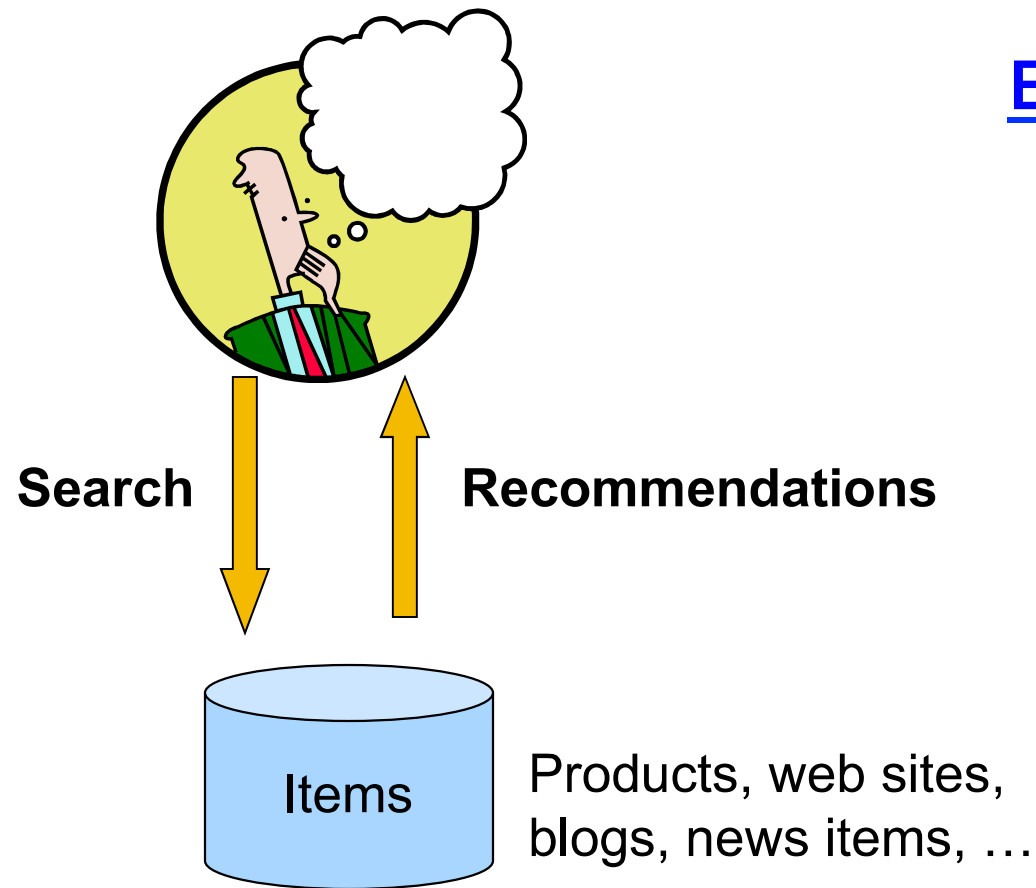


Recommendations



Examples:

amazon.com.



movielens
helping you find the *right* movies



From Scarcity to Abundance

- **Shelf space is a scarce commodity for traditional retailers**
 - Also: TV networks, movie theaters,...
- **Web enables near-zero-cost dissemination of information about products**
 - From scarcity to abundance
- **More choice necessitates better filters**
 - Recommendation engines
 - How **Into Thin Air** made **Touching the Void** a bestseller: <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html>

Types of Recommendations

- **Editorial and hand curated**
 - List of favorites
 - Lists of “essential” items
- **Simple aggregates**
 - Top 10, Most Popular, Recent Uploads
- **Tailored to individual users**
 - Amazon, Netflix, ...

Formal Model

- X = set of **Customers**
- S = set of **Items**
- **Utility function** $u: X \times S \rightarrow R$
 - R = set of ratings
 - R is a totally ordered set
 - e.g., **0-5** stars, real number in **[0,1]**

Utility Matrix

	Avatar	LOTR	Matrix	Pirates
Alice	1		0.2	
Bob		0.5		0.3
Carol	0.2		1	
David				0.4

Key Problems

- **(1) Gathering “known” ratings for matrix**
 - How to collect the data in the utility matrix
- **(2) Extrapolate unknown ratings from the known ones**
 - Mainly interested in high unknown ratings
 - We are not interested in knowing what you don't like but what you like
- **(3) Evaluating extrapolation methods**
 - How to measure success/performance of recommendation methods

(1) Gathering Ratings

■ Explicit

- Ask people to rate items
- Doesn't work well in practice – people can't be bothered

■ Implicit

- Learn ratings from user actions
 - E.g., purchase implies high rating
- What about low ratings?

