24. Uls for Search and IR

INFO 202 - 13 November 2012

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Plan for Today's Lecture

The "Classical" Model of Search and the "Classical" UI for IR

Web-based Search

Best practices for UIs in query specification, query results, and query reformulation

Four big ideas for new Search Uls

An even bigger idea - "Watson-class" natural language Uls

A Range of Information Needs

Finding the citations to documents (so you could look for them in the physical library)

Answers to specific questions

Comparison of similar items

Familiarization (browsing and "building upon")

Knowledge discovery / data mining

... finding out what your friends are doing

The "Classical" IR System: Searching for Citations or Documents

Early in the digital era (1970s) large specialized bibliographic collections were created for academic articles, legal cases and opinions, news articles, etc.

The users of these systems were reference librarians, paralegals, journalists, and other professionals willing to be trained in using them

Since these systems predated the PC and graphical terminals, their user interfaces used "command lines"

The command languages were complex and powerful, typically supporting Boolean, adjacency, and term stemming operators

(PCR OR POLYMERASE(W)CHAIN(W)REACTION? OR DNA(W)SEQUENC?) AND (CANCER? OR PRECANCER? OR NEOPLASM? OR CARCINO?)

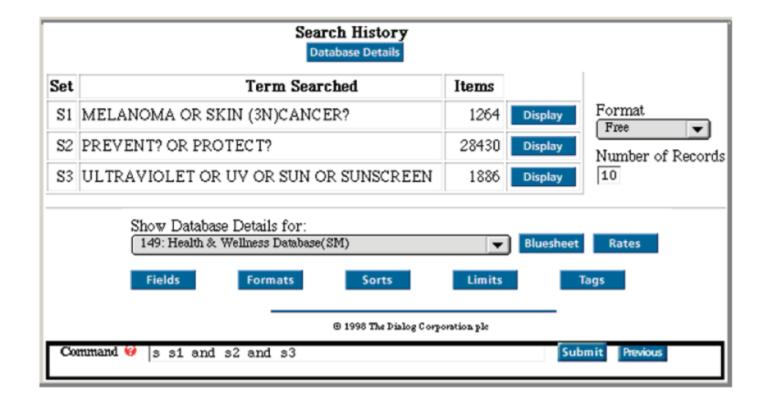
Query Specification in "Classic" Search Ul

Challenges Posed by the "Classic" IR UI

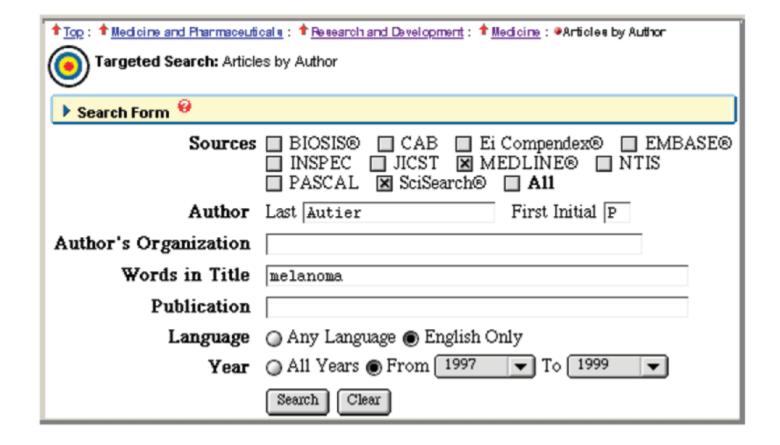
Untrained users (e.g. with public access terminals in libraries) generally couldn't use these systems effectively on their own

But effective use is essential in narrow and specialized domains where high recall is mandated

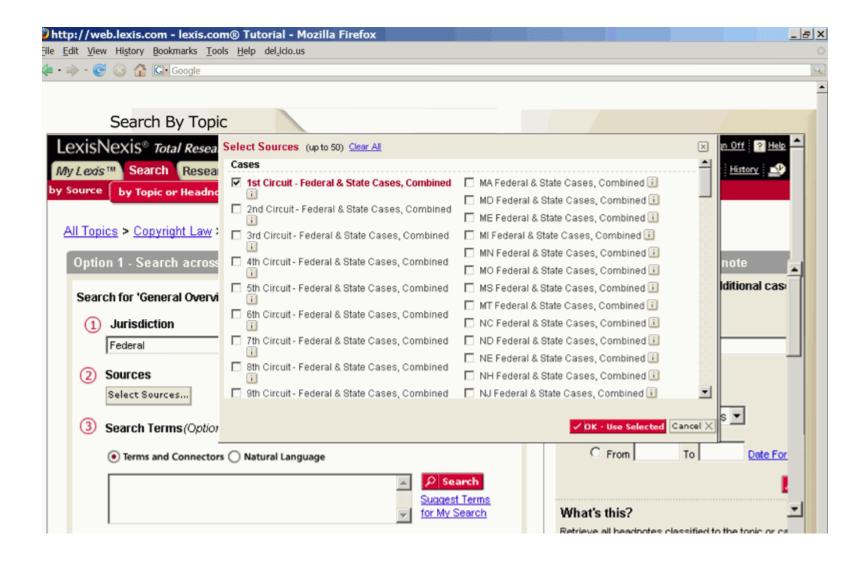
Classic Query Specification "Webified" -- 1998



