



Chapter 21: Information Retrieval

Database System Concepts, 6th Ed.

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Chapter 21: Information Retrieval

- Relevance Ranking Using Terms
- Relevance Using Hyperlinks
- Synonyms., Homonyms, and Ontologies
- Indexing of Documents
- Measuring Retrieval Effectiveness
- Web Search Engines
- Information Retrieval and Structured Data
- Directories



Information Retrieval Systems

- **Information retrieval (IR)** systems use a simpler data model than database systems
 - Information organized as a collection of documents
 - Documents are unstructured, no schema
- Information retrieval locates relevant documents, on the basis of user input such as keywords or example documents
 - e.g., find documents containing the words “database systems”
- Can be used even on textual descriptions provided with non-textual data such as images
- Web search engines are the most familiar example of IR systems



Information Retrieval Systems (Cont.)

- Differences from database systems
 - IR systems don't deal with transactional updates (including concurrency control and recovery)
 - Database systems deal with structured data, with schemas that define the data organization
 - IR systems deal with some querying issues not generally addressed by database systems
 - ▶ Approximate searching by keywords
 - ▶ Ranking of retrieved answers by estimated degree of relevance



Keyword Search

- In **full text** retrieval, all the words in each document are considered to be keywords.
 - We use the word **term** to refer to the words in a document
- Information-retrieval systems typically allow query expressions formed using keywords and the logical connectives *and*, *or*, and *not*
 - *Ands* are implicit, even if not explicitly specified
- Ranking of documents on the basis of estimated relevance to a query is critical
 - Relevance ranking is based on factors such as
 - ▶ **Term frequency**
 - Frequency of occurrence of query keyword in document
 - ▶ **Inverse document frequency**
 - How many documents the query keyword occurs in
 - » Fewer → give more importance to keyword
 - ▶ **Hyperlinks to documents**
 - More links to a document → document is more important



Relevance Ranking Using Terms

■ **TF-IDF** (Term frequency/Inverse Document frequency) ranking:

- Let $n(d)$ = number of terms in the document d
- $n(d, t)$ = number of occurrences of term t in the document d .
- Relevance of a document d to a *term* t

$$TF(d, t) = \log \left(1 + \frac{n(d, t)}{n(d)} \right)$$

- ▶ The log factor is to avoid excessive weight to frequent terms
- Relevance of document to *query* Q

$$r(d, Q) = \sum_{t \in Q} \frac{TF(d, t)}{n(t)}$$



Relevance Ranking Using Terms (Cont.)

- Most systems add to the above model
 - Words that occur in title, author list, section headings, etc. are given greater importance
 - Words whose first occurrence is late in the document are given lower importance
 - Very common words such as “a”, “an”, “the”, “it” etc. are eliminated
 - ▶ Called **stop words**
 - **Proximity**: if keywords in query occur close together in the document, the document has higher importance than if they occur far apart
- Documents are returned in decreasing order of relevance score
 - Usually only top few documents are returned, not all



Similarity Based Retrieval

- Similarity based retrieval - retrieve documents similar to a given document
 - Similarity may be defined on the basis of common words
 - ▶ E.g., find k terms in A with highest $TF(d, t) / n(t)$ and use these terms to find relevance of other documents.
- **Relevance feedback:** Similarity can be used to refine answer set to keyword query
 - User selects a few relevant documents from those retrieved by keyword query, and system finds other documents similar to these
- Vector space model: define an n -dimensional space, where n is the number of words in the document set.
 - Vector for document d goes from origin to a point whose i^{th} coordinate is $TF(d, t) / n(t)$
 - The cosine of the angle between the vectors of two documents is used as a measure of their similarity.



Relevance Using Hyperlinks

- Number of documents relevant to a query can be enormous if only term frequencies are taken into account
- Using term frequencies makes “spamming” easy
 - ▶ E.g., a travel agency can add many occurrences of the words “travel” to its page to make its rank very high
- Most of the time people are looking for pages from popular sites
- Idea: use popularity of Web site (e.g., how many people visit it) to rank site pages that match given keywords
- Problem: hard to find actual popularity of site
 - Solution: next slide



Relevance Using Hyperlinks (Cont.)

- Solution: use number of hyperlinks to a site as a measure of the popularity or **prestige** of the site
 - Count only one hyperlink from each site (why? - see previous slide)
 - Popularity measure is for site, not for individual page
 - ▶ But, most hyperlinks are to root of site
 - ▶ Also, concept of “site” difficult to define since a URL prefix like `cs.yale.edu` contains many unrelated pages of varying popularity
- Refinements
 - When computing prestige based on links to a site, give more weight to links from sites that themselves have higher prestige
 - ▶ Definition is circular
 - ▶ Set up and solve system of simultaneous linear equations
 - Above idea is basis of the Google **PageRank** ranking mechanism



Relevance Using Hyperlinks (Cont.)