(2) Extrapolating Utilities

- **Key problem:** Utility matrix U is **sparse**
 - Most people have not rated most items
 - **Cold start:**
 - New items have no ratings
 - New users have no history
- **Three approaches to recommender systems:**
 - 1) Content-based
 - 2) Collaborative
 - 3) Latent factor based

} **Today!**

Content-based Recommender Systems

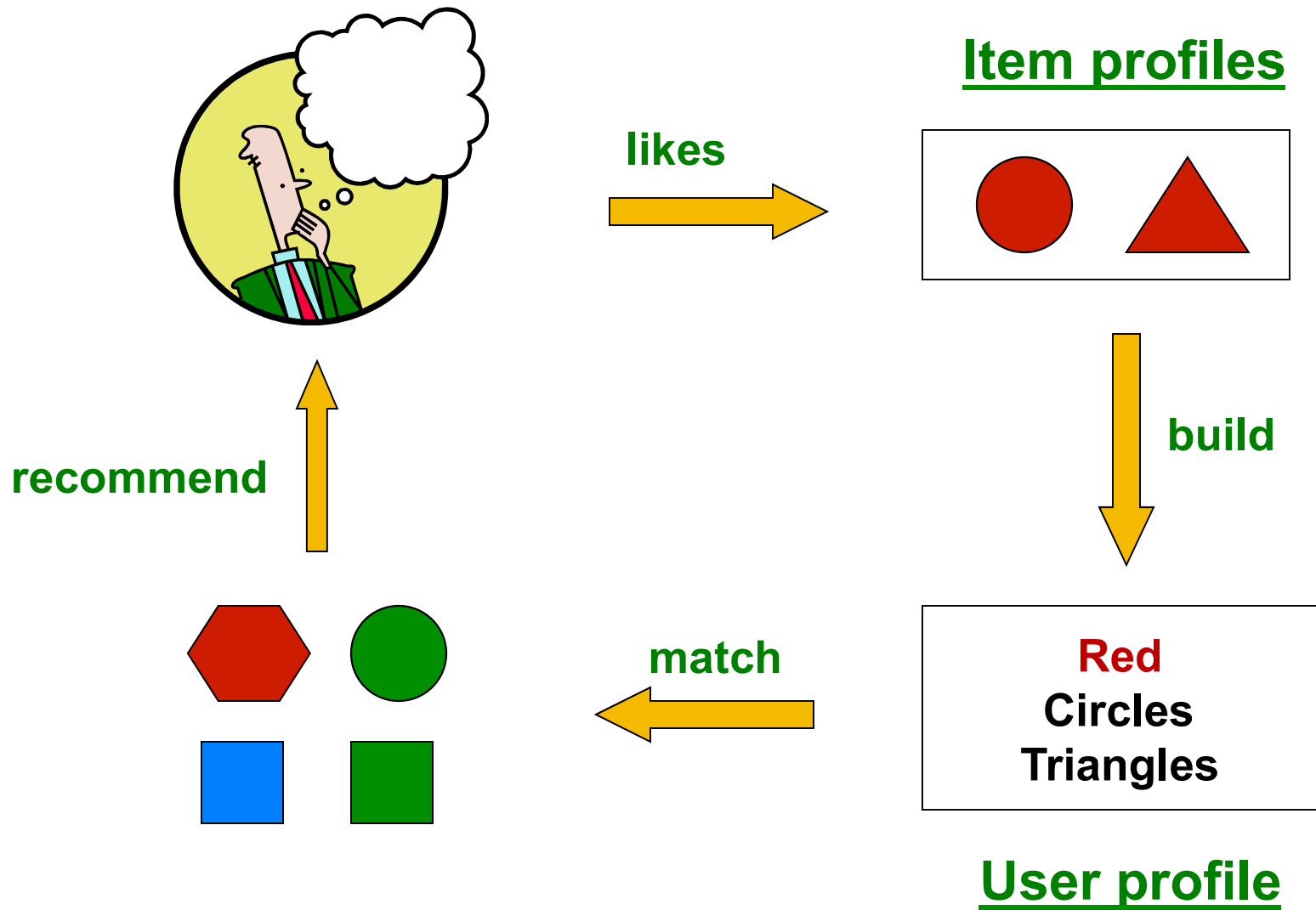
Content-based Recommendations

- **Main idea:** Recommend items to customer x similar to previous items rated highly by x