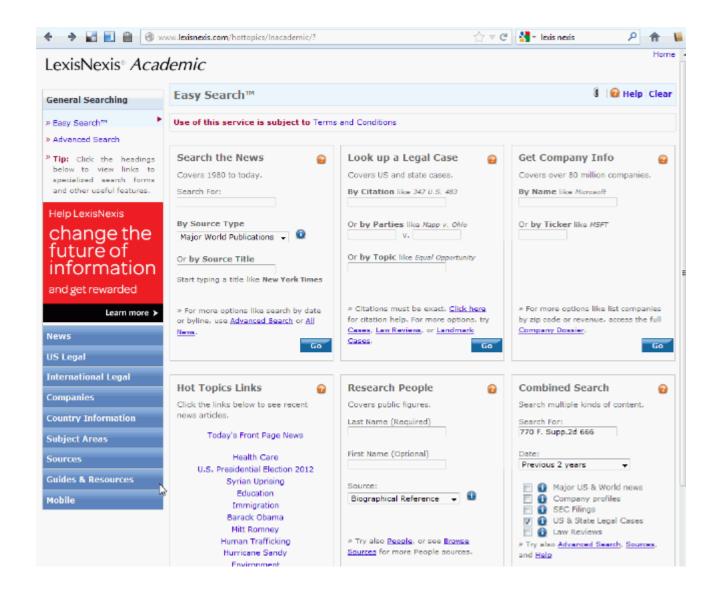
Classic Source and Field Selection "Webified" -- 1998



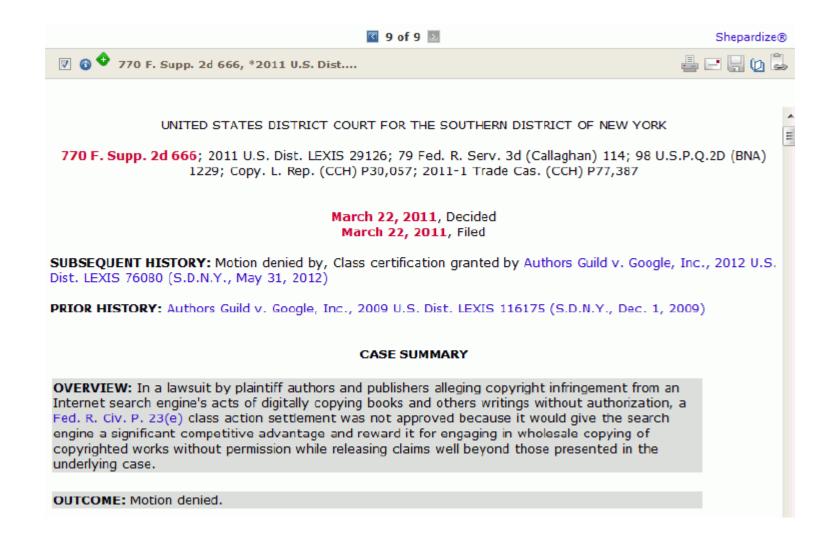
Classic Query Specification "Webified" -- 2007



LexisAcademic 2012



LexisAcademic 2012 - Reults



Searching the Web

The size and scope of the Web is vastly greater than any "classic" bibliographic or document collection

But the scope of what people search for is also vastly greatly than in classical IR systems

People expect to get information and documents, rather than just citations

Challenges Posed by Searching the Web

Uls must accommodate differences among people in:

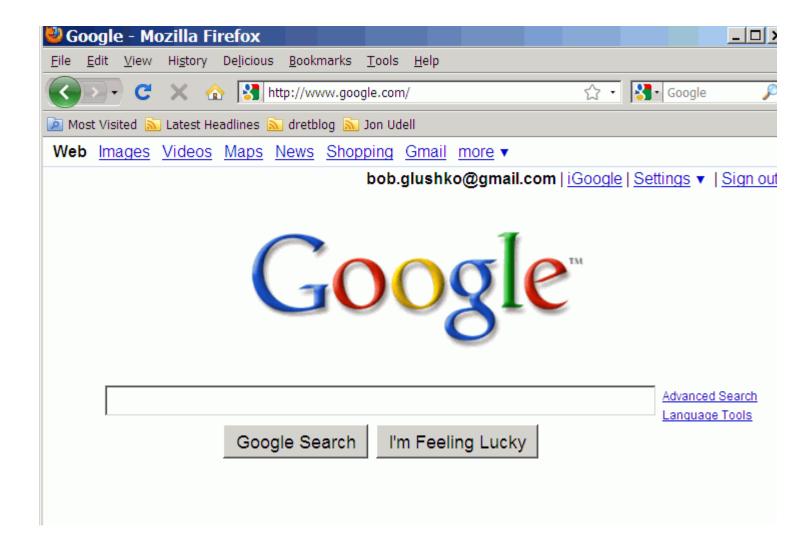
- Knowledge / life experience
- Cultural background and expectations
- Reading / scanning ability and style
- Methods of organizing and looking for things

UI functionality is constrained by heterogeneity of content (e.g., can't assume complete and consistent metadata or structure)

