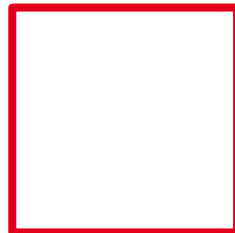
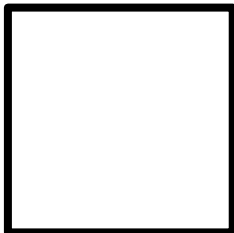


White Text in Red Box



Hello!

About Me

- Torben Reetz
- 7th Semester Software Engineering (SSD)
- 3reetz@informatik.uni-hamburg.de

A Recommender Framework for Skills Management

@SinnerSchrader

Contents

- Motivation
- Requirements
- Commercial Solutions
- Concept
- Implementation
- Evaluation

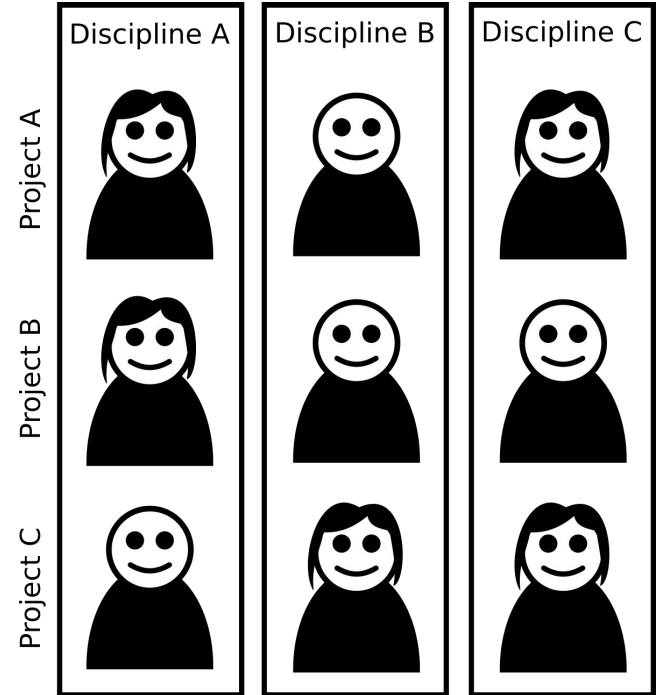
Motivation

Context SinnerSchrader

- Hamburg based
- Full service web agency
- 505 employees (459 full-time)
- Revenue > 51M Euro (15/16)

Matrix Organization

- Domain specific teams
- Project teams
- Multiple project teams per employee
- Definitions:
 - Project Manager → Project team
 - Supervisor → Domain specific team



Project Driven Business

- Employees work on multiple projects
- Limited in time
- Planning is hard
 - New requirements
 - New customers
 - Errors in estimation of workload

Struggles (Project Manager)

- Employees leave
- Workload changes
 - new sub projects
- Shift in disciplines
 - Designers → Developers

Project managers frequently look for new team members.

Struggles (Looking for Help)

- Different experience and knowledge
- Different fields to work in
 - Designers, Frontend Developers, Backend Developers, Writers, ...
- Different projects need different competencies
 - Tech Stacks, Services ordered by the customer, ...

Employees search for people that can help to solve a specific problem.

Challenges to Tackle

- People search for other people that have specific skills
 - To solve a problem
 - To add them to a project team
- There is no central source of information

Goal

- Create this source of information
- Focus: Motivation and Cooperation
 - Find someone who is motivated to work in the team/to help you
 - Working together \leftrightarrow Monitoring

Requirements

Functional Requirements

- Person search
 - Enter skills → find best matching person
- User profiles
 - Skills, personal data, direct contact
 - Enter own skills
 - Login
- Management of registered Skills
 - The system holds a pool of skills users can add to their profiles
 - Add new skills
 - Rename skills
 - Delete skills

Non Functional Requirements

- Different devices
 - Primary: Desktops
 - Mobile devices optional
- Browser support
 - Chrome, Firefox, Safari
 - No support for IE/Edge
- Response Times (RAIL)
 - 100ms to acknowledge input
 - 1s to finish rendering results
- Scalability
 - Increased number of users should not be a problem
 - Enlarge storage and computing resources

Commercial Solutions



Skills Base



Skills Base

Talent Management (engage!)

Talent Management (engage!)



SkillsDB Pro



SkillsDB Pro



Many More

Conclusion

Concept

Definitions

- Skill: ability a specific persons has
- Levels
 - Skill level: measurement of knowledge about a skill
 - Will level: measurement of motivation to employ a skill
 - Four Step Scale (0-3)
- Fitness: Measurement of how well a person fits into a searched skill set

Four Step Scale

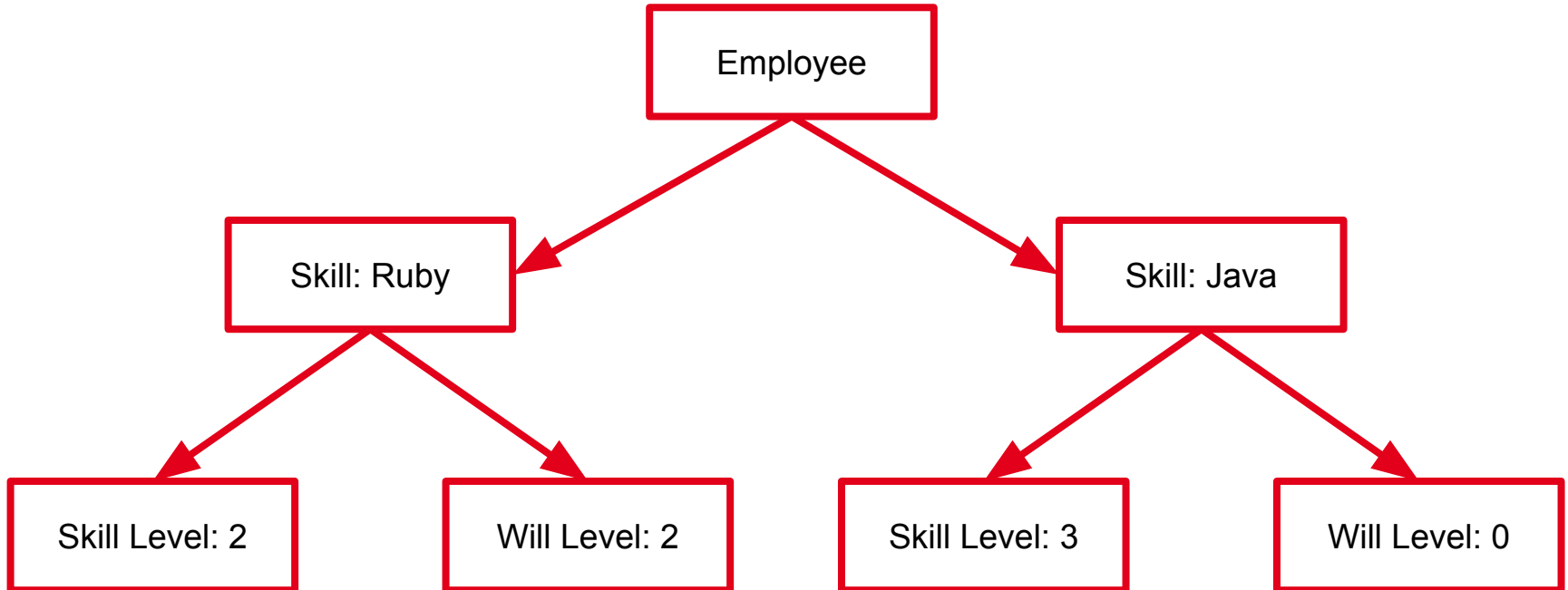
	Skill Level	Will Level
0	Novice	Uninterested
1	Basic Knowledge	Indifferent
2	Advanced Knowledge	Somewhat Interested
3	Expert	Highly Interested

Four Step Scale

	Skill Level	Will Level
0	Novice	Uninterested
1	Basic Knowledge	Indifferent
2	Advanced Knowledge	Somewhat Interested
3	Expert	Highly Interested

- Skill Level = 0 → Person has little, but more than no knowledge
- No knowledge → Skill not present

Definitions



Person Search

1. User enters skills to look for
2. Systems presents list of results
 - People that have all skills
 - Best match on first Position
 - Recommender System

Recommender Systems

“are information filtering systems that deal with the problem of information overload by filtering vital information fragment[s] out of large amount of [...] information”

Recommender Systems

- Take a large amount of information
- Filter this information
- Recommend parts of it

Recommender Systems

- Take a large amount of information → All employees
- Filter this information
- Recommend parts of it

Recommender Systems

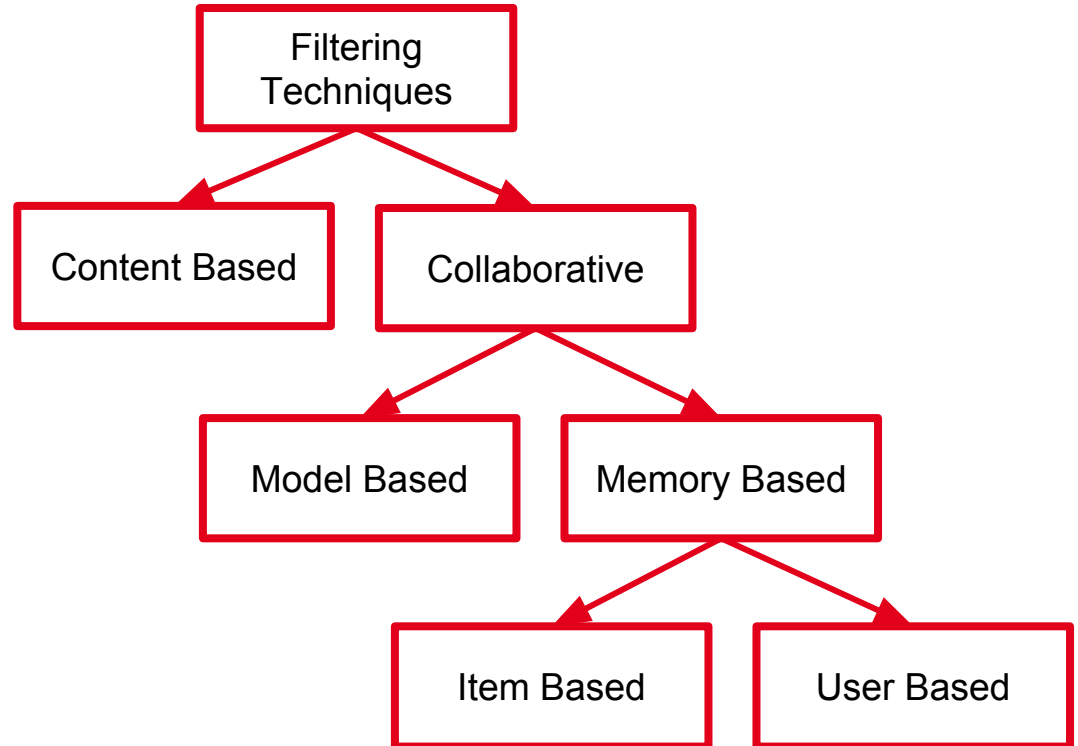
- Take a large amount of information → All employees
- Filter this information → Filtering by knowledge and motivation
- Recommend parts of it

Recommender Systems

- Take a large amount of information → All employees
- Filter this information → Filtering by knowledge and motivation
- Recommend parts of it → Best match first