Example:

- **Movie recommendations**
 - Recommend movies with same actor(s), director, genre, ...
- **Websites, blogs, news**
 - Recommend other sites with “similar” content

Plan of Action



Item Profiles

- For each item, create an **item profile**
- **Profile is a set (vector) of features**
 - **Movies:** author, title, actor, director,...
 - **Text:** Set of “important” words in document
- **How to pick important features?**
 - Usual heuristic from text mining is **TF-IDF**
(Term frequency * Inverse Doc Frequency)
 - **Term ... Feature**
 - **Document ... Item**

Sidenote: TF-IDF

f_{ij} = frequency of term (feature) i in doc (item) j

$$TF_{ij} = \frac{f_{ij}}{\max_k f_{kj}}$$

Note: we normalize TF to discount for “longer” documents

n_i = number of docs that mention term i

N = total number of docs

$$IDF_i = \log \frac{N}{n_i}$$

TF-IDF score: $w_{ij} = TF_{ij} \times IDF_i$

Doc profile = set of words with highest **TF-IDF** scores, together with their scores

User Profiles and Prediction

- **User profile possibilities:**

- Weighted average of rated item profiles
- **Variation:** weight by difference from average rating for item
- ...

- **Prediction heuristic:**

- Given user profile \mathbf{x} and item profile \mathbf{i} , estimate $u(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{i}) = \cos(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{i}) = \mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{i} / \|\mathbf{x}\| \cdot \|\mathbf{i}\|$

Pros: Content-based Approach

- **+: No need for data on other users**
 - No cold-start or sparsity problems
- **+: Able to recommend to users with unique tastes**
- **+: Able to recommend new & unpopular items**
 - No first-rater problem
- **+: Able to provide explanations**
 - Can provide explanations of recommended items by listing content-features that caused an item to be recommended

Cons: Content-based Approach

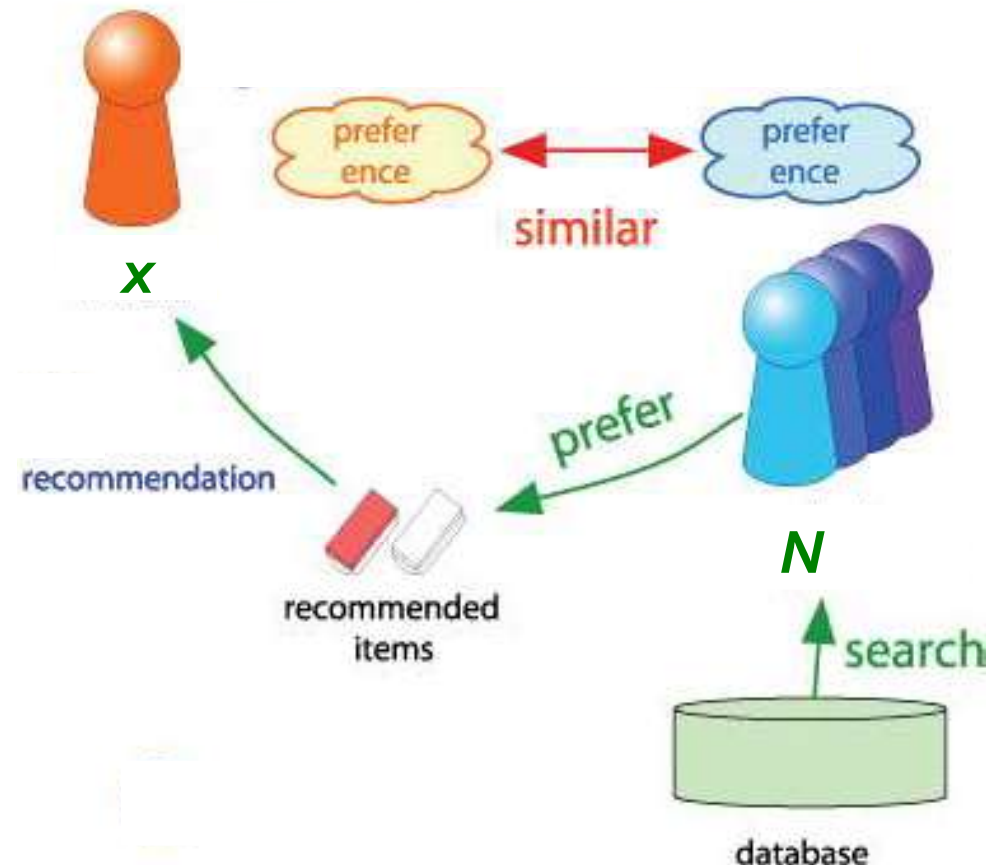
- **–: Finding the appropriate features is hard**
 - E.g., images, movies, music
- **–: Recommendations for new users**
 - **How to build a user profile?**
- **–: Overspecialization**
 - Never recommends items outside user's content profile
 - People might have multiple interests
 - **Unable to exploit quality judgments of other users**