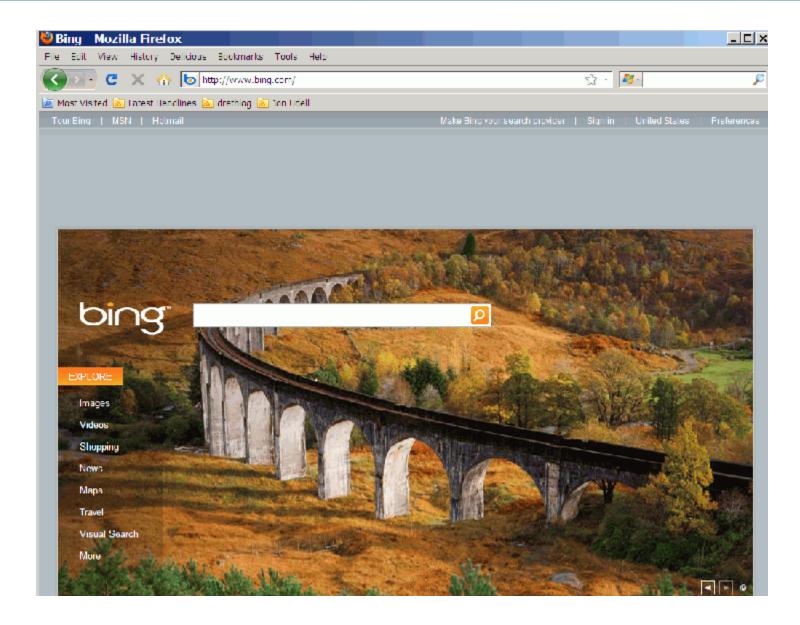
So what this means in practice is that the default web search UI is the simplest possible one: just a search box...

Additional challenges arise because people have multiple devices on which they want to search the Web and many have limited capabilities for UIs

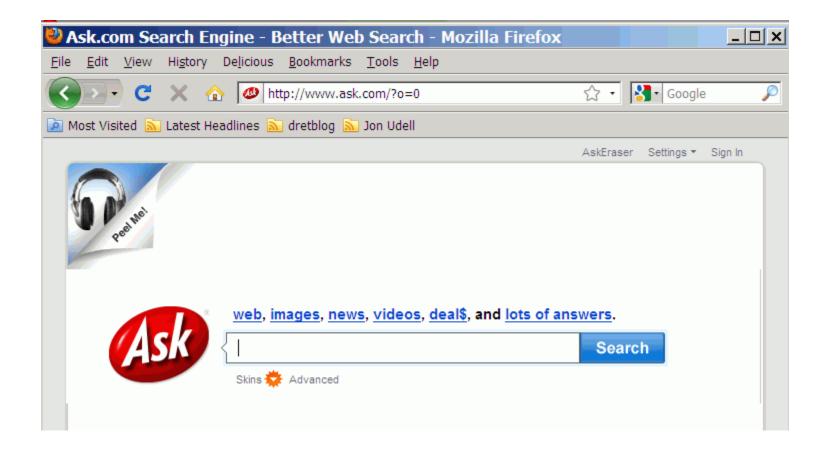
Google's Default Search UI



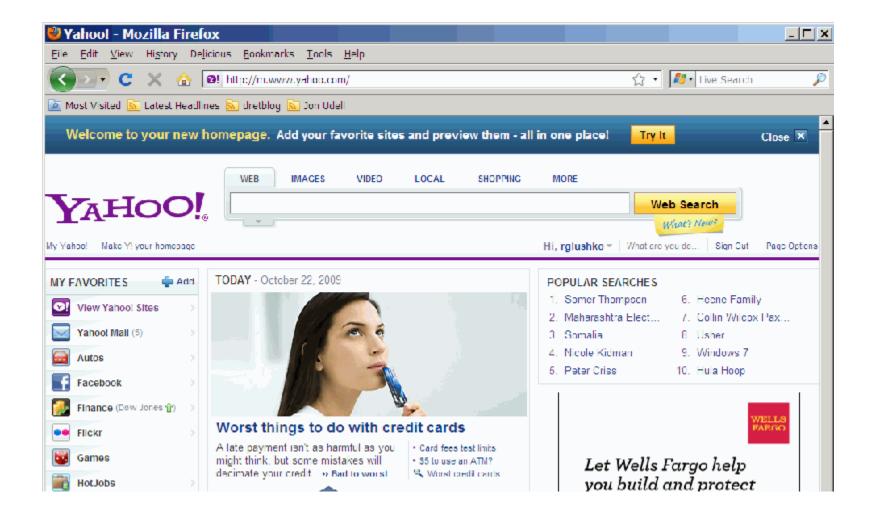
Microsoft Bing Default Search UI



Ask's Default Search UI



Yahoo! Default Search UI



"Ordinary" People Just Don't Get IR

1 in 7 never type URLs in the address bar and others use it wrong

Some use "URL style" (no spaces between words) when entering words into query forms

Only 1 in 6 uses quotes in query forms, and many of these do so incorrectly

Almost no use of any advanced search syntax or functions

They don't appreciate the "vocabulary problem," so if their first query term doesn't work, they just give up rather than trying other terms

"Ordinary" People Don't Understand Boolean Operators

For most people, Boolean semantics are counterintuitive or backwards

- Boolean AND narrows a search, but natural language "and" implies a request for more information
- Likewise, Boolean OR is a union that widens a search, while "or" implies a mutually exclusive choice in everyday language

"Ordinary" People Don't Understand Text Processing in IR Systems

If very frequent words ("stop words") are removed by the search engine, a query like "To be or not to be" won't find anything

A query like "boat fire" is different from "fire boat" but many users don't realize that term order matters

The Search Process and Interface Components

Hearst says "the heart of the search process is an iterative cycle of query specification, inspection and interpretation of query results, and query reformulation"

- Query Specification: Selecting and structuring search terms
- Query Results: Ordered list of documents or other objects matching the query
- Query Reformulation: If nothing in the results satisfies the query, users modify their initial queries and submit new ones

Small Details Matter

Uls for IR require great care in small details because of the text-intensive nature of search

