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EE577: Massive Data Analytics

Assignment #4- Random Walk algorithms

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1 Task Description

In this assignment, we implement a recommender system using random walks over the bipartite graph of Persian Twitter users and tweets. The dataset is the same previously analyzed tweet corpus from Assignment 3.

The approach constructs a bipartite user-tweet interaction graph where edges link users to the tweets they have engaged with. We then apply Pixie, an algorithm which performs personalized PageRank via random walks on the graph to uncover each user's most influential neighbors. These neighboring users with strong connections are deemed similar users.

To validate performance, for recommended tweets derived from similar users' engagements, we retrieve and display their natively associated tweets from the dataset. Comparing recommended tweets against their original contextual tweets allows qualitative evaluation of recommendation quality.

In summary, this system generates tweet recommendations by first modeling the user-tweet dataset as a bipartite network amenable to random walk analysis. It then exploits the Pixie algorithm to discern tweet preference patterns among similar users via graph walks, recommending tweets that those closely-linked users engaged with. Retrieving associated tweets provides ground truth context to gauge recommendation accuracy.

2 Algorithm Description

2.1 Random Walks

Random walks on graphs provide a technique to derive similarities between nodes based on network structure and connections. The intuition is that nodes linked by short walk lengths likely share related attributes or connectivity patterns.

Formally, a random walk starts at some initial node and iteratively moves to a randomly selected neighbor. This repeats, traversing the graph in a randomized fashion. Tracking walk sequences reveals nodes frequently visited together, having high transition probabilities between each other.

For similarity detection, numerous random walks originating from each node are analyzed to determine node affinity. The probability distribution over other nodes converging from the walks indicates global structural equivalencies.

Specifically, nodes reached faster and more frequently from the origin node are deemed more similar, as walkers consistently traverse between them. Transition likelihoods correlate with similarities in position and role within the graph.

2.2 Pixie Algorithm

Pixie is an algorithm introduced by Pinterest for item recommendation using random walks on user-item bipartite networks.

In the bipartite graph, the two node sets are users and items. An edge connects a user to an item if that user has interacted with (e.g. liked or saved) the item. Random walks originating from each user node transition between similar user nodes with higher probability based on their item overlap. The consistent random walk patterns reveal user affinity even where no explicit edge exists. Figure 1 illustrates an example of a bipartite graph, generated from user-item interactions

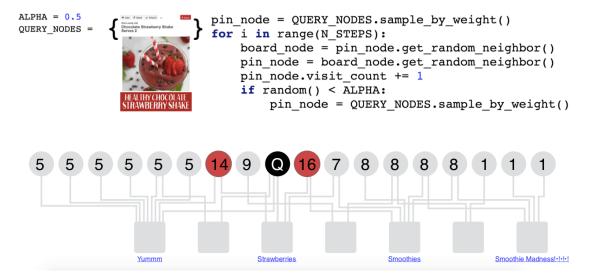


Figure 1: Pixie Algorithm

In our Twitter case, we construct a bipartite graph with user nodes on one side and tweet nodes on the other. An edge links a user to a tweet they engaged with, whether by replying, quoting or retweeting.

Random walks from a user node then hop between other user nodes that have interacted with common tweets. This models tweet preference similarity between the walked users - users consistently co-visited on short walks have demonstrated aligned tweet selections.

Finally, the tweets walked users engaged with that the source user did not are recommended, having been implicitly endorsed through the shared random traversal.

So in essence, Pixie transfers tweet endorsements from similar users discovered through randomized bipartite walk sequences in order to produce personalized recommendations while overcoming sparsity.

2.3 Implementation

To implement the Pixie algorithm, we first construct a bipartite graph representation consisting of user nodes on one side and tweet nodes on the other. Two RDDs encode the graph - one mapping users to their engaged tweet IDs, and another mapping tweets to their engaging user IDs.

Due to resource constraints and decreasing similarity from distant nodes, we extract a localized sub-graph around each target user for analysis by traversing nearby neighbors out to a depth of 2 hops empirically.

Random walks over the sub-graph originate at the target user node then transition to a randomly chosen tweet node from the target's engagements. Next, a random user is picked from that tweet's list who is then the origin for the next step.

We implement two walk modes - one returns to the source user on any dead-end, while the other enables teleportation back to source with some probability. Here we apply the former, as dead-ends occurred frequently enough to match typical teleport probabilities.