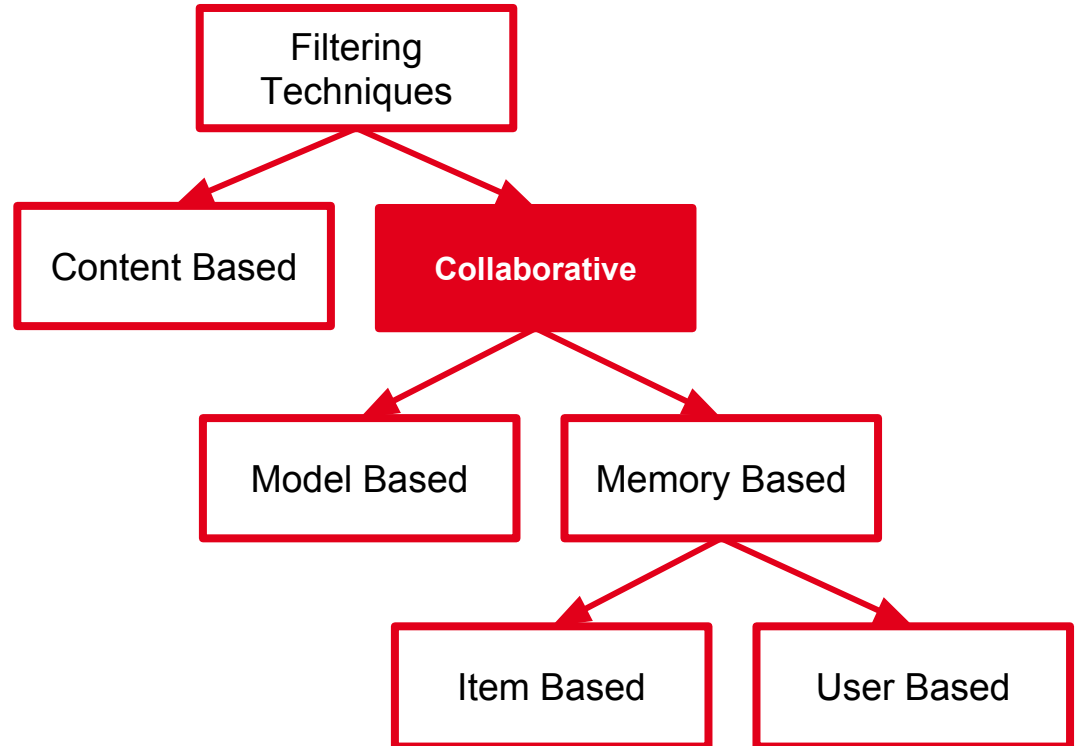
Filtering Techniques

- Isinkaye et al.
- Techniques to find the items to suggest
- Hybrid filtering: combine multiple techniques



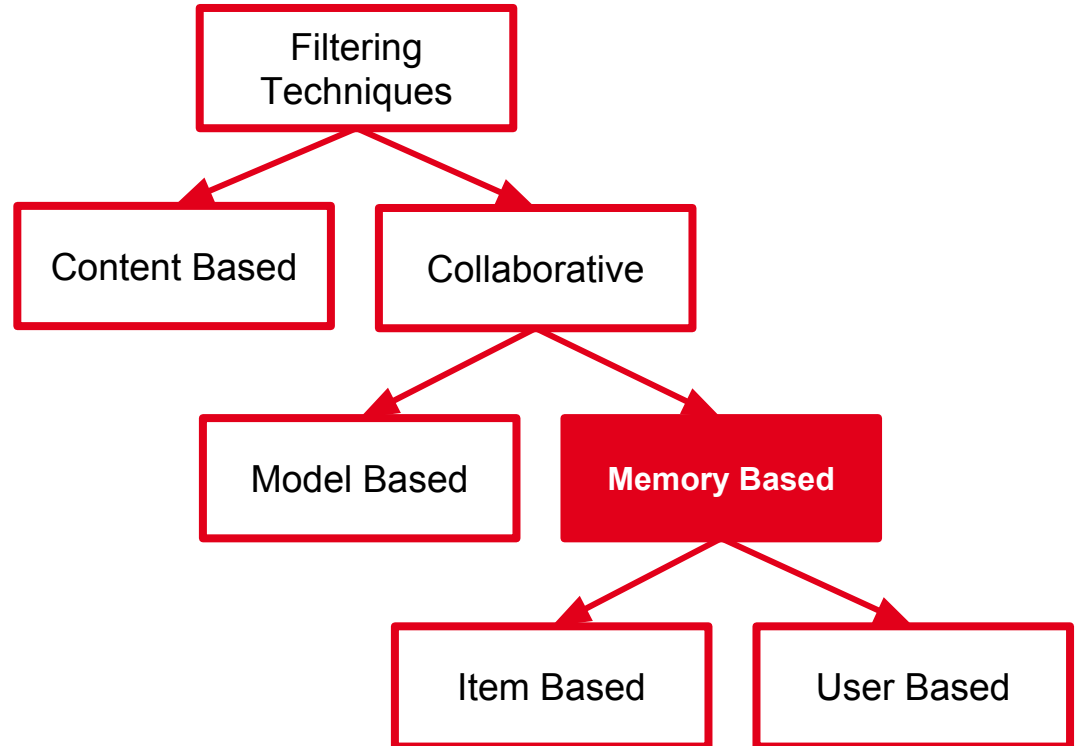
Filtering Techniques (Collaborative)

- People behave similarly
- Find neighbours



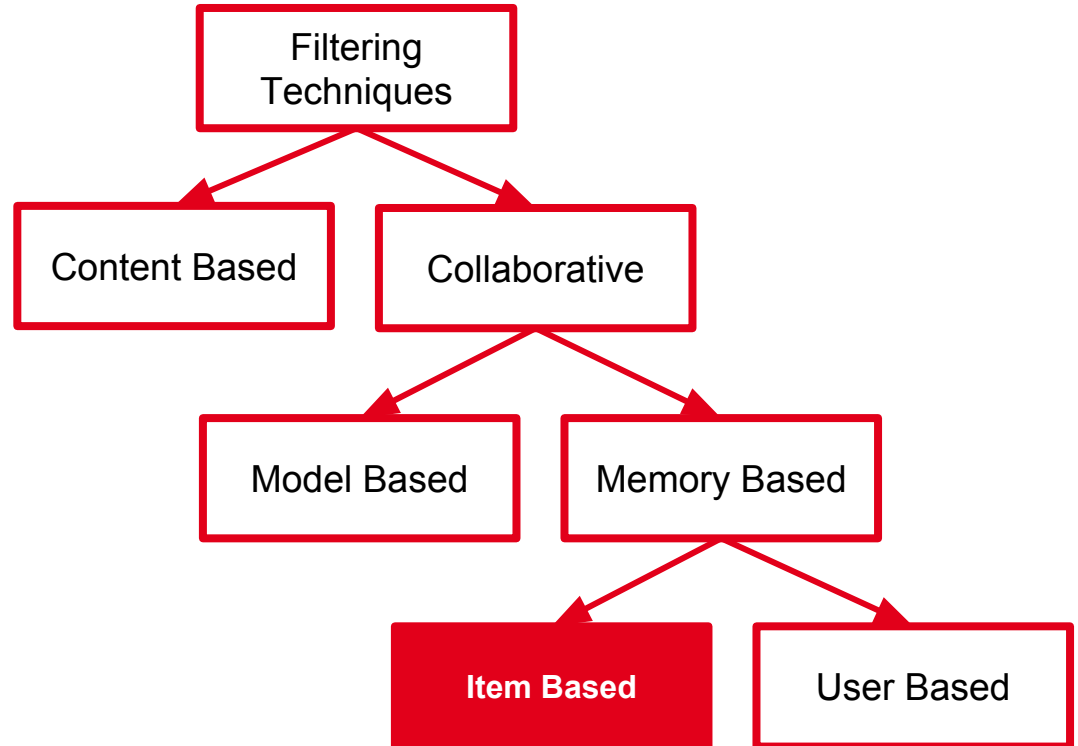
Filtering Techniques (Memory Based)

- Subset of collaborative filtering
- Operates directly on saved interaction history



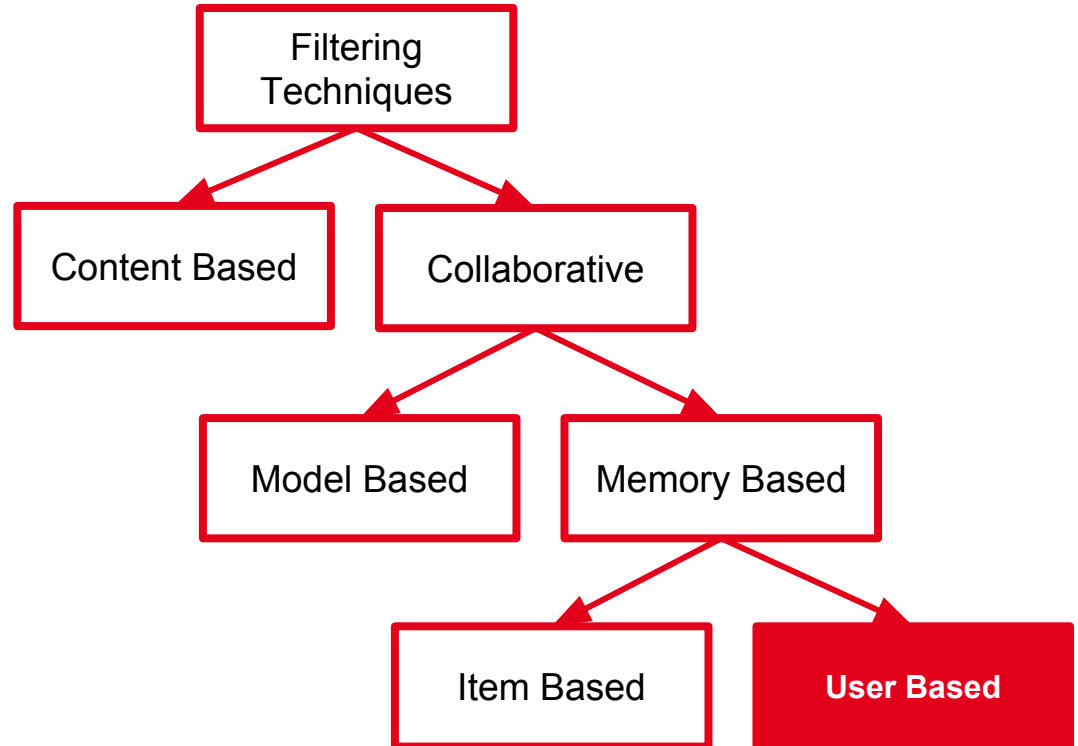
Filtering Techniques (Item Based)

- Subset of memory based filtering
- Save interaction history per item
- Find items that are similar to each other



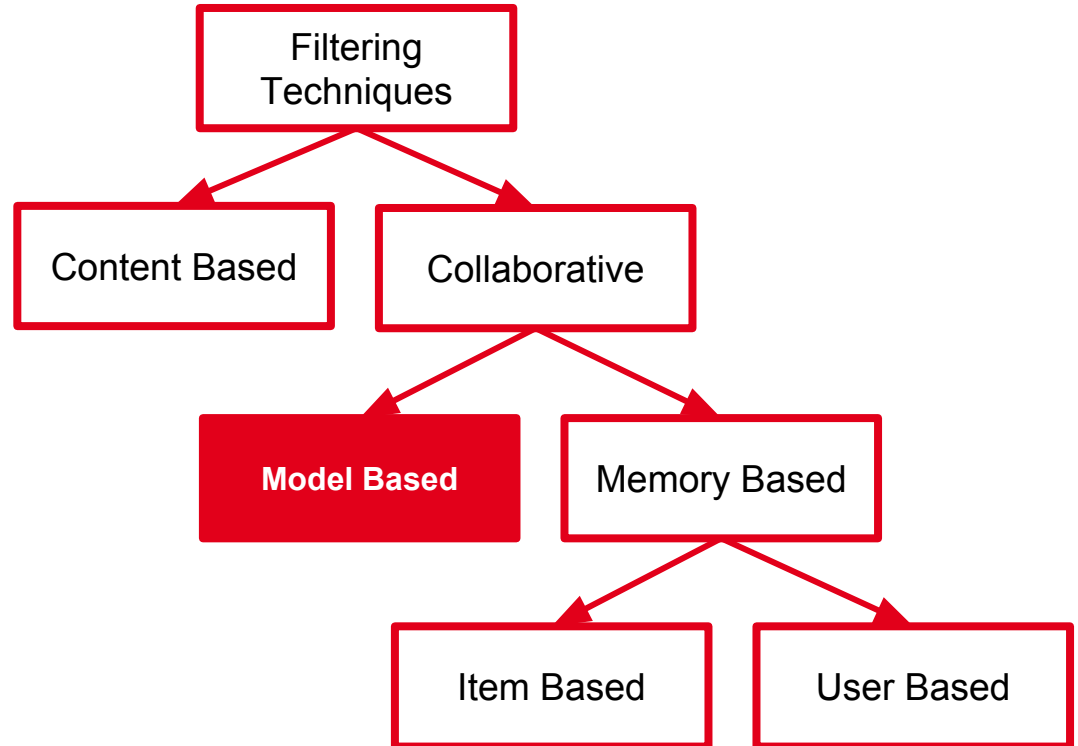
Filtering Techniques (User Based)