• Tension between more information and clutter

How and where to arrange components of the interface and results matters a lot

- People don't read instructions or help text
- People scan / skim rather than read

Best Practices in Query Specification

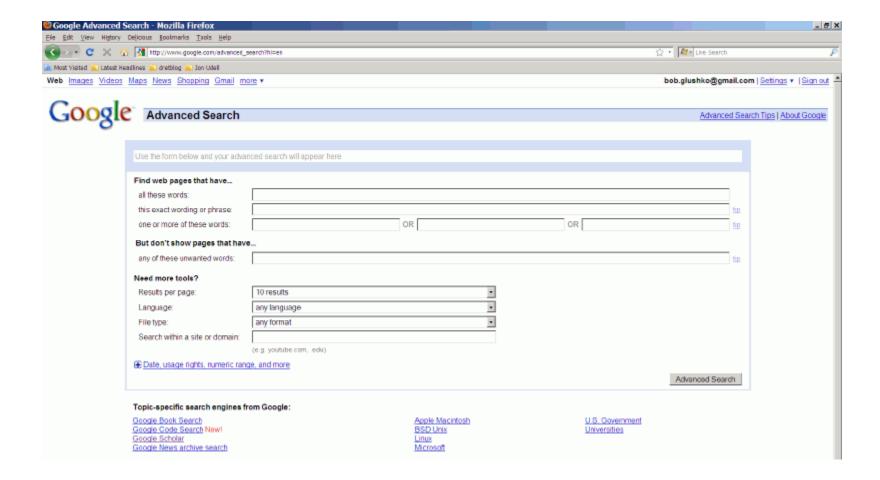
Provide advanced capabilities for defining queries and constraining results, but progressively disclose them to hide complexity

Query suggestions

Query expansion and contraction (also used in query refinement stage) that is TRANSPARENT to the user

