

Interview and Focus Group Outcomes

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MAS 965 Relational Machines

Contents

- A lot of this was covered in the proposal
- Basically talking here about highlights

Interview Targets

- Sponsors
 - Talked to Cisco, Accenture, and Sony reps
- Other newcomers to the lab
 - Interviewed some UROPs about lab
- Communication and Development Office
 - Finally managed to talk to them last week
 - Talked to web manager about integration and interests

Focus Groups

- Technical: Badge and deployment details
- Meta-level: keyword selection, user interaction issues, services

Agenda / Questions

- Visitors
 - Problems they face
 - What they want
 - What they need
 - What they expect
- Badge folks
 - What features are needed to support other research
 - What is technically feasible
- C*D office
 - Wants, needs, politics...

What We Have...

- List of keywords specified by advisors
 - Very low cross-subscription rates
 - Lack of context makes most keywords useless
 - Trails for very generic interests
- Interest expression
 - Research the PLDB, which contains no associative data
 - Ask C*D office to facilitate contact
 - “Poll” groups during a visit to find real interests

Sponsor Interview outcomes

- Fairly informal and opportunistic due to time constraints and availability
- Different sponsor “ages”, but outcomes uniform throughout
- Confusion about specific activities of groups
- Long term sponsors will likely have less knowledgeable representatives present during the event
- Cynicism about ability of system to direct successfully
- Multifaceted utility will help acceptance

Sponsors: Relational Aspects

- Envision system to be something like highly knowledgeable C*D personnel
- However, there was a lack of understanding about the proactive nature of the system compared to the normal actions of the C*D office
 - May need to see system in action
 - Issues of minimum introductory period
- Need to overcome cynicism born from decades of promises made by AI community (to which this project will be mentally compared)

Focus Group on Target Description

- Extensive analysis of PLDB entries at syntactic and semantic levels
- Indicates several issues
 - Entries focus on distinctiveness, while this requires a metric for similarity
 - Entries are descriptive, not declarative
 - Widespread repurposing of words
 - Highly context-dependent usage
 - PLDB parsing is basically out
 - Lack of semantic association data in PLDB → hard to use for humans

Other Approaches

- Use synonyms for association formation
 - Repurposing requires context metric
- Use common sense framework
 - Same issue + incorrect impressions from repurposing
- Use ACM keywords
 - Lack of granularity within ML domain of work
- Parse papers for keywords
 - We don't write about all the things that are important
 - C*D office had tried this, to no avail

Chosen approach

- Less draconian than the rigid ACM framework
- Much more draconian than current free-for-all system
- Allow some limited number of new keywords for expressing distinctions per group and project
- ...
- But require a minimum number of selections from the preset general keywords

Focus Group on Badge Capabilities

- Badge is no longer a good display platform
- Move display and search functionality from badge to kiosk network
 - Addresses sponsor comment on added functions
 - “Find User” feature now works from kiosk
 - Upshot: location data makes it easy to track compliance regardless of vote
 - New system for ad-hoc grouping based on inter-person interaction (Jon Gips)
- But increases stress on the kiosk system

Relational Requirements

- Generally same as before
- Incorporate a natural language agent capable of explaining “thought process” at final point of contact (kiosks)
 - Trust maintenance is key
 - There is a feeling that this problem is unsolvable
- Incorporate location data for smarter suggestions that exclude visited groups, which shows a level of “personal attention”
 - Attempt to “hold” attention
- Address person by name: show awareness of individual