- Subset of memory based filtering
- Save interaction history per user
- Find groups of users that have similar interaction histories



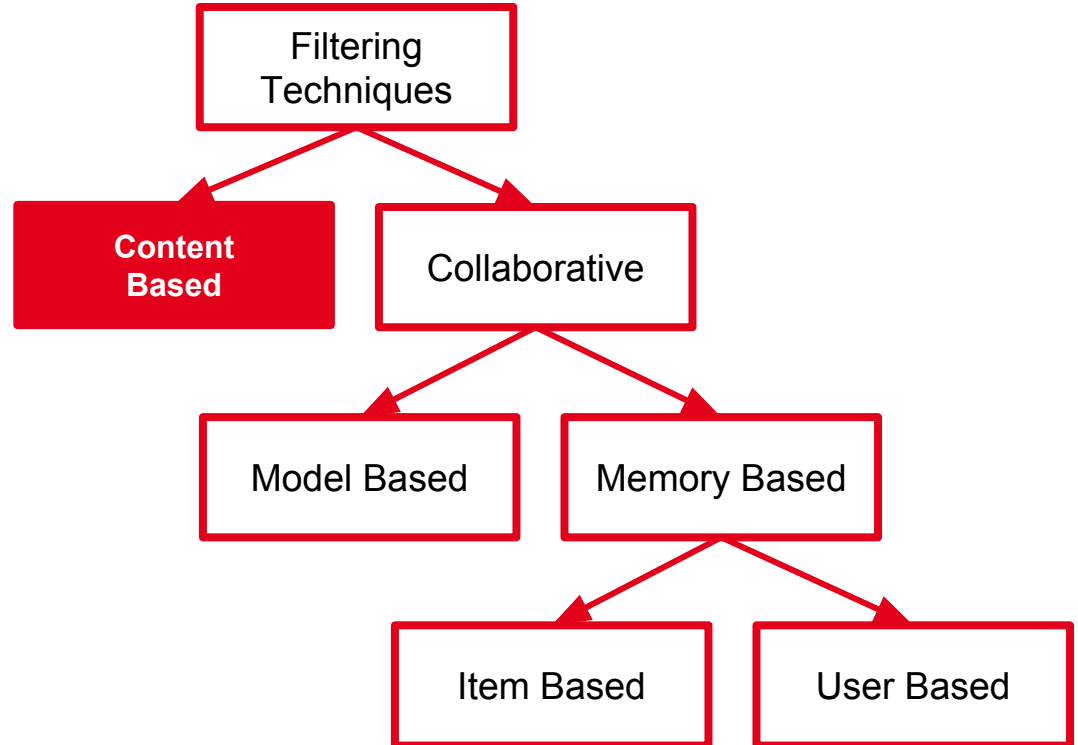
Filtering Techniques (Model Based)

- Subset of collaborative filtering
- Model used to create suggestions
- Interactions to learn the model

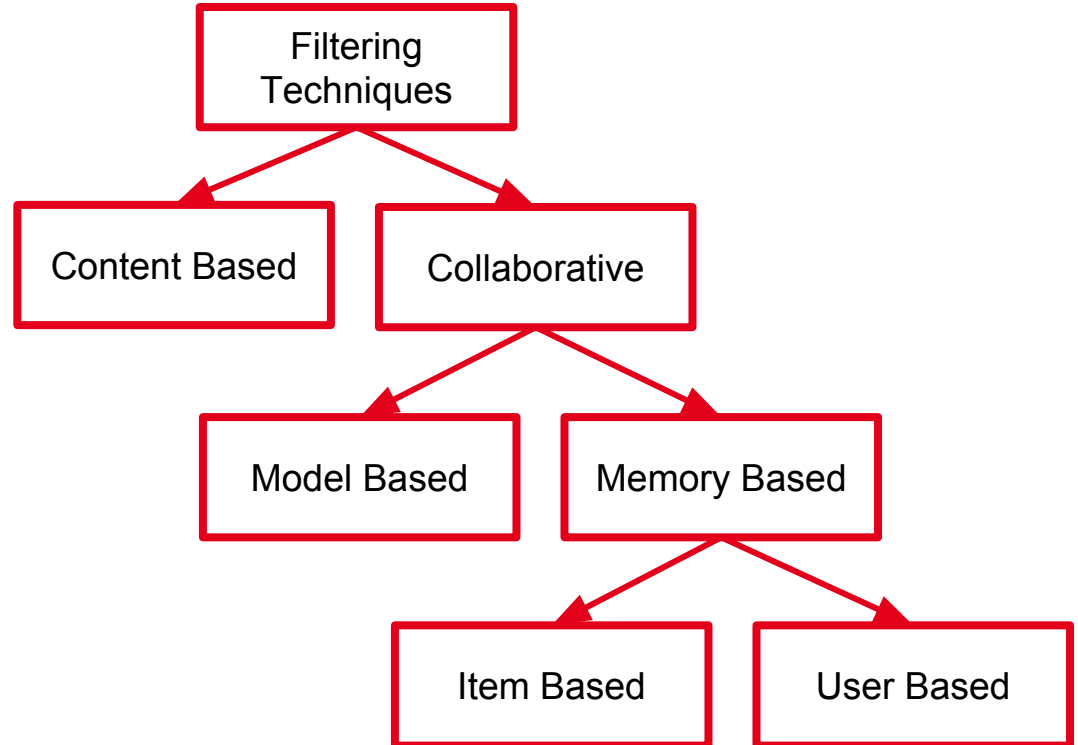


Filtering Techniques (Content Based)

- Examine items, not interactions
- Reference items (previous interactions, searched)
- Find items that have attributes similar to reference items

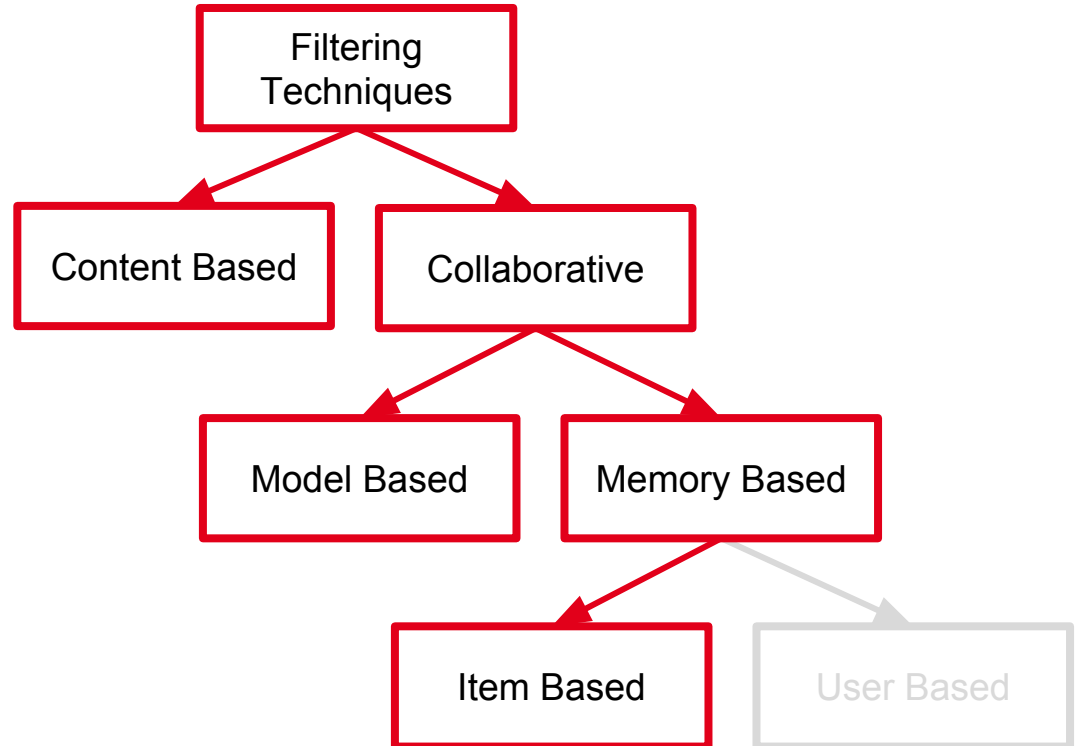


Filtering Techniques (Chosen Approach)



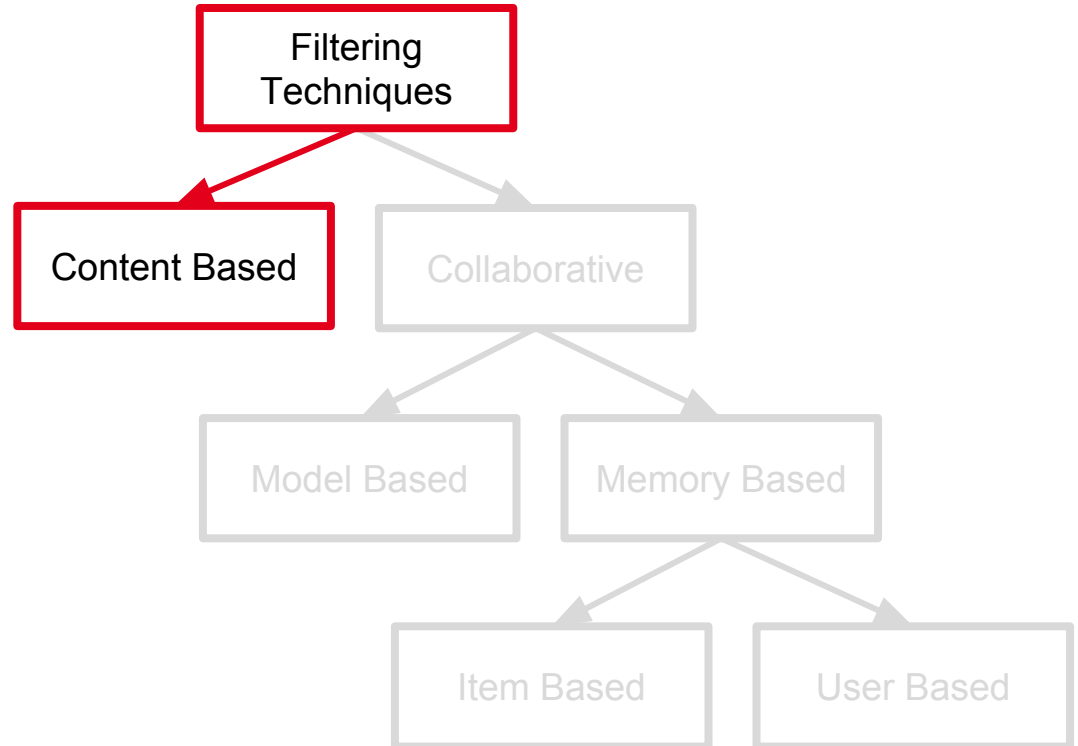
Filtering Techniques (Chosen Approach)

- User not logged in



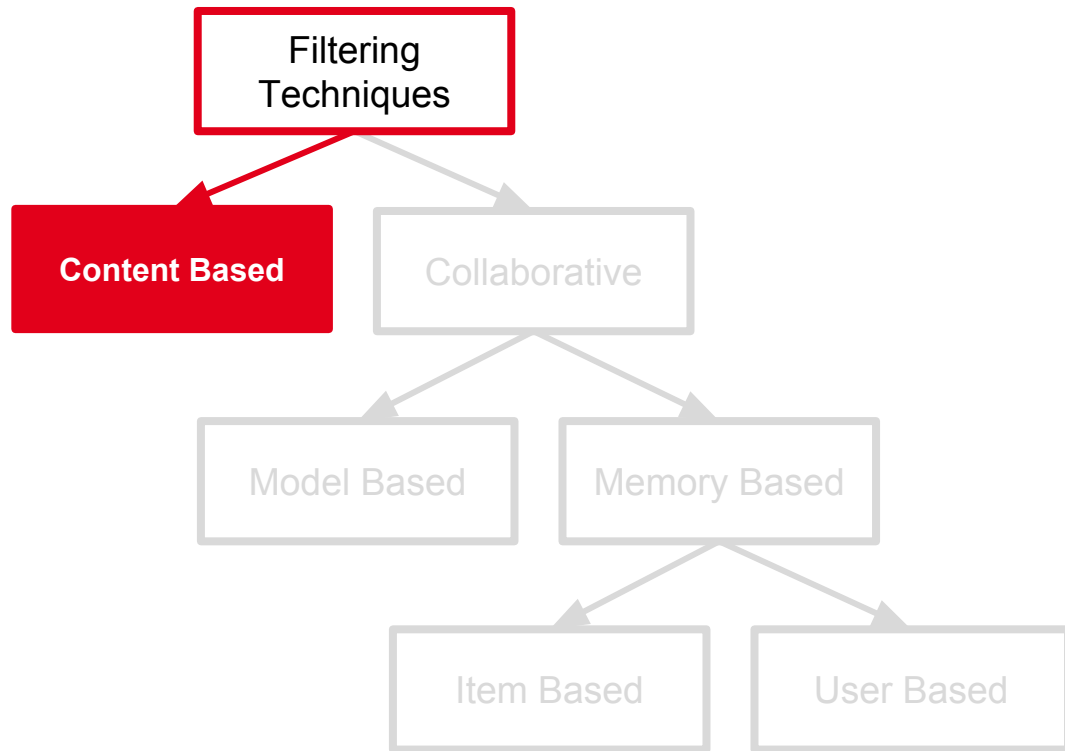
Filtering Techniques (Chosen Approach)