DWIM / spelling correction

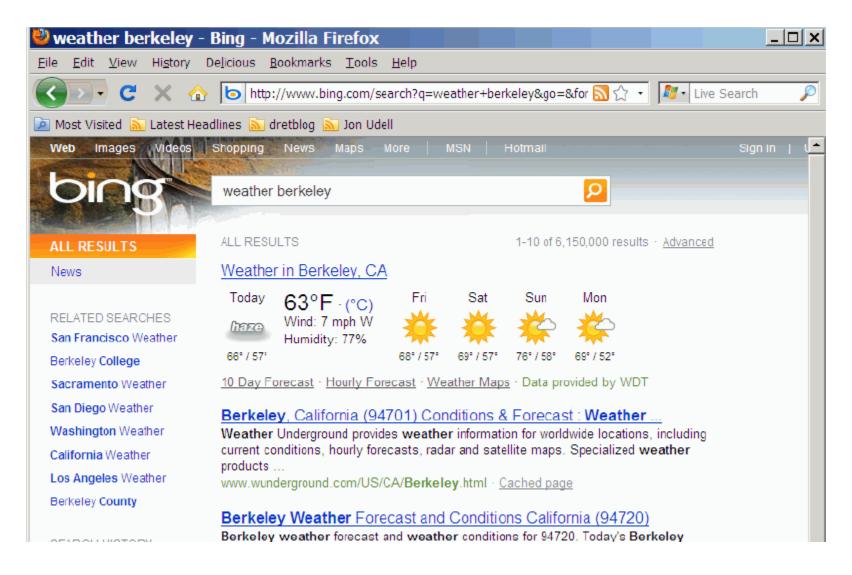
Google Advanced Search



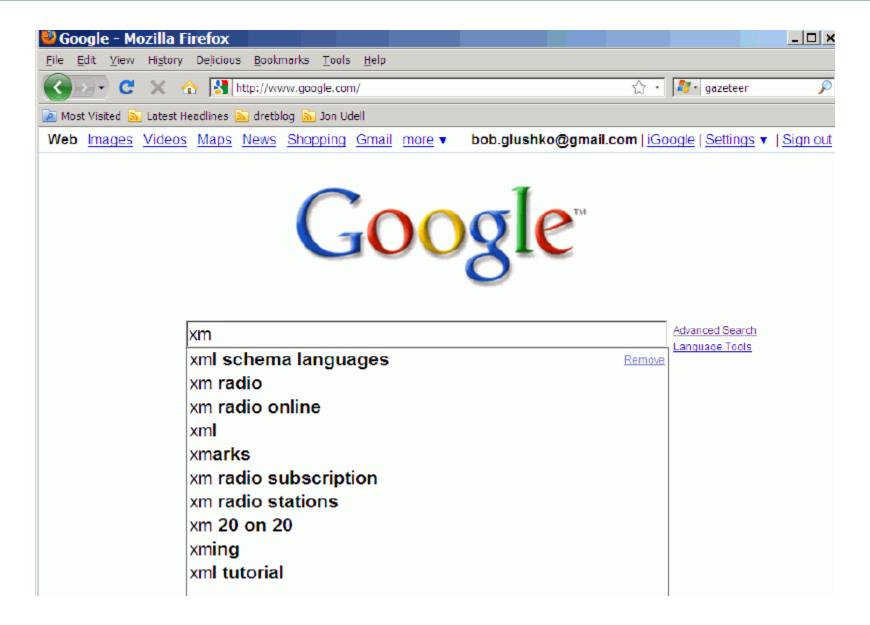
Windows Bing Advanced Search



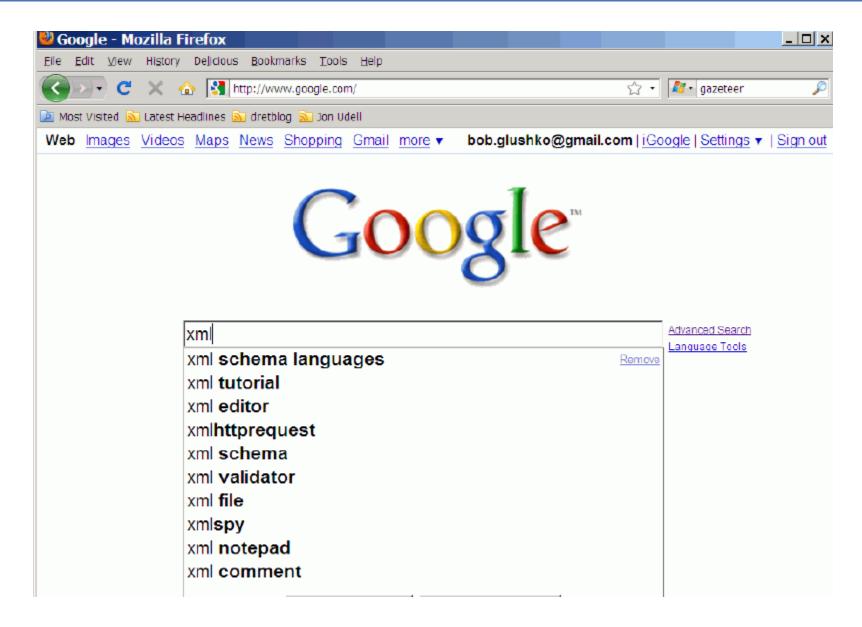
Query Refinement (They Assumed You Wanted)



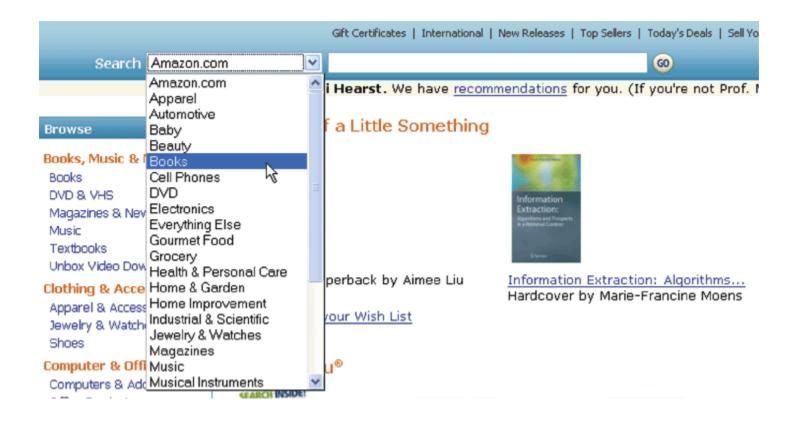
Query Suggestion in Google [xm]



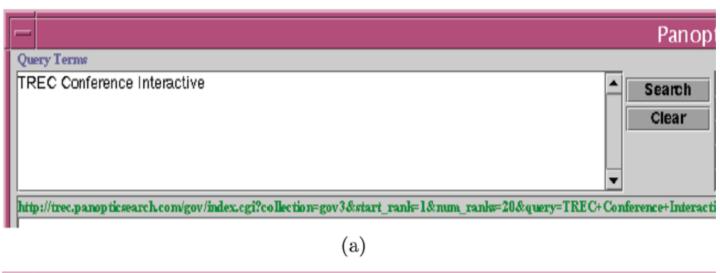
Query Suggestion in Google [xml]

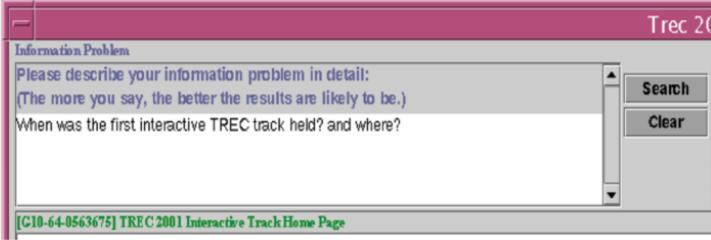


Search Window with Subject Drop Down Menu



Search Window with Terse and Verbose Instruction





Google Presents a Spelling Correction



DWIM

"Do What I Mean" mechanisms try to be "smart" and determine the searcher's unstated intentions or goals

Examples:

- Automatically suggest spelling corrections
- Automatically augment my query with related terms, synonyms, abbreviations, etc.
- Pop up "the paperclip" that tells me what kind of help I need

CRITICAL POINT: Users love DWIM when it works, but DESPISE it when it doesn't

Best Practices in Results Presentation

Present ranked results (people won't look past the first page) but don't show ranks

Sort of search results according to important criteria (date, author)

