors will name their web pages consistently with their article titles.

However, I feel that I am more generous with awarding relevance score for snippet than for the actual page. For instance, for the like 'best lasagna recipe how to make' search result that gave lasagna soup, I felt that it deserved 1pt based on the snippet, but when I clicked inside and saw the

picture of the actual dish, I realized it was far different from normal lasagna and subsequently awarded the landing page 0pt.

5. Any other thoughts:

It is quite difficult to recommend relevant search results, when sometimes users themselves are bad at keying clear queries that indicate what they are intending to look for...