Collaborative Filtering

Harnessing quality judgments of other users

Collaborative Filtering

- Consider user x
- Find set N of other users whose ratings are “similar” to x ’s ratings
- Estimate x ’s ratings based on ratings of users in N



Similarity Metric

	HP1	HP2	HP3	TW	SW1	SW2	SW3
A	4			5	1		
B	5	5	4				
C				2	4	5	
D		3					3

- **Intuitively we want:** $\text{sim}(A, B) > \text{sim}(A, C)$
- **Jaccard similarity:** $1/5 < 2/4$
- **Cosine similarity:** $0.386 > 0.322$
 - Considers missing ratings as “negative”

■ **Solution: subtract the (row) mean**

	HP1	HP2	HP3	TW	SW1	SW2	SW3
A	2/3			5/3	-7/3		
B	1/3	1/3	-2/3				
C				-5/3	1/3	4/3	
D		0					0

sim A,B vs. A,C:
 $0.092 > -0.559$

Notice cosine sim. is correlation when data is centered at 0

Item-Item Collaborative Filtering

- So far: **User-user collaborative filtering**
- **Another view: Item-item**
 - For item i , find other similar items
 - Estimate rating for item i based on ratings for similar items
 - Can use same similarity metrics and prediction functions as in user-user model

$$r_{xi} = \frac{\sum_{j \in N(i; x)} s_{ij} \cdot r_{xj}}{\sum_{j \in N(i; x)} s_{ij}}$$

s_{ij} ... similarity of items i and j
 r_{xj} ... rating of user u on item j
 $N(i; x)$... set items rated by x similar to i

Item-Item CF ($|N|=2$)

users

movies

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1		3			5			5		4	
2			5	4			4			2	1	3
3	2	4		1	2		3		4	3	5	
4		2	4		5			4			2	
5			4	3	4	2					2	5
6	1		3		3			2			4	

- unknown rating

- rating between 1 to 5

Item-Item CF ($|N|=2$)

		users											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
movies	1	1		3		?	5			5		4	
	2			5	4			4			2	1	3
	3	2	4		1	2		3		4	3	5	
	4		2	4		5			4			2	
	5			4	3	4	2					2	5
	6	1		3		3			2			4	



- estimate rating of movie 1 by user 5

Item-Item CF ($|N|=2$)

		users												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	$\text{sim}(1,m)$
movies	1	1		3		?	5			5		4		1.00
	2			5	4			4			2	1	3	-0.18
	<u>3</u>	2	4		1	2		3		4	3	5		<u>0.41</u>
	4		2	4		5			4			2		-0.10
	5			4	3	4	2					2	5	-0.31
	<u>6</u>	1		3		3			2			4		<u>0.59</u>

Neighbor selection:

Identify movies similar to movie 1, rated by user 5

Here we use Pearson correlation as similarity:

