



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

## Text Technologies for Data Science

INFR11145

# Ranked Retrieval (2)

Instructor:  
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## Lecture Objectives

- Learn about Probabilistic models
  - BM25
- Learn about LM for IR



## Recall: VSM & TFIDF term weighting

- Combines TF and IDF to find the weight of terms

$$w_{t,d} = (1 + \log_{10} tf(t, d)) \times \log_{10} \left( \frac{N}{df(t)} \right)$$

- For a query  $q$  and document  $d$ , retrieval score  $f(q, d)$ :

$$Score(q, d) = \sum_{t \in q \cap d} w_{t,d}$$

- TFIDF observations
  - Term appearing more in a doc gets higher weight (TF)
  - First occurrence is more important (log)
  - Rare terms are more important (IDF)
  - Bias towards longer documents

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## IR Model

- VSM is very heuristic in nature
  - No notion of relevance is there (still works well)
  - Any weighting scheme, similarity measure can be used
    - Components not interpretable  $\rightarrow$  no guide for what to try next
    - More engineering rather than theory  $\rightarrow$  tweak, run, observe, tweak ...
  - Very popular, hard to beat, strong baseline
    - Easy to adapt good ideas from other models
- Probabilistic Model** of retrieval
  - Mathematical formulation for relevant / irrelevant sets
    - Explicitly defines random variables (R,Q,D)
    - Specific about what their values are
    - State the assumptions behind each step
    - Watch out for contradictions

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## Probabilistic Models

- Concept: Uncertainty is inherent part of IR process
- Probability theory is strong foundation for representing and manipulating uncertainty
- Probability Ranking Principle (1977)

## Probability Ranking Principle

- “If a reference retrieval system’s response to each request is a ranking of the documents in the collection in order of decreasing probability of relevance to the user who submitted the request,
- where the probabilities are estimated as accurately as possible on the basis of whatever data have been made available to the system for this purpose,
- the overall effectiveness of the system to its user will be the best that is obtainable on the basis of those data.”
- Basis for most probabilistic approaches for IR

## Formulation of PRP

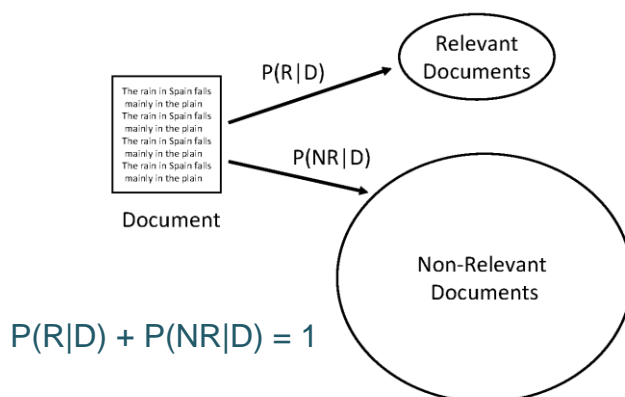
- Rank docs by probability of relevance
  - $P(R|D_{r1}) > P(R|D_{r2}) > P(R|D_{r3}) > P(R|D_{r4}) > \dots$
- Estimate probability as accurate as possible
  - $P_{\text{est}}(R|D) \approx P_{\text{true}}(R|D)$
- Estimate with all possibly available data
  - $P_{\text{est}}(R | \text{doc, session, context, user profile, ...})$
- Best possible accuracy can be achieved with that data
  - $\rightarrow$  the perfect IR system
  - Is it really doable?
- **How to estimate the probability of relevance?**

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## PRP Concept

- Imagine IR as a classification problem



- Document  $D$  is **relevant** if  $P(R|D) > P(NR|D)$

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## Probability of Relevance

- What is  $P_{\text{true}}(\text{rel} \mid \text{doc}, \text{query}, \text{session}, \text{user}, \dots)$ ?
  - Isn't relevance just the user's opinion?
    - User decides relevant or not, what is the "probability" thing?
- Search algorithm cannot look into your head (yet!)
  - Relevance depends on factors that algorithm cannot observe
    - SIGIR 2016 best paper award: *Understanding Information Need: an fMRI Study*
- Different users may disagree on relevance of the same doc
  - Even similar users, doing the same task, in the same context
- $P_{\text{true}}(\text{rel} \mid Q, D)$ :
  - Proportion of all unseen users / context / tasks for which D would have judged relevant to Q
- Similar to:  $P(\text{die}=6 \mid \text{even and not square})$