The most visited nodes indicate users most similar to the target. We retrieve both the target's and most similar users' tweets to enable qualitative evaluation of recommendation accuracy - if recommended tweets align with the target's tweet topics, the walk-based affinity estimates are demonstrated to translate to suggestion quality.

3 Results

Here is an edited version of the Results section intro:

This section presents recommended tweets generated for 5 users via bipartite Pixie walks. The first 3 users were previously analyzed in Assignment 3 for benchmarking. The final 2 users were randomly selected to demonstrate wider applicability. For each sampled user, their tweeted content provides ground truth context while the Pixie-recommended tweets based on graph walk user affinities showcase the system's ability to suggest relevant, personalized content matching users' interests. Analyzing recommendations across diverse users validates the implemented approach and provides qualitative insights into performance.

3.1 User #1

This user was previously analyzed using a collaborative filtering approach in Assignment 3. Figure 2 compares the similar users recommended by the random walk method versus collaborative filtering. As expected given the different underlying algorithms, there is some overlap as well as variance between the recommendation lists. Critically, the common users identified provides mutual validation between the two approaches.

Assignment #4

Further analysis of the target user's tweets versus the tweets from a sample of top recommended similar users reveals strong topical alignment. As evidenced in the accompanying example figures, the recommended users share common interests and tweeting behavior with the target. This provides qualitative confirmation that the random walk algorithm properly identifies users posting about analogous subjects who would be expected to engage with similar content. Seeing analogous tweet topics verifies that the graph walk-based user affinity estimates appropriately capture preference similarities that translate to semantically relevant tweet suggestions.

Overall, inspection of recommendations for previously seen users builds additional confidence in the recommender while allowing interesting comparative analysis against the collaborative filtering method. The meaningful user overlaps combined with tweet topic matches support the validity of employing Pixie random walks on user-tweet bipartite networks to uncover personalized tweet recommendations.

```
[('1654179648761102337', 420),
                                                                                                               [(1.6035674514745464, '1724483603600486400'),
(1.6035674514745464, '1632351425383522312'),
(1.6035674514745464, '1487097029990002688'),
(1.3416407864998738, '774470366676877312'),
(1.3416407864998738, '1725652340043100160'),
(1.3416407864998738, '1725280261300965378'),
  ('1710302619371982848', 308),
   ('1487097029990002688', 205),
      '1648401324608827392', 166),
      '1593669637102866432', 124),
'1226113547542773762', 122),
  ('1696453872074539008', 87),
                                                                                                                 (1.3416407864998738, '1725280261300965378'), (1.3416407864998738, '1721135891308007424'), (1.3416407864998738, '1719916251404021760'), (1.3416407864998738, '1719773177503682560'), (1.3416407864998738, '1719696919692292096'), (1.3416407864998738, '1710302619371982848'), (1.3416407864998738, '1710302619371982848'), (1.3416407864998738, '17088669640020514816'), (1.3416407864998738, '170866961838588886513')
  ('1253707166919397377', 85),
   ('1724483603600486400', 81),
  ('1632351425383522312', 80),
      1714031594598490113', 78),
1398658879827886085', 73),
   ('1710903076574359552', 71),
                                                                                                                 (1.3416407864998738, 17088609964026514810),
(1.3416407864998738, '1704606183858880513'),
(1.3416407864998738, '1704531218174251012'),
(1.3416407864998738, '1692155672807325699'),
(1.3416407864998738, '1689309272180482048'),
(1.3416407864998738, '1685928050708418560'),
   ('1221434210927464448', 70),
   ('1305617097339400192', 68),
      1654409094076268546', 61),
      1549397580869664775', 56),
1643233712916578309', 54),
                                                                                                                  (1.3416407864998738, '1675154446966312962'),
   ('1698191107786518528', 53)]
                                                                                                                  (1.3416407864998738, '1648401324608827392'
```

