Web experiments and test collections: Are they meaningful?

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David Hawking and Nick Craswell coordinate the TREC Web experiments.
Introduction: TREC (Web) experiments

- Many groups participate in the same experiment, with fixed queries, documents and "goals".
  - Many groups: Invention and confirmation
  - Central judging: Blind and fair
  - Static crawl. Reproduce results. Reusable?
  - Debate on methodology

- (We know what works in TREC ad hoc. Meaningful.)

- Web. What works?
History of the TREC Web track

1998 Link ranking papers. No WT.

WT99–WT01 Web data and short queries.
   Meaning: Links ⇒ Relevance

2001 SIGIR: Searching for home pages by name
   Links ⇒ Home pages
   Full text search ⇒ Home pages

WT01 Links and URL type ⇒ Home pages (meaningful)

WT02 GOV, Named pages & Topic distillation
# Topic distillation

Relevance ranking "Computer science"  Relevant Distilled
- tsg.anu.edu.au/Services/Ais/ATLES/xtable.csv  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/pipermail/seminars/2002-March/thread.html  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/pipermail/seminars/2002-March/subject.html  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/pipermail/seminars/2002-March/author.html  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/pipermail/seminars/2002-March/date.html  x
- anulib.anu.edu.au/clusters/science/subjects/comput.html  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/lib/cs-oz.shtml  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/lib/cs-oz.html  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/~David.Wolfram/CTTcites.html  x

Topic distillation "Computer science"
- feit.anu.edu.au/  x  x
- cs.anu.edu.au/  x  x
- anulib.anu.edu.au/clusters/science/collection/
- geography.anu.edu.au/
- engn.anu.edu.au/  x  x
- tltsu.anu.edu.au/  x  x
- ecocomm.anu.edu.au/
- anusf.anu.edu.au/  x  x
- ecocomm.anu.edu.au/departments/stat/welcome.html

Nick Craswell  WWW 2002 — Honolulu
Some issues

- Binary judgments
- Can’t do Google-scale experiments
  - Commercially interesting: Site, enterprise, ‘GOV’
- Site-site and enterprise-enterprise variation
- Need:
  - Keep developing methodology (ideas and criticism)
  - Find out what works (e.g. anchors)