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## Okapi BM25 Model

- Based on the probabilistic model
  - A document D is relevant if  $P(R=1|D) > P(R=0|D)$
- Extension to the "binary independence model"
  - **Binary features:** Document represented by a vector of binary features indicating term occurrence
  - Assume **term independence** (Naïve Bayes assumption)
    - BOW trick
- In 1995, *Stephan Robertson* with his group came up with the **BM25** Formula as part of the **Okapi** project.
- It outperformed all other systems in TREC
- Popular and effective ranking algorithm

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## Okapi BM25 Ranking Function

- Let  $L_d$  be the number of terms in document  $d$
- Let  $\bar{L}$  be the average number of terms in a document

$$w_{t,d} = \frac{tf_{t,d}}{k \cdot \frac{L_d}{\bar{L}} + tf_{t,d} + 0.5} \times \log_{10} \left( \frac{N - df_t + 0.5}{df_t + 0.5} \right)$$

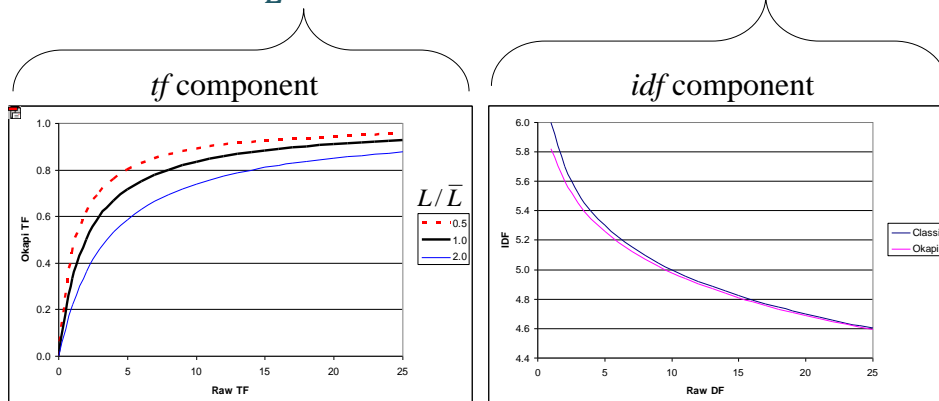
- Best practices:  $k=1.5$

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## Okapi BM25 Ranking Function

$$w_{t,d} = \frac{tf_{t,d}}{1.5 \frac{L_d}{\bar{L}} + tf_{t,d} + 0.5} \times \log_{10} \left( \frac{N - df_t + 0.5}{df_t + 0.5} \right)$$



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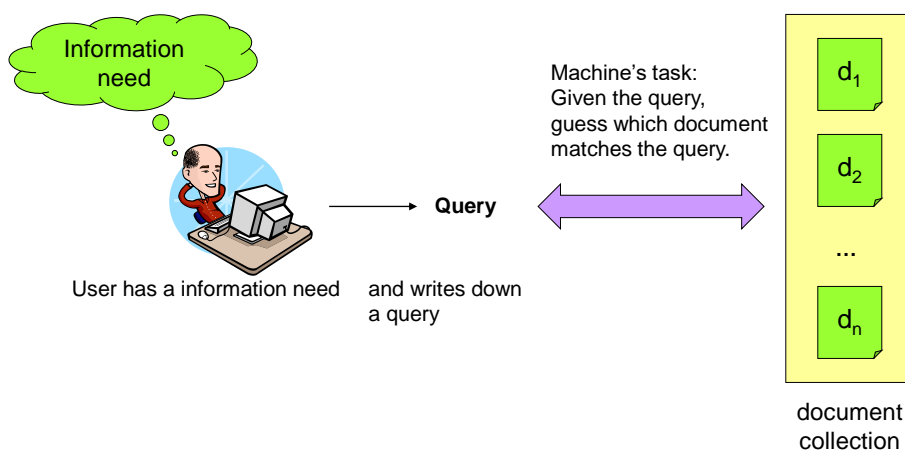
## Probabilistic Model in IR

- Focuses on the probability of relevance of docs
  - Could be mathematically proved
  - Different ways to apply it
  - BM25 is the most common formula for it
- 
- What other models could be still used in IR?