(a) Random Walks

(b) Collaborative Filtering

Figure 2: Similar users by RW and CF

```
target_user_tweets = parsed_rdd.flatMap(lambda x: target_user_tweets_parser(target_user,x))
target_user_tweets.collect()
وصیت نامه یکی از شهدای بزرگوار : خدایا نشود که در زندگی دو دستی به درخت زندگی بجسیم و همچون مبوه ایی یوسیده بیافتم خدایا تا ایمائی هست مرا برای خود کریاتی")] (https://t.co/CzBw8KoKmM' لسکر_علویان#nاگهنام_سلّ_مادر#nا/کن
, "generated"),
'generated'),
لتسکر_علوبان#۱۱گسنام_مثل_مادر#۱۱کنند، اینکه کهرمان زندگی چه شخصی باشه در عاقبت بخیری خیلی مهمه/۱۵۵۵ازندگی بر از انتخاب هایی است که مسیر ها رو عوض می')
https://t.co//05EkchpZ14',
    'generated'),
 , *https://t.co/JWvgiokZzn گمذامر مثل مادر#n\ها200cاوداع با لاله#n\ها200cعضور مردم قدر شناس دبلر علوبان در مراسم وداع با لاله ')
 ,'https://t.co/1NN0Fp1AGe گمنام_مثل_مادر#\ما\u200cوداع_با_لاله#n\ىبار علويان و مردم هميشه در صحفه')
    'generated'),
 , 'https://t.co/QgF5gIXki9 هاu200cاع با لاله#n\گمنام مثل مادر #n...در بي اسم و')
 ی زنندئوهین می کنند و به آب هم میزنن \u200c\مننت گلم\u20ac\یلا بایر نمی کرد.ولی بلچشمان خودم می بینم همونایکه دم از وحدت و برادری می زنندمتأسفانه اینجا علیه مقدسات اهل'؟
ر'همه نومین هرای ایرو رهبری فرزانه مان میدونید.چجور از آر
    generated'),
۱۸۱۸سلار من \u200c\بوددی \u200c\بوددی \n\n
| https://t.co/w8Td548q<u>1M</u>شکر_طویان#۱۸شکر_مائی_مادر#۱\n\ <mark>۱ و</mark>طن را در آغرش میکند
                                                                                                      و اینک رهروان مکتب حاج قاسم در بابل .فرزندان خوشنامn\n\خسته نباتسی یهلوون
 , ('generated'),
ر'گمنام مثل مادر #nh ها/u200cارداع با لاله#nh بوی مادر مودهدn\ آمدنت چه آمدنوست که عجب هرای شهرn\ شهرد گمنام سلام')
 ر میده در در کیف گذامی همتندم\.. چه زیباست') https://t.co/zj4jzA9tCG', هخاطرات مردانی که پروای نام ندارند و در کیف گدامی همتندم\.. چه زیباست')
'generated'),
 , 'گمنام_مثل_مادر#n\لشكر_علويان#n|تو نشان از مادر دارى گمنام بمانn\بخدا گمنام بودن زيباستn\گمنام بمان شهيد عزيز')
    generated'),
 ( 'https://t.co/ioQCzwZBqC شتكر_طویان#n\n مهمقاتی كه #گمنام_مثل_مانر هستندn\های حصاسه و نفاع مقسu200cمهمقاقی ویژه از سالn\بنیل علویان این روزها مهمان دارد' )
 ...
( 'قسکر_علویان#۱۱گفنام_مثل_ملار#۱۱ .شهید گمنام مایه برکت برای نظام و باعث وحدث و همدلی میشود' )
```

Figure 3: Targer user tweets

```
[('1654179648761102337', 420),
  1710302619371982848', 308),
 ('1487097029990002688', 205),
 ('1648401324608827392', 166),
  '1593669637102866432', 124),
                        , 122),
  1226113547542773762'
  1696453872074539008', 87),
  1253707166919397377', 85),
  1724483603600486400', 81),
 ('1632351425383522312', 80),
  1714031594598490113', 78),
  1398658879827886085', 73),
  1710903076574359552', 71),
 ('1221434210927464448', 70),
 ('1305617097339400192', 68),
 ('1654409094076268546', 61),
  '1549397580869664775', 56),
  1643233712916578309', 54),
  [1698191107786518528', 53)]
```

Figure 4: Similar users and corresponding similarity score

```
recommended_tweets = parsed_rdd.flatMap(lambda x: tweet_parser(sample_tweets,x))

recommended_tweets.collect()

مدل medical medical
```

Figure 5: Recommended tweets 1

```
recommended_tweets = parsed_rdd.flatMap(lambda x: tweet_parser(sample_tweets,x))

recommended_tweets.collect()

('Mac_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_ade_Union_to_hard_
```

