

Automatic User Profiling for Intelligent Tourist Trip Personalisation

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Index Terms—tourism, itinerary, user-profiling.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Problem Definition

Producing an itinerary before a trip can be a demanding task which requires a substantial amount of research. Many times people rely on travel books, individual travel blogs and online websites to form a holiday plan, but these are not always tailored according to the traveller's preferences and opinions [1].

This paper focuses on creating a system which helps tourists automate the process of travel planning. An adequate automated trip planner application would consist of two parts,

- 1) the retrieval of user preferences
- 2) the generation of a custom itinerary

Numerous systems, which will be discussed in the Literature Review, are available and therefore building a working prototype is both possible and feasible. Although these systems automate the process of producing the itinerary, they require a lot of end-user data and preferences to form a personalised itinerary. Can the user preference gathering be automated?

Given the amount of information a single user holds online, it is possible to automate and help the process of gathering personal preferences [2]. A deep learning model could be trained to classify a person's social media profile to determine what the user wants from a trip. This information alongside other parameters such as the user's budget and trip length could give out a very accurate personalised holiday plan.

B. Motivation

The immense amount of data generated by each user online [3] was the main motivation behind using this advantage in creating a unique system that benefits tourists by implementing something easy to use and does not bombard them with a lot of extra questions. Although planning itineraries can be a complex problem [4], if the users allow the system to gather

preferences based on their social media profile, preferences can be collected automatically based on his posts.

C. Why the Problem is non-trivial

User Profiling based on social media has been an essential part of Personalized advertising. The advertisers can target their customers more accurately and earn more sales per viewer [5]. However, this paper aims in using such a technology to implement a different approach in automating the preference gathering.

D. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to quickly generate a personalised itinerary by making use of preferences and parameters.

This system will aim to achieve the following Objectives:

- 1) Collect social media images to form a training and testing set which will be categorised by the activity. These can include images associated with events such as, nature, beach, sports, food, bars and clubs.
- 2) Design a model that classifies the images correctly.
- 3) Define a user profile based on the social media collection results and additional parameters.
- 4) Gather a list of places available and form scores for each activity based on the user's parameters.
- 5) Generate quickly multiple itineraries each with different score levels.

II. BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies both on user profiling and on real-time automatic trip itinerary generation have been carried out throughout the years.

There are many types of systems which help the travellers in their trips. Gavalas et al. [6] categorised these into **POI recommenders**, **Tourist Service Recommenders**, **Collaborative content from users and social media services**, **path recommenders** and **Personalised multiple-day tour planners**. The planning of a trip to a traveller introduces the Tourist Trip Design Problem (TTDP) which has received a lot of observation and heuristic contribution [7], [8]. Sylejmani et al. [9] have defined the TTDP as part of the Orienteering Problem (OP). OP problems contain a number of nodes each containing a score and try to solve the path containing the maximal score constrained with parameters such as time and budget [7]. There are many solutions to this problem which will be discussed in the next section.

A. Tourist Recommender Systems

In 2004, a paper by Dunstall et al. [4] was published using a prototype called the The Electronic Travel Planner (ETP). This system selects destinations by determining activities based on the user's preferences. Each activity is stored in a relational database with information such as duration, availability, date and time categorised as either tours, lodging or transportation. The requirements for forming such an itinerary include the number of children and adults, the location, the date range, budget and user preferences in the form of *mandatory, at least once, desired, forbidden and permitted* activities. Since examples given in the paper took 15-45 seconds to process the resulting running time was listed as an issue.

The Recommender System (RS) was provided by Sebatsia et al. [10] and Garcia et al. [11] to suggest tourist locations. User preferences are collected in the form of age, gender, nationality and ontology. The recommender is based on 4 techniques, *Demographic recommendation, collaborative recommendation, content based recommendation and knowledge based recommendation*.

A different approach using social media was presented by Choudhury et al. [1] in 2010 and Brilhante et al. [12]. Geo-referenced Flickr¹ content alongside Wikipedia² information was used to gather information such as the date, location and popularity of the photos being uploaded. An OP algorithm was then used to generate the ideal number of Point of Interests (POI).

A tabu Search approach was proposed by Sylejmani et al. [13] as a Multi Constrained Team Orienteering Problem with Time Windows (**MCTOPTW**), an advanced form of the OP. In this algorithm, three steps were used in order to generate the activity plan. A new activity is added as a node to the trip using *Insert*, A node is exchanged with a new activity using *Replace* and two nodes are swapped using *Swap*. A pair of tabu lists structured frequently are used to avoid repeating solutions.

Recently, a solution towards presenting an itinerary solving conflicts between multiple tourists with different preferences was proposed by [9]. All tourists are split into groups by preference, during certain activities the itinerary splits up the groups to visit their specific POI. Before the trip one of the options is selected:

- 1) **Solo**: A trip for a single person.
- 2) **Subgroups**: The tourists are separated into smaller groups by preference and travel together.
- 3) **All Together**: One itinerary for all Tourists.
- 4) **Tourists Combined**: At certain times, tourists are separated to meet their personal preferences

B. User Profiling for Travel Preferences

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¹<https://www.flickr.com/>

²<https://www.wikipedia.org/>