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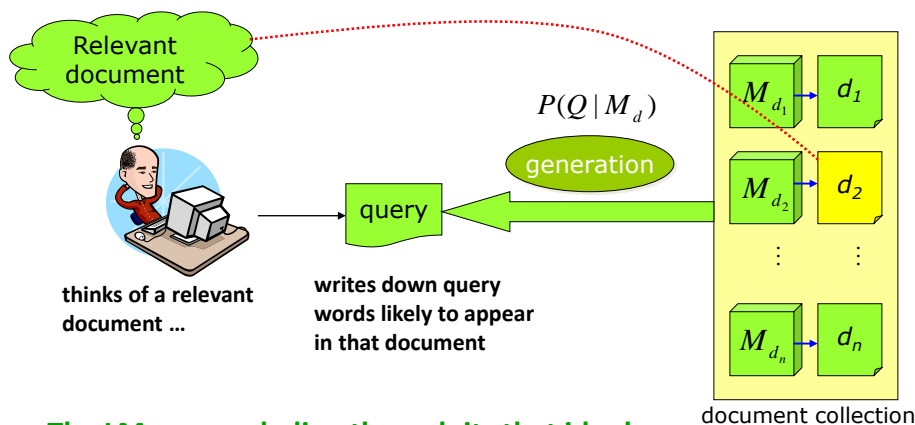
## “Noisy-Channel” Model of IR



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## IR based on Language Model (LM)



- The LM approach directly exploits that idea!
- a document is a good match to a query if the document model is likely to generate the query

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## Concept

- Coming up with good queries?
  - Think of words that would likely appear in a relevant doc
  - Use those words as the query
- The language modeling approach to IR directly models that idea
  - a document is a good match to a query if the document model is likely to generate the query
    - happens if the document contains the query words often.
- Build a probabilistic language model  $M_d$  from each document  $d$
- Rank documents based on the probability of the model generating the query:  $P(q|M_d)$ .

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## Language Model (LM)

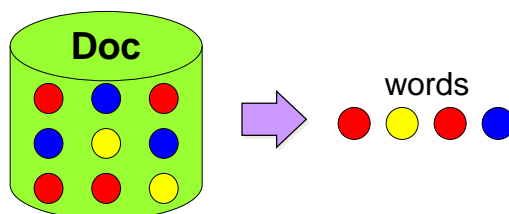
- A language model is a probability distribution over strings drawn from some vocabulary
- A topic in a document or query can be represented as a language model
  - i.e., words that tend to occur often when discussing a topic will have high probabilities in the corresponding language model

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## Unigram LM

- Terms are randomly drawn from a document (with replacement)



$$\begin{aligned}
 P(\text{red, yellow, red, blue}) &= P(\text{red}) \times P(\text{yellow}) \times P(\text{red}) \times P(\text{blue}) \\
 &= (4/9) \times (2/9) \times (4/9) \times (3/9)
 \end{aligned}$$

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## Example

| $w$  | $P(w q_1)$ | $w$   | $P(w q_1)$ |
|------|------------|-------|------------|
| STOP | 0.2        | toad  | 0.01       |
| the  | 0.2        | said  | 0.03       |
| a    | 0.1        | likes | 0.02       |
| frog | 0.01       | that  | 0.04       |
|      |            | ...   | ...        |

- This is a one-state probabilistic finite-state automaton – a unigram language model.

- $S = \text{"frog said that toad likes frog STOP"}$

$$P(S) = 0.01 \times 0.03 \times 0.04 \times 0.01 \times 0.02 \times 0.01 \times 0.02 \\ = 0.00000000000048$$

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## Comparing LMs

- $M_{d1}$   
LM generated from Doc 1
- $M_{d2}$   
LM generated from Doc 2
- Try to generate sentence  $S$  from  $M_{d1}$  &  $M_{d2}$

| Model $M_{d1}$ |          | Model $M_{d2}$ |          |
|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| $P(w)$         | $w$      | $P(w)$         | $w$      |
| 0.2            | the      | 0.2            | the      |
| 0.0001         | yon      | 0.1            | yon      |
| 0.01           | class    | 0.001          | class    |
| 0.0005         | maiden   | 0.01           | maiden   |
| 0.0003         | sayst    | 0.03           | sayst    |
| 0.0001         | pleaseth | 0.02           | pleaseth |
| ...            |          | ...            |          |

| text:      | <u>the</u> | <u>class</u> | <u>pleaseth</u> | <u>yon</u> | <u>maiden</u> | $P(S)$           |
|------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|------------------|
| $M_{d1}$ : | 0.2        | 0.01         | 0.0001          | 0.0001     | 0.0005        | 0.00000000000001 |
| $M_{d2}$ : | 0.2        | 0.001        | 0.02            | 0.1        | 0.01          | 0.000000004      |

