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Recommender Systems Meet Large Language Model Agents: A Survey

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the integration of Large Language Models (LLMs) and Recommender Systems (RS) has revolutionized the way personalized and intelligent user experiences are delivered. This survey provides an extensive review of critical challenges, current landscape, and future directions in the collaboration between LLM-based AI agents (LLM Agent) and recommender systems. We begin with an introduction to the foundational knowledge, exploring the components of LLM agents and the applications of LLMs in recommender systems. The survey then delves into the symbiotic relationship between LLM agents and recommender systems, illustrating how LLM agents enhance

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recommender systems and how recommender systems support better LLM agents. Specifically, we discuss the overall architectures for designing LLM agents for recommendation, encompassing profile, memory, planning, and action components, along with multi-agent collaboration. Conversely, we investigate how recommender systems contribute to LLM agents, focusing on areas such as memory recommendation, plan recommendation, tool recommendation, agent recommendation, and personalized LLMs and LLM agents. Furthermore, a critical evaluation of trustworthy AI agents and recommender systems follows, addressing key issues of safety, explainability, fairness, and privacy. Finally, we propose potential future research directions, highlighting emerging trends and opportunities in the intersection of AI agents and recommender systems. This survey concludes by summarizing the key insights of current research and outlining promising avenues for future exploration in this rapidly evolving field. A curated collection of relevant papers for this survey is available in the GitHub repository: <https://github.com/agiresearch/AgentRecSys>.

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Introduction

The integration of Large Language Model (LLM) and Recommender Systems (RS) has marked a transformative shift in how personalized recommendations are generated and delivered. Recommender systems, designed to predict user preferences and suggest relevant items, are ubiquitous in applications ranging from e-commerce to entertainment and social media. Historically, these systems have relied on techniques such as collaborative filtering, content-based filtering, and hybrid approaches. However, the advent of LLMs and AI agents has introduced new paradigms, significantly enhancing the capabilities and performance of recommender systems.

This survey seeks to thoroughly explore the interplay between LLM-based AI Agents (LLM agents) and recommender systems. It explores how LLM agents can enhance the functionality and effectiveness of recommender systems and, conversely, how recommender systems can optimize the performance and utility of LLM agents. By delving into these interconnections, we aim to shed light on the current state of research, highlight key challenges, and outline future directions in this fast-developing field. The importance of this survey is underscored by the growing sophistication and prevalence of LLM agents in various

domains. As LLM agents continue to advance, their potential to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and user experience of recommender systems grows increasingly impactful. Understanding the dynamic relationship between LLM agents and recommender systems is crucial for researchers and practitioners aiming to leverage AI technologies to develop next-generation recommender systems.

First, we introduce the foundational concepts necessary for understanding the integration of LLM agents into recommender systems in Section 2. This includes an overview of the evolution and capabilities of LLM-based AI agents and the application of LLMs in enhancing recommender systems. Additionally, we highlight the symbiotic relationship between LLM agents and recommender systems, which motivates us to organize the subsequent sections.

Then, we explore various approaches through which LLM agents can benefit recommender systems in Section 3. Specifically, we begin by discussing the limitations of existing recommender systems and how LLM agents address them, followed by the challenges of developing LLM agent-based recommender systems. Next, we explore the overall architecture and key components including memory, planning, and action that are essential for designing LLM agent recommender systems, along with the details of relevant technologies. Furthermore, we discuss how multiple agents collaborate to support more complex and effective recommender systems.

Conversely, we also investigate how recommender systems can enhance the functionality of LLM agents in Section 4. Specifically, we begin by analyzing the motivations, benefits, and challenges associated with applying recommender systems to LLM agents. Furthermore, we examine research on memory recommendation, plan recommendation for agents, tool recommendation, agent recommendation, and personalized agent configurations in the context of LLM agents. This section further highlights the bidirectional relationship, emphasizing the mutual benefits of integrating recommender systems with LLM agents.

Furthermore, as discussed in Section 5, the deployment of LLM agents in recommender systems raises critical issues related to trustworthiness. We address key challenges such as safety, explainability, fairness, and privacy of LLM agents within recommender systems. Ensuring that

these systems are trustworthy, reliable, and robust is essential for their widespread adoption and effectiveness.

Finally, we explore potential future research directions in Section 6, highlighting emerging trends and opportunities at the intersection of LLM agents and recommender systems. We conclude this survey by highlighting our main contributions and the promising future of this field in Section 7.

This survey is timely and crucial due to the rapid advancements in LLM agents and the increasing need for sophisticated recommender systems. By exploring the intersection of these two fields, this survey provides a comprehensive understanding of recent advancements and future possibilities, offering valuable insights into how LLM agents can enhance recommendation capabilities and how recommender systems can, in turn, optimize LLM agents. What distinguishes this survey from existing literature is its holistic approach. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first survey to thoroughly detail the interaction between LLM agents and recommender systems, while other surveys might focus on specific aspects of LLM agents or recommender systems. Our survey encompasses the full spectrum of the interaction of LLM agents and recommender systems, covering key aspects such as definitions, motivations, current advancements, methodologies, and techniques, as well as future challenges and opportunities within each branch of research. Additionally, we address the critical issue of trustworthiness in the context of LLM agents and recommender systems, which is often overlooked in other surveys. In conclusion, our comprehensive analysis and forward-looking perspective make this survey a valuable resource for anyone interested in cutting-edge developments at the intersection of LLM agents and recommender systems.

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