

We used google news (news.google.com) to get 3 personalized newsfeed. Below we have included the screen capture of the news feeds from google. All the three screenshots were taken around 4:45 am GMT on Tuesday Sep/24/2013. The three terms that we used for personalizing our news feed were:

- ✓ backpacking travel (note the intentional typo in backpacking)
- ✓ World Equity Markets
- ✓ Recommender Systems

## Recommender Systems (see screen shot below)

The screenshot shows a Google News page with the search term 'Recommender Systems'. The left sidebar lists categories: Top Stories, News near you, Spotlight, backpacking travel, World Equity Markets, and Recommender Systems (highlighted in red). The main content area displays a list of news articles. The first article is 'Why Recommendation Engines Are About To Get Much Better' by Ellis Booker from InformationWeek, dated 6 hours ago. The second is 'Meet Microsoft's Surface 2 And Surface Pro 2' from TechCrunch, dated 12 hours ago. The third is 'YouTube Is Winning An Emmy, But Video Recommendation Still Has A Long ...' from Fast Company, dated Sep 20, 2013, by Alice Truong. The fourth is 'Microsoft Seeks Patent on Tastemaker Recommendations' from IPWatchdog.com, dated Sep 22, 2013. The fifth is 'Highly Recommended: Book Review' from Business 2 Community, dated Sep 22, 2013, by Prasanna Bidkar. The sixth is 'Why Zuckerberg Thinks Government Should Not "Move Fast And Break Things"' from TechCrunch, dated Sep 19, 2013, by Gregory Ferenstein. The seventh is 'Back To MOOC - September's Computer Science Courses' from iProgrammer, dated Sep 2, 2013. The eighth is 'Automatic style spotter can spot your next book' from New Scientist, dated Sep 14, 2013. The ninth is 'Reform of university entrance exam sparks debate' from University World News, dated Sep 14, 2013. The tenth is 'Zuckerberg's Manifest Destiny: Connecting The 5 Billion People Without Internet' from TechCrunch, dated Sep 12, 2013, by Josh Constine. The eleventh is 'Zuckerberg Says The "Government Blew It" On The NSA Scandal' from TechCrunch, dated Sep 12, 2013. The twelfth is 'Recommendations for Letters' from Inside Higher Ed, dated Sep 4, 2013. The thirteenth is 'Twelvefold Appoints Jay Budzik as Chief Technology Officer' from GlobeNewswire (press release), dated Sep 9, 2013.

One of the terms used for personalizing the news feed is "Recommender Systems". A quick experiment shows that the articles recommended ARE the result of a word by word search for the terms presented. At a minimum stemming is undertaken (this can be clearly seen in the first few articles some of which contain "Recommendation System" instead of "Recommender System".) Within this corpus of articles found through search, it is not clear what algorithm is used to mark some articles more relevant than the others. However we can make educated guesses about what the algorithm is not based on.

1. The relevance is not exclusively based on the time stamp of the article. In some cases older articles are deemed more relevant than newer ones (article 3 - "YouTube Is Winning An Emmy, But Video Recommendation Still Has A Long ..." Vs article 4 - "Microsoft Seeks Patent on Tastemaker Recommendations" below)
2. The relevance is also not exclusively based on TFIDF. The word recommend (*recommendation, recommender, recommender*) can be considered a rare term and it occurs more times in article 3 - "YouTube Is Winning An Emmy, But Video Recommendation Still Has A Long ..." than in article 1 - "Why Recommendation Engines Are About To Get Much Better." Thus TFIDF score is not exclusively used for scoring relevance of the articles.

It seems a weighted combination of TFIDF and time stamp of the article is used to score its relevance.

## Improvement needed

The newsfeed also includes articles that have no relevance to recommender systems. For example article 6 - "Why Zuckerberg Thinks Government Should Not "Move Fast And Break Things" is included only because there is a short biography of Zuckerberg at the bottom of the page and how he worked on music recommendation system before he created Facebook. The main article is about a subject other than recommender systems. Clearly the personalized newsfeed failed to only look at the main article on the webpage to score article relevance.