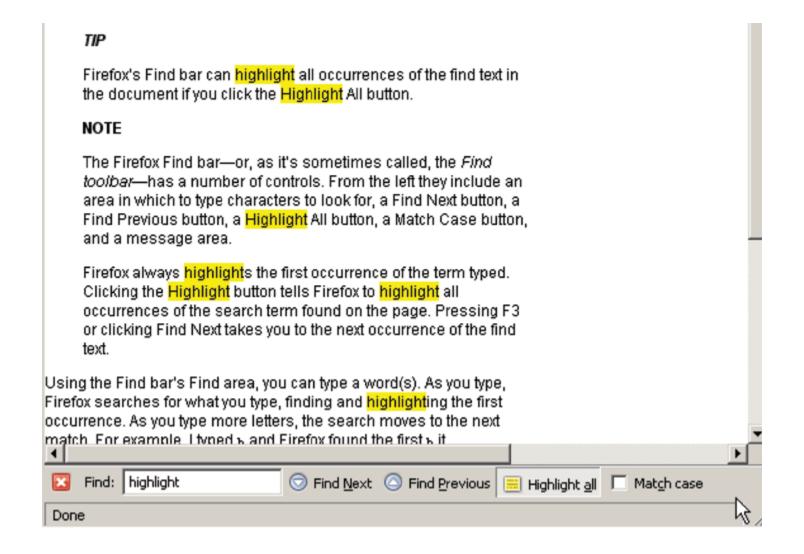
Group results according to well-organized category labels (see Flamenco)

Highlight query terms

Present query terms in context

Counter-intuitive failure to help: visualization

Search Query Term Highlighting



Search Query Term in Context



how to prevent cheese from molding

Search

Preference

Web Books

Results 1 - 10 of about 175,000 for how to prevent

Book results for how to prevent cheese from molding



Food Science - by Norman N. Potter, Joseph H. Hotchkiss - 608 pages Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Things - by Reader's Digest Association - 400 pages

Sargento.com | FAQs

Mold can develop on cheese once the product is exposed to air. ... packaging is not 100 percent airtight and does not always prevent mold development. ...

www.sargentocheese.com/aboutus/fag.jsp - 26k - Cached - Similar pages

A Forest Ranger's Cookbook - Household Suggestions

To prevent cheese from molding, wrap in a cloth wrung out of vinegar. Then roll in paper. In cooking vegetables: Cover those that grow under the ground. ...

forestry.about.com/cs/foresthistory1/a/camp_reci_tips.htm - 26k - Cached - Similar pages

Preventing Moldy Cheese

It's the air that makes the mold on cheese so keeping air from getting at ... In the bowl I add a little corn startch which will prevent it from sticking. ...

www.stretcher.com/stories/981123b.cfm - 42k - Cached - Similar pages

How to Prevent Cheese Mold | eHow.com

How to Prevent Cheese Mold. It is frustrating to go into the refrigerator to get cheese for a recipe or sandwich and find that it has gone green with mold.

www.ehow.com/how 2043886 prevent-cheese-mold.html - 49k - Cached - Similar pages

Grouping of Search Results

Interviews with lay users often reveal a desire for better organization of retrieval results

Useful for suggesting where to look next

Variety of techniques - categories vs clusters, single vs complex (faceted) category structure

Comparing the Techniques -- Clustering

Clustering is an automated technique for assigning results to groups (exclusively)

More flexible than pre-defined categories

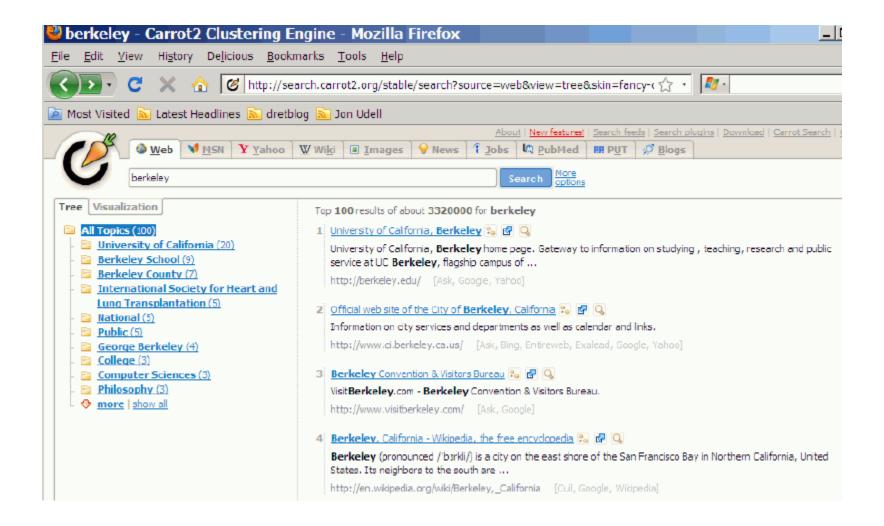
Disambiguates ambiguous terms

Automatically generated labels can be unintuitive and occur at different levels of description

Potentially useful if the user wants a summary of the main themes in the subcollection

Potentially harmful if the user is interested in less dominant themes

Results Clustering by Carrot2



Comparing the Techniques -- Categories

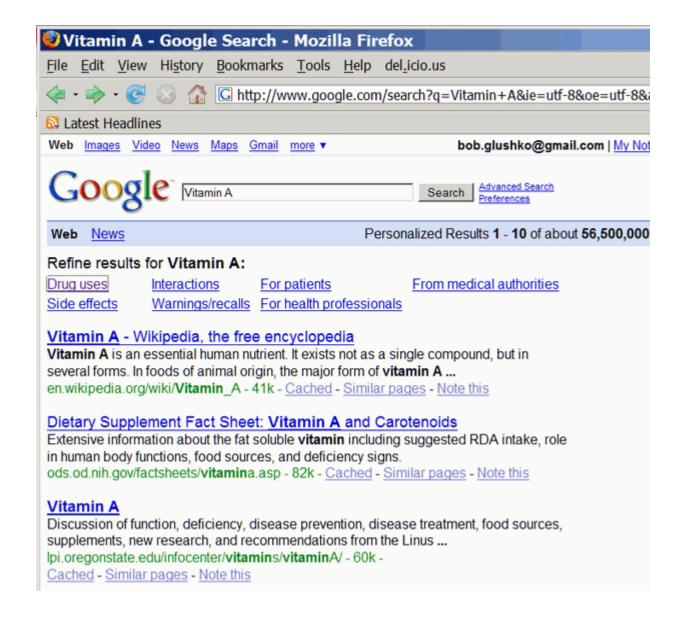
Human-created categories, but items can often be automatically assigned (to multiple categories)

