

Development of a Genre Palette

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Short Abstract

This presentation details the development of a genre palette used in the study of the effects of genre-annotated search results on the relevance judgement process in a web search environment. This palette development was conducted in several phases: (i) a survey of user terminology; (ii) user-based refinement of terminology into a tentative genre palette, and (iii) user validation of the genre palette.

Long Abstract

This presentation describes a series of studies conducted for the purpose of building a genre palette to be used to improve the effectiveness of web searching. A major issue in palette development is the identification of what document categories should be used as genres. As genre can be defined as a “folk typology”, document categories must enjoy widespread recognition by their intended user groups (aka discourse communities), in order to qualify as genres. Three user studies were conducted to develop a genre palette and show that it is recognizable to users.

The first study was a survey of user terminology for web pages. Three participants separated 100 webpage printouts into stacks according to genre, assigning names and definitions to each genre. The second study aimed to refine the resulting set of forty-eight (often conceptually and lexically similar) genre names and definitions into a smaller palette of user-preferred terminology. Ten participants classified the same 100 webpages. A set of five principles for creating a genre palette from individuals’ sortings was developed, and the list of 48 was trimmed to 18 genres. The third study aimed to show that users would agree on the genres of webpages, when choosing from the genre palette. In an online experiment in which 257 participants categorized a new set of 55 pages using the 18 genres, on average, over 70% agreed on the genre of each page.

Difficulties of experimental design and future directions for the work will be discussed.