1) Subtract mean rating m_i from each movie i

$$m_1 = (1+3+5+5+4)/5 = 3.6$$

row 1: $[-2.6, 0, -0.6, 0, 0, 1.4, 0, 0, 1.4, 0, 0.4, 0]$

2) Compute cosine similarities between rows

Item-Item CF ($|N|=2$)

		users												sim(1,m)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
movies	1	1		3		?	5			5		4		1.00
	2			5	4			4			2	1	3	-0.18
	<u>3</u>	2	4		1	2		3		4	3	5		<u>0.41</u>
	4		2	4		5			4			2		-0.10
	5			4	3	4	2					2	5	-0.31
	<u>6</u>	1		3		3			2			4		<u>0.59</u>

Compute similarity weights:

$$s_{1,3}=0.41, s_{1,6}=0.59$$

Item-Item CF ($|N|=2$)

		users											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
movies	1	1		3		2.6	5			5		4	
	2			5	4			4			2	1	3
	<u>3</u>	2	4		1	2		3		4	3	5	
	4		2	4		5			4			2	
	5			4	3	4	2					2	5
	<u>6</u>	1		3		3			2			4	

Predict by taking weighted average:

$$\hat{r}_{i,x} = \frac{\sum_{j \in N(i,x)} s_{ij} \cdot r_j}{\sum_{j \in N(i,x)} s_{ij}}$$

$$r_{1,5} = (0.41 \cdot 2 + 0.59 \cdot 3) / (0.41 + 0.59) = 2.6$$

Item-Item vs. User-User

	Avatar	LOTR	Matrix	Pirates
Alice	1		0.8	
Bob		0.5		0.3
Carol	0.9		1	0.8
David			1	0.4

- In practice, it has been observed that item-item often works better than user-user
- **Why?** Items are simpler, users have multiple tastes

Pros/Cons of Collaborative Filtering

- **+ Works for any kind of item**
 - No feature selection needed
- **- Cold Start:**
 - Need enough users in the system to find a match
- **- Sparsity:**
 - The user/ratings matrix is sparse
 - Hard to find users that have rated the same items
- **- First rater:**
 - Cannot recommend an item that has not been previously rated
 - New items, Esoteric items
- **- Popularity bias:**
 - Cannot recommend items to someone with unique taste
 - Tends to recommend popular items

Hybrid Methods

- **Implement two or more different recommenders and combine predictions**
 - Perhaps using a linear model
- **Add content-based methods to collaborative filtering**
 - Item profiles for new item problem
 - Demographics to deal with new user problem

Remarks & Practical Tips

- Evaluation
- Error metrics
- Complexity / Speed

Evaluation

movies

users

1	3	4			
	3	5			5
		4	5		5
		3			
		3			
2			2		2
				5	
	2	1			1
	3			3	
1					

Evaluation

movies

users

1	3	4			
	3	5			5
		4	5		5
		3			
		3			
2			?		?
				?	
	2	1			?
	3			?	
1					

Test Data Set

Evaluating Predictions

- **Compare predictions with known ratings**
 - **Root-mean-square error (RMSE)**
 - $\sqrt{\sum_i (r_{xi} - \hat{r}_{xi})^2}$ where \hat{r}_{xi} is predicted, r_{xi} is the true rating of x on i
 - **Precision at top 10:**
 - % of those in top 10
 - **Rank Correlation:**
 - Spearman's *correlation* between system's and user's complete rankings
- **Another approach: 0/1 model**
 - **Coverage:**
 - Number of items/users for which system can make predictions
 - **Precision:**
 - Accuracy of predictions
 - **Receiver operating characteristic (ROC)**
 - Tradeoff curve between false positives and false negatives

Problems with Error Measures

- **Narrow focus on accuracy sometimes misses the point**
 - Prediction Diversity
 - Prediction Context
 - Order of predictions
- **In practice, we care only to predict high ratings:**
 - RMSE might penalize a method that does well for high ratings and badly for others

Collaborative Filtering: Complexity

- Expensive step is finding k most similar customers: $O(|X|)$
- **Too expensive to do at runtime**
 - Could pre-compute
- Naïve pre-computation takes time $O(k \cdot |X|)$
 - X ... set of customers
- **We already know how to do this!**
 - Near-neighbor search in high dimensions (**LSH**)
 - Clustering
 - Dimensionality reduction

Tip: Add Data

- **Leverage all the data**

- Don't try to reduce data size in an effort to make fancy algorithms work
- Simple methods on large data do best

- **Add more data**

- e.g., add IMDB data on genres

- **More data beats better algorithms**

<http://anand.typepad.com/datawocky/2008/03/more-data-usual.html>