Usually restricted to a fixed set

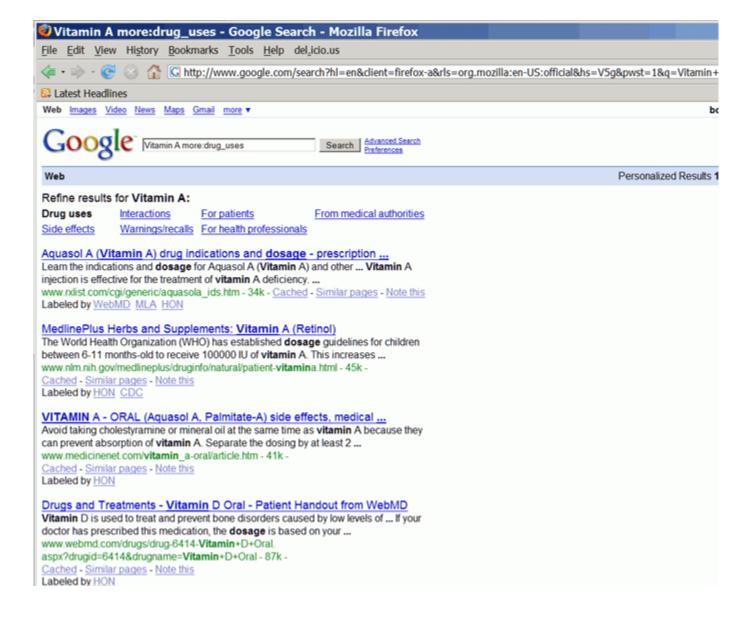
Intended to be readily understandable to those who know the underlying domain

Provide a novice with a conceptual structure

Results Categorization by Google



Results Categorization by Google [2]



Results Organized Using Faceted Categories (Flamenco)



Best Practices in Query Reformulation

(Do what works in query specification within the context of current results)

Make it easy to conduct iterative search by modifying queries to search within the current results

Get relevance feedback from searcher ("more like this")

Query Refinement Based on Relevance Feedback

Many studies show that if users engage in relevance feedback, the results are much better.

But the explicit effort required to rate relevance is usually a roadblock

This is one motivation for using "social" or indirect methods of assessing relevance, (+1, LIKE, etc)

Four Big Ideas

Personalization

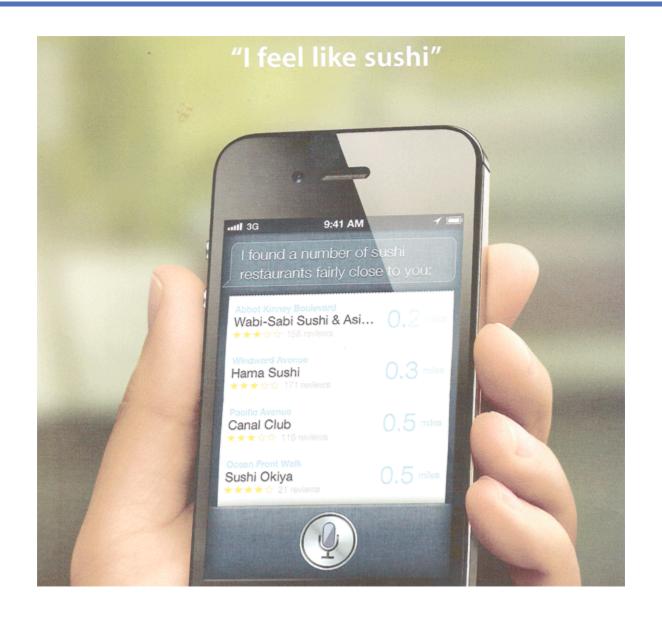
Timeliness (http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/03/google-cha)

"Smart" voice recognition - SIRI

"Social" search - exploit content created by your

"friends"http://www.bing.com/explore/social/

SIRI in the iPhone 4



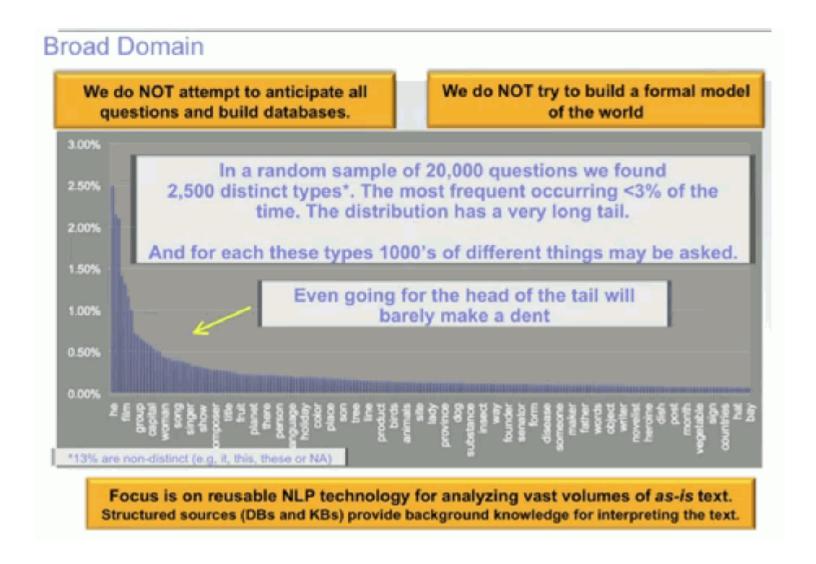
Watson Plays Jeopardy

Watson Beats the Human Champs (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xm8iUjzgPTg&feature=related)