- Connections to **social networking** theories that ranked prestige of people
 - E.g., the president of the U.S.A has a high prestige since many people know him
 - Someone known by multiple prestigious people has high prestige
- Hub and authority based ranking
 - A **hub** is a page that stores links to many pages (on a topic)
 - An **authority** is a page that contains actual information on a topic
 - Each page gets a **hub prestige** based on prestige of authorities that it points to
 - Each page gets an **authority prestige** based on prestige of hubs that point to it
 - Again, prestige definitions are cyclic, and can be got by solving linear equations
 - Use authority prestige when ranking answers to a query



Synonyms and Homonyms

■ Synonyms

- E.g., document: “motorcycle repair”, query: “motorcycle maintenance”
 - ▶ Need to realize that “maintenance” and “repair” are synonyms
- System can extend query as “motorcycle *and* (repair *or* maintenance)”

■ Homonyms

- E.g., “object” has different meanings as noun/verb
- Can disambiguate meanings (to some extent) from the context

■ Extending queries automatically using synonyms can be problematic

- Need to understand intended meaning in order to infer synonyms
 - ▶ Or verify synonyms with user
- Synonyms may have other meanings as well



Concept-Based Querying

- Approach
 - For each word, determine the **concept** it represents from context
 - Use one or more **ontologies**:
 - ▶ Hierarchical structure showing relationship between concepts
 - ▶ E.g., the ISA relationship that we saw in the E-R model
- This approach can be used to standardize terminology in a specific field
- Ontologies can link multiple languages
- Foundation of the **Semantic Web** (not covered here)



Indexing of Documents

- An inverted index maps each keyword K_i to a set of documents S_i that contain the keyword
 - Documents identified by identifiers
- Inverted index may record
 - Keyword locations within document to allow proximity based ranking
 - Counts of number of occurrences of keyword to compute TF
- **and** operation: Finds documents that contain all of K_1, K_2, \dots, K_n .
 - Intersection $S_1 \cap S_2 \cap \dots \cap S_n$
- **or** operation: documents that contain at least one of K_1, K_2, \dots, K_n
 - union, $S_1 \cup S_2 \cup \dots \cup S_n$
- Each S_i is kept sorted to allow efficient intersection/union by merging
 - “**not**” can also be efficiently implemented by merging of sorted lists



Measuring Retrieval Effectiveness

- Information-retrieval systems save space by using index structures that support only approximate retrieval. May result in:
 - **false negative (false drop)** - some relevant documents may not be retrieved.
 - **false positive** - some irrelevant documents may be retrieved.
 - For many applications a good index should not permit any false drops, but may permit a few false positives.
- Relevant performance metrics:
 - **precision** - what percentage of the retrieved documents are relevant to the query.
 - **recall** - what percentage of the documents relevant to the query were retrieved.



Measuring Retrieval Effectiveness (Cont.)

- Recall vs. precision tradeoff:
 - ▶ Can increase recall by retrieving many documents (down to a low level of relevance ranking), but many irrelevant documents would be fetched, reducing precision
- Measures of retrieval effectiveness:
 - Recall as a function of number of documents fetched, or
 - **Precision as a function of recall**
 - ▶ Equivalently, as a function of number of documents fetched
 - E.g., “precision of 75% at recall of 50%, and 60% at a recall of 75%”
- Problem: which documents are actually relevant, and which are not



Web Search Engines

- **Web crawlers** are programs that locate and gather information on the Web
 - Recursively follow hyperlinks present in known documents, to find other documents
 - ▶ Starting from a *seed* set of documents
 - Fetched documents
 - ▶ Handed over to an indexing system
 - ▶ Can be discarded after indexing, or store as a *cached* copy
- Crawling the entire Web would take a very large amount of time
 - Search engines typically cover only a part of the Web, not all of it
 - Take months to perform a single crawl



Web Crawling (Cont.)