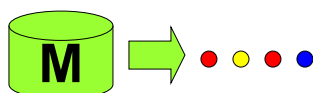
$$P(\text{text}|M_{d2}) > P(\text{text}|M_{d1})$$

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## Stochastic Language Models

- A statistical model for generating text
  - Probability distribution over strings in a given language



$$P(\text{red yellow red blue} | M) = P(\text{red} | M)$$

$$P(\text{yellow} | M, \text{red})$$

$$P(\text{red} | M, \text{red yellow})$$

$$P(\text{blue} | M, \text{red yellow red})$$

## Unigram and Higher-order LM

$$P(\text{red yellow red blue})$$

$$= P(\text{red}) P(\text{yellow} | \text{red}) P(\text{red} | \text{red yellow}) P(\text{blue} | \text{red yellow red})$$

- **Unigram Language Models**

$$P(\text{red}) P(\text{yellow}) P(\text{red}) P(\text{blue})$$

- **Bigram (generally,  $n$ -gram) Language Models**

$$P(\text{red}) P(\text{yellow} | \text{red}) P(\text{red} | \text{red yellow}) P(\text{blue} | \text{red yellow red})$$

## LM in IR

- Each document is treated as basis for a LM.
- Given a query  $q$ , rank documents based on  $P(d|q)$

$$P(d|q) = \frac{P(q|d)P(d)}{P(q)}$$

- $P(q)$  is the same for all documents → ignore
- $P(d)$  is the prior – often treated as the same for all  $d$ 
  - But we can give a prior to “high-quality” documents, e.g., those with high PageRank (later to be discussed).
- $P(q|d)$  is the probability of  $q$  given  $d$ .
- So to rank documents according to relevance to  $q$ , ranking according to  $P(q|d)$  and  $P(d|q)$  is equivalent

## LM in IR: Basic idea

- We attempt to model the query generation process.
- Then we rank documents by the probability that a query would be observed as a random sample from the respective document model.
- That is, we rank according to  $P(q|d)$ .

## $P(q|d)$

### Query Likelihood Model

- We will make the conditional independence assumption.

$$P(q|M_d) = P(\langle t_1, \dots, t_{|q|} \rangle | M_d) = \prod_{1 \leq k \leq |q|} P(t_k | M_d)$$

$|q|$ : length of  $q$ ;  $t_k$ : token occurring at position  $k$  in  $q$

- This is equivalent to:

$$P(q|M_d) = \prod_{\text{each term } t \text{ in } q} P(t|M_d)^{tf_{t,q}}$$

$tf_{t,q}$ : term frequency (# occurrences) of  $t$  in  $q$

- Multinomial model (omitting constant factor)

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## Parameter estimation

- Probability of a term  $t$  in a LM  $M_d$  using Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE)

$$P(t|M_d) = \frac{tf_{t,d}}{|d|}$$

$|d|$ : length of  $d$ ;

$tf_{t,d}$ : # occurrences of  $t$  in  $d$

- Probability of a query  $q$  to be noticed in a LM  $M_d$ :

$$P(q|M_d) = \prod_{\forall t \in q} \left( \frac{tf_{t,d}}{|d|} \right)^{tf_{t,q}}$$

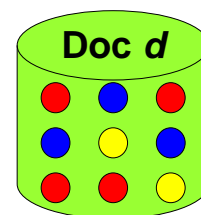
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## Example

$$P(\text{red, yellow, red, blue}) = P(\text{red})^2 \times P(\text{yellow}) \times P(\text{blue}) \\ = (4/9)^2 \times (2/9) \times (3/9) = 0.0146$$

$$P(\text{red, yellow, green, blue})$$



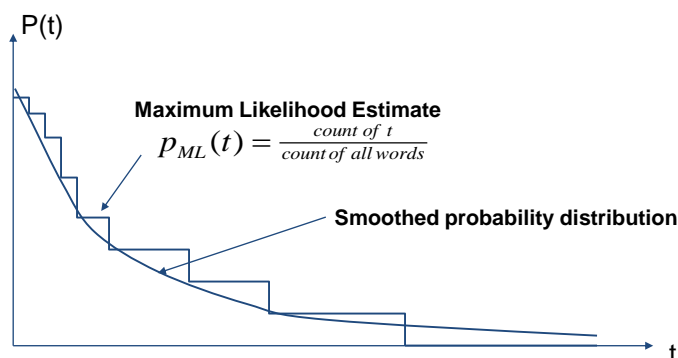
- Is that fair?
  - In VSM,  $S(Q,D)$  was summation, works more like OR in Boolean search. Missing one term reduces score only
  - In language model,  $S(Q,D)$  is  $P(Q|D) \rightarrow$  Multiplication of probabilities  $\rightarrow$  missing one term makes score = 0
  - Is there a better way to handle unseen terms?

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## Smoothing

- Problem: Zero frequency
- Solution: “Smooth” terms probability



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## Smoothing

- Document texts are a sample from the language model
- Missing words should not have zero probability of occurring
- A missing term is possible (even though it didn't occur)
  - but no more likely than would be expected by chance in the collection.
- A technique for estimating probabilities for missing (or unseen) words
  - Overcomes data-sparsity problem
  - lower (or discount) the probability estimates for words that are seen in the document text
  - assign that "left-over" probability to the estimates for the words that are not seen in the text (and also on the seen ones)

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## Mixture Model

$$P(t/d) = \lambda P(t/M_d) + (1 - \lambda) P(t/M_c)$$

- Mixes the probability from the document with the general collection frequency of the word.
- Estimate for unseen words is  $(1-\lambda) P(t/M_c)$ 
  - Based on collection language model (background LM)
  - $P(t/M_c)$  is the probability for query word  $i$  in the collection language model for collection C (background probability)
  - $\lambda$  is a parameter controlling probability for unseen words
- Estimate for observed words is

$$\lambda P(t/M_d) + (1-\lambda) P(t/M_c)$$

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## Jelinek-Mercer Smoothing

$$P(t|d) = \lambda P(t|M_d) + (1 - \lambda)P(t|M_c)$$

- **High value of  $\lambda$ :** “conjunctive-like” search – tends to retrieve documents containing all query words.
- **Low value of  $\lambda$ :** more disjunctive, suitable for long queries
- Correctly setting  $\lambda$  is important for good performance.
- Final Ranking function:

$$P(q|M_d) \propto \prod_{1 \leq k \leq |q|} (\lambda \cdot P(t_k|M_d) + (1 - \lambda) \cdot P(t_k|M_c))$$

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## Example

- **Collection:**  $d_1$  and  $d_2$
- $d_1$ : “Jackson was one of the most talented entertainers of all time”
- $d_2$ : “Michael Jackson anointed himself King of Pop”
- **Query  $q$ :** Michael Jackson
- Use mixture model with  $\lambda = 1/2$
- $P(q|d_1) = [(0/11 + 1/18)/2] \cdot [(1/11 + 2/18)/2] \approx 0.003$
- $P(q|d_2) = [(1/7 + 1/18)/2] \cdot [(1/7 + 2/18)/2] \approx 0.013$
- Ranking:  $d_2 > d_1$

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## Notes on Query Likelihood Model

- It has similar effectiveness to BM25
- With more sophisticated techniques, it outperforms BM25
  - Topic models
- There are several alternative smoothing techniques
  - That was just an example

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## Summary

- **Three ways to model IR**
- VSM  
How query vector aligns with document vector?
- Probabilistic Model  
What is the relevance probability of document D given query Q?
- LM  
How likely is it possible to observe/generate sequence of terms Q in a language model of document D?

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## Resources

- Text book 1: Intro to IR, Chapter 12
- Text book 2: IR in Practice, Chapter 7.2, 7.3
- Readings:
  - Robertson, Stephen E., et al.  
**"Okapi at TREC-3."**  
Nist Special Publication Sp 109 (1995): 109.
  - J. Ponte and W. B. Croft.  
**A language modeling approach to information retrieval.**  
In *Proceedings on the 21st annual international ACM SIGIR conference*, pages 275–281, 1998