## [backpacking travel \(see screen shot below\)](#)

For the next newsfeed we created an intentional typo in one of the words. The real word is "*backpacking*", but we used "*backpacking*" for our search. Google search is forgiving of typos and either warns the user of the typo or auto-corrects the typo in the search results. We expected to see the same behavior in our personalized newsfeed and that is what we saw. Its also clear that case is not significant in searches.

### Improvement needed

Again in this case we see articles included that had nothing to do with "*backpacking*". For example there was an article from "The Sun" (that needed registration to read) and was about the actress Rachel McAdams. It seems the personalized newsfeed recommender is prone to making mistakes. However the wrong news article appropriately had a lowly relevance score.

**News**

U.S. edition ▾Modern ▾

Top Stories

News near you

Spotlight





backpacking travel

World Equity Markets

Recommender Systems

backpacking travel

**Bear-Proof Keg, Cliffhanging Mark Rough Rocklies Hike**  
Bloomberg - 13 minutes ago  
While my backpacking partner and I were on a park trail less than 24 hours after takeoff from LaGuardia Airport in New York, the planning had started months earlier.  
[See realtime coverage](#)

**Video: Backpacking The Trans-Catalina Trail**  
LAist - 8 hours ago  
... of terrain from Class I to Class III (relatively flat and easy to some rough terrain, may be steep, difficult). This video shows a four-day backpacking trip, from campfire-side course, the natural splendor of ...  
**'That city? It's horrible. Don't bother.'**  
The Age (blog) - 3 hours ago  
It might have been something I ate, or an airborne virus, or my body simply giving up after months of backpacking abuse. Whatever the cause, I ... It lasted a good five day trip, I really did, but I shouldn't ...  
**The World's Most Beautiful Places Without Internet Access (PHOTOS)**  
Huffington Post - 5 hours ago  
If you're looking for an epic, tech-free backpacking trip, try the Sequoia/King's Canyon National Parks leg of the Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,600-plus mile stretch through the Sie Canada to the Mexico border, recently ...  
  
Modesto Bee - 1 hour ago  
**Blizzard, ice and snow help drive Sacramento youths' love of wilderness**  
E-mail Print. Frankie Jones shares her stories about backpacking 30 days through the rugged Okanogan National Forest in the Cascades under a diversity s  
Modesto ...  
**How social media has ruined backpacking through Europe**  
The Globe and Mail - Sep 17, 2013  
For Canadians, backpacking Europe is a rite of passage. Unlike package tours, backpacking is a struggle, full of discovery and disappointment and chance connections.  
**Travel While You're Young**  
Huffington Post - 12 hours ago  
Spend 12 weeks backpacking. Travel for a month straight. Take a road-trip. Plan a weekend getaway. Go explore the neighborhoods around your city, travel to states that exotic location halfway around the world.  
  
National ...  
**Bats and more: an astonishing array of wildlife greets visitors to Borneo's ...**  
National Post - 12 hours ago  
... easy to get international connections to the regional airport conveniently located one kilometre from the park headquarters.  
National ...  
**CHELSEA: Traveler reflects on backpack trip around Michigan**  
Heritage Newspapers - 17 hours ago  
Oberholtzer went on a solo, six-week backpacking trip in Northern Michigan along the North Country Trail, where she covered over 700 miles of land.  
**REI Celebrates Fall with New Outdoor Products, Events and Travel Offers**  
DigitalJournal.com - 8 hours ago  
REI Outdoor School instructors teach a variety of classes specific for fall, such as backpacking, trail running, outdoor photography and GoPro® Basics programs.  
  