- User not logged in
- Other users' searches must not affect the current one

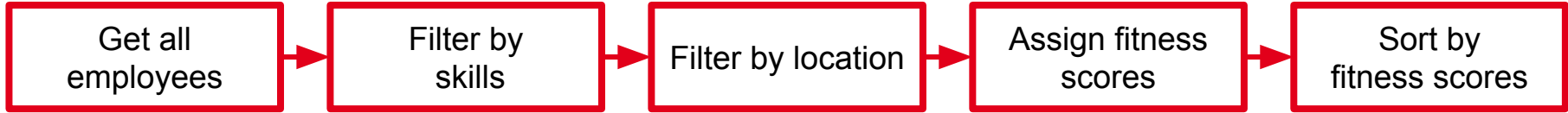


Filtering Techniques (Chosen Approach)

- User not logged in
- Other users' searches must not affect the current one
- Items (employees) have rich attributes
- Specific reference items (search query)
- Decision: Content Based Filtering

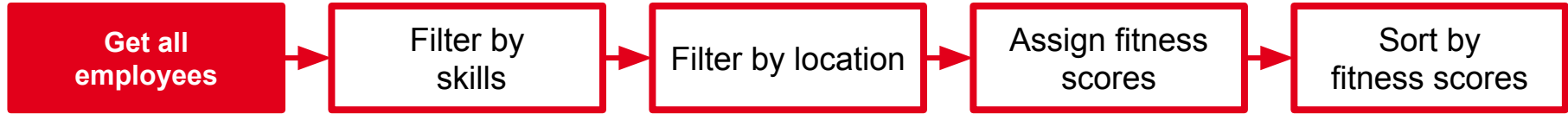


Person Search (Outline)



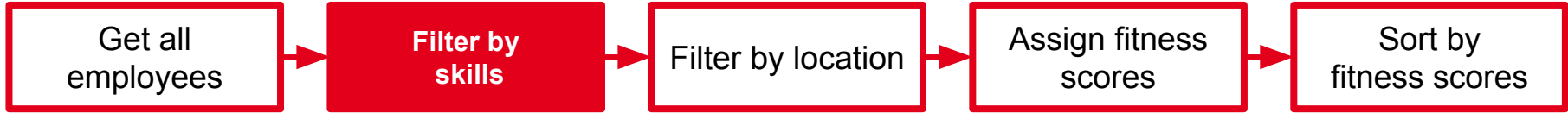
- User already submitted their search query
- User entered a location to search at (optional)

Person Search (Outline)



- Create a list of everyone known to the system

Person Search (Outline)



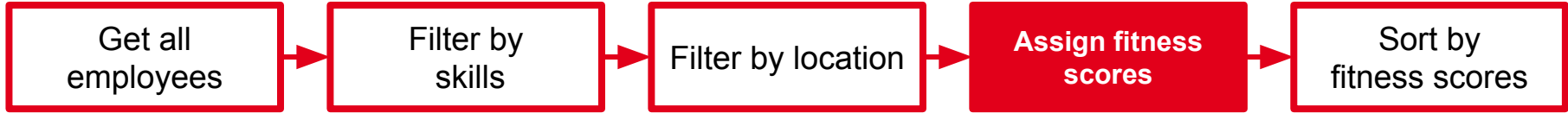
- Remove persons who do not have all searched skills in their profile
- Levels are ignored at this time

Person Search (Outline)



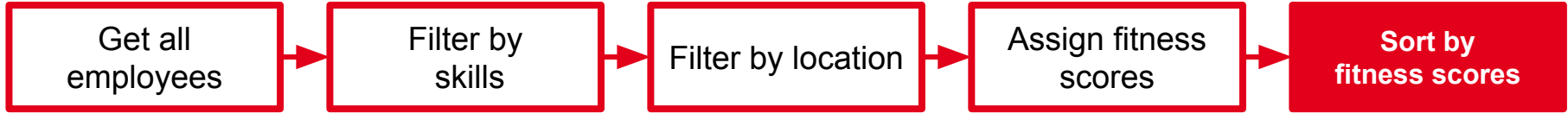
- User can restrict the search to locations
- If so, remove all employees not working there

Person Search (Outline)



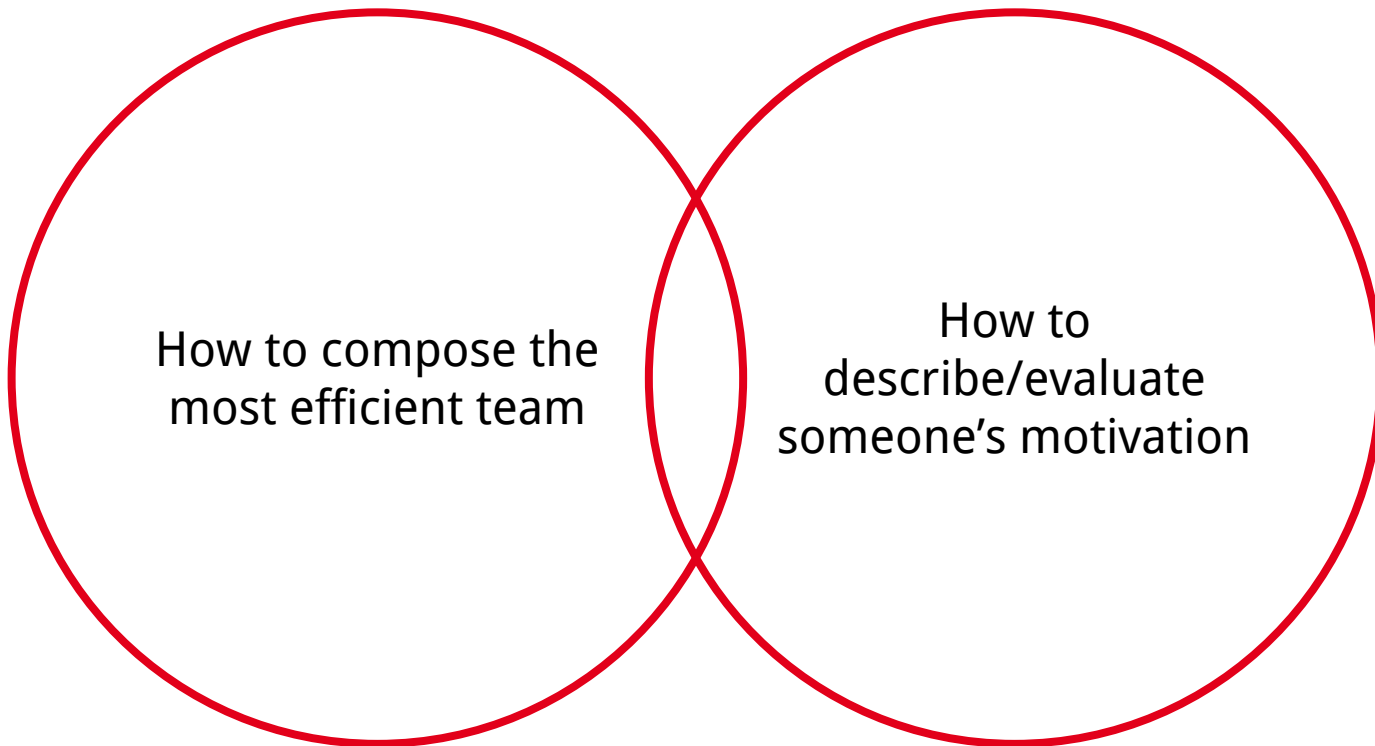
- For every employee in the list, create a score that
 - Describes how well they fit the search criteria
 - Takes into account skill levels and will levels
 - On a scale from zero to one

Person Search (Outline)

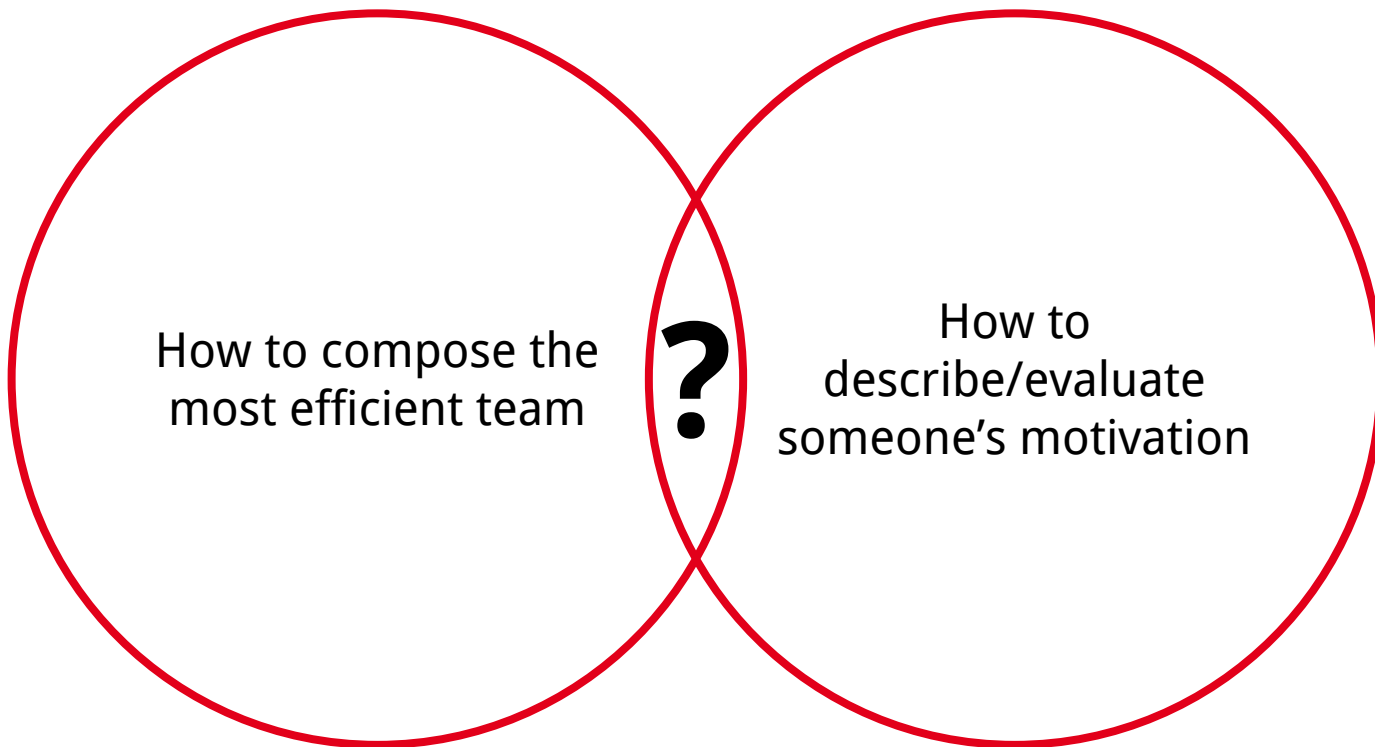


- Sort the employees by their fitness scores
- Implicit recommendation
 - Best match → First position

Fitness Score (Research)



Fitness Score (Research)



Fitness Score (Research)

- Ivanovska et. al: Algorithms for Effective Team Building
- Canós-Darós: An algorithm to identify the most motivated employees
 - General Motivation \leftrightarrow Task specific
 - Asking employees to rate their motivation generates suitable data
- Spoonamore et. al: Matching Sailors to Positions Based on Skill