- Crawling is done by multiple processes on multiple machines, running in parallel
 - Set of links to be crawled stored in a database
 - New links found in crawled pages added to this set, to be crawled later
- Indexing process also runs on multiple machines
 - Creates a new copy of index instead of modifying old index
 - Old index is used to answer queries
 - After a crawl is “completed” new index becomes “old” index
- Multiple machines used to answer queries
 - Indices may be kept in memory
 - Queries may be routed to different machines for load balancing



Information Retrieval and Structured Data

- Information retrieval systems originally treated documents as a collection of words
- **Information extraction systems** infer structure from documents, e.g.:
 - Extraction of house attributes (size, address, number of bedrooms, etc.) from a text advertisement
 - Extraction of topic and people named from a new article
- Relations or XML structures used to store extracted data
 - System seeks connections among data to answer queries
 - **Question answering systems**

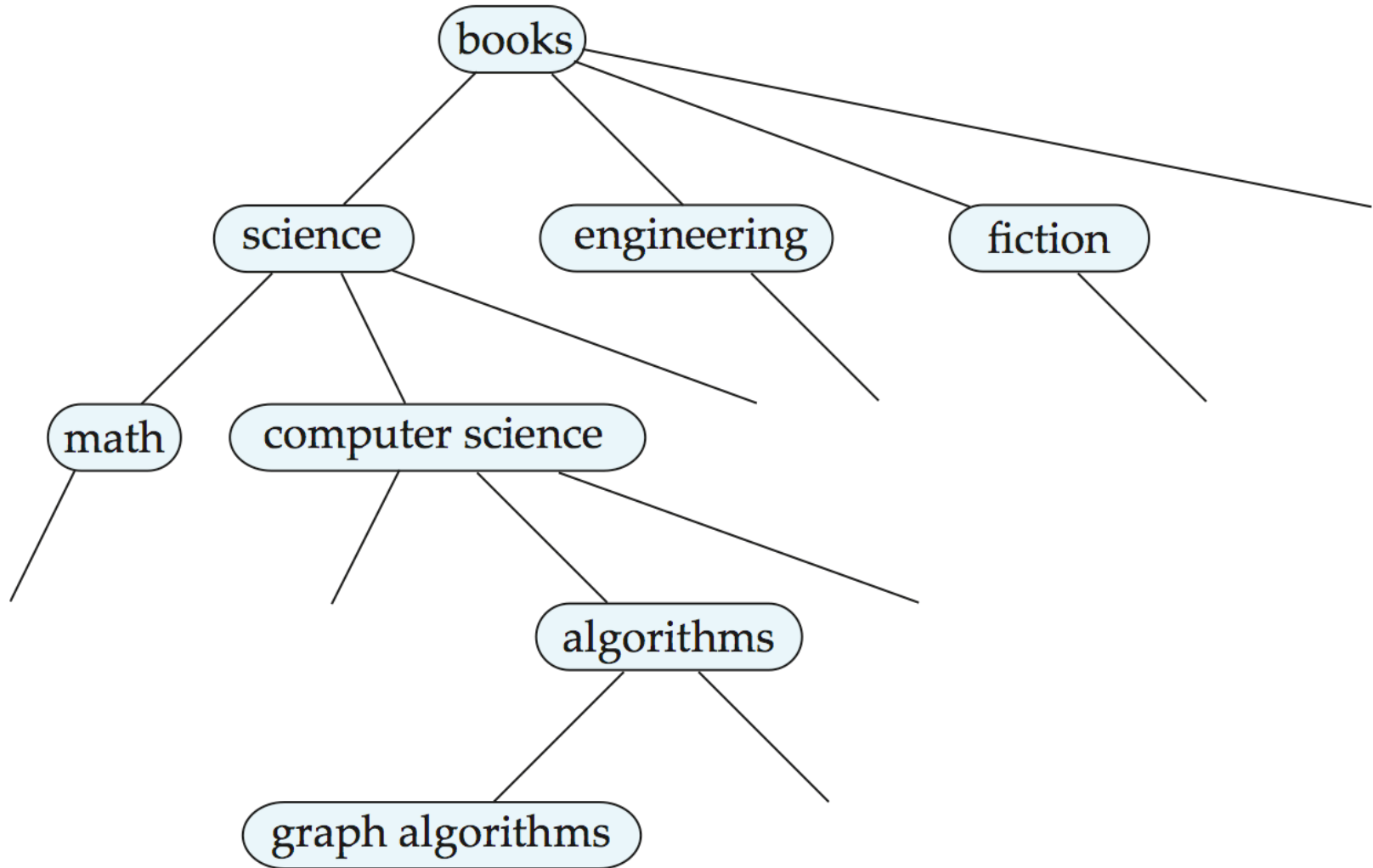


Directories

- Storing related documents together in a library facilitates browsing
 - Users can see not only requested document but also related ones.
- Browsing is facilitated by classification system that organizes logically related documents together.
- Organization is hierarchical: **classification hierarchy**