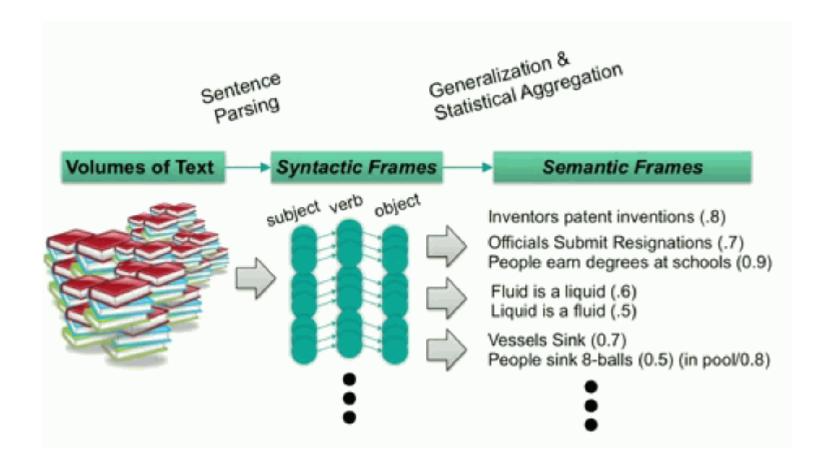
Jeopardy uses a broad and open knowledge domain, uses complexly (with puns and abbreviations) worded clues, demands precise answers, and you have to be quick!

A compelling technology (and marketing) demonstration for IBM

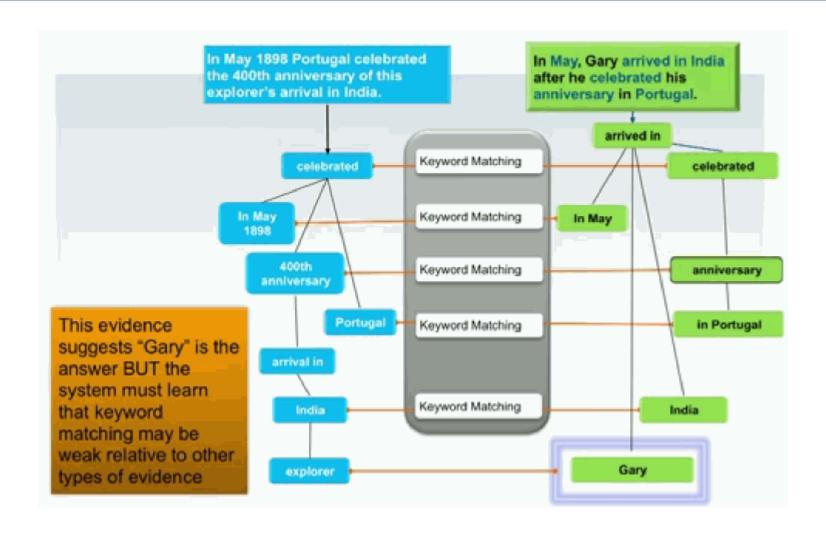
Watson's Approach to QA



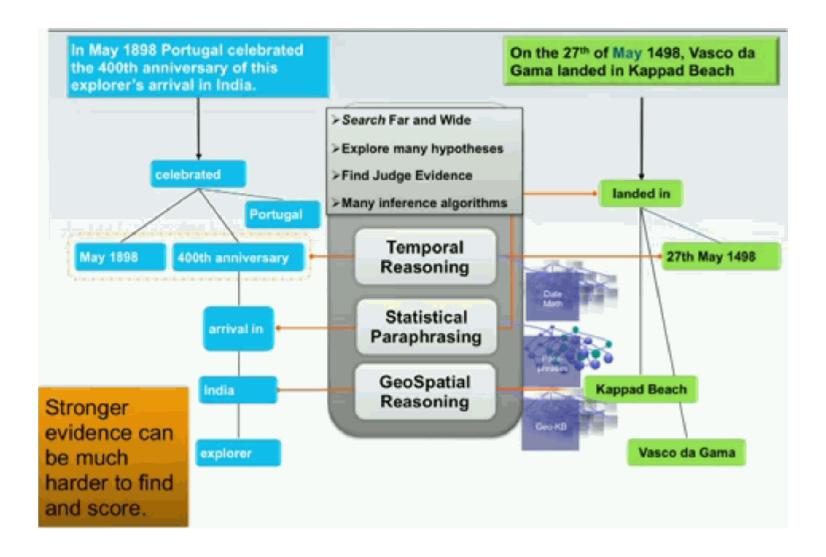
Watson - Learning from Reading



Watson - Why Keywords Won't Work



Watson - Using Deeper Evidence



Readings for Next Lecture (11/15)

Manning: Chapter 6 (focus on sections 6.2 and 6.3)

Yu, Clara, et al. – "Patterns in Unstructured Data" (from "Latent Semantic Indexing" through "Applications"