Figure 6: Recommended tweets 2

3.2 User #2

```
target_user_tweets = parsed_rdd.flatMap(lambda x: target_user_tweets_parser(target_user,x))
target_user_tweets.collect()
((: ولى من با ٣٠٠ لير مينونم بخرمش\حالت عادى ١٠٠ دلاره∩منځه واقحام\.رو براى استور تركيه ببينيد Blinkist شما فقط قيمت يک اپ مثل')]
https://t.co/snE01CFuKD',
    'generated'),
زده ۲۵ گیگ لونثرنت با ۳ ماه یوئیوب پرمیوم و دینکی نامحدود برای واتساب, یوئیوب, اسپاتینای. همه اینا برای ۳ ماه اول ۱۸۱۰،۳۷۰ څرا یسکه های اینثرنتی این کفار اینتر خیرن آخه')
مرا n#vodafone https://t.co/xoSKCGtk1k' ⊖ جرا کو ایران همچین چیزایی نداریم\n/ا. لبر
('generated')
  قدم بحدی حتما خرید یک رونرہ،۱۸ 📵 چوشی اندرویدم که واقعا وضعیت وخیمی دارہ رو بعدها میدم تعمیر ولی تا این موقع به عنوان روئر دارم استفادہ میکنم ازش و خیلی خوب تندہ' )
واقعيه
برای گوگا۱۰(یلی چرا سیستم پرداخت ایل اینتدرر بی دربسر نر از گوگاه۱۱۸۸-کلی هم یایند به قوانین مالی آمریکا هستند۱۰(ایل هم بزرگه۱۰/گوگل بزرگه۱۰۱م(من درک نسوکتم این قضیه روّ )
همین موردم باعث میشه بازم بخوام این گوتنیو نگه۱۱۸۰ یلید کلی سند و مدرک و آییی رزیننشال جور کنی. ولی ایل میگه قط یولو بده بهم و به روتن پریاخت تو اون کشور دانته باش و تمام
و دارم
 '(generated'),
('((: ها، ولی حالا نیگه مجبورم داخل فولدرسّم بزنم200cا\مارک\u200cا\کل بوک Mikolaona'))',
  , '((: ها، ولى حالا ديگه مجبورم داخل فولدرسّم بزنم\u200c\مارك\u200c\كل بوک @Nikolaona')
     replied'),
رو همینطوری بمونه
     'generated'),
ملت از دید آزادی اینثرنت و گرون بودنش میگن که ختب هر دوه\ه\اون از دید اقتصادی میگه آفا وضعیت درآمدی خرابه هم ای فی مدیر عامل شقل توپیت میزند بهش حمله میکنن و از (((ز اینا دست حکومته و نه یک شخص و مدیریتش. دیگه در این حد آزادی نداریم 'generated'),
ملت از دید آزادی اینترنت و گرون بوینش میگن که خب هر۱۱۸ساون از دید اقتصادی میگه آقا وضعیت درآمدی خرابه۱۰ .ولی هر بار که مدیرعامل شاتل مویایل کوییت میزنه بهش حمله میکنن ؟
ر' ((((: دو اینا دست حکومته و نه یک شخص و مدیریتش. دیگه در این حد آزادی نداریم
 "(generated"), (() فویوای باطری بد دارم۱۱٫یکی بولد یک توضیح عطلی و درست حسابی بده من چطوری این آینون رو نگه دارم که باطریش به فقا نره')
سال با په گوئمی سر کردم که اسکرین یک ۱۱۵(((: فویوای باطری بد دارم۱۱٫یکی بولد یک توضیح عطلی و درست حسابی بده من
و' 📵 این الان په ۷ ساعتی موده خیلی خرکونم۱۱٫نیم ۲
    'generated'),
```

Figure 7: Targer user tweets

```
[('824950806411624448', 127),
  302678816', 116),
 ('1562505373285658631', 77),
 ('855095592', 68),
 ('60171166', 67),
  '767126934', 67),
('1271067471760568322', 60),
  1556954568797392897', 57),
  1576644054699642880', 52),
 ('1639263584407416839', 49),
('17532913', 44),
('1676645415758733333', 38),
('597673178', 38),
  1010561817997922308', 37),
('840241125499777024', 37),
('1321668098076954624', 36),
 ('46853901', 36),
 ('1231450050389315585', 34),
  '1567482915600142339', 34)]
```