A Classification Hierarchy For A Library System



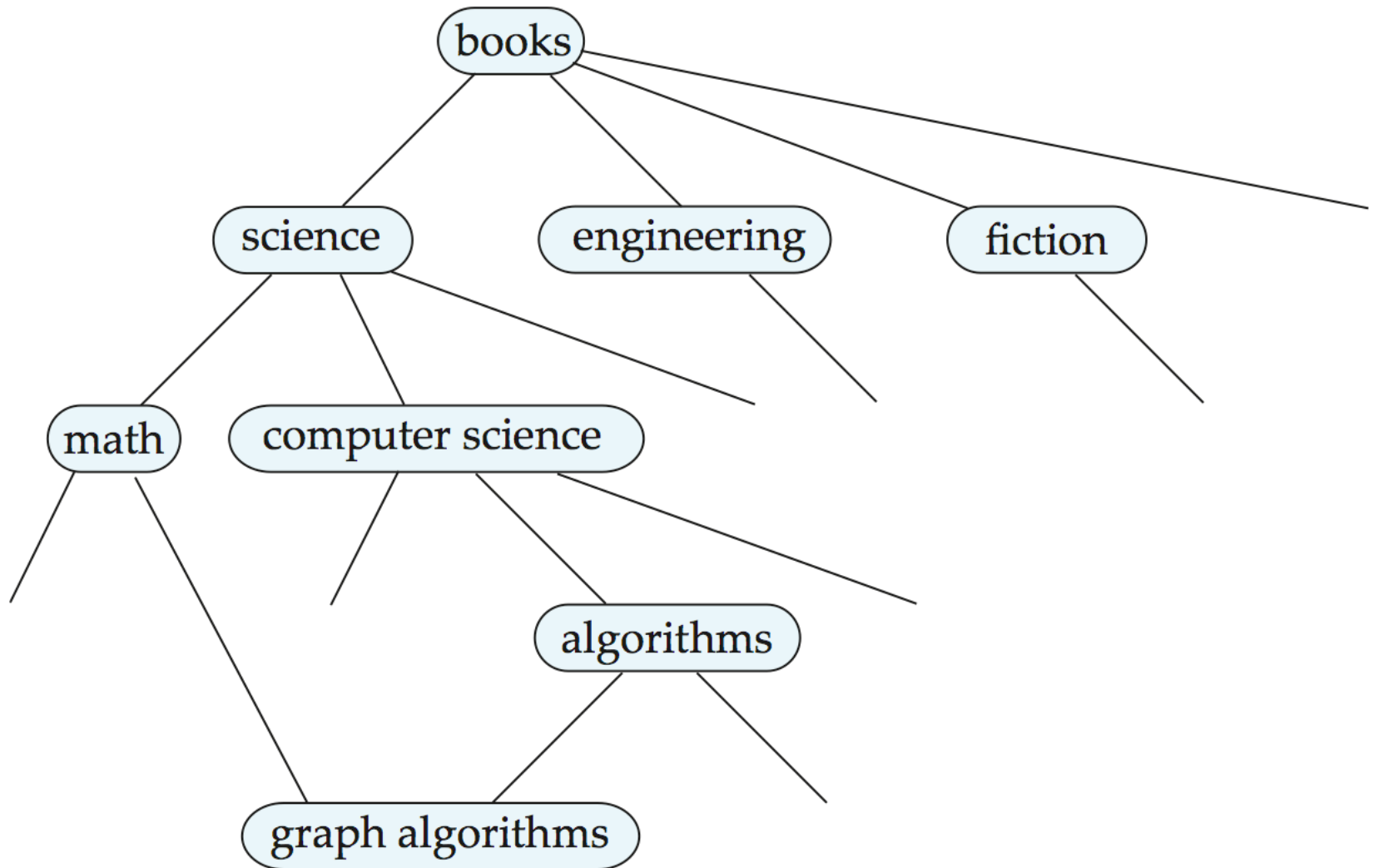


Classification DAG

- Documents can reside in multiple places in a hierarchy in an information retrieval system, since physical location is not important.
- Classification hierarchy is thus Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG)



A Classification DAG For A Library Information Retrieval System





Web Directories

- A **Web directory** is just a classification directory on Web pages
 - E.g., Yahoo! Directory, Open Directory project
 - Issues:
 - ▶ What should the directory hierarchy be?
 - ▶ Given a document, which nodes of the directory are categories relevant to the document
 - Often done manually
 - ▶ Classification of documents into a hierarchy may be done based on term similarity



End of Chapter

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