Matching Sailors to Positions Based on Skill

- Qualities
 - Fast to execute
 - Easy to implement and maintain
 - Understandable
- Factors included
 - Rating
 - Pay grade
 - NECs

Matching Sailors to Positions Based on Skill

- Basic principle: weighted mean of factors
 - $S = \alpha \text{ ratingscore} + \beta \text{ paygradescore} + \gamma \text{ NECscore}$
 - $\alpha, \beta, \gamma \geq 0$
 - $\alpha + \beta + \gamma = 1$

Fitness Score (Basic Principle)

- Weighted mean of factors
 - Average skill level in searched skills
 - Average will level in searched skills
 - Specialization (skill levels)
 - Specialization (will levels)
- Estimation by users
 - Suitable data (Canós-Darós)
 - Focus on collaboration (external ratings → supervision)
- Weighting parameters configurable

Fitness Score (Definitions and Helpers)

$$V = \{x \in \mathbb{N}_0^+ \mid 0 \leq x \leq 3\}$$

$$S = \{Java, Ruby, C++, \dots\}$$

$$E = \{x \in S \mid \text{employee has skill } x\}$$

$$Q = \{x \in S \mid \text{user searches for skill } x\}$$

$$v_s : E \mapsto V$$

$$v_w : E \mapsto V$$

Fitness Score (Factors)

- Skill levels in searched skills: a_s
- Will levels in searched skills: a_w
- Specialization in searched skills
 - Skill levels: s_s
 - Will levels: s_w

$$a_s = \left(\sum_{x \in E \cap Q} v_s(x) \right) \cdot \frac{1}{|E \cap Q|}$$

$$a_w = \left(\sum_{x \in E \cap Q} v_w(x) \right) \cdot \frac{1}{|E \cap Q|}$$

$$s_s = \frac{\max(V) + a_s - \left(\left(\sum_{x \in E \setminus Q} v_s(x) \right) \cdot \frac{1}{|E \setminus Q|} \right)}{2\max(V)}$$

$$s_w = \frac{\max(V) + a_w - \left(\left(\sum_{x \in E \setminus Q} v_w(x) \right) \cdot \frac{1}{|E \setminus Q|} \right)}{2\max(V)}$$

Fitness Score (Basic Algorithm)

- Weighted mean of the factors
- Configurable weighting parameters (w_{as} , w_{aw} , w_{ss} and w_{sw})
 - Positive real numbers
 - Sum: 1
- Value between zero and one

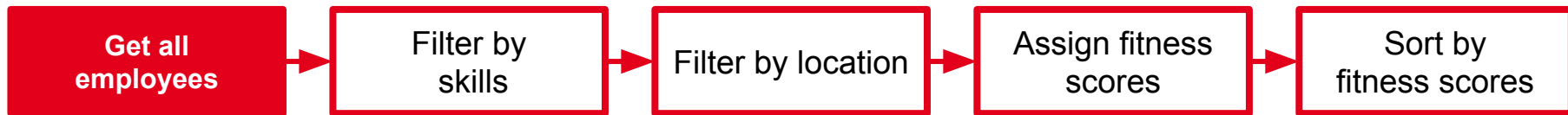
$$f = \frac{w_{as} \cdot a_s}{\max(V)} + \frac{w_{aw} \cdot a_w}{\max(V)} + w_{ss} \cdot s_s + w_{sw} \cdot s_w$$

Example

Assumptions

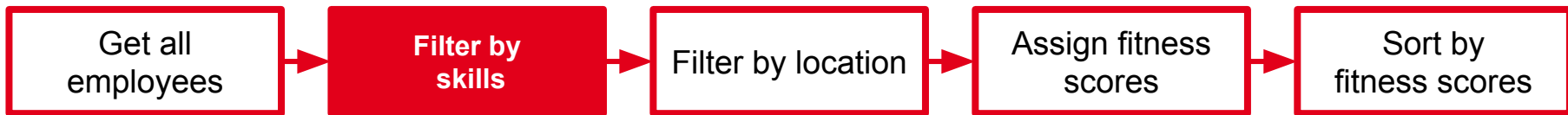
- Weighting parameters
 - $w_{as} = w_{aw} = w_{ss} = w_{sw} = 0.25$
- Five persons; three known skills
- Distribution of skill/will levels not lifelike
- Notation: [skill level]/[will level]
- Searching for
 - Java and Ruby
 - In Hamburg

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++
Alice	Hamburg	2/1	2/2	3/3
Bob	Hamburg	2/3	0/3	0/1
Charlie	Hamburg	3/3	2/1	1/2
Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2
Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++
Alice	Hamburg	2/1	2/2	3/3
Bob	Hamburg	2/3	0/3	0/1
Charlie	Hamburg	3/3	2/1	1/2
Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2
Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++
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Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2
Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



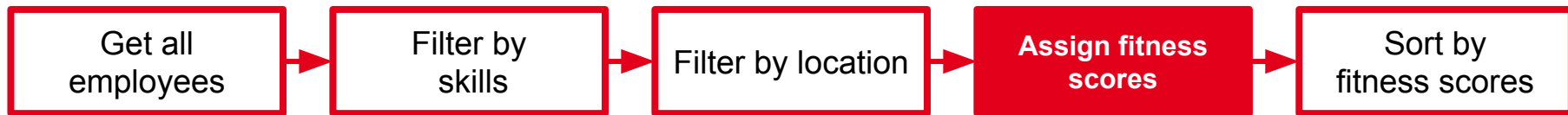
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Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2
Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



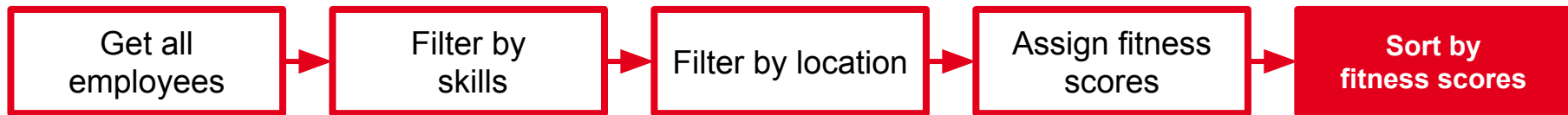
Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++
Alice	Hamburg	2/1	2/2	3/3
Bob	Hamburg	2/3	0/3	0/1
Charlie	Hamburg	3/3	2/1	1/2
Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2
Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



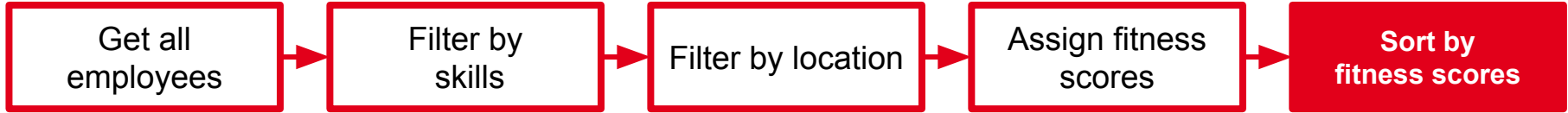
Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++	f
Alice	Hamburg	2/1	2/2	3/3	0.44
Bob	Hamburg	2/3	0/3	0/1	0.71
Charlie	Hamburg	3/3	2/1	1/2	0.69
Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2	-
Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1	2/3

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



#	Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++	f
3	Alice	Hamburg	2/1	2/2	3/3	0.44
1	Bob	Hamburg	2/3	0/3	0/1	0.71
2	Charlie	Hamburg	3/3	2/1	1/2	0.69
	Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2	-
	Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1	2/3

Example (Java and Ruby in HH)



#	Person	Location	Java	Ruby	C++	f
3	Alice	Hamburg	2/1	2/2	3/3	0.44
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	Donald	Hamburg	3/3	-	2/2	-
	Erika	Frankfurt	1/1	2/3	3/1	2/3

Interlude: Visual Concept

Alle Standorte

Suchbegriffe
Motiondesigner X

4 ERGEBNISSE

Name

Nils Adam
Kreation

Mail Hangout

Intermediate Designer

Hamburg

Motiondesign
XXX

Teamleiter

Nils Adam
Kreation

Mail Hangout

Intermediate Designer

Hamburg

Motiondesign
XXX

Teamleiter

Nils Adam
Kreation

Mail Hangout

Intermediate Designer

Hamburg

Motiondesign
XX

Teamleiter

Nils Adam
Kreation

Mail Hangout

Intermediate Designer

Hamburg

Motiondesign
X

Teamleiter

SINNERSCHRADER



skill/will

Wir haben Talent.

Hamburg ▾

gesuchter skill / will

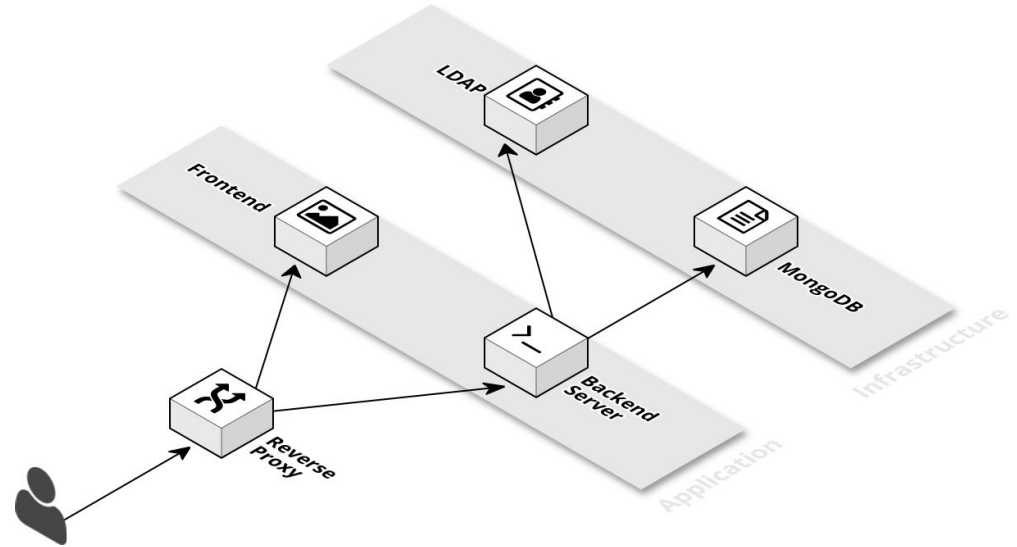
Zack!

Du bist auf der Suche nach speziellen Talenten oder Personen mit bestimmten Skills bei SinnerSchrader? Dann gib Deinen Suchbegriff ein und Du bekommst eine Liste mit potentiellen Kandidaten angezeigt. Ob es sich um eine Fähigkeit, Kenntnisse in einem Programm oder Spezialwissen zu bestimmten Technologien handelt, ist egal.

Implementation

Structure

- **Reverse Proxy**
 - Delivers frontend
 - Forwards to backend
- **Backend Server**
 - Retrieves,
 - Filters and
 - Modifiers data
- **MongoDB**
 - Skill data
 - Personal contact data (synced)
- **LDAP**
 - Personal contact data



Backend Technologies

- Java
- Spring Boot
- Spring Data
 - MongoDB connection
- unboundid SDK
 - LDAP connection
- Swagger
 - Interactive API documentation
- JUnit
- Maven

REST API

- Representational State Transfer
- JSON
- Access to all features of the backend

REST API Endpoints (Login)

URL	Method	Feature
/login	POST	User Login
/logout	POST	User Logout

- Login to edit user's skills
- No login needed to search

REST API Endpoints (Users)

URL	Method	Feature
/users	GET	Main person search function
/users/{user}	GET	Get specific user's details
/users/{user}/skills	POST	Add/Update user's skills
/users/{user}/skills	DELETE	Remove skill from user's profile

- New users added on their first login
- No removing of users

REST API Endpoints (Skills)

URL	Method	Feature
/skills	GET	Get all skills/text autocomplete
/skills	POST	Create new Skill
/skills/next	GET	Recommend next skill to enter
skills/{skill}	PUT	Edit skill (rename)
skills/{skill}	DELETE	Delete skill

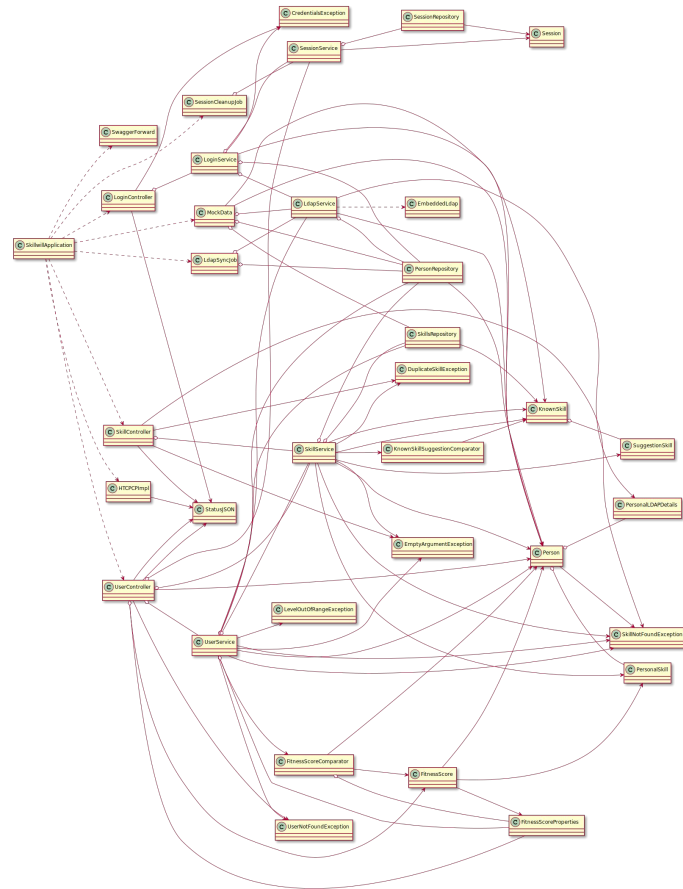
REST API Endpoints (Skills)

URL	Method	Feature
/skills	GET	Get all skills/text autocomplete
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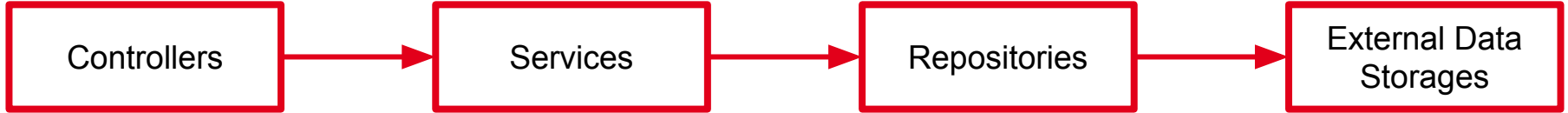
- Next skill to enter: Will be used in search view
- Separate Recommender System
 - Markov Chain
 - Item Based Filtering (Collaborative)

Backend Structure

- Controllers
- Services
- Repositories
- Jobs
- Helpers
- Data Types



Backend Structure

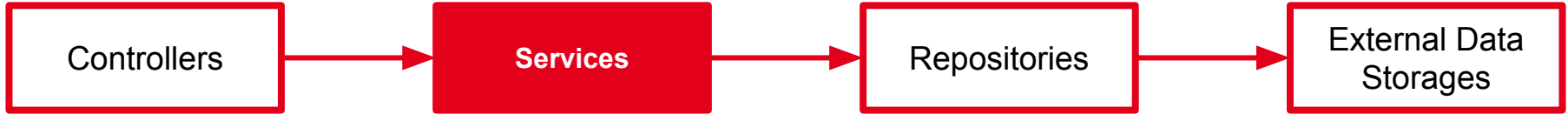


Backend Structure



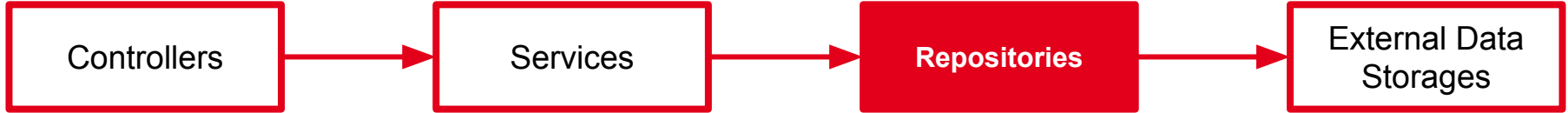
- Listen to API endpoints
- Use services to
 - Get data
 - Send data
 - Send commands
- Convert Objects to JSON

Backend Structure



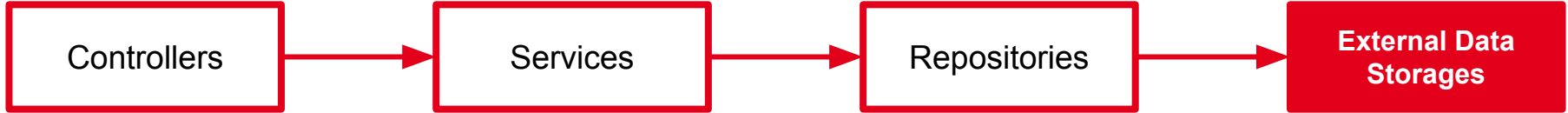
- Get, filter, transform, edit data
- Use repository objects to
 - Retrieve data from external sources
 - Write data to external sources
- Contain business logic

Backend Structure



- Spring Data repository objects
- Provide Methods for CRUD operations
- Wrappers to simplify storage access

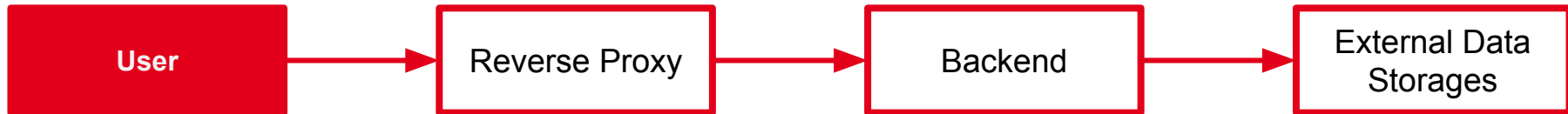
Backend Structure



- Store Data
- MongoDB
 - Registered Skills (including transition lists for suggestion)
 - Persons
 - Personal Data (synced from LDAP)
 - Personal Skills (ID, skills with levels)

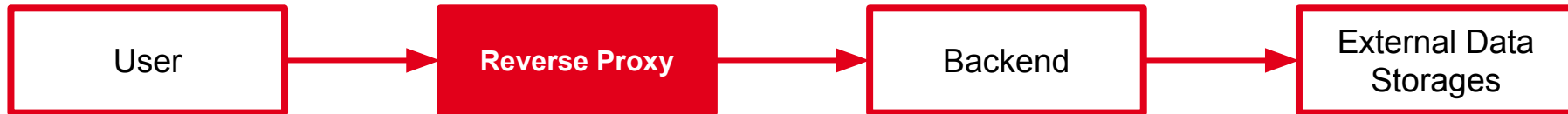
Example

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



- Search for Java and Ruby in HH
- Browser Calls API
 - *api.some.tld/users?skills=Java,Ruby&location=Hamburg*

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



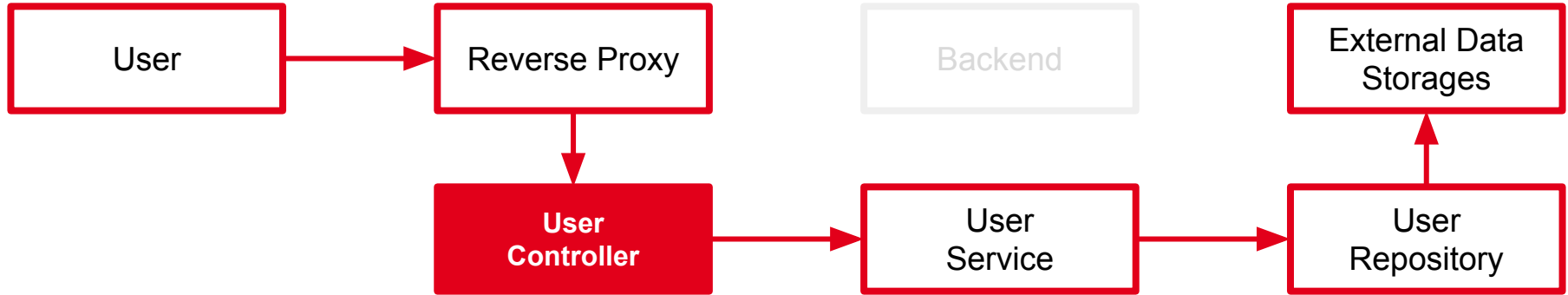
- Recognize API Call (Domain)
- Forward to Backend Server

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



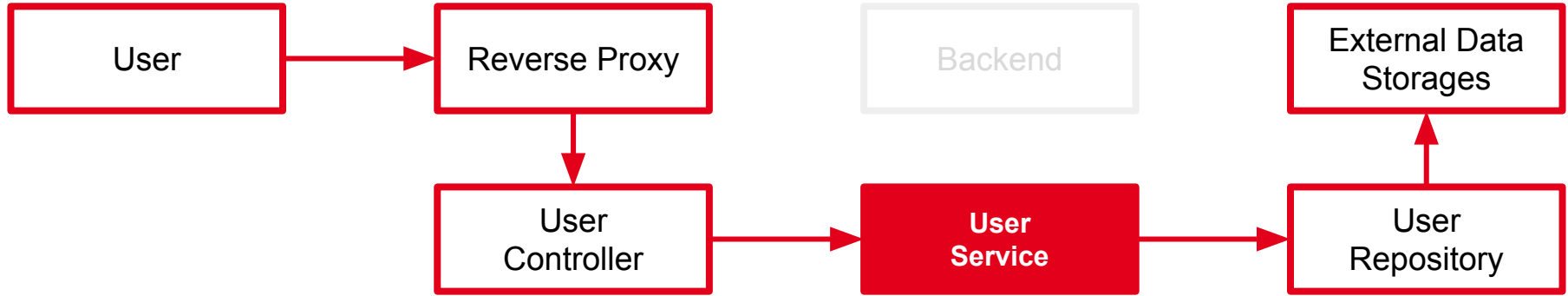
- Waits for HTTP Requests
- Dispatching to Controller

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



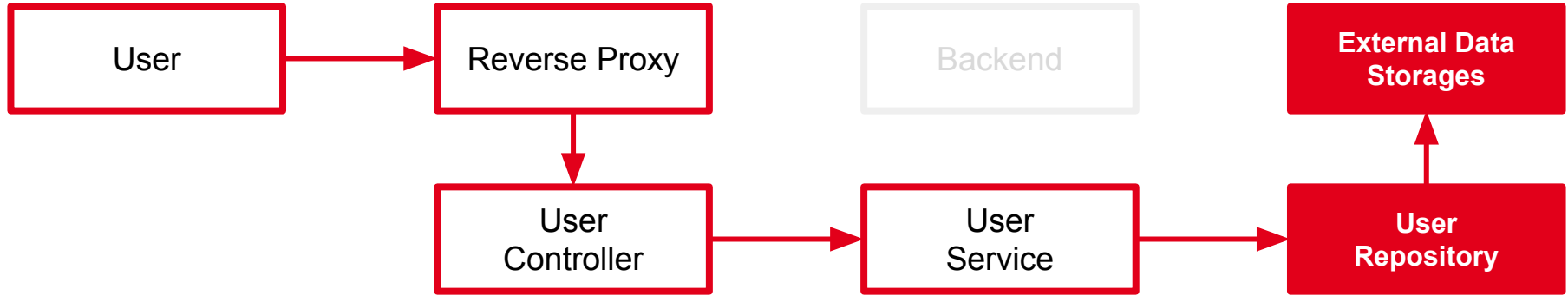
- Call method based on request URL and Parameters
 - /users/
 - ?skills=Java,Ruby&location=Hamburg
- Request matching persons from UserService

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



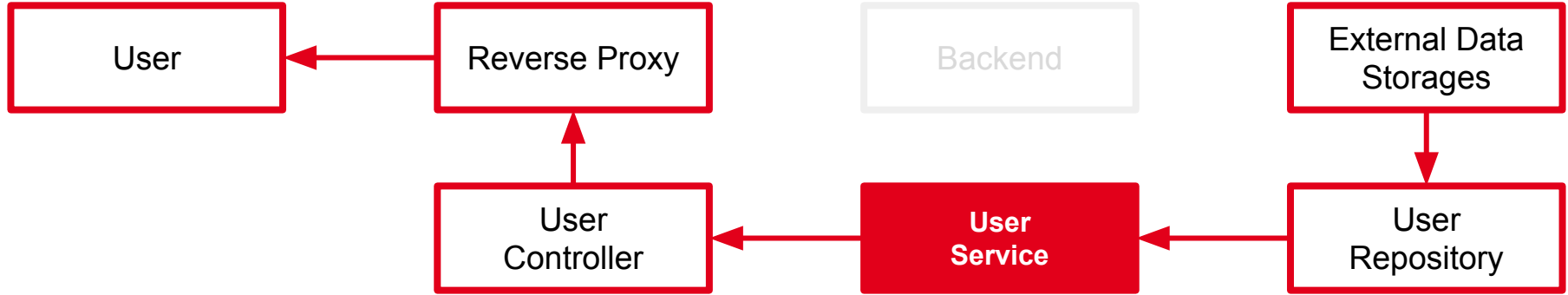
- Request needed users from Repository

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



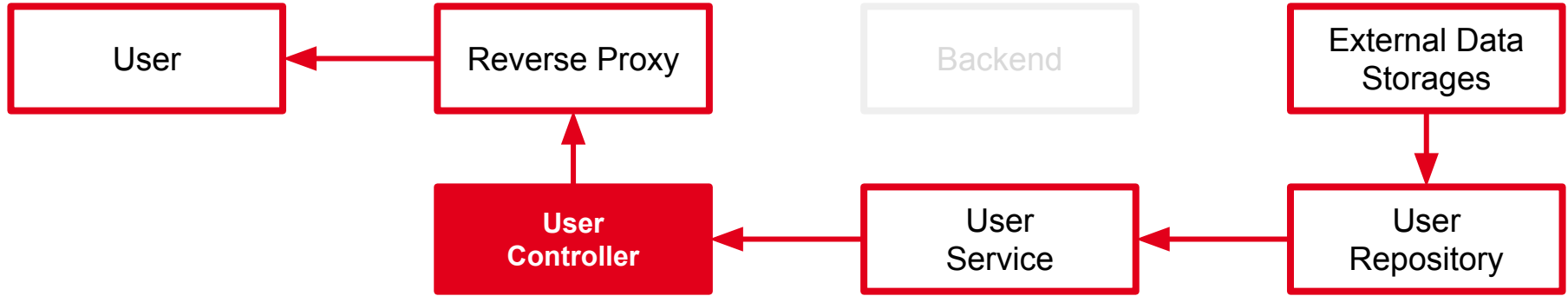
- Get data from MongoDB
- Return user objects to UserService

API Call (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



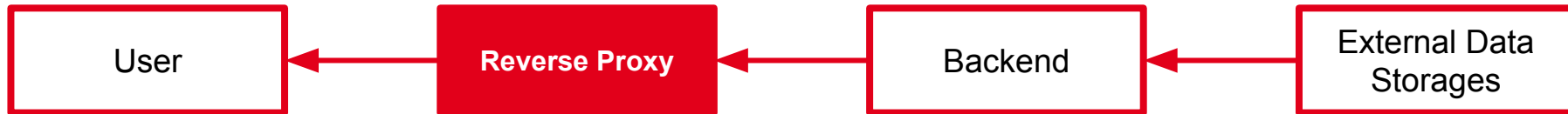
- Process retrieved user objects
- Apply search and fitness score algorithms

API Call Cycle (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



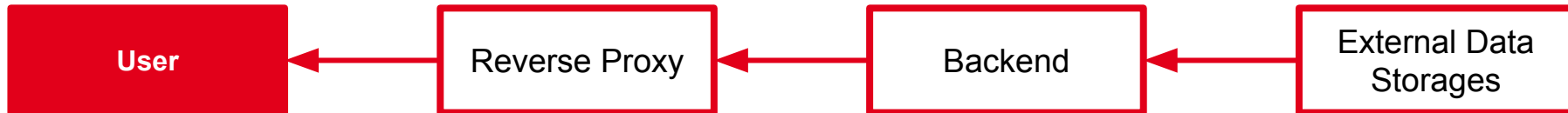
- Convert found user objects to JSON
- Return HTTP Response
 - In case of error, return corresponding HTTP Code

API Call Cycle (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



- Forward JSON response to client

API Call Cycle (Search for Java and Ruby in HH)



- Parse JSON response
- Render result list

Evaluation

Recap: Requirements

- Functional
 - Person Search
 - Login, Logout
 - Users can modify their skills
 - Add, rename and delete registered skills
- Non functional
 - Device Support
 - Browser Support
 - Scalability
 - Response Times

Recap: Requirements

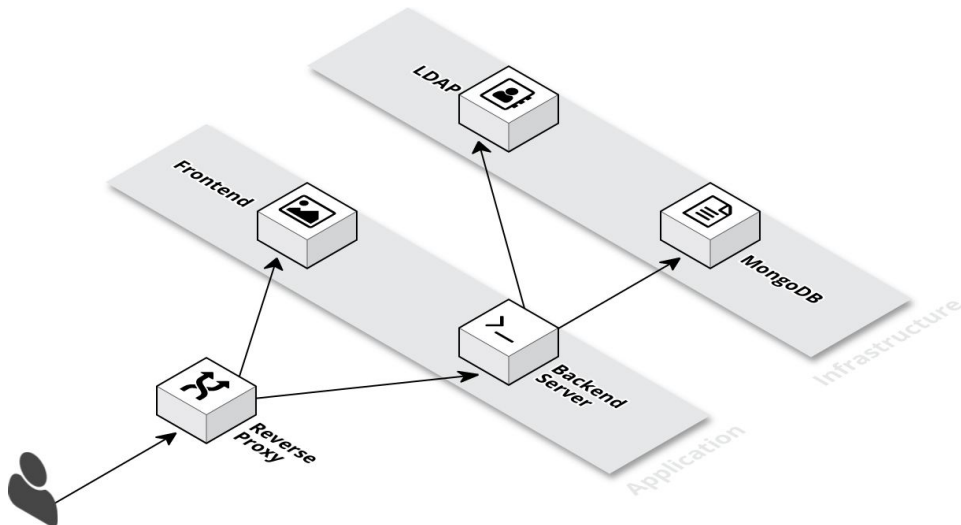
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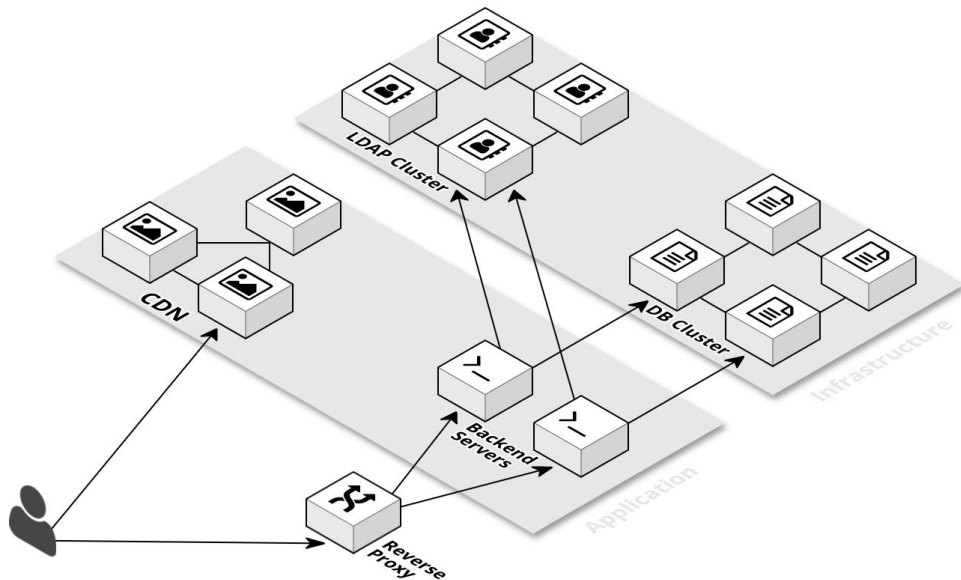
Evaluation (Scalability)

- MongoDB
 - Designed and shown to be scalable
- LDAP
 - Six servers
 - Cluster is transparent to application
- Frontend
 - CDN
- Backend
 - Stateless Application
 - Reverse proxy as load balancer
 - Tested



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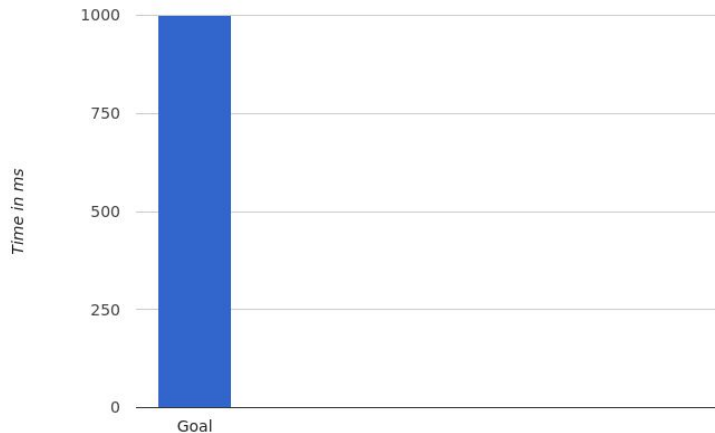
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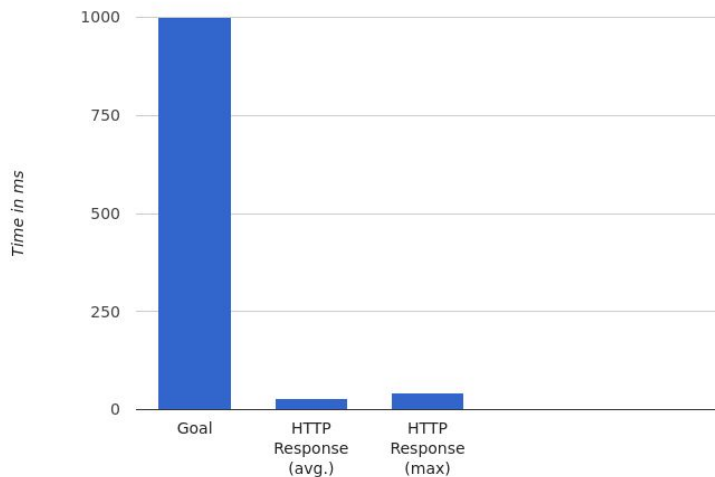
Evaluation (Response Times)

- Goal: 1s max to finish rendering



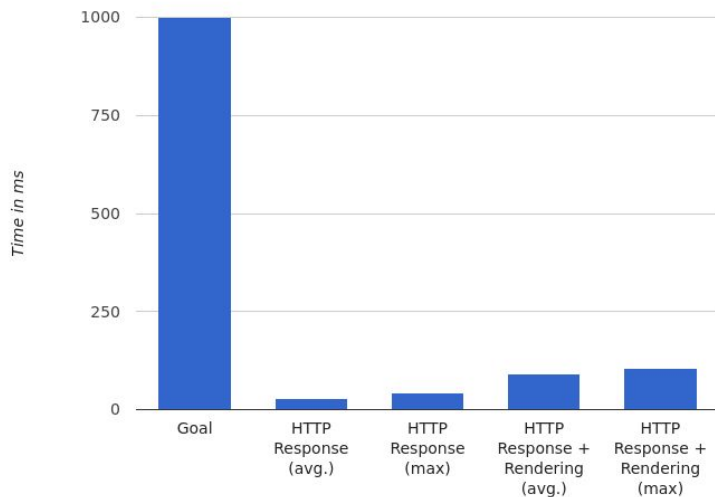
Evaluation (Response Times)

- Goal: 1s max to finish rendering
- HTTP Response: 33ms/44ms (40 samples)



Evaluation (Response Times)

- Goal: 1s max to finish rendering
- HTTP Response: 33ms/44ms (40 samples)
- + Rendering: 90ms/106ms (16 samples)



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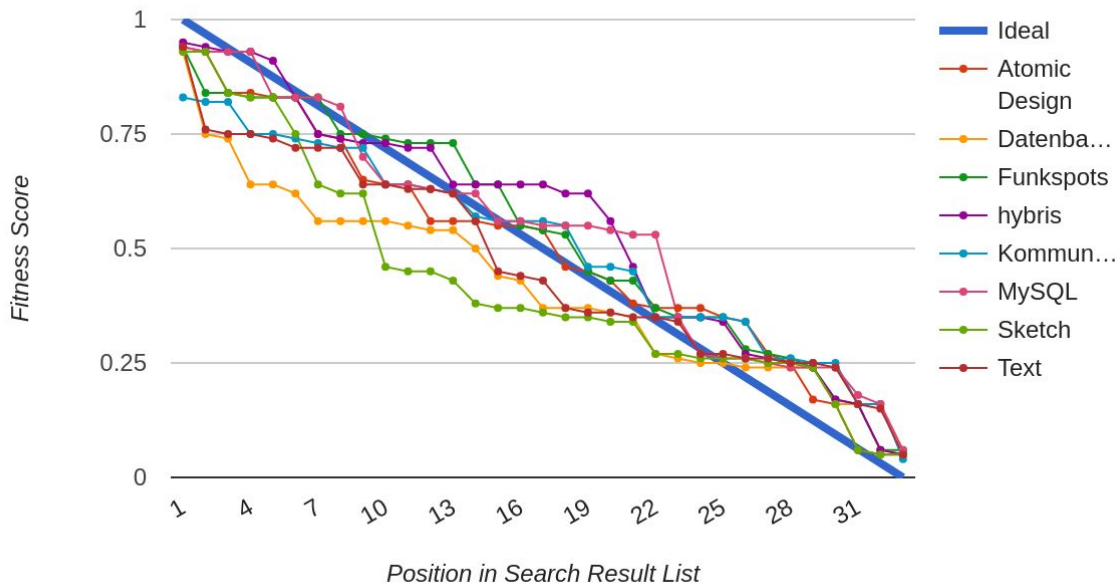
Evaluation (Fitness Score Algorithm)

- Are fitness values distributed uniformly when the input values are?
 - No → the algorithm probably is not fair
 - Yes → we still do not know
- Is there a configuration of weighting parameters that reflects the users' perception?

Evaluation (Distribution of Fitness Scores)

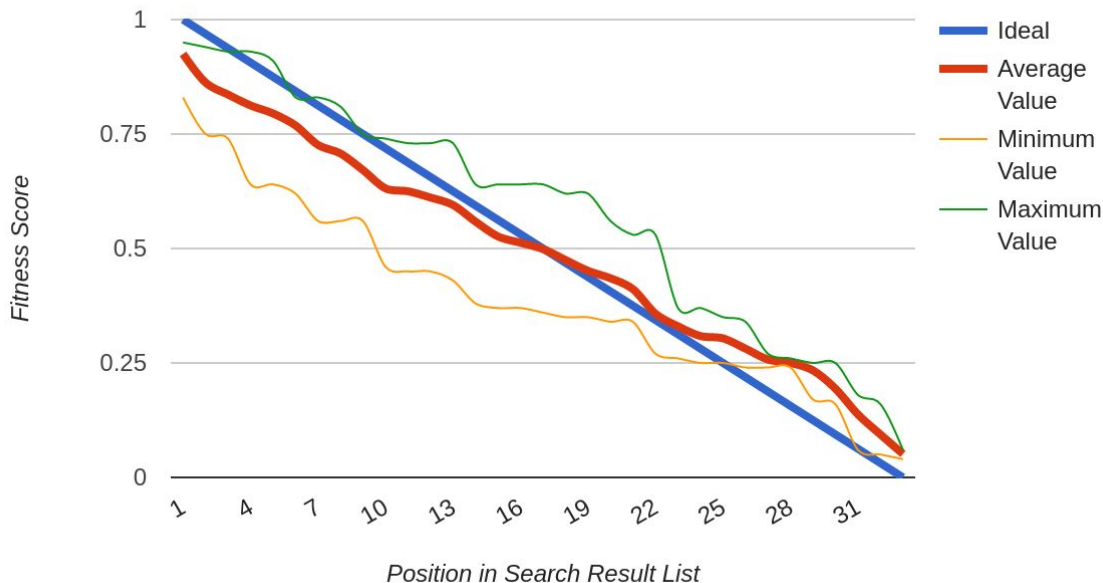
- Generate 100 users
- Assign a random number ($n \leq 17$) of skills
- Assign random skill/will level for each skill
- Perform Searches
- Hypothesis to validate:
 - Random values are distributed uniformly
 - Fitness of employee's is distributed uniformly
 - Fitness Scores are distributed uniformly
 - Results sorted by fitness:
 - Linear falling function
 - $f(\text{first}) = 1$
 - $f(\text{last}) = 0$

- Searches for 8 distinct skills (33 results each)



Evaluation (Distribution of Fitness Scores)

- Searches for 8 distinct skills (33 results each)
- Average correlates with ideal



Evaluation (Distribution of Fitness Scores)

- Average Deviation: 6%
- Maximum Deviation: 27%



Evaluation (Distribution of Fitness Scores)

- Input distributed uniformly \rightarrow Output distributed uniformly
- Sources of error
 - Random generation
 - Small sample (8 rows; 33 values each)

Evaluation (Reflection of Users' Perception)

- Is there a configuration of weighting parameters that reflects the users' perception?
 - Employees estimate the importance of the factors
 - Employees estimate fictional persons' scores
 - Find a configuration that fits both

Evaluation (Survey)

- Online Survey (Google Forms)
- Random group of 161 employees invited (35%)
- 41 participants in 72hrs (8%)
- Question Type 1
 - Fictional person, has skills
 - Specific Search
 - Subject estimates fitness (Likert Items: 1 - 5)
- Question Type 2
 - Description of a factor included in the algorithm
 - Subject rates importance (Likert Items: 1 - 5)
- Type 2 shown after Type 1 → Knowledge about factors must not influence perception of fitness

Evaluation (Survey)

SkillWill

Alice

Alice hat die Fähigkeiten Java (4/4), AEM (3/4), Ruby (1/2) und .NET(3/4). Gesucht wird nach Java und AEM.

Wie gut passt Alice deiner Meinung nach auf die Suche?

	1	2	3	4	5	
passt gar nicht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	passt perfekt

BACK

NEXT

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SkillWill

Faktor 1: Durchschnitt der Skills

Du suchst mit dem Tool nach bestimmten Fähigkeiten. In die Sortierung der gefundenen Personen wird der durchschnittliche Skill der jeweiligen Person in den gesuchten Fähigkeiten einbezogen.

Wie wichtig ist dir dieser Faktor?

	1	2	3	4	5	
nicht wichtig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr wichtig

BACK

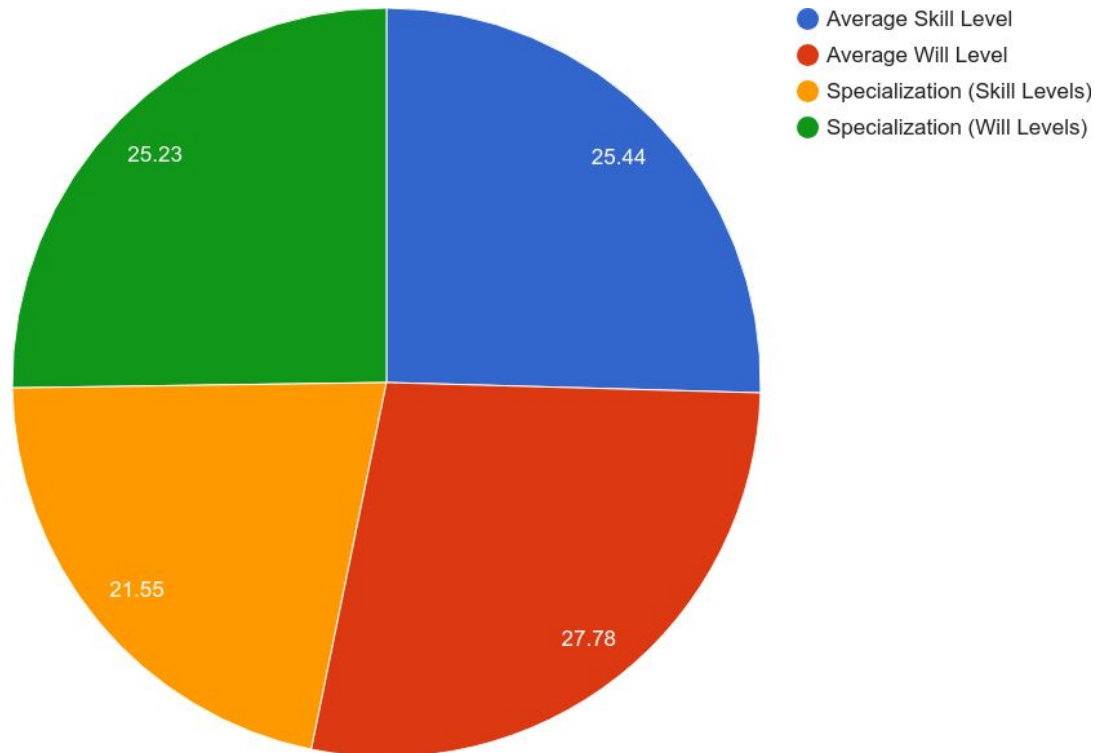
NEXT

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Evaluation (Survey)

Factor	Description	Mean Rating (1-5)	Mean Rating (%)
w_{as}	Average skill level in searched items	3.80	25.44
w_{aw}	Average will level in searched items	4.15	27.78
w_{ss}	Specialization (Skill Levels)	3.22	21.55
w_{sw}	Specialization (Will Levels)	3.77	25.23

Evaluation (Survey)

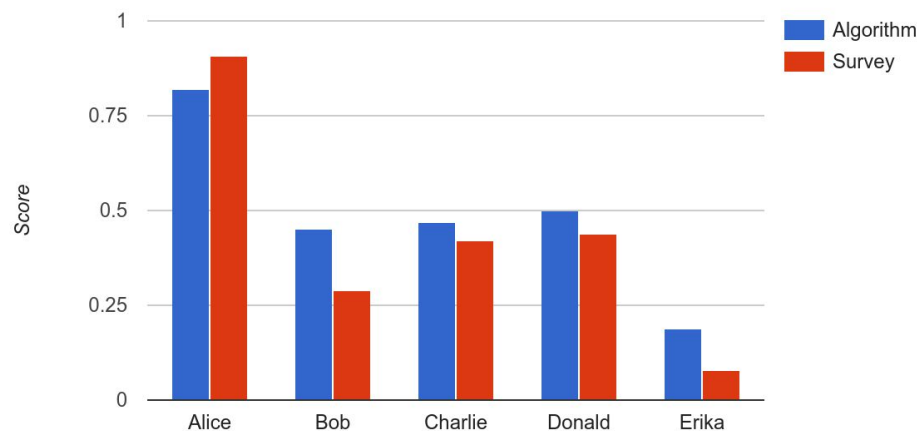


Evaluation (Survey)

- Configure algorithm to use these weighting parameters
- Calculate fitness scores for the five fictional test persons
- Test, if there is a significant deviation
 - Two Tailed Heteroscedastic T-Test
 - Significance Level: $p \geq 0.1$

Evaluation (Survey)

Test Record	f_a	f_s	Dev.	$p \geq 0.1$
Alice	0.82	0.91	0.12	No
Bob	0.45	0.29	0.16	No
Charlie	0.47	0.42	0.16	No
Donald	0.50	0.44	0.17	No
Erika	0.19	0.08	0.18	No



Evaluation (Survey)

- $p \geq 0.1 \rightarrow$ No significant deviation
- $p \geq 0.05 \rightarrow$ % Rows deviate significantly
- General algorithmic principle works

Refining the Fitness Score Algorithm

- Estimated Factors $\cong 0.25$
- Setting all to 0.25
 - Simplifies algorithm
 - No drastic effect on accuracy

$$f = \frac{w_{as} \cdot a_s}{\max(V)} + \frac{w_{aw} \cdot a_w}{\max(V)} + w_{ss} \cdot s_s + w_{sw} \cdot s_w$$

$$\Rightarrow f = \frac{a_s + a_w}{4\max(V)} + \frac{s_s + s_w}{4}$$

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Demo

Demo (Fallback)

Résumé & Outlook

Résumé

- Context: SinnerSchrader
- Requirements
 - Collaboration \leftrightarrow Supervision
 - Focus: search
 - Includes motivation
- Commercial solutions
 - Do not fulfill requirements
- Concept
 - Search and fitness score algorithms
- Implementation
- Evaluation
 - Basic ideas behind algorithms work
 - Could be tweaked to get even better results

Outlook

- Tweaking of algorithms
- Last touches on the frontend
- Test phase with real users
- Legal concerns
- Extend with features
 - Skill categories
 - Search in departments
 - ...

Thanks

Thanks
for all the fish

Find this on Github!

github.com/t0rbn/BSc
github.com/sinnerschrader*

Q&A