Figure 8: Similar users and corresponding similarity score

```
[ ] recommended_tweets = parsed_rdd.flatMap(lambda x: tweet_parser(sample_tweets,x)) recommended_tweets.collect()

[ ] recommended_tweets.collect()

[ ] كان المراحد المراحد
```

Figure 9: Recommended tweets 1

Figure 10: Recommended tweets 2

3.3 User #3

Figure 11: Targer user tweets

```
[('1574904470835798041', 1193)]
```

Figure 12: Similar user and corresponding similarity score

Figure 13: Recommended tweets

3.4 User #4

```
[ ] target_user = users_rdd.takeSample(False,1,487)[0]
    target_user

    ('1343961231166734336',
    ['1736503973559906442',
        '1736422396721062257',
        '1736384901635539042',
        '1736407359461704039',
        '1736455332614877486',
        '1736307951638323471',
        '1736442052454310094'])
```

Figure 14: Targer user 4

```
target_user_tweets = parsed_rdd.flatMap(lambda x: tweet_parser(target_user_tweets_ids,x))

target_user_tweets.collect()

[] target
```

Figure 15: Targer user tweets

```
[('952453705', 755),
  37050268', 370),
  '1591547142136627202', 336),
 '1303599606551531520', 327),
  '1343961231166734336', 43),
 ('1575260422516662272', 25),
  1705256827213041669', 24),
  1593256090908532736', 23),
  '959142611025059842', 22),
 '1272999611607719942', 21),
 '1712456826292428800', 21),
 ('1501786831725240321', 19),
  1089593176808148997', 18),
  1545831035208093696', 18),
  '1021430809474076674', <mark>17),</mark>
 ('1269654925', 17),
 ('1420411453975273474', 17),
  '1579439373636046848', 17),
  [1267421104861261826], 16
```

Figure 16: Similar users and corresponding similarity score

Figure 17: Recommended tweets 1

Figure 18: Recommended tweets 2

4 Discussion

Is the implemented model online or offline?

The current implementation operates in an offline manner. Some key points:

- The full bipartite graph is preprocessed into localized target user-centric subgraphs upfront before walking
- There is no incremental updates to the graph representation
- The random walk computations originate from static snapshots of the subgraphs

This indicates new tweets or users would require recomputation of the subgraphs and re-execution of the random walks to refresh recommendations. The upfront bipartite graph partitioning and materialization makes directly incorporating dynamic new nodes challenging.

However, there is potential to evolve this approach to an online system:

• Subgraphs could be generated in a streaming fashion using sliding windows

- Random walks could run continuously on subgraph snapshots
- Edge updates could trigger targeted partial recomputation

In summary, the current system follows an offline batch analysis paradigm over static snapshots. But an online workflow could be achieved by adapting the preprocessing and incremental updating the graph analytics. This would allow dynamically adjusting recommendations in real-time as new edges arrive without full rebuilds.

Comparison between Random Walk and Collaborative Filter

Advantages of random walks:

- Captures implicit relationships beyond explicit engagement edges
- Handles data sparsity well, can connect disjoint user clusters
- Computationally efficient to approximate recommendations
- Naturally incorporates bipartite structure between users and tweets
- Visualizable walks aid debugging and insight

Disadvantages of random walks:

- Preprocessing overhead to construct bipartite graph
- Static batches lack easy online update process
- Walk hyperparameter tuning is challenging
- Hard to provide interpretable explanations

Advantages of collaborative filtering:

- Intuitive and transparent user-user correlations
- Incremental Updates with new data inserts easier

- Widely analyzed approach with known strengths
- No required modeling of tweet relationships
- Explains recommendations via user alignments

Disadvantages of collaborative filtering:

- Limited by sparsity of engagement edges
- User correlations can be less robust
- Suffers from cold start problem
- Hard to go beyond direct connections
- User biases and outliers degrade performance

Random walk's graph diffusion captures subtle signals across disjoint data, overcoming sparsity issues. However collaboration filtering is more interpretable and naturally incrementally. Hybrid approaches combining explicit correlations augmented with structural walk affinities may balance the tradeoffs. The best approach depends on the dataset connectivity, domain biases, and product requirements. But both move beyond content features with user behavioral modeling.