Cambs Times - 15 hours ago  
**GALLERY: Students complete their DofE gold awards on extraordinary ...**  
They also received a donation from The Whittlesey Charity and the Round Table which helped to make the trip possible. During the trip they completed their backpacking the Lares Trek in the High Andes, close to 5,000m.  
  
Business Insider - Sep 20, 2013  
**How The Backpacking Trip From Hell Nearly Ruined My Marriage**  
In our Money Mic series, we hand over the podium to people with controversial views about money. These are their views, not ours, but we welcome your res

## World Equity Markets

For our last personalized news feed we used "World Equity Markets" in our search. "World" and "Markets" are fairly common words and hence will have low TFIDF scores. However "Equity" is a rarer word and hence will have a higher TFIDF score. The word equity can be used in social justice or economic equality context as well. and yet all the articles recommended in our news feed are related to the financial equity (stock) markets. Thus the search engine is smart enough to understand that the word "Equity" in association with the word "Markets" means stock markets.

**News**

U.S. editionModern

Top Stories

News near you


Spotlight

backpacking travel

**World Equity Markets**


[Recommender Systems](#)

World Equity Markets




Arabian Gazette

See realtime coverage




Washington Post

**Stocks Soar on Summers Withdrawal**  
New York Times - Sep 16, 2013  
Stock and bond markets around the world jumped on Monday, after Lawrence H. Summers withdrew from consideration as chairman of the Federal Reserve.  
**Stocks rise after Summers quits Fed race** Financial Times  
**Summers's Withdrawal Cheers Markets** Wall Street Journal - by Alexandra Scaggs




FXstreet.com - Sep 13, 2013

**Markets steady as investors prepare for Fed decision on reducing stimulus**  
Washington Post - Sep 17, 2013  
LONDON - Markets were trading in fairly narrow ranges Tuesday as investors positioned themselves for possibly the biggest economic event of the year - the Fed's decision on whether to reduce stimulus.




Livemint

**World equity markets mixed, EUR/USD still shackled**  
In European markets, today the EURO STOXX moved -0.05% as it moved in region of 2862.07, down -1.37 points in these moments.




Livemint

**World equities dip, dollar slips; Fed focus curbs moves**  
... Federal Reserve policy meeting. The price cuts in stocks appeared to put the S&P 500 index on track for its first loss after a seven-day winning streak, while factory output stalled an eight-day rise in world equity ...



Reuters - Sep 4, 2013

**Global shares rise, gold falls as Syria strike looks limited**  
A gain of almost 1 percent on Wall Street led share prices in Europe to rebound. MSCI's measure of global equity markets .MIWD000000PUS rose 0.6 percent and the pan-1 leading shares closed 0.2 percent higher.



Business

**China Data Lifts World Markets**  
Fox Business - Sep 9, 2013  
An upswing in Chinese exports lifted world equity markets on Monday, though worries about Syria and uncertainty over when and by how much the U.S.

**GLOBAL MARKETS-Stocks, dollar dip as Fed decision on stimulus looms**  
Reuters - Sep 17, 2013  
MSCI world equity index retreats from 5-year high \* Dollar dips but remains above four-week low \* Germany's stronger-than-expected ZEW weighs on Bund \* Oil drops below Blaise Robinson PARIS, Sept 17 (Reuters) ...

**Global markets in turmoil on Syria strike fears**  
MarketWatch  
Aug 27, 2013  
Written by William L. Watts  
Tuesday's market action wasn't all about Syria, but the growing likelihood of a U.S.-led military strike against the regime of Bashar al-Assad certainly added to global market uneasiness. President Barack Obama's spokesman Jay Carney said President Barack Obama would announce a decision on whether to strike Syria by the end of the week.

**GLOBAL MARKETS-Dollar dips, stocks flat as Fed meets on stimulus**  
Reuters - Sep 17, 2013  
But Wall Street rose, leading a measure of global equity markets to rebound, after data on U.S. consumer prices added to sentiment that the Fed will start trimming its bond holdings which begins on Tuesday.