

Lecture 14: Distributed Word Representations for Information Retrieval

Section 9.2.2 Query Expansion: How can we robustly match a user's search intent?

- *Synonymy*: In most collections, the same concept may be referred to using different words.
 - Has an impact on the *recall* of most IR systems
 - Users often attempt to manually refine their queries
 - How could an IR system help with query refinement?
 - We want to understand a query, rather than simply matching keywords.
We want to better understand *when* query and documents match
- *Query expansion*: Users give *additional* input on query words or phrases, possibly suggesting additional query terms
 - The users opting to use one of the alternative query suggestions
- How to generate alternative or expanded queries for the user?
 - Global analysis: For each term in a query, automatically expand the query using synonyms and related words from thesaurus
 - Local analysis: Analyze the documents in the current results set
 - * Feedback on documents or on query terms
- How to build a thesaurus?
 - Use of a controlled vocabulary maintained by human editors: Canonical terms for each concepts
 - Manual thesaurus: Synonymous names for concepts, without designating a canonical term.
 - Automatically derived thesaurus
 - * Using word co-occurrence statistics: words co-occurring in a document or paragraph are likely to be in some sense *similar or related in meaning*
 - * Exploiting grammatical relations or dependencies: less robust than co-occurrence statistics, but more accurate
 - * Quality of the resulting terms often not so good
 - * Since those terms are highly correlated in documents anyway, this method may not retrieve that many additional documents.
 - Query reformulations based on query log mining: Exploit the *manual query reformulations* of other users
- Use of query expansion generally increases recall
 - A domain-specific thesaurus is required.
 - May significantly decrease precision, particularly when the query contains ambiguous terms.

How can we represent term relations?

- Under the standard symbolic encoding of terms, different terms have no direct way of representing their similarities.

- Basic IR is scoring on $q^T d$. Can we learn parameters W to rank via $q^T W d$?
 - Berger and Lafferty 1999, Query translation model
 - W is huge ($> 10^{10}$): Sparsity is the problem
- We could learn a dense low-dimensional representation of a word in \mathcal{R}^d , such that dot products $u^T v$ express word similarity.
- Supervised Semantic Indexing shows successful use of learning W
- This lecture will however consider *direct similarity*
- Traditional way: Latent Semantic Indexing/Analysis - Use SVD; Results were somewhat iffy

Neural Embeddings

- Build a dense vector for each unique word, chosen so that it is good at predicting *other words appearing in its context*
- To do that, build a NN model that predict a *center word* w_t amongst its set of context words
 - Directly learn *low-dimensional* word vectors, based on ability to predict
 - Learned weights of this model would be the *word embeddings*
- **Word2Vec:**
 - Two Algorithms
 1. Skip-grams
 - * Given the center word, only consider context words in the window of fixed size
 2. Continuous Bag of Words
 - Two(Three?) Training Methods
 1. Hierarchical softmax
 2. Negative sampling